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Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

Vitriol and anger marks Israel Apartheid Week hate fest

There were heated exchanges and even punches thrown on Wits University campus this week between the South African Union of Jewish Students and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement's student body, the Palestinian Solidarity Committee (PSC), over Israel Apartheid Week. "Amandla Intifada" was one of the cries heard above the vitriol from the PSC leadership as sparks of anger and hatred flew around the piazza in front of the Great Hall. See page 4.

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Israel’s ‘Facebook bill’ could hamper free speech

TALI FEINBERG

Israel’s Knesset last week passed the first reading of the Criminally Offensive Content from the Internet bill - dubbed the “Facebook bill”. If passed into law, this will mean that social media platforms will be required to remove content deemed as criminal by the State. Some critics believe that rather than combat terrorism, it could have the opposite effect as it clamps down on free speech.

The bill was brought about as a result of last year’s wave of terror in Israel. Justice Minister spokesperson Ayelet Shaked said this was sparked by and seeks to address “the Palestinian incitement against the State of Israel”.

After the bill’s first reading, Facebook put out a statement: “At Facebook, nothing is more important than community safety, and we work hard to keep people safe. We have zero tolerance for terrorists, praise for their acts and incitement to real-world violence. We work aggressively to remove it from our platform as soon as we become aware of it.”

But the bill is seen by many as a serious threat to free speech. Talking to the SA Jewish Report, local journalist Raymond Joseph posited: “Since there have been arrests and the detention of Palestinians for what Israel has termed ‘incitement through social media’, it would suggest that the intention of this bill is to legalise what is happening.

“I would question whether it is in fact to give Facebook - which is already co-operating with the Israeli authorities in monitoring and taking down ‘inciting posts’ - and other social networks a fig leaf of legal protection when

ordered to take down what is deemed to be inappropriate.

“While the authorities seek to control social media content in areas under their control, it will not stop the rest of the world from posting, tweeting and commenting on Israel. Also, with the rise in end-to-end encrypted social communications tools like WhatsApp, Telegram and Signal, the law will not stop people speaking out - but could instead drive the chatter and discussions underground to networks that are out of the public eye.”

Veteran South African media expert, Raymond Louw says: “No cognisance seems to be taken between people expressing anger and frustration at the manner in which they are treated and a direct call for violence. The consequence is that readers of social media are denied access to the views expressed by people about what they feel about their treatment and circumstances. This is an unwarranted curb of freedom of expression.”

Local technology expert Arthur Goldstuck explains: “Generally, there are two sides to the issue: the need to remove content that is truly inciting, such as calls to violence and murder, and the attempt by governments to remove content that is critical of it.

“The former would not only be necessary, but essential, given the role social media can play in fomenting violence. The latter would be lamentable and even disgraceful, as would be an attack on freedom of speech, freedom of the press and civil liberties in general.

“The further issue at stake here is: Who will be the subject of resultant legal action? If it is intended only to target anti-Israel posts and not Israeli posts that call for violence and

murder, then it would clearly be immoral and unjustifiable.”

Dr Tehilla Shwartz Altshuler, director of IDI’s Centre for Democratic Values and Institutions and head of the institute’s Media Reform and Open Government Programmes, says the bill in its current form is “inapplicable to the Internet. It would facilitate a disproportionate amount of censorship as the result of an inappropriate legal apparatus.

“When compared to online incitement legislation in other countries, the Facebook bill is legally unprecedented.”

Dr Shwartz Altshuler says the legislative proposal would create an absurd situation in which content that is censored only in Israel is distributed in other countries. The Internet makes it possible for surfers to use an unlimited variety of online platforms, which means that even if content is removed from one platform, this will not prevent its spread.

Says Louw: “The effect on social media users would be aggravated by censorship but it is difficult to forecast how they will respond and give vent to their frustrations.”

• The South African government stated this week it was contemplating regulating social media as well.

Shabbat Times

March 10/12 Adar
March 11/13 Adar
Parshat Zachor Tetzaveh

Starts	Ends	
18:12	19:00	Johannesburg
18:15	19:44	Cape Town
18:02	18:51	Durban
18:15	19:10	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:16	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:05	East London

Parsha

How to hang Haman



Parshat Zachor Tetzaveh
Rabbi Dovid Wineberg
The Green and Sea Point
Hebrew Congregation
Cape Town

Someone once asked: “What is the difference between ignorance and apathy?”

The reply came quickly: “I don’t know and I don’t care!” What is humanity’s most dangerous character trait? Which human failing most threatens our historic charge to bring G-dliness into the world?

Put differently, who is a greater threat to our national project, Haman or Achashverosh?

The Talmud in Tractate Megillah tells that they both equally hated the Jews. Yet, Haman is hanged and portrayed as the ultimate villain; a caricature of the anti-Semite for all time. And all the while Achashverosh - who gives Haman initial authority to implement his Final Solution, and profits from it nogal - is given a pass. A “get out of jail free” card in Jewish history!

Achashverosh was a boor, a simple stable boy who through sheer luck rose to the greatest office of the land. Indeed, Jewish scholarship portrays him as a bumbling fool, who waffles on existential matters of state.

But Haman is a descendant of Agag, king of Amalek, the eternal enemy of our people. “Zachor - remember that which Amalek did to you on your way out of Egypt.”

In a special pre-Purim reading this Shabbat, the Torah instructs us to erase any memory of Amalek, “from the face of the earth”. Amalek is synonymous with cynicism; a people who snipe at the Jews, “just because”.

Legend has it that the chief rabbi of pre-state Palestine, Harav Kook, zatzal, was once

challenged by a British official about the Jews’ devotion to the Western Wall. “After all,” he sneered, “it’s just a bunch of stones.”

“Let me explain”, responded the Chief Rabbi. “In this land everything is not as it seems. You see, some hearts are made of stone, and some stones actually have a heart.”

Ignorance is a terrible malady, yet it is correctable. But cynicism is a rot that eats away at the soul. The cynic’s only goal is to destroy the other, it has no interest in anything constructive. There is no correcting a cynic. As Rav Kook demonstrated in his response, the only effective way is to call it out for what it is: heartless, apathetic.

Ignorant Achashverosh and cynical Haman represent two distinct internal threats to our people. With Achashverosh we could “make a plan”. Cynicism (not to be confused with scepticism), on the other hand, is a deadly character trait, with no positive side-effects. So, hang your inner Haman on the highest tree and let your inspiration shine forth.

Happy Purim!

South African
Jewish Report

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Government to expropriate Yeshiva College, Sandringham Gardens



MORDECHAI FAKNEWS

When President Yaacov Zuma finally rose to the podium during State of the Nation 2017 and spoke of “radical economic transformation”, a palpable shudder rippled through the parliamentary chamber. At that pivotal moment, little did the South African Jewish community suspect that they would be the first victims of the government’s new radical initiative.

Leaked government documents, now in the possession of the SA Jewish Report, reveal the first property targeted for expropriation without compensation will be the Yeshiva College campus and Sandringham Gardens complex in Glenhazel.

The leaked documents reveal that President Zuma and his family will take over the newly-completed Arcadia Orphanage. “When Donald Trump renamed his holiday golf club Mar-a-Lago, the White House of the South, we knew we needed to establish a Nkandla of the North,”said a fictitious government spokesperson. “The President needed an entire compound for his wives, mistresses and children and Arcadia appeared to be the perfect location. It has so many rooms and such nice facilities; the President loved the fire pool and the shul will be converted into a home theatre for visiting international dignitaries and war criminals.”

A Chev spokesperson said: “The good news is that taxpayers won’t have to foot the bill for this new Nkandla, as this will be expropriation with no compensation, so we are very happy for the fiscus.”

The Supreme Leader of the Board of Deputies was also very positive about the move, “We built this old-age home and orphanage with white monopoly capital, so it’s only appropriate that the government gives it as a gift to the President and his friends.

“The expropriation heralds the dawn of a new positive relationship between the Jewish community and the ANC.”

“We met with Johannesburg Mayor Herman Mashaba”,

said Dina Diamond disappointedly, “but he told us that this move was out of his hands. He did however invite me out on a date and I was very flattered - he is a fine-looking man.”

Shaun Matisonn of the SA Jewish Board of Education is co-ordinating an initiative to relocate the students of the Yeshiva Campus to the Holy Rosary Convent on a “time share basis”. Yeshiva students will have access to the school for Torah study during lunch breaks and after 15:00 on alternate days of the week, including Shabbos. “We will also be offering Vitality points for each page of Gemara learnt,” says Shaun.

Finding a new location for the residents of Sandringham Gardens is proving slightly more challenging. Herby Rosenberg of Afrika Tikun has ingeniously suggested that we could put residents on floating cruise ships in the Zoo Lake. “There is a wonderful view from there,” says Herby “It’s close to the park and we could arrange discounted entrance for the zoo itself.”

There are currently negotiations for a kosher Moyo to provide African cuisine to the floating village.

Property guru Herschel Jawitz, speaking to the Jewish Report on condition of anonymity, said that property prices in the Glenhazel area are likely to skyrocket if we can get Nigerian drug lords to buy up some of the larger properties in the area. This could be an amazing financial boon for our community.

Benjy Porter, who has lived in the area for many years, is happy with the new arrangements as long as the architectural aesthetic of the majestic Sandringham Gardens is maintained.

Porter explained: “We were originally hoping that the Guptas would move into a refurbished Sandringham Gardens, but it looks like it was too far to walk to the Saxonwold Shebeen on Shabbos.”

The move out of the Yeshiva and Sandringham Gardens complexes is scheduled for shortly after Purim.

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HAPPY PURIM!

Open hostility on campus over Israel Apartheid Week



Photos: Ilan Ossendryver

Palestinian supporters staged a “die-in” on the Wits Great Hall piazza to symbolise the number of Palestinians killed.

ROBYN SASSEN

From vociferous conversations arguing against Jewish colonialist associations, to others condemning Palestinian Solidarity Committee (PSC) students as being ignorant of the situation, the energy sparks flew at times over Israel Apartheid week on Wits campus on Monday and Tuesday.

Then, the flames ignited on Wednesday morning with a significant rise in hostility between SAUJS students and PSC supporters. This included a “die-in” staged by the PSC, in which students lay on the ground in the SAUJS side of the piazza, mimicking dead Palestinian bodies.

It included the spray painting of words such as “Fuck Zionism” on the PSC’s display in front of the Great Hall, as well as “Amandla Intifada!” The flag of the Hezbollah terrorist organisation was brought onto the side of the SAUJS camp and various other inflammatory gestures were made by PSC supporters.

“We respond to victims of terror on both sides,” said Gabriel Zollmann, national chairman of SAUJS, who spoke of the intimidation he and his fellow students were experiencing.

“We know that historically PSC does not abide by rules,” he added.

“We are experiencing the brunt of clear hatred, but our students have been unwavering in their commitment,” he added. “It is hard to tell what will transpire in the rest of the week, but it’s clear that PSC do not endorse our camp’s legitimacy. They do not respect our students. They are wantonly damaging our displays and have damaged our banners.”

