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# south african Jewish Report

March 31 2017 / 4 Nisan 5777  
Volume 21 - Number 11

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## The UN's new sheriff in town

See pages 3 and 6



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# Bombs - no cause for concern

ANT KATZ

The Jewish community has no immediate cause for concern, following the finding of a large arms cache in Randburg on Monday, according to police and the Community Security Organisation (CSO).

The cache, including at least 60 old bombs and a suicide vest, was discovered by contractors in the basement of a dilapidated commercial building, being renovated. Noting a suspicious bag, workers alerted police who were shocked to find a haul which included “at least” 60 mortar bombs, seven rifles (AK47s and R5s), 12 revolvers and several pistols and one suicide vest.

The matter raised the alarm of an already jittery Jewish community in Johannesburg, after last year’s arrest of suspected ISIS-

affiliated bombers, Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee Thulsie, who were caught red-handed as they were allegedly building bombs in support of the Islamic State, according to police.

The Thulsie twins remain in custody on terrorism charges. They are expected to appear in court again in May. They were caught with a list of targets reportedly including one soft US government target and a laundry list of Jewish installations.

Of this week’s find, police spokesman Mavela Masondo said police couldn’t rule out a terrorism link because of the suicide vest found.

The CSO said there is no reason to indicate that the weaponry was planned to be used against the Jewish community. “But, as always, there is a cause to be vigilant,” it says.

“The CSO is aware of the weapons and explosives found this afternoon,” read its

## Shabbat Times

**March 31/4 Nissan**  
**April 1/5 Nissan**  
**Parshat Vayikra**

Starts	Ends	
17:49	18:38	Johannesburg
18:15	19:16	Cape Town
17:36	18:26	Durban
17:56	18:45	Bloemfontein
17:57	18:47	Port Elizabeth
17:48	18:38	East London

Monday notice. The CSO was very quick off the mark and its notice was likely the first indication of the events for many in the community.

CSO said that it was “in constant contact with the SA authorities” and promised to update the community “as further information becomes available”.

The CSO stressed: “It is merely a reminder of the very real threats faced across the globe.” It warned that “SA is not immune to these threats”.

However, the CSO has not initiated a higher community threat level protocol at this stage.

“This discovery only serves to confirm what we already know,” a highly-placed CSO source told Jewish Report on Tuesday, “the potential is there - all the time...”

CSO recommends that the community “continue to be vigilant” and aware of their surroundings, actively implement security protocols and not lose sight of the fact that, on an ongoing basis, “we face a very real and present threat”.



A screen shot from a video taken at the time of the find.

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## Parsha

# Vayikra - a world in Divine harmony and order

This Shabbat we start with the reading of the third book of the Torah. The book has very different names in different traditions. Often we say “Leviticus” or “Torat Kohanim - The Teaching of the Priests” as most of its laws are connected to the temple service.

Today in the Jewish world, it is common to refer to this book as “Vayikra - And He called”, according to its very first word in the Hebrew.

The title “Vayikra” is the better choice for another reason: Leviticus or Torat Kohanim could be misleading; they could give the impression that its content is only dealing with a group of selected people like the Levites and the Kohanim.

But, the opposite is the case: Vayikra is important for all of us.

Vayikra presents to us the concept of a world in Divine harmony and order. To maintain this order, the Torah explains in detail what someone should do



Parshat Vayikra

**Rabbi Adrian M Schell**  
**Bet David Morningside**

when a boundary has been violated.

This can be something affecting ourselves and our bodies, or boundaries in time and space. In other words, boundaries between the sacred and the profane, or between life and death. The book describes that anyone, who has violated G-d’s order and harmony, can also restore it, or even has an obligation to restore it.

The image Vayikra is drawing for us is that the body of a person as well as the sanctuary (tabernacle) and the society itself, are own little sacred worlds themselves. Each world represents the great whole, and each world has an impact on what happens around it.

This means that purity and holiness are not only limited to the temple or the synagogue, it also includes our entire life, our bodies, our homes, our interactions with other humans and with nature. There are several facets in

everything, profane and sacred ones alike.

Because our bodies and our lives are holy, we find in the book Vayikra regulations on “food”, “relationships” and “ethics” in order to protect this holiness.

The book contains not only instructions for the priests and the temple cult, but also, how we should interact with our neighbours and about sexuality. Even though priests may have a special role, the text makes clear that all Israelites are meant to be holy, because G-d is holy and we are G-d’s people.