This was the situation until shortly before the SA Jewish Report went to print on Wednesday afternoon, when the SAUJS students were deeply concerned about what lay ahead of them during the remainder of the week. They had reason for this concern as the situation - albeit sometimes fairly peaceful - appeared to be growing in volatility.

Until Wednesday, the different pockets of mixed students, black and white, Jewish, Muslim and others, wearing kippot and keffiyahs and T-shirts emblazoned with slogans from both sides, were either loudly insulting each other, or in a few cases, engaged in heated debate, but nothing more.

One of the biggest issues that could have exacerbated the situation arose over - believe it or not - whether or not the two sides could share space on campus.

“How on earth can we expect the Palestine Solidarity Committee (PSC) to discuss sharing land, if they can’t even agree to share the piazza at Wits University?” asked a frustrated Zollmann on Tuesday, day two of the 13th annual Israel Apartheid Week (IAW).

On Monday SAUJS members were aggressively ousted from their allocated half of the piazza outside the Great Hall by PSC

students. It had previously been agreed by Wits’ Dean of Students to divide the piazza between the two, as had been the case in past years.

But some students were dismissive of this decision. Said PSC-affiliated Wits law student Rashaad Dadoo, on Twitter: “[Sharing the space] doesn’t create healthy discourse, it doesn’t create an enabling environment. All that it does is promote antagonism between the two ...

“We aren’t here to fight SAUJS, private security or management. We’re here to raise awareness, to speak to our constituencies... and to discuss ideas around solidarity with Palestine.”

Dadoo said this year the idea of sharing the space was rejected as it “hasn’t worked previously”.

On Monday, PSC took matters into its own hands. According to SAUJS director, Cayla Urdang: “They tore down our posters, they removed our information boards. It was violent. It calmed down, when we moved our information displays.”

At several points, male and female SAUJS students were violently pushed by PSC students, and campus security set up a human wall between them to physically separate them.

A huge grey-painted construction of wood, was erected in front of the columns of the Great Hall, bearing the spray-painted words “Zionism

is Racism”, which dominated the piazza by early Monday afternoon, mimicking Israel’s controversial concrete wall separating Israel from Palestinian areas.

“I think the volatility of the situation has to do with the FeesMustFall precedent,” said Urdang. “The concept of ‘White Privilege’ has become very easy to throw around,” and has a tendency to rapidly turn violent.

Joining the SAUJS students were Raphael Wien and Michal Kfir, students of Jerusalem’s Hebrew University. They represent the pro-Israel advocacy organisation StandWithUs and are in South Africa during IAW, which continues until March 12.

Kfir, who was violently pushed by PSC students, said: “While this behaviour might be acceptable in South Africa, it isn’t in Israel. We don’t want students to be afraid to come to university.”

Zollmann explained: “Leading up to IAW, SAUJS urged the university to meet with us and PSC, so we could establish clear terms of engagement well in advance of the week. Unfortunately, this didn’t happen. We had just one meeting in January. It wasn’t fruitful.”

Zollmann said. “We appreciate that the university has allowed us to give our perspective. Everyone knows there is a conflict, but there are two sides to it.”

Motlanthe against ‘two-state solution’

ROBYN SASSEN

Former South African President Kgalema Motlanthe spoke out against the two-state solution for Israelis and Palestinians, saying it had failed. Motlanthe was the keynote speaker at the BDS launch of the 13th annual Israel Apartheid Week last Sunday at Constitution Hill.

Motlanthe’s view contradicts both South African government policy and the policies of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas who aspires to national self-determination of the Palestinian people.

Speaking of his 2006 visit to Israel/Palestine, Motlanthe said he was convinced of the necessity of establishing democracy in the region, which includes the rights of each group living in the same area, to exist and enjoy sovereignty, which is currently not the case.

“Having lived under such conditions, I know its effects all too well and how they solidify institutions, laws, nations and the character of states,” he said.

While the two-state solution ostensibly appears the most workable option, Motlanthe said, it has increasingly failed to be put into practice and remains purely conceptual.

Motlanthe quoted former US Secretary of State John Kerry who warned that the two-state solution was in danger of collapsing and said: “If the choice is one state, Israel can either be Jewish or democratic. It cannot be both. And it won’t ever really be at



peace.”

“Those who oppose [the one-state solution] argue that it will lead to war,” said Motlanthe. “Such violence was also predicted in South Africa’s transition to democracy, but this didn’t happen, because of sheer human will and brave leadership.

“Due to the ongoing illegal occupation of the West Bank,” he continued, “there is a de facto if unilateral one-state solution, without the democratic context.”

He said it ill behoves South Africans to bring the tensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to our shores. He acknowledged the huge Jewish and Muslim contributions to democracy in South Africa, adding: “Anti-Semitic actions couched in the language of human rights cannot be condoned. I look forward to a day when both Israelis and Palestinians join in a society in which differences are acknowledged, but are not a source of divisions and mistrust.



We, Jewish Capetonians, call for social housing in Sea Point and on other sites in an inclusive Cape Town.

We, Jewish Capetonians, make this submission to the Western Cape Government in support of social housing on the Tafelberg site in Sea Point. As citizens with a common stake in an inclusive and integrated city, we wish to state the following:

Cape Town’s history of racial segregation and current spatial inequality means there is a dire need to provide affordable housing in the centre of Cape Town and its immediate surrounds. Areas like Sea Point have excellent public transport and schools that must be accessible to people across race and class lines.

We support the dismantling of spatial apartheid in the city of Cape Town so that working class people and their families can afford to live in and around the city centre. This will mean a united, diverse, safe, prosperous and welcoming city. Yet rising property prices exacerbate the segregation inherent in the original apartheid spatial planning, with a resulting need for government to take an active role in creating an inclusive city. Tafelberg, a large tract of land on the Atlantic Seaboard owned by the Western Cape government, represents a welcome opportunity to provide subsidised rental housing desperately needed in the inner-city.

We are therefore encouraged by the Western Cape Government’s proposal to accommodate 270 units of mixed-income social housing on the site.

In terms of this model the historic school building could still be available for lease to a school such as the Phyllis Jowell Jewish Day School or used as a community centre.

The ongoing evictions of poor people from central Cape Town locations for resettlement in places like Wolwerivier, located far from the city centre, do not provide dignified housing solutions. Government must make affordable housing and temporary alternative accommodation available in centrally located neighbourhoods where people who are vulnerable to eviction have historically lived, worked and found healthcare and education.

Social housing on Tafelberg can provide secure accommodation for domestic workers, carers, gardeners, nurses, and police, amongst others, who live and work in the Sea Point area. Some currently live in storerooms that were never intended for human habitation. These individuals have contributed immeasurably to the wellbeing of the broader Sea Point community for decades, and this chance to repay them, although not enough, cannot be missed.

We are proud of the role Jews have historically played in identifying with the oppressed and standing for justice, and we wish to continue this tradition by supporting the call for social housing in Sea Point and on other sites in an inclusive Cape Town.



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south african

Jewish Report

Apartheid didn't bring peace

Apartheid was instituted in South Africa in 1948 in order to make sure that one racial group could feel and act superior to another. The idea was to ensure that one group was kept down so the other could soar, so that the one group would always “have” while the other - no matter what they did to change this - were held back from “having”.

It was, in essence, a one-upmanship battle, where the one side had no chance.

This week, Israel Apartheid Week runs rampant across the world. And in this case, the one side is accusing Israel of being no different to apartheid South Africa and the other side is saying this isn't true.

Israel is accused by supporters of the ever-growing Boycott, Divest and Sanctions (BDS) movement of being the oppressor pushing the poor Palestinians down... to keep them down.

Well, that is what it is about, in its simplest form. In reality, it is way more complicated than that, not least of all because the world at large views the Palestinians as being oppressed and incapable of defending themselves against this ogre of an Israel. So, BDS and the Palestinians get the sympathy vote around the world.

That is, when you discount that the Palestinians are a part of the greater Arab world, which one would imagine makes them a whole lot stronger.

Then, one needs to take into account any relationship between the Palestinians, suicide bombers, the horrendously cruel ISIS and other overt terror organisations.

For me, though, I wonder about the real reason behind Israel Apartheid Week. Not having been party to any of this before, I am witnessing a week where hatred and ugliness towards “others” is perpetuated around the world. It feels like an excuse for people to say and do abhorrent things.

I don't get it - not least of all because people behind this are saying they are doing this in the name of peace and the ability for all people to have the right to self-actualisation.

Sorry, but as far as I know, self-actualisation, peace and freedom do not emerge from venomous vitriol and threatening each other's lives.

As far as I am concerned, it stems from being adults sitting across a table from one another and consciously seeking a peaceful and equitable solution.

But bringing out various “personalities” who will push a “cause” and make one side look better than the other, to those who have not yet decided, is not about peace. Instead, it is about one-upmanship and perpetuating differences and ensuring that one side is right and the other is wrong.

And while South Africa understands what apartheid is - having lived through it - it is a very emotive word here. For many people, it symbolises the evil that people can do to others. It is so much easier for most people to sympathise with the “underdog”, those people supposedly living under “apartheid” in Israel.

In truth, this loaded term is totally unfair in that the basis of the population and the division of power precludes any semblance of apartheid. But the term works to aggravate and incense people - both those who deny that Israel is an apartheid state and those who insist it is.

Around the world, though, the term may not be as loaded, but the anger and hatred is just as bad. Israel's ambassador to France pleaded with the French government to ban Israel Apartheid Week there because of the heightened anti-Semitism. This didn't happen and so France opened itself to the threat of ugly racial violence.

At what point are all sides going to get that rather than fighting, showing how your difference is better than my difference and my way of thinking is better than yours, doesn't have any positive impact for anyone? We have to try and find similarities, common grounds and ways we can work together. It is enough looking for reasons to fight and about time to find solutions and paths to peace.

Yes, I know how many times Middle East leaders have sat around tables to find peaceful solutions and they haven't managed to. So, does that mean we stop and rather focus on proving the other side is the beast? That simply doesn't make any sense to me.

Stop fighting and start finding a way towards peace!

In the meantime, so many young students at South African universities and others around the world are scared to go to their lectures for fear they will fall victim to Israel Apartheid Week's perpetrators. Something is wrong with that!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

More news on our website www.sajr.co.za

Is BDS a real concern for Israel?



Protesters against the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement stand behind a police barricade during the Celebrate Israel Parade in New York.

PAULA SLIER

MIDDLE EAST: Most Israelis feel they get so much bad press anyway that another “Israel Apartheid Week” (IAW) aimed at garnering support for the Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement won't make much difference.

The IAW may have been in the news in South Africa over the past few days, but other than three small articles, each in a different Israeli publication, there was hardly a murmur in this part of the world.

That's not to say people in Israel are unconcerned. Since last year the government has upped its fight against BDS with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confronting the movement head-on in his speeches, appointing Home Security, Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy Minister Gilad Erdan to fight it and even going so far as to allocate almost 100 million Israeli shekels (\$25 million) towards a special anti-BDS task force.

But not everyone agrees this is money well spent. Critics insist BDS must be fought abroad - on campuses and European capitals, not through the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs.

Even more critics charge that the louder the pro-Israel message is on campus, the more likely it is to backfire. Universities tend to be places that support the perceived underdog and for a state that was conceived in Europe and which stands as a bulwark of the American empire, there's simply no way to make Israel popular.

On paper, at least, BDS is dangerous because it brings together a lot of, especially young, motivated activists united in their attempts to delegitimise Israel.

But the other side of the coin is also true. Former Prime Minister Golda Meir once famously remarked to US President Richard Nixon: “You may be the president of 250 million, but I'm the prime minister of five million prime ministers.”

It's rare in Israel to find people in agreement - except perhaps when the country is at war (and even then not always) - but when it comes to BDS, just about everyone is on the same page - it isn't good for Israel and many argue it isn't good for those it purports to help - Palestinians.

Left-wing Israelis and advocacy groups like J Street argue IAW makes no distinction between West Bank settlements and Israel proper; that it places the entirety of blame for the Israeli/Palestinian conflict unfairly on Israel; and through comparisons with apartheid implies the illegitimacy of the state.

What's more, such an approach doesn't offer solutions. You can't make peace with someone you want to boycott. “What's the point of BDS?” I'm asked again and again by Israelis when I bring up the topic. “Just to tell the world how terrible we are?”

It's a view echoed by Palestinians I ask as well. Polls

show that support among Palestinians for BDS is on the decline. What saw more than 170 Palestinian civil society organisations rally behind the BDS call for non-violent resistance 12 years ago, hasn't, they repeatedly tell me, brought the conflict any closer to a resolution. The senior Palestinian leadership is also not a fan.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is on record as saying: “No, we do not support the boycott of Israel.” For Abbas, too, a distinction needs to be made between boycotting Israel and boycotting products made in the settlements - the latter of which he's a strong advocate.

“The settlements are in our territories. They're illegal,” he's said time and time again. But we do not ask anyone to boycott Israel itself. We have relations with Israel; we have mutual recognition of Israel.”

But even the boycott of settlements is controversial. I once sat down with a Palestinian father of nine. He was helping to erect Israel's security fence and only agreed to the interview on condition I hide his face and conceal his identity.

Without this job, he told me, he'd be unable to put food on the table for his children. An estimated 40 000 Palestinians work in the settlements, many in construction, earning up to three times as much as the average Palestinian wage.

Not that this justifies the settlement enterprise of course and there's a valid argument that it's the Israeli occupation that has undermined the ability of Palestinians to develop their own economy and improve a 27 per cent unemployment rate. Few Palestinians happily work in the settlements - they do it out of necessity.

This time last year, thanks to BDS, hundreds of Palestinians were laid off after the SodaStream factory where they worked, moved out of the West Bank and back into Israel. BDS hurt the very people it purported to help.

Dore Gold, president of the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs and a former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations, has criticised IAW for not only not respecting human rights, but being “an incredibly hypocritical initiative that ignores the apartheid practised by the Palestinians themselves, who make the sale of land to Jews punishable by death.

It is also not a movement dedicated to making peace, but rather to denying the historical rights of the Jewish people.”

BDS advocates insist they're making headway and no doubt the analogy between Israel and apartheid is a strong one that will continue to be used effectively in future. But don't expect it to make headlines here in Israel anytime soon.

• Paula Slier is the Middle East Bureau Chief of RT, the founder and CEO of NewshoundMedia and the inaugural winner of the Europcar Woman in Leadership award of the South African Absa Jewish Achievers.



At the Israel Apartheid Week coalface

Gabriel Zollmann is the South African Union of Jewish Students national chairman. A fourth-year medical student, he was head boy at King David Victory Park during 2012/13 and is a former mayor of the Johannesburg Mini Council. He answered these questions in the run up to IAW.

What drew you to study medicine?

The factors that influenced my decision include: my fascination with medical science, my role models in life, my quest for knowledge and my passion for people. I’ve come to learn that in the medical world, there are no guarantees, and while we may think we know so much, in fact there is much that we still do not know. That is what excites me.

How does being Jewish and a Zionist feature in your life?

I am and always have been passionate about and proud of my Jewish and Zionist heritage. Both Judaism and Zionism are major parts of my identity and therefore inform many of my decisions and choices. While growing up, I was a channich and a madrich at Bnei Akiva South Africa, and I sat on the youth board of the JNF/KKL in South Africa.

Why did you take on a leadership role in SAUJS?

I’ve been involved with SAUJS for a few years now, and I began to see how massive our potential as a union is. In the world we live in today, great leaders are far and few. We are dealing with a crisis of leadership everywhere. SAUJS has the ability to inspire Jewish students to lead, and we can be the source of inspiration and motivation for young South African Jewish students. So, I took on this role to steer SAUJS in the direction of fulfilling its ultimate potential.

How does SAUJS view Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) in general and how do you view the 2017 IAW?

IAW is a challenging time for Jewish students on campus. This is a week where BDS and its affiliates distort what is a complex political and security situation, in order to portray Israel as an apartheid state as part of their greater efforts to demonise Israel. IAW is at the core of the global delegitimisation campaign against Israel. We believe that we have a duty to give voice to the hundreds of Jewish students on each campus, and we do not let the IAW campaign go unopposed.

What do you believe is behind this and who gains from its existence?

This week is a manifestation of larger efforts to delegitimise Israel. The existence of this campaign has not brought anything constructive to university campuses or to South Africa.

What has gone into SAUJS preparation for this week?

An unimaginable amount of time and effort have been invested in preparing for our “See Israel For Yourself” campaign. SAUJS National Council has mounted a nationwide campaign. We have six guests from Israel, graffiti artists from Artists4Israel and Chloé Valdary, an African American freedom fighter and Zionist, joining us on campus. We’ve also received enormous support from the community that has allowed us to be as prepared as possible.

How do you think the university authorities should be dealing with IAW?

I think the universities management need to realise the real intentions behind the IAW campaign. We’ve seen universities in the UK cancel IAW events altogether because of its contravention of the definition of anti-Semitism. I don’t foresee that reality in South Africa, but I do hope that the universities management are more prepared going forward in ensuring negotiated terms and agreements are drawn up in advance. Campuses are spaces of free speech and expression, and both narratives need to be given the space to be heard equally and fairly.

What are the implications of IAW for Jewish students?

IAW is an uncomfortable time for Jewish students. But it’s also a time for Jewish students to stand up and be proud of their heritage, identity and beliefs. SAUJS offers that environment on campus during the week. Our hope is that Jewish students will not be the target of any abuse, and we do everything that we can to ensure the safety of our students both politically and physically, in a peaceful and engaging way.

While you are dealing with this on a national level, IAW is an international threat. How serious a threat do you think it is and what should we - as Jews - be doing about it?

We should continue to stand up for what is right and just, and we should continue to provide the space for discussions about Israel. If we continue to have open and honest conversations about Israel, we will win this battle. At the end of the day, we have the truth on our side.

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Chassidic Lego on offer



ANT KATZ

An American Jewish mother came up with the idea to build a Star Wars-inspired Lego shul - including the Legovitcher Rebbe and chassidim. She is trying to crowdfund her “Beis Death Star”, titling her episode “The Brickovicker Rebbe Returns”.

Tobey Finklestein dreamed up the idea and she’s trying to make it something with which other parents and kids can have fun with. She started a Kickstarter (online crowdfunding) appeal to pay for the project and have it on the market by Pesach. The self-described “Jewish-Asian tiger mom” said she came up with the idea after her 10-year-old came asking for the “Lego Death Star”.

Now he is likely to get a Jewish version of it.

Those who donate (a minimum of \$18) to help build the first intergalactic shul - Beis Death Star Kochav Chaim - will be rewarded with their “very own Brickovicker Chassid,” she says.

So far just \$333 has been pledged by 11 backers towards Toby’s goal of raising \$1 200. The offer expires on March 26.

Funders each get their own, unique Chassid, built of Lego bricks, says Tobey. Not only that, she also promises to throw in extras for the bigger backers. These include:

- A fly rubber streimel compatible with most Lego minifig heads and a custom torso assembly bearing the “Chassid” logo
- A personalised certificate of lifetime membership to Beis Death Star Kochav Chaim including:
 - An invitation to our Chanukahs Habayis (inauguration)
 - A mission from the Brickovicker Rebbe
 - Self-determination of your Brickovickers Special Power
 - Discounted High Holiday seats
 - Access to the Brickovicker community on Facebook to share the exploits of Brickovickers far and wide, received when you order your Brickovicker and become a founding backer (\$18+).

Tobey says her goal is to have a little fun with her family, build and disseminate her own woman-owned and operated sect of Chassidim, and generate enough revenue to build the first intergalactic shul with her kids.

Thousands of SA Jews are claiming German passports

ANT KATZ

While few South African Jews have any desire to emigrate to Germany, those who can, are flocking to claim German citizenship. It is all about having the best passport to travel on and an “insurance policy” against a troubled South Africa.

The German Embassy in Pretoria has issued thousands of passports to South Africans and is continuing to issue German re-naturalisations at an average rate of 75 per year, almost all to descendants of dispossessed German Jewry.

Estimates and extrapolations of the Embassy’s data suggest that well over 1 000 Jews have availed themselves of their right to German citizenship since 2000. And many thousands more did so prior to that date. Their offspring are then born as German nationals.

Kirsten Hardt from the consular and legal section of the German Embassy in Pretoria, who deals with the applications, told Jewish Report that the vast majority of applicants are Jewish South Africans who were applying on the basis that their families had been dispossessed of their property and had their citizenship revoked by the Nazis.

Steven Adler of Johannesburg applied for, and received, German citizenship “in the 1970s”. His late parents came from Germany, he explained, and one of the main reasons motivating his decision at the time “was because of the savings on visa expenses” when he travelled on business. “I can go almost anywhere in the world without having to apply for, or pay for a visa,” he said, adding that it has saved him thousands of rand over the years.

“My two kids and nine grandchildren all have German passports as well,” he says.

Renée Snoyman, also from Johannesburg, says that after her mother, Maisy, regained her German citizenship in 1986, she applied for it herself. It was a simple process, she says. Her sister and daughter have since got their passports.

Maisy Snoyman arrived in South Africa at the age of eight with her brother and parents. “My grandfather had an inkling that it was time to get out,” says Renée. Her grandfather hailed from Berlin, her grandmother from Munich. “Every member of both their families perished,” she says. “My mom and uncle and their parents came over just before Kristallnacht.”

Renée’s motivation for getting German citizenship was “for ease of travelling”. She says: “If we can have it and we are entitled to it... why not? It is the best passport to have - I can go to 158 countries without a visa.”

Between January 30, 1933 and May 8, 1945 two laws were enacted by the Nazi regime that caused German Jews to lose their citizenship. The Law on the Revocation of Naturalisations and the Deprivation of German Citizenship deprived many German Jews of their citizenship.

All remaining former German citizens who were Jewish, however, lost their citizenship with the “Eleventh Decree to the Law on the Citizenship of the Reich” of 1941. This stipulated that Jews living outside Germany

could not be German citizens.