One of the major themes of the book Vayikra is to form the Israelites, to form us Jews, to a sacred, a holy nation, that is an ethical nation, a kingdom of priests. When we read the text, we can discover how we can draw meaning out of it for our lives and how we can contribute to the healing, the repair of the world - tikkun olam.

“Am Kadosh” - a holy nation - has often been misunderstood. It is not an elevation above other people, our fellowmen or nature; it marks a special attribute in our relationship to G-d. We are partners with G-d in the ongoing process to keep this world in balance, in its Divine order.

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# Sweeping the Jews off their feet

DAVID HOROVITZ  
WASHINGTON

Fourteen minutes. That's how long Nikki Haley, US Ambassador to the United Nations, spent in conversation with interviewer Dan Senor at AIPAC's annual policy conference on Monday afternoon. And that was all it took to mark her out as the undisputed star of this event... and of who knows what to follow.

"That was the next president of the United States," said a man watching alongside me as Haley left the stage to a huge standing ovation. Ridiculous, you might say. Well, probably. But certainly reflective of the adulatory mood among the 18 000 people massed at the Washington DC conference. It was clear well before Haley's appearance at the annual event that her no-nonsense dismissals in recent weeks of the UN's dreadful Israel-bashing obsession had won her immense admiration among the delegates to AIPAC.

Apparently the only person unaware of her stellar status was the ambassador herself, who was plainly wowed by the reception she received.

Haley's appeal is readily understandable. She looks both personable and serious. She is a straight talker. A former governor of South Carolina, she has a track record that includes the highly resonant achievement, for this audience, of having signed into law the first statewide legislation to counter the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement against Israel. And now she's taking on the reviled UN.

Without seeming slick about it, she also offered, early in her remarks, a very potent parallel between her Indian-American Sikh upbringing and what she called Israeli culture (I'm guessing she meant Jewish) that would have endeared her to anyone in the audience who wasn't already won over: "We're very close knit. We love our families. We have a strong work ethic. We believe in professionalism and philanthropy and giving back," she said. And then paused.

"So that's all the good things," she continued, to much laughter. Then: "We're aggressive. We're stubborn. And we don't back down from a fight. So, it's a..." She didn't get to finish that sentence, so overwhelming was the roar.

Her rhetoric smacked of common sense. She'd gone to the United Nations, and found it to be an absurd place. And now she was telling the folks at AIPAC about it.

She recalled how "bizarre" it was for her, when she first set foot in the UN, to listen to delegate after delegate simply bash Israel - the more so when there are so many crises and threats to deal with in the Middle East. "I knew they said it was bad, but until you hear it, and you see it, you just can't comprehend how ridiculous it is," she said.

She lambasted former president Barack Obama's beloved Iran nuclear deal, and said it was "beyond me" and "terrible" that the deal got passed.

She declared that when UN Security Council Resolution 2334 was approved in December 2016, its passage facilitated by the Obama administration's failure to exercise a veto, "the entire country felt a kick in the gut. We had just done something that showed the United States at its weakest point ever," she said.

"Never do we not have the backs of our friends. We don't have a greater friend than Israel. And to see that happen was not only embarrassing, it was hurtful." Nowadays, by contrast, she went on, "everyone at the United Nations is scared to talk to me about Resolution 2334. And I wanted them to know that, look, that happened, but it will never



happen again."

All these forthright declarations were met with delight.

So, too, some of her one-liners, delivered with restraint, but with unmistakable conviction.

On Iran: "We're going to watch them like a hawk."

On her approach to confronting what she thinks is unfair: "All I did was tell the truth."

On engineering change at the UN: "I'm not there to play."

And: "The days of Israel-bashing are over."

And: "I wear heels. It's not for a fashion statement. It's because if I see something wrong, we're going to kick 'em every single time."

And most loudly applauded of all: "So for anyone that says you cannot get anything done at the UN, they need to know there's a new sheriff in town."

But Haley, no matter how convincing, would not have soared were it not for the tangible, initial successes of her mission. It was the combination of words with first deeds that cemented her triumph.

The folks at the UN "didn't know exactly" what she had in mind at first, "so we showed them," Haley said. "So when they decided to try and put a Palestinian (the former PA prime minister Salam Fayyad) in one of the highest positions that had ever been given at the UN, we said no, and we had him booted out." That garnered a pretty enthusiastic response, but Haley wasn't finished. "That doesn't mean he wasn't a nice man," she said graciously. "That doesn't mean he wasn't good to America," she further allowed. But then came the punch line: "What it means is until the Palestinian Authority comes to the table, until the UN responds the way they're supposed to, there are no freebies for the Palestinian Authority anymore." The roof fairly shook.