Until 2000, only Swiss nationals were allowed by Germany to hold dual nationality - but a tweak in how Germany interpreted its strict immigration procedures at the turn of the century, means that those who were dispossessed by the Nazis and have the nationality of a country that allows dual-citizenship, such as South Africa, may now be allowed to hold on to both.

South African Jews who got their German citizenship prior to 2000 and retained their South African status, should now rectify their situation and become legal dual nationals, or they could face losing their German rights forever, says Hardt.

Since 2000 Germany has allowed dual nationality to South African Jews, as long as the applicants go to the SA Department of Home Affairs and apply for a “retention certificate” which gives them permission to retain their South African citizenship and thus hold dual-SA/German citizenship.

The German Embassy advises South Africans to get a retention certificate but it also relies on the say-so of the South African citizens that they have done so. Many do not, although Hardt says this is a simple rubber-stamping procedure which she has never seen denied by South Africa.

However, warns Hardt, “we have a small problem”, because once you get German papers - unless you have (official) retention, you are automatically no longer a South African citizen.

Other Jews flocking to become German

Following the Brexit vote in the UK, German authorities have reported a twentyfold increase in applications for reserved citizenship from British Jews.

In October 2016, The Guardian reported that “about 400 applications (by Jewish descendants of dispossessed Germans) from the UK are being processed by the authorities and 100 further enquiries that will ‘very probably’ lead to applications are in the pipeline.” This, said the newspaper, is compared to the “usual annual figure of about 25”.

Israelis are doing it too... Between 2000 and 2015, 33 321 Israelis were granted German citizenship. However, while 31 722 were allowed to keep their Israeli citizenship as well, 1 599 had to renounce it to become German.

While Germany’s Basic Law allows all Nazi-dispossessed Jews the right of citizenship, a later decree allowed all Israelis the right to German citizenship (as has always been the case with the Swiss). But because German law by default insists that all new citizens renounce their previous citizenship when they become German, Israelis who are not exempt by German origin, have to as well.

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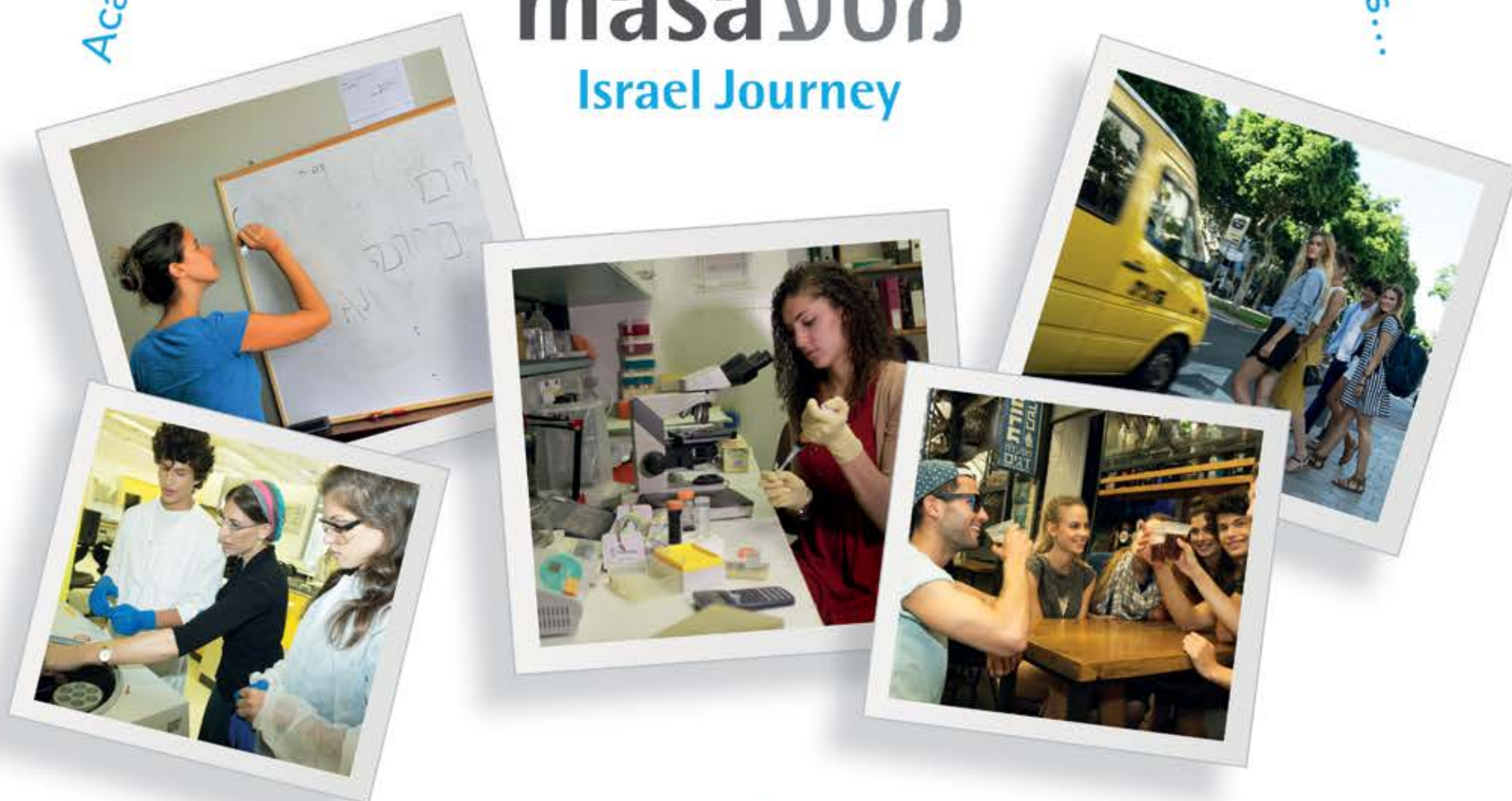
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Breathe in the light and blow out the darkness

SIMON APFEL

Rabbi Elimelech Goldberg punctuates each remark with a quick, almost imperceptible nod. It's not a rhetorical device, a means to underline and affirm what he's just said. It's a gesture of defiance.

Goldberg, a rabbi with a black belt in Choi Kwang Do, and a clinical assistant professor of paediatrics at Wayne State University School of Medicine, is the founder of Kids Kicking Cancer.

The non-profit organisation, established in 1999, teaches breathing techniques and meditation to children battling serious illnesses.

Goldberg has been in South Africa, presenting to Sinai Indaba audiences in Cape Town and Johannesburg over the last two weeks.

He begins his talks with a joke. At first his dry humour seems some sort of coping mechanism for someone who has stared into the face - and faces - of tragedy for more than 20 years. As the extraordinary presentation progresses, however, it becomes evident life has been one defined not by tragedy, but, improbably, by triumph.

In 1981, Goldberg, fondly known as "Rabbi G" ("it sounds less Jewish", he quips), lost his two-year-old daughter, Sara, to leukaemia.

"She was a special neshama," he recalls. "She would tell the other children at the hospital not to cry. Her skin was sloughing off, she had sores in her mouth and diarrhoea, but she was telling me: 'It's okay, Abba, I love you.'"

That personal tragedy proved the catalyst for the programme that has given similar courage to thousands of kids across the world.

"She has influenced so many people. Everything I do now is really based upon what she taught - that, no matter how difficult the mountain is, you have to find the strength to walk up singing and dancing. That was ultimately her life's lesson."

Though KKC teaches childhood cancer patients, some of them as young as three, the basics of martial arts, the programme is not about breaking boards or bricks, throwing opponents over one's shoulders, or beating off armed robbers in dark alleys. The focus, as it is in much of martial arts, is on the mental aspect.

"We use martial arts as a hook," Goldberg explains. "Ultimately, we teach our kids that the greatest power of all is the light inside them. The real power of martial arts is in your mind, your soul, your spirit..."

The core focus of the programme is on the breathing exercises - what he describes as "breathing in the light and blowing out the darkness".

Goldberg's breakthrough success with this treatment occurred while working at Camp Simcha, a summer camp for kids with cancer and other blood

disorders. He watched as medical staff restrained a little boy while administering chemotherapy. The boy screamed in protest and Goldberg decided to intervene. He asked the camper if he wanted to learn some martial arts, and when he said yes, the rabbi taught him some breathing techniques.

"I explained that in martial arts you learn that pain is a message you don't have to listen to, that you can breathe in this amazing chi or energy and blow out the pain," Goldberg recounts. "Twenty minutes later they pulled out the needle and the boy looked up at the nurse and said: 'Did you do it yet?'"

Two decades later Kids Kicking Cancer has become a fixture in scores of hospitals across the US, with branches also in Israel, Canada and even Italy.

"We were asked to bring Kids Kicking Cancer to the Bambino Gesù hospital in Rome," says Goldberg. "So, an Orthodox rabbi needed permission from the Pope to teach Eastern meditative techniques to Vatican children."

Kids Kicking Cancer is very much universalist in outlook.

"Thirty per cent of the children we work with in Israel are Muslim, and we have the largest sickle cell programme for children from Africa." People of all ages around the world, including high-level executives from corporations such as PVS, Pfizer, Walmart and Ford, have learnt how to breathe in the light and blow out the darkness to help them deal with stress, anxiety and other debilitating feelings.

And most remarkably, it is the kids from Kids Kicking Cancer who do the teaching - closing the so-called "Hero Circle".

Goldberg believes that when the children teach the breathing technique to others, they themselves find purpose in their lives. He says that Kids Kicking Cancer isn't just about giving terminally ill children strength and endurance - it's about making them powerful; transforming those in dire need of healing into healers.

"We transform the children from victims to victors, and they are. Because everyone can be a teacher. That's power, peace, purpose," he says, voicing the mantra of Kids Kicking Cancer.

Daniel Rock, 13, is Rabbi G's ambassador in South Africa. Last year, on a visit to the US, the breathing techniques helped him overcome a crippling fear of needles.

"Daniel responded fabulously to the meditation," says Goldberg. "He was a real martial artist, super focused. I told him I had an agenda - that if he was going to learn how to do breath work and deal with pain, he was going to be my first teacher in South Africa."

On Sunday, Daniel led a room of around 1 500 people in breathing in the light and blowing out the darkness at Sinai Indaba.



It is this fresh approach to patient care that won Goldberg recognition as a "CNN Global Hero" in 2014, bringing his work to the attention of not just global health officials, but also celebrities.

"When [Hollywood actor] Christian Bale heard about the programme, he called me up saying he wanted to come and give presents to the kids. We don't do that. I told him we'd bring the kids to him."

"He and his wife Sybil sat on the floor for two hours learning how to breathe in the light and blow out the darkness. Imagine how it made the kids feel that Batman was learning from them how to be a superhero..."

For Goldberg, instilling that sense of purpose is especially important for children at the end of their lives. He tells the story of Danny, a nine-year-old boy

on a dedicated ventilator at the Lin Hospital in Haifa, who could only move his eyebrows.

How do you teach karate to a boy who can only move his eyebrows?

"We created a mediation based on his favourite music," says Goldberg. "I told Danny: 'When you're able to focus on the light, blink once. Once you visualise this globe of light in your head, blink twice. When you feel the warmth of the light blink three times. Blink four times when you can take light and spread it through your body. And blink five times when the light is so powerful you can spread it to the rest of the world.'"

Danny's meditation was distilled into a 180-second video that was posted to a protected website.

"The first 10 000 people wrote to Danny: 'I'm doing your meditation, it's changing my life.' And that freed this child from being incarcerated and filled him with purpose. That's the beauty of Hero Circle."

Kids Kicking Cancer gives each terminally ill child a black belt before they die. "People ask me how I deal with children dying," Goldberg says. "I cry. But for me the death of a child is not the greatest tragedy. The greatest tragedy is a person who is 95 years old and dying - and they don't have a clue why they lived."

"Some of our children have impacted this world so powerfully. And that light is forever."

Goldberg nods. It's a nod of defiance - of those who look at his children and see only illness and feel only pity. But it's also a nod of encouragement. Power. Peace. Purpose. Breathe in the light and blow out the darkness.

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Heard at Sinai Indaba

SIMON APFEL

Sinai Indaba saw some 5 000 people gather in Johannesburg to hear some of the Jewish world’s most celebrated thinkers and speakers share multi-faceted insights on relationships, personal development, Jewish philosophy, Jewish mysticism, Jewish history, relationships, spirituality and Israel diplomacy.

“Sinai Indaba is an opportunity to refresh our minds and souls,” says Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, who founded the Indaba in 2011.

This year’s line-up of speakers embodied that freshness, relevance and immediacy. Here is what they had to say:

Rabbi Dr Sam Lebens

• “You live in a dream. We’re all being dreamed by G-d. But even if you’re fictional, maybe it’s up to you what type of story you’re in?”

• “There was a man called Abraham. He was a real person. But he was also an expression of an idea that G-d wanted to represent in the world. He was born of a metaphor. What are you a metaphor for? That is up to you.”

Charlie Harary

• “The core of connecting in a relationship is to communicate. And communication is not what you say, but what you hear.”

• “There is no tomorrow. Tomorrow is a gift we may not deserve. We act now. We don’t wait.”

Rabbi Binny Freedman

• “One of the inexplicable, wonderful things about a relationship with Hashem is the realisation that in all of G-d’s greatness, there is still room for me. And that Hashem actually created me, which means I am important enough to be created, and even more, that without me all of creation would be missing something.”

• “Each of us has the opportunity to contribute to making a better world, and everything that we encounter affords us an opportunity to do just that.”

Raquel Kirszenbaum

• “The more you have of what society tells you to want, the less happy you are.”

• “The Jewish question is not ‘why’, it’s ‘for what’ - what do I do with this, how can I make it better?”

• “What you carry is not your choice; your choice is how you carry what G-d gives you.”

Yaakov Katz

• “I am often asked how Israelis can sit in coffee shops in Tel

Aviv and Jerusalem when rockets are landing in the South. How can people board a bus down the block from another bus that had just been blown up by a suicide bomber? I think the answer mostly has to do with one word - resilience.”

- “Israel needs to remember that Trump is for Trump. There’s no ideology there. The question Israel is asking is what is Trump after.”
- “In the 1950s, you know what Israel exported? False teeth and oranges. Now, not even 70 years after its creation, 50 per cent of our exports are technology.”
- “In Israel, we innovate and create, not despite the threats along our borders, but because of them.”



Charlie Harary



Rabbi Dov Greenberg



Nili Couzens

Rabbi Dov Greenberg

• “A great lover is a great forgiver.”

• “Neuroses and charoses - both Jewish delicacies.”

• “Celebrate the imperfections of your spouse - this is the message of breaking the glass at the chuppah and shouting ‘mazel tov!’”

• “To bring the world into being, G-d withdrew his presence, and in that space he allowed for otherness. If we want to be G-d-like in love, we too have to create a space for otherness.”

Rabbi Reuven Leuchter

• “The parable of a person being a world is very accurate. There is a surface crust, which is liveable, presentable. But inside there’s a constant raging fire.”

• “People expect a rabbi to explain away their situation, to show them the difficulty is imaginary. This is wrong. This is speaking to a person, where he is not.”

• “Your self-worth is compared to a maze. You have to find your way to the core.”

Nili Couzens

• “Your whole life is setting you up for greatness.”

• “When your kids have a trait, they think everybody has that trait. Our role as a parent is to be able to tell them, ‘this is what’s great about you!’”

• “Don’t be the weak substitute teacher in your own house. You’re the one in charge.”

• “The real you is your soul - your body is just your scuba suit. If you want people to see your soul, you have to turn down the volume on your body.”

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Naomi Hadar
Executive Director
Gauteng



On February 22 2016, the YAD Division of the IUA-UCF hosted a successful and exclusive Whiskey Tasting Event. It was of a high calibre and a well-attended networking platform which was enjoyed by the participants.

Whisky Brother of Hyde Park owners Marc Pendlebury and Niel Paterson, gave a professional and interesting tutored tasting of select fine and rare single malt whiskies that was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Pendlebury and Paterson tutored on whiskies such as

Whisky Tasting Evening with YAD a night to remember

anCnoc 15yrs, Ben Riach 15yrs and a lucky winner went home with a bottle of Glendronach 16yrs.

IUA-UCF Executive Director Naomi Hadar and friend of the IUA-UCF, Hugh Raichlin addressed the audience and gave an impassioned talk on what the IUA-UCF has meant to him and how by being involved has enriched his life. A special thank you to Pureau who generously sponsored the water bottles for the evening.

In case you missed our fabulous event we would love to have our community join us in future.



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A South African approach to cemetery vandalism

SUZANNE BELLING

In the United States, Jewish cemeteries have been the target of horrific vandalism across the country, but this is no longer the case in South Africa, according to Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, country communities’ spiritual leader of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies. And while many Jewish country cemeteries in South Africa were vandalised in the past, say Silberhaft, they were never targeted because they were Jewish graves. “It is usually pure vandalism at work,” he says.

In Europe, Silberhaft believes it is the work of right-wing Jew-haters. “But I cannot say the same of South Africa. There is seldom anti-Semitic graffiti. It is not the work of Muslims, who respect the dead, and the same can be said of most Africans.

“We have never had this type of vandalism in cemeteries in sub-Saharan Africa,” says the rabbi, who is also CEO of the African Jewish Congress.

There were, however, Satanic signs, the figures 666 on the vandalised graves in Bloemfontein and Kimberley.

Over the last two weeks, Jewish cemeteries in the US - including Philadelphia, Rochester and St Louis, Missouri - were trashed and hundreds of headstones were smashed, despite some of the cemeteries being gated. American Jews - aided by many Christians and Muslim communities - pulled together to raise funds and effect clean-ups and repairs.

“For the past 15 years, we have dealt with and overcome the problem, which was prevalent in country towns such as Nigel, Lichtenburg, Mahikeng, Musina, Kroonstad, Riversdale and also in the old cemeteries of Bloemfontein and Kimberley,” Rabbi Silberhaft told the Jewish Report.

Fencing off the cemeteries does not help, he said, as the Americans found out.

“We approach the problem in a two-fold manner: reaction and repair to the vandalised cemeteries and putting precautionary measures in place.”

In one of the worst acts of vandalism in South Africa in recent years, in 2000 the Lichtenburg Jewish Cemetery suffered damage to nearly all of its graves.About 60 graves were targeted and more than half

of Deputies thousands of rands to repair.

“It is very sad when this vandalism happens in the country towns, where some of our great pioneers were buried.”

But Rabbi Silberhaft is a doer, not a talker. He was in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives, where Arab children, “who do not understand the meaning of death or respect of the dead, used to vandalise Jewish graves.

“From Israel, I adopted the idea of laying the headstones flat, to prevent them from being smashed and knocked over. We have tackled about 38 cemeteries so far - it is an ongoing project, costing millions, with some of the funds coming from trusts set up by the defunct communities before all their members left.

“It is a holy obligation, which most often the Board has to undertake as many people have emigrated and abandoned the graves of their parents and families.”

Firstly, the base of the headstone is secured on the existing frame, or a new frame and concrete blocks are erected on the graves, “to prevent them from being tampered with, as it is a belief that Jewish brains are superior and have special powers and we don’t want anyone meddling with the remains.

“Then we lay the headstones at a 30 degree angle, so they are impossible to topple, but this angle allows water to run off in the event of rain,” the rabbi said.

“Cemetery vandalism is rife throughout the world, particularly in Lithuania, Hungary and Germany.”

As very few Jews still live in the country towns of South Africa, it is left to righteous gentiles to maintain the cemeteries. “But there is very little to do - we make sure that all the weeds and trees are removed and the grounds are cleaned and fenced off to keep the cemeteries in a pristine condition.”



of the tombstones were broken, and the remainder pushed over. Dead snakes were left on some of the graves. Several children’s graves in an adjoining cemetery were tampered with.

The perpetrators, four pupils from a local high school, were arrested. “They were high on drugs and because the tall tombstones make a satisfying thud (when they are toppled), they targeted those gravestones.

“The teens were caught and arrested and were sentenced to 28 hours of work, cleaning up the cemetery, which cost the Board



CSO urges community never to become complacent

SUZANNE BELLING

Over the past months Jewish community centres across the United States, Argentina and the United Kingdom have received bomb threats, with evacuations taking place late last month in various centres and Jewish cemeteries being desecrated.

At the end of last month, the Jewish Museum in Sydney was evacuated after staff received bomb threats.

Juan Thompson, who allegedly made eight of the bomb threats to Jewish institutions in the US, has been arrested. The Anti-Defamation League has called the wave of anti-Semitic acts “unprecedented”.

In the wake of these often co-ordinated threats, the Community Security

Organisation (CSO) says that South Africans need to learn lessons from this. It is very possible that local Jewish organisations and institutions could be targeted.

“It is critical never to dismiss [these threats] as a hoax,” said Jevon Greenblatt, operations director of the CSO in Johannesburg.

“More Jewish institutions need to ensure physical security and make sure that no unauthorised people can gain access to their premises.”

It should be noted that most Jewish organisations already have well-established links with the CSO and have appropriate measures in place.

Although thankfully the threats overseas have not materialised locally, Greenblatt said: “Clearly this is a growing trend affecting Jewish installations around the world. We must all be prepared to handle the situation should it arise in South Africa.”

The CSO urges members of the Jewish community to plan and prepare for such an eventuality; develop a bomb threat response protocol specific to each facility, including well-practised evacuation planning.



“Ensure that all staff, especially those who answer phones, are trained in handling these situations. Ensure that your physical security, training of guards and procedures are adequate. Ensure that all are aware of their surroundings, so they can easily identify something or someone that is out of place.”

Greenblatt says most bomb threats are received by phone and are serious until proven otherwise.

“Remain calm. Keep the caller on the line for as long as possible. Do not hang up, even if the caller does. Listen carefully and try to keep the caller talking to learn further information.”

Greenblatt suggests, if possible, to write a note to a colleague who can call the authorities during the call and, as soon as the caller hangs up, follow this up with your own notification.

If the phone has a display or caller identification, copy the number or letters shown on the window.