Second example: "So then they tested us again. And this ridiculous report, the Falk report, came out. I don't know who the guy is, or what he's about, but he's got serious problems," said Haley, lightly horrified. "Goes and compares Israel to an apartheid state?"

So, what did she do about it? "The first thing we do is we call the secretary general, and say: 'This [report] is absolutely ridiculous. You have to pull it.' The secretary general immediately pulled the report, and then the director has now resigned." Again the roar.

The "next president of the United States"? That's really not the point right now.

But she is certainly quite an asset. (Times of Israel)

• David Horowitz is the founding editor of the Times of Israel.

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# From the old Arcadians for the new

ROBYN SASSEN

When former Arcadia resident Freda Cheilyk (née Koppel) watched the video the Chevrah Kadisha made about the new Arcadia orphanage, she was taken back to a time when she was a frightened young Czechoslovakian immigrant, who had recently lost her mother.

Tears of joy come to her eyes as she speaks of the new Arcadia, Johannesburg Jewry's children's home, a facility in existence for over 100 years, which has just launched its sixth manifestation in the suburb of Sandringham.

"When I received the video of it on my computer, I watched it again and again. I woke up in the night to watch it again.

"But to actually see it in real life... I was on such a high! It was indescribable. When I met the architect, Mark Falconer, I told him it is miraculous. It's only on one acre, but the design with its details, is mind-boggling."

She attended the recent donor opening of Arcadia's brand new, purpose-designed premises. It was the culmination of over four years' work. This 20-roomed home, designed with the most sustainable amenities our world can offer, beggars comparison with popular clichés of Victorian orphanages. It's a place with real values. But it could never have come into existence without help.

That help was forthcoming in part from Monty Koppel, Freda's brother.

In 1936, Freda, Monty and their parents and five siblings arrived from Czechoslovakia. They were chassidic and poor. Four years later, their mother died; their father could not raise them alone. He faced the hardest decision a parent could: to put his three youngest, Freda, Monty and Hymie, into an orphanage.

Freda, who now lives on Australia's Gold Coast, is two years older than Monty. Born in 1927, she was in Johannesburg for the launch: "We lived in a small village called Teresva - today in western Ukraine - on the Carpathian Mountains. There was no electricity or running water.

"The journey between Europe and Africa in the 1930s was an ordeal. We didn't speak English, we were afraid to eat anything as it may not have been kosher, and we spent most of the trip seasick.

"My father was a cigarette salesman; he carried his stock on the trams. He would come home after nine o'clock at night to find us three huddled together in bed, the maid was drunk downstairs; we were frightened. He had to do the cooking, making sure it was



Saul Tomson and Monty Koppel.

kosher... The best thing was to place us in care.

"Who had ever seen such a place! It was palatial!" she refers to Arcadia's majestic building, on Oxford Road, with its grand staircases and its flow of architectural space, that still today, bisected by the highway, and repurposed as insurance offices, is magnificent.

It was like chalk and cheese from their humble abode in lowly Vrededorp, Johannesburg.

"The children in the orphanage - there were about 300 at the time - were friendly because they were curious about us," she remembers. "They knew we were religious and spoke no English. But we all played together.

"It was 30 acres. We had great fun in the huge garden and stealing fruit from the Oppenheimers' estate. We got sandwiches for school - and food was supplied by the government. We went to Forest Town School."

The Koppel children stayed in Arcadia for four years. Freda and Monty moved home briefly, to live with their father and his new wife and shortly thereafter they moved out, to establish their own lives.

Freda's Arc years were happy. She recalls the privilege of sleeping on the Arc's "Romeo and Juliet" balcony. Ma and Doc Lichtigfeld ran the institution at the time; Freda remembers them fondly. She acknowledges how the stakes have changed for children in contemporary orphanages and they are mostly there for different reasons.

The launch of the new building in Sandringham, saw Saul Tomson, the joint group chief executive of the Chevrah Kadisha

and a driving force behind the new Arcadia, take the Koppels to visit the orphanage's former premises, now an insurance consortium.

Arcadia's history stretches way beyond these two buildings. The first was a small house repurposed in 1903 to cater to eight Jewish orphans in Hillbrow and to take them out of Nazareth House, which was Catholic.

Three years later, it was moved to a house in Kensington. The orphanage moved to Villa Arcadia in Oxford Road in 1923. It became the sanctuary of the so-called Ochberg orphans, and its need for space grew.

Designed by renowned architect Herbert Baker, Villa Arcadia had been the residence of Lady and Lord Lionel Phillips, magnates and philanthropists who sowed many seeds of Johannesburg, from 1909.

They sold it to the Johannesburg Jewish community in 1923 and the original name of this Villa Arcadia, with its resonances of classical utopia, stuck in its being associated with Johannesburg Jewry's orphans.

"For me, the story's been a dream," Tomson said. "This was history in the making. When did this community last build a facility from the ground? Sure, we've got nice kosher restaurants and lovely shuls. There're not really new schools, maybe a classroom or two, but to build an organisation from the ground, for a community that's just trying to survive, I thought was a phenomenal piece of history. I really wanted everyone to be a part of it."

The Chev has been running Arcadia since 2003 and three weeks ago, the children moved into their new home.

## SAFI conferences: Unified throughout SA

OWN CORRESPONDENT

For the first time the South African Friends of Israel's annual Advocacy Conference was held in both Durban and Cape Town as well as Johannesburg. Until now, it was only held in Johannesburg. All three SAFI events were well attended, with over 1 000 community, religious and political leaders from around South Africa attending the events.

Cape Town opened their conference - which was on March 21 - with almost 300 passionate Zionists, both Christians and Jews. Durban held their conference the following day, which was

attended by around 100 delegates.

Across the board, speakers from all walks of life included Rev Kenneth Meshoe, Zimbabwean apostle Dr Alexander Chisango, Chris Eden of Bridges for Peace, Luba Mayekiso, national director of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem and keynote speaker, Chloé Valdary, director of Partnerships and Outreach at Jerusalem U.

The South African Friends of Israel are proud of the growing success of this annual event, and will continue in building positive relationships and partnerships with the communities across the African continent.

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# National and provincial government fight over site for Jewish school

Pictogram by Ant Katz, courtesy Google Earth



The Tafelberg site in the heart of Sea Point, runs from Main Road to High Level Road.

## ANT KATZ

Just as soon as the the Western Cape Cabinet made a decision to sell their Tafelberg Sea Point property to build a Jewish school, the national and local government protested... along with a number of Jews.

Even Minister of Human Settlements Lindiwe Sisulu, has objected to this sale.

Sisulu's spokesman Ndivhuwo Mabaya says the minister does not agree with the decision, especially since national government is in the process of redefining restructuring zones. "We believe that land should be used for the benefit of the poor; there are many people who work in the City of Cape Town, who have to wake up in the wee hours of the morning and drive and catch buses and trains. We are going to engage with provincial government. That decision must be changed," he said.

However, provincial government maintains the property is not big enough for a sub-economic housing project and that it has earmarked other accessible land for this purpose. It is digging in its heels, saying it will not budge on its long-awaited decision on this controversial piece of land.

Provincial government maintains both national and local government have no claim to this property and it is therefore not their decision.

"This is a decision by the Western Cape government on how best to use its assets. The land does not belong to the Human Settlements nationally... this decision has nothing to do with them," says Provincial Human Settlements MEC Bonginkosi Madikizela.

In a counterpunch on Tuesday, the City informed the national government and the Western Cape government of their "intention to declare Cape Town in its entirety as a restructuring zone so that we

can provide affordable housing opportunities wherever suitable land is available."

This is just the latest in so much debate over this prime property and whether it should be sold to the Phyllis Jowell Jewish Day School (PJJDS) - presently situated in Camps Bay - or used for social housing.

The provincial government, which sold the site for R135 million to the school, said that its decision was based on various factors, including the fact that the site did not fall within a restructuring zone, so it would not

The Western Cape Province has reaffirmed its commitment to establish affordable housing units closer to the City, but is adamant that Tafelberg is not suitable for this purpose and bemoans that it has become a political point-scoring issue.

qualify for a national social subsidy. It was sold to the PJJDS after the Tafelberg Remedial School relocated to Bothasig in 2010.

The social activist organisation, Reclaim the City (Reclaim), supported by the NGO Ndifuna Ukwazi, was awarded a court order suspending the sale, causing a long-running campaign to build affordable housing on the site - which has been supported by the Cape Town City Council (the City) and several other social activist groups.

Last week, however, the Western Cape brought the matter to a close and sold the site to the Jewish school. This led to a chorus of criticism and action from all sides, including the City, Sisulu and various individuals and activist groups, who have been appealing for affordable and conveniently located housing in the

City.