Immediately on termination of the call, from a different phone contact 08618 000 18. Give all the information possible and await instructions.

The CSO has issued a bomb threat checklist, with a list to help identify and remember a caller .

- If a bomb threat is received via a handwritten note, handle the note as little as possible.
- Should the bomb threat be received by e-mail, call the CSO control room and do not delete the message.
- Do not use two-way radios or cell phones, as radio signals have the potential to detonate a bomb.
- Do not touch or move a suspicious package. Signs of such a package are no return address; excessive postage; stains; strange odour or sounds emanating from the package; unexpected delivery; poor handwriting; misspelled words; incorrect titles; and foreign postage.

Greenblatt emphasises the importance of notifying the CSO of all suspicious calls.

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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



Above Board
Jeff Katz
National Chairman

IAW turns nasty - again

Those who accept at face value claims that “Israel Apartheid Week” aims at promoting justice, human rights and democracy, need only witness how this annual propaganda event is actually conducted.

It is clear that as in the past, IAW activists are solely intent on imposing their views and silencing those who challenge them by whatever means are necessary.

The first day of the campaign at Wits was marked by a series of acts of intimidation and disruption against SAUJS students trying to display their own exhibitions, including attempts by IAW activists to destroy SAUJS’ posters and literature.

The university authorities have been alerted to these incidents, and hopefully the necessary steps will be taken to ensure that those wishing to put forward a different view, will be allowed to do so without further harassment or intimidation.

In responding to IAW, it would be quite easy to indulge in tit-for-tat mudslinging and similar undemocratic activities. To the great credit of our students, they are instead running a campaign promoting peace and dialogue, based on the theme “See Israel for yourself”.

Similarly, the Board and the SAZE, decided this year to bring out Craig Dershowitz of Artists 4 Israel, an NGO that promotes peace and social change through arts and culture,

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

to run a series of graffiti art projects and workshops in the Johannesburg inner city.

The Board was instrumental in obtaining publicity for the visit, including organising radio interviews where Craig referred to his work in promoting peace and co-existence in Israel. The Board also had a number of opinion articles published in the print media, and has been active in combating attempts to push for an academic boycott of Israeli institutions. We continue to work closely with SAUJS, assisting as much as we can in ensuring that they can freely carry out their activities.

In 2000, the Board brought out the first-ever edition of what was then called The Guide to Jewish South Africa, a comprehensive listing of every Jewish organisation countrywide, including in the smaller towns and country areas. It was an immediate success, particularly among those involved in Jewish communal service.

Now called The Guide to Jewish Southern Africa, since it today also includes Jewish communal organisations in other sub-Saharan African countries, it provides the contact details, addresses and current contact persons of over 300 Jewish institutions, grouped under such categories as religious, educational, Zionist, fundraising, welfare, outreach, youth, women’s groups and kosher establishments.

The Guide, which appears biennially, embodies a lesser known but still vital function of the Board, namely to provide an overall co-ordinating role for and source of

information on South African Jewry. It has become one of the most valued services provided by the Board to the community, particularly to its affiliates.

I commend Shirley Beagle for once again doing so meticulous a job in compiling the latest edition. As always, she went to all possible lengths to ensure that the information was as accurate and up-to-date as possible. Copies of the Guide can be obtained free of charge from all our regional offices.

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



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A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

Giving without a thought of receiving

With Purim this week, we marvel anew at the story of Queen Esther and Mordechai and the miraculous manner in which Hashem’s behind-the-scenes intervention brings salvation to the Jewish people. He was there all along, but hidden, quiet, unseen, as He so often is.

This theme of restraint and modesty is a powerful lesson in Jewish teachings. We are urged to perform good deeds, not for publicity, fame or reward, but for the inherent value of the deed itself and because Hashem commands it.

The Chevrah Kadisha held its annual Zayin Adar function to honour all the staff and volunteers who perform the essential work of Jewish burial. This mitzvah is known as “chesed shel emet – kindness of truth”, because it is a final act of respect and humanity on the part of the living that the deceased can never repay.

In this material world we too often give only in order to receive. But the work performed at our cemetery is done unpretentiously, discreetly and respectfully. No-one talks



ChevrahKadisha
AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY WELFARE

Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff

about what they do in the tahara room. There is no fanfare, no accolades, no rewards - except for those bestowed by Heaven, which we have no way of measuring or even understanding.

On this occasion a special award was presented to Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag, rosh Beth Din, who has served our community for 50 years. A man of infinite humility, his immediate response was: “I don’t deserve this.”

That kind of modesty is characteristic of a true Jewish leader who shuns the limelight and whose motives are pure. It occurs to me that so much of the Chev’s work is done behind the scenes - protecting the privacy of people we assist financially, people we counsel emotionally, people we prepare for burial, children we protect from harm and abuse. And that is as it should be. For the beauty and true value of good deeds is in their dignity, respect and discretion. That’s how we emulate G-d.

If it were not for the fact that we need the support of the community to continue our essential work, we might never speak of what we do, or publicise our achievements.

But that divide between idealism and reality need not detract from the purity of purpose in our work and the fact that the Chev gives, not to get, but because there are those among us who need help.

A freilichen Purim to all!

May our partnership continue to thrive - Feedback@jhbchev.co.za

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ChevrahKadisha

Vashti’s dilemma is the same as that of modern-day women

ADINA ROTH

Purim is traditionally considered a story of Jewish triumph, celebrating the narrow averting of a nation’s genocide. Yet, the Scroll of Esther opens not with Jewish people, but with the theme of women under patriarchy.

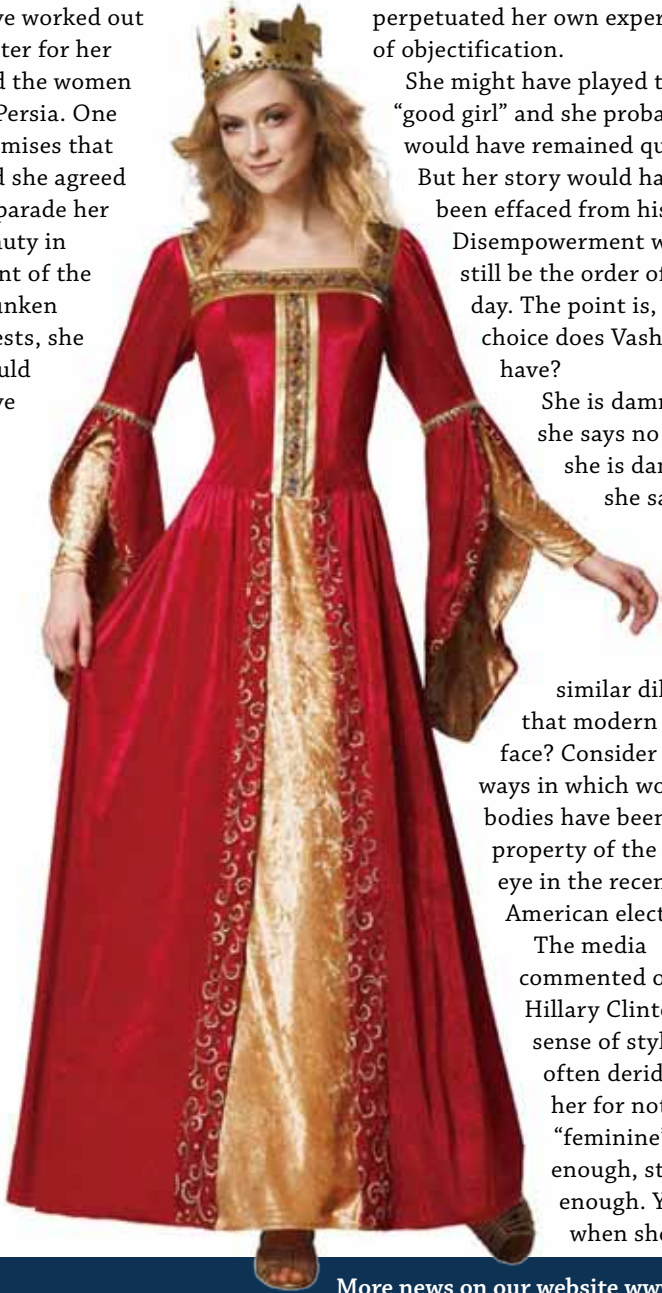
In Chapter 1, Queen Vashti is famously summoned to appear before the drunk king Achashverosh and his equally inebriated guests.

Seemingly unwilling to be objectified in front of leering men, Vashti refuses her husband’s invitation. Her assertive refusal sets off ripples of disbelief through the Persian court and Achashverosh is immediately advised to get rid of her, or all the women in Persia will deem it acceptable to contravene their husbands.

Vashti’s singular moment of empowerment backfires as she is removed from her throne and a decree goes out to all the provinces of the Persian Empire that men must rule their households and that women must speak the language of their husbands. Ouch, that revolutionary moment doesn’t seem to end well!

Yet, let’s pause and imagine Vashti’s quandary here: What if she had said yes? Would things

have worked out better for her and the women of Persia. One surmises that had she agreed to parade her beauty in front of the drunken guests, she would have



perpetuated her own experience of objectification.

She might have played the “good girl” and she probably would have remained queen.

But her story would have been effaced from history. Disempowerment would still be the order of the day. The point is, what choice does Vashti have?

She is damned if she says no and she is damned if she says yes. Is this not a

similar dilemma that modern women face? Consider the ways in which women’s bodies have been the property of the public eye in the recent American election.

The media commented on Hillary Clinton’s sense of style, often deriding her for not being “feminine” enough, stylish enough. Yet when she

attempted to pay more attention to her style, she was accused of spending “too much” on clothes and she was criticised for being disconnected from the people.

Clinton refused to play into stereotypical expectations of feminine beauty and she suffered for her saying “no”. On the other hand, Melania Trump, with her modelling career and her fashion business, tows a more stereotypically “feminine” line of beauty.

Yet, the media has unscrupulously gazed on Melania and critiqued her for revealing too much. If Hillary did not care enough, Melania cared too much!

These women embody Vashti’s dilemma: Vashti was dethroned for not performing and one could say that Hillary was denounced by some for not conforming to the traditional expectations of how a woman should dress.

Yet, Melania who openly celebrates fashion and “feminine” beauty, is equally ravaged. This makes me think how much has changed for women since Persia circa 486 BCE?

Vashti’s dilemma sums it up: Bowing out or opting in, women leaders are always subject to a particular kind of gaze and scrutiny. Is there a way out of this?

Perhaps the carnival style

holiday of Purim gives us a clue as to how women might be able to manage this dichotomous dilemma presented by patriarchy.

Purim is the holiday of disguise and dress-up, where we reveal hidden aspects of ourselves as we conceal others. The fun nature of dress-up belies much deeper messages about identity and self, surface and depth; that we are somehow always revealing some parts and concealing others, that all of life is a mask and that we shouldn’t take anything too seriously.

The deeper work then invites each person to move inwards and trust that beneath the multiple masks we wear for the world, a deeper authenticity exists which neither the media, nor the leering King Achashverosh can touch.

In other words, we need to be less intimidated by the external gaze of the other and in some ways flout the constant scrutiny by revealing and concealing. We need to be dancing this way and that, all the time remembering that like Esther a deeper secret remains hidden.

This secret is an essence that is incumbent on each person to journey and discover.

That deeper secret subverts the most dogged of gazes. Inviolable, perhaps it is the only way out of Vashti’s dilemma.

More news on our website www.sajr.co.za

Nine things you didn’t know about Purim

JULIE WIENER
NEW YORK

With costumes, spiels and lots of drinking, Purim is one of Judaism’s most raucous holidays. You might know about beautiful Esther thwarting evil Haman’s plans, the custom of getting drunk and what hamantaschen are. But we’re guessing there’s a few things about Purim, which this year starts at sundown on March 11, that might surprise you.

1. Esther was a vegetarian (or at least a flexitarian).

According to midrash, while Queen Esther lived in the court of King Achashverosh, she followed a vegetarian diet consisting largely of legumes so that she would not break the laws of kashrut. For this reason, there is a tradition of eating beans and peas on Purim. (After all, you’ll need something healthy after all the booze and hamantaschen.)

2. You’re supposed to find a go-between to deliver your mishloach manot, the gift baskets traditionally exchanged with friends and family on Purim.

The verse in the Book of Esther about mishloach manot stipulates that we should send gifts to one another, not just give gifts to one another. As a result, it’s better to send your packets of goodies to a friend via a messenger than to just

give them outright. Anyone can act as a go-between, so feel free to recruit the postal service or even that nice guy in the elevator to help you deliver your gifts.

3. The Book of Esther is the only biblical book that does not include G-d’s name

The Book of Esther also makes no references to the Temple, to prayer or to Jewish practices such as kashrut.

4. Hamantaschen might have been designed to symbolise Haman’s hat - or his ears or pockets. Or something a little more womanly.

Some say these cookies represent Haman’s ears (the Hebrew name for them, “oznei Haman” means just this), and refer to a custom of cutting off a criminal’s ears before his execution. Another theory is that the three corners represent the three patriarchs whose power weakened Haman and gave strength to Esther to save the Jews.

Yet another theory: Because the German word tasche means “pouch” or “pocket”, the cookies could signify Haman’s pockets and the money he offered the king for permission to kill the Jews.

5. In 1945, a group of American soldiers held belated Purim services inside Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels’ confiscated castle.

According to JTA coverage at the time, the Jewish chaplain “carefully arranged the candles over a swastika-bedecked bookcase in Goebbels’ main dining room”, and Jewish soldiers explained to their Christian comrades in attendance “about Haman and why it was so fitting that Purim services should be held in a castle belonging to Goebbels”.

6. The Book of Esther, which many scholars theorise is fictional, may be an adaptation of a Babylonian story.

Some scholars argue that the Book of Esther adapted stories about these pagan gods - Marduk becoming Mordechai and Ishtar transformed to Esther - to reflect the realities of its own Jewish authors in exile.

7. The Jewish calendar has a regular leap year with two months of Adar (but only one Purim, which falls during the second Adar).

To ensure that the holidays remain in their mandated seasons, the Jewish calendar was ingeniously adjusted to accommodate the 11-day difference between the lunar and solar years. In the fourth century

CE, Hillel scheduled an extra month at the end of the biblical year, as necessary.

The biblical year begins in spring with Nissan (Exodus 12: 1-2) and ends with Adar. Hillel, in conjunction with the Sanhedrin (Jewish supreme court), chose to repeat Adar (Adar I and Adar II) every third, sixth, eighth, 11th, 14th, 17th and 19th year over a 19-year period.



8. Purim is celebrated one day later inside walled cities than it is everywhere else.

The Book of Esther differentiates between Jews who lived and fought their enemies for two days within the walled capital city of Shushan and those who lived in

unwalled towns, where only one day was needed to subdue the enemy.

The rabbis determined we should make that same distinction when memorialising the event. Accordingly, if a person lives in a city that has been walled since the days of Joshua (circa 1250 BCE), as Shushan was, Purim is celebrated on the 15th of Adar, a day referred to as Shushan Purim.

9. Just after the 1991 Gulf War, Israel’s most popular Purim costume was of the Israeli army spokesman whose face appeared on TV every time a Scud missile alert sounded - and people snacked on “Saddamtaschen” instead of hamantaschen.

Spokesman Nachman Shai’s “reassuring tones earned him the sobriquet ‘National Valium’,” while Israel was being pelted with Iraqi missiles, according to a JTA report at the time.

That year, while many costume-makers avoided the temptation to make Saddam Hussein costumes (it would be like a Hitler costume, one vendor told JTA), bakeries hawked “Saddamtashen”, which “look and taste exactly like hamantaschen”. (My Jewish Learning via JTA)

A tribute to Elliot Wolf, the consummate educator



PETER FELDMAN

On hearing the name Elliot Wolf, thousands of South African Jews - particularly King David Linksfeld alumni - almost dof their caps with respect to this consummate school principal. Wolf is loved by so many and his name is almost always used in the same sentence as King David Schools.

Last Sunday night the community turned out in full force to honour in song the achievements of this man who gave 50 years of service to King David Schools and Jewish education.

One of his alumni, Colin Schachat, a celebrated international baritone, and his son Gabi, were showcased in this tribute at the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg in honour of this great educator and mensch.

“What a joy it was to perform for Mr Wolf,” said Colin Schachat. “It was like the closing of a circle”, having been one of his pupils at King David Linksfeld.

“Mr Wolf had such a profound effect on so many thousands of students. It was a time when education was rigid and he had the philosophy of not only teaching people, but also showing them how to think for themselves. He made an enormous impact on those he taught.”

Wolf first joined King David Linksfeld in 1968 as a head of department, teaching Latin and English. He became deputy head in 1969 and in 1974 headmaster - a position he held for 34 years.

After a three-week retirement in 2002, he was asked to head the King David Schools’ Foundation, where he still is - a total of 50 years of service to this remarkable institution that has produced thousands of students who today are leaders in their respective fields the world over.

The stirring music extravaganza in his honour also featured the 40-piece Johannesburg Festival Orchestra under the baton of renowned Israeli conductor David Sebba; a guest appearance by noted South African tenor Given Nkosi; and the united King David School Choir.

Wolf told Jewish Report how honoured he had been and thanked the generosity of the King David Schools’ Foundation that had

organised the event.

Wolf said he felt “absolute joy and pride” and “happiness because I was accorded such special treatment and pride because I have been given the privilege to play a part in so important a cause and survived for so long”.

Over his distinguished career, Wolf enjoyed many highlights. “The highlight of my career,” he said, “has been the opportunity I have had to play a part in the lives of so many thousands of wonderful students over 34 years at KDHS Linksfeld.

“I have had the privilege of attending King David reunions locally and all over the world and they certainly proved to be a reaffirmation of my choice of career.”

“I derive great vicarious pride in the achievements of the alumni and reconnecting with them has been such a pleasure. On a very personal level, my sharing of my career with my twin brother Jeffrey, was certainly a highlight and a tremendous advantage since I always had an excellent sounding board, particularly in times of stress.”

Asked about the changing face of education over the years, he said: “Education has certainly changed considerably over the years and many of the changes have been brought about by the advent of IT and are certainly advantageous.

“However, my belief is that nothing can replace a good teacher who interacts with his/her students and shares a learning experience with them. Good teaching is not only about imparting relevant subject matter, but also about providing a moral compass and the values and attitudes that will serve our students well in their future lives.”

He added he would certainly encourage young people to consider a career in teaching in spite of the attractions of the more lucrative professions.

“Teaching offers other rewards - job satisfaction and the knowledge that one is making a difference in the lives of future generations.”

From a relaxation perspective, Wolf now finds time to read, travel, do gardening which he describes as “a long-practised hobby”, tackle crossword puzzles, attend the theatre and films.

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Where has all the passion gone?



**TAKING
ISSUE**

Geoff Sifrin

The Sinai Indaba conference last weekend has been lauded as a great success, as in previous years. Anybody who attended would have been struck by the excellent organisation, the international speakers’ high quality and their thought-provoking presentations about Judaism and Jewish-related topics.

But it also illustrated an important phenomenon - the degree to which mainstream South African Jewry is withdrawing from engagement with this country.

“The sense of powerlessness of minority groups is profound as they watch people well-connected to President Jacob Zuma’s government sell this country down the river with incompetence and corruption.”

The speakers and programme contained scant reference to what it means to be Jewish in the specifically local South African context, the here-and-now of a country drowning in poverty, inequality and corrupt politics, yet a place where optimistic, new green shoots are popping up everywhere which need nurturing by committed people.

To be fair, Sinai Indaba’s self-declared mandate since its inception six years ago is to focus on the grand concepts, spirituality and practices of Judaism and the Jewish people, rather than local matters. To enhance understanding and enthusiasm about being Jewish.

Thus, there was also little direct reference to on-the-ground realities of life in other countries, aside from Israel.

South African Jews have in the past played a significant role in social and political affairs. Jewish activist organisations and individuals have engaged intensely, often at personal risk during apartheid, such as the Union of Jewish Women, the United Sisterhood and others. But now their older members complain that they are being replaced by fewer and fewer younger people.

South Africa is where most Sinai Indaba participants actually live. They face complex challenges about being actively Jewish in a rapidly changing, troubled society with an uncertain future.

Jews constitute only 0,13 per cent of the population of 55 million. It is common knowledge that many have given up on this country and have left, or are in the process of doing so. The Jewish population has shrunk from about 125 000 in the 1970s to some 70 000 today.

But for the ones who stay, a meaningful understanding of their place here as Jews is crucial. Local rabbis, lay leaders and individuals grapple with it.

The sense of powerlessness of minority groups is profound as they watch people well-connected to President Jacob Zuma’s government sell this country down the river with incompetence and corruption.

When criticism of the government and Zuma is voiced too loudly, accusations of racism tend to be hurled back, silencing many well-meaning citizens who don’t have the stomach for the fight. It is a form of “disenfranchisement” of minorities by what has become a majoritarian government rather than a democratic one.

The latest government debacle last week is about Social Development Minister Bathabile Dlamini’s failure to put in place legitimate mechanisms for paying social grants on April 1 to some 17 million of the poorest, most vulnerable South Africans who depend on these meagre amounts to keep going.

The disgrace should stir all people, including Jews, into urgent action to demand that those who created the crisis be brought to book. But the chances are that Dlamini, who is in Zuma’s close circle, will somehow be let off the hook.

It is impossible to know what South Africa will look like 10 years’ time. A realignment of its politics is underway, as the ANC looks like it will break apart under the pressure of its warring factions. Minority groups, including the Afrikaners, are withdrawing into their own laagers to look after their interests as best they can.

What will South African Jewry’s size be in 10 years’ time and what kind of community will it be?

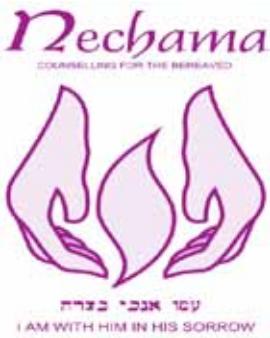
Will it be engaged as South Africans, making meaningful “Jewish” contributions to society? There are no easy answers, except to say visionary leadership is vital to prevent it becoming insular and inward-looking.

• Read Geoff Sifrin’s regular columns on his blog sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com

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ChevrahKadisha

Koe’siestes shows that love is more than a monologue

PETER FELDMAN

Play: From Koe’siestes to Kneidlach
Performer: Chantal Stanfield
Director: Megan Furniss
Venue: Auto & General Theatre on the Square, Sandton
Until: March 18

Friday night Shabbos with the family can be hell for people who aren’t Jewish - they can be loud, alien and frankly distressing if you aren’t part of the fold.

Actress Chantal Stanfield is very familiar with this experience and many more, having fallen in love with a Jewish singer. She has cleverly turned her own experiences into a delightfully funny one-woman show.

She is a coloured woman from the Cape Flats who fell in love with RJ Benjamin. The monologue depicts how their lives panned out. Both come from diversely different backgrounds and cultures, but the thread to their wellbeing is the thing called love and if you have enough of it in your heart, you can overcome most obstacles.

Everything that occurs in this narrative that she so painstakingly recounts on stage, actually took place (with some poetic licence tossed into the mix, no doubt) and to hold the attention of an audience as a solo performer for an hour is no mean feat.

That she does that with some aplomb, speaks measures of her ability to connect on a universal level about life and how enriching it can be if you just unshackle your heart and your mind and expose it to

endless possibilities.

Adroitly directed by Megan Furniss, the show starts at the beginning of the relationship where Stanfield is on a theatrical assignment in Turkey and connects on the Internet with a Capetonian singer with similar tastes and interests.

The fact that he is Jewish and she is not, does not seem to perturb the couple unduly as they pursue their relationship with vigour. In doing so, Stanfield’s story holds up a mirror to traditional Judaism and her unique perspective of it.

She explains in minute detail her first Shabbos with his family and her reaction to the rituals. Over a period of time she learns a great deal about the Jewish faith and its people, navigating a tightrope between her own upbringing and religion (she was Baptist) and that of her new-found family.

It’s a uniquely South African story punctuated with humour and insight. She also adds new words to her vocabulary such as goy, faribels, bris...

Stanfield also questions her own identity during her discourse and the effects her marriage will have on their offspring.

During her journey of discovery she also morphs into a variety of characters in her life which include her mother, her gay best friend and a rabbi.

All in all, “From Koe’siestes to Kneidlach” is a fun night out and an entertaining theatrical diversion.



Chantal Stanfield with her Jewish Chossen.

ORT launches project to instil love of reading

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The Mama Ca Reading Project, steered by ORT SA, aims “to give children of all walks of life access to books and to provide training to teachers to ensure that children read with understanding, meaning and critical thinking”.

The project was established by the Schwab, Lyons and Frank families in the memory of Carol Schwab, a primary school teacher of some 45 years’ standing.

Carol’s daughter, Ricci Lyons (an ORT SA national executive committee member) said of her mother: “She was passionate about nurturing her students’ imaginations and enquiring minds through the medium of books.”

Mama Ca Reading incorporates a “Literacy Wheel” developed by Dr Lydia Abel and her team at ORT SA Cape.

Ariellah Rosenberg, ORT SA CEO, says: “ORT SA has historically looked towards STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)



education subjects in its training of teachers and pupils in Gauteng, but this project gives us an opportunity to expand into literacy and add to our stable of offerings by collaborating with ORT SA Cape.”

Dr Abel adds: “The ‘Literacy Wheel’ is a fun, game-like activity where learners can work independently, in groups or alone... to promote the development of reading with understanding and intentional writing.”

Each segment (colour) of the wheel represents a different aspect of thinking and provides “sentence starters” for the relevant questions from grade 4 upwards. It integrates the key elements of language acquisition and literacy instruction with its focus on the What, Where, Why, Who and When. The Literacy Wheel encompasses all the thinking strategies that good readers use to understand text and offers learners multiple opportunities to practise. This frees up the teacher or parent to focus on specific learning issues at any given time and differentiate the classroom.

Blanche still batting strongly at 100 not out

ESTHER RUBIN AND RONNIE LIPKIN

The TV lounge at Sandringham Gardens was transformed, from just an ordinary room into one with décor fitting for a queen. Blanche Gittleson occupied the “throne” as 40 guests paid their respects to her and wished her well on a singular milestone - her 100th birthday – on Sunday February 26.

Blanche, a long-time resident of Sandringham Gardens, was supported by her family from Cape Town and Johannesburg. Messages and greeting were read out from the Taviansky family in England as well as as the Lipkin family in Vietnam.

Ronnie Lipkin reminisced with Blanche about her early days and about her relationship with Ronnie’s late father Hyman. Blanche strolled down a long memory lane, recalling many details and there was hardly a dry eye in the room, especially when Blanche joined in the singing of “My Yiddishe Mama”. Ronnie compared her 100 years in cricketing terms to scoring a century not out! Blanche was born in the Johannesburg suburb of Ophirton, three kilometres south-west of the CBD in 1917 and has lived a full and productive life, working at the SA Zionist Federation for 40 years, until she had to “indignantly” retire at age 82!

Esther Rubin read Psalm 100 - a prayer of thanks - from the Book of Tehillim, in Blanche’s honour. She compared Blanche’s 100 years to the 100 brachot we say every day.

She spoke about the fact that we need

to give thanks to Hashem every day for our blessings and appreciate what He has given us and show gratitude. She believes this applies to Blanche, as she has always had a positive attitude to life. She is a kind and generous person, always thinking of others and putting other people’s needs before her own.

Lipkin, together with Aubrey Epstein provided Yiddish music to fit the occasion, while Louis Neutel sang a beautiful rendition of “Shehechyanu”.



Blanche Gittleson



- Cape Town Holocaust Centre hosts Werner Dreier on “The Holocaust in Public Memory and in Education in Austria”. Venue: 88 Hatfield Street, Gardens. Time: 18:00. Light refreshments will be served. RSVP Dianne: (021) 462-5553 or admin@holocaust.org.za

Friday (March 17)

- Lunch hour classical music concerts at the Auto & General Theatre on the Square every Friday at 13:00. No booking. Unreserved seats at R50 (incl coffee and biscuits) available at the box office from 12:30. The Sunset Serenade with Peta Ann Holdcroft (cello), Malané Hofmeyr-Burger (flute), Irene Tsoniff (violin), Ivo Ivanov (viola) and Rosemary Kane (harp). Information: Daphne Kuhn or Mika Stefano (011) 883-8606.

Friday (March 10)

- UZLC hosts Jack Bloom, shadow MEC for health in the Gauteng legislature, on “How Could More Than 100 Mental Patients Die in Gauteng”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45-14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421.

- Lunch hour classical music concerts at the Auto & General Theatre on the Square every Friday at 13:00. No booking. Unreserved seats at R50 (incl coffee and biscuits) available at the box office from 12:30. The Wits Trio with Malcolm Nay (piano), Zanta Hofmeyr (violin) and Maciej Lacny (cello) will perform the Schubert Trio in B flat major. Information: Daphne Kuhn or Mika Stefano (011) 883-8606.

Saturday evening (March 11)

- WIZO Tzabar presents a “Brilliant Broadway Show” - an evening not to be missed! Come dressed as your favourite musical character (optional). time: 8.00pm. Venue: Beyachad. Time: 20:00. Cost: R230 (incl refreshments). Contact: Jenny (011)

645-2515, Nava 082-789-9118 or Raya 083-377-2970.

Sunday (March 12)

- Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets in its new venue, Beit Emanuel Slome Auditorium in Parktown. Time: 14:15 sharp. A DVD will be screened of some performances of the Big Band era (1906-1983) followed by an audio on Freddy Martin & his Orchestra (1906-1983). After interval, a documentary featuring the life and music of Glenn Miller. Information: Marilyn 072-243-7436 or Jack 082-450-7622.

- Second Innings hosts Les Markowitz on “Adjusting to Retirement in Today’s Changing World”. Venue: Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Information: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Monday (March 13)

- UJW hosts Sarah Key, writer and innovator in adult education, on “The Magic of Narratives - the Potential Stories have to Unite,

to Inspire and to Heal”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Wednesday (March 15)

- The 8th Nechama Seminar, titled “Normal Life at Breakfast, a Whole New World by Lunch” takes place at Double Tree by Hilton, Upper Eastside, 31 Brickfield Road, Woodstock, with prominent experts in the field of bereavement and loss. Time: Registration 08:30. Seminar from 09:00 - 15:00. Cost R650 pp (including tea and lunch). Booking essential. Information: Office (021) 465-9390 or admin@nechama.org.za

Thursday (March 16)

- Hebrew Club meets on 2nd floor at Beyachad. Time: 11:00 – 12:00. Calling all fluent Hebrew speakers to hear interesting Hebrew lectures on economy, history, technology, family memories, etc. Information: Abigail (011) 640-2376 or 072-432-9198.

Happy month of Adar kicks in at Sydenham Pre-Primary School



JENNY MILLER

Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primary School celebrated Rosh Chodesh Adar with lots of singing and “creepy crawly” crowns that were made by each child to add to the festivity. Adar is officially the “happy month”, as is written, “As soon as Adar begins, increase in joy!”

Proudly showing off their crowns are (left to right): Skyla Benater, Liat Haifer, Suri Lange, Kara Saloner and Mikah Meyerowitz

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Siyakhana - a laudable effort to promote healthy eating

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Professor Michael Rudolph of the University of the Witwatersrand School of Dentistry has a passion for promoting healthier living through the food we eat. He is the director and founder of the Wits Siyakhana Initiative “promoting healthier communities” through growing fresh vegetables and fruit in its gardens. Siyakhana embraces the permaculture ethic of not only selling the produce through box schemes, but also through distributing surplus food to the needy. Children from Torah Academy Primary School recently visited the Siyakhana Initiative and learnt about the food gardens with a view to establishing a sustainable partnership between the school and Siyakhana. Professor Rudolph is pictured here with some of the learners.



Crazy hats help get them into festive spirit

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Children from King David Pre-Primary Victory Park School celebrated the start of Rosh Chodesh Adar by wearing crazy hats to school. With Purim just around the corner, the children were delighted to start playing dress-up and get into the mood of all the celebrations that are anticipated during this happy month.

Ariella Hurvitz; Ava Rozen; Yahli Shapiro; Jamie Twidale; and Samuel Green.



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A female tennis player with blonde hair tied back, wearing a teal athletic top and a matching visor. She is holding a tennis racket with a black and red frame and a white grip. She is looking off to the side with a focused expression. The background is a blurred blue and red, suggesting a tennis court setting.

JACK MILNER

As is the trend these days, Peer used social media to announce that she was quitting. “I want to share with you one of the hardest decisions I have had to make in my life,” Peer wrote on Facebook. “After 23 years, in which 13 of those years I was an international professional tennis player, I am retiring.

Peer had not played a match on tour since the 2016 Abierto Monterrey, where she lost in the opening round of qualifying to Viktorija Golubic.

More news on our website www.sajr.co.za