In order to make their protest felt, activists supporting Reclaim, this week "took up residence" in the abandoned Woodstock Hospital and Helen Bowden Nurses' Home near the Waterfront. They say they are not moving from these properties - also earmarked by the provincial government for sale - until their demands are met. Their most important demand is the development of affordable housing on the Tafelberg site.

In its statement on the sale of the Tafelberg property on Wednesday, the provincial Cabinet said affordable housing would be included as a condition of sale for Helen Bowden. The statement also suggested that affordable housing would be part of the sale of Woodstock Hospital.

The occupying activists, however, have described these commitments as "vague". They do not guarantee sales, says Daniel Linde, and they "have no time commitments attached to them".

Linde is part of the campaign for social housing around the city. While Jewish Sea Point is split on the issue, he was involved in the petition that was signed by over 250 Jewish residents - in favour of 270-plus housing units to be built.

In the meantime, the PJJDS - which brands itself as a "multi-sensory school relying heavily on a variety of innovative, creative educational techniques and systems, to inspire learning and thinking in each individual child" - is already planning its new school.

The Western Cape Province has reaffirmed its commitment to establish affordable housing units closer to the City, but is adamant that the Tafelberg site is not the best suitable for this purpose and it bemoans that it has become a political expedient point-scoring issue.

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## South African Jewish Report

# Haley's comet of the UN

When the then United Nations Ambassador nominee, Nikki Haley, first defended Israel in her opening statement, I sat up and listened. She was so impressive in her clear thinking, determination to ensure that no more would the United Nations bully this tiny country in the Middle East.

"Nowhere has the UN's failure been more consistent and more outrageous than against our close ally, Israel, and in the General Assembly session just completed, the UN adopted 20 resolutions against Israel and only six targeting the rest of the world combined.

"In the past 10 years, the Human Rights Council has passed 62 resolutions condemning the reasonable actions Israel takes to defend its security. Meanwhile the world's worst human rights abusers in Syria, Iran and North Korea, received far fewer condemnations. This cannot continue," were her words. And she hadn't even got the job yet.

She has now, and she continues to take no prisoners and doing what she pledged to do: "not stay silent when our values are challenged". It is heartwarming to see such a politician actually "seeing" Israel for what it is and recognising how it is being bullied.

Now I don't for one moment see Israel as blameless and angelic. It is not! But, it is so tiresome to constantly being condemned for trying to exist and for every move it makes, whether it is good or bad.

So, who is Nikki Haley and is she possibly just a Trump apologist?

This impressive woman is the daughter of immigrant Sikh parents from Punjab, India, who arrived almost penniless in their new home. Already, this makes her not your common or garden Trump acolyte. She grew up being different in South Carolina, with a mother who wore a sari and a father who wore a turban. "I was never white enough to be white or black enough to be black," she said. In fact, her real name was Nimrata Randhawa and she started doing her parents' books in their shop when she was just 13. "Only when I got to college did I realise that wasn't normal, but in our family, we worked," she said.

She not only didn't support Trump during his campaign, she was very vocal about her derision of him, publicly calling him a bully and a fraud.

Despite this, she got the ambassadorship. While I may think she is impressive, Forbes magazine said of her appointment that Trump's choice of Haley is a slap to the United Nations and pandering to the Asian-Americans. Forbes claimed that choosing her was showing "contempt for conducting foreign affairs through the UN in particular and multilateral organisations in general".

The article continued to slate Haley's ability. Forbes was not the only medium or organisation to pooh-pooh Haley.

But Haley has been throwing her weight in all the right places, proving her political skill in a quietly spoken, clear, unapologetic way that means business.

And her support for Israel is unwavering, which is pretty unusual in the hallowed halls of the United Nations.

While Trump has in fact reportedly dismissed the UN as useless, calling it "just a club for people to get together, talk and have a good time", Haley is taking her role seriously. She had a report on Israel being an apartheid state pulled as being ridiculous and the director who wrote it has since resigned. She also stopped a Palestinian from taking up one of the highest offices in the UN. She has without doubt won the Jewish American vote.

Now, I may not agree with all her political views, but I love the way she puts them across in such a reasoned way.

She's no bully, nor is she an apologist. She is a fair and astute politician with what I believe will be a long and fruitful career, if her last few weeks are anything to go by.

Just this week, Haley wowed the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (see page three) with her achievements in a short space of time. And if there was any doubt, she said: "For anyone who thinks they can't get anything done in the UN, they need to know there is a new sheriff in town". I for one will be watching this space with interest.

**Peta Krost Maunder**  
Editor



**PAULA SLIER**

Military checkpoints are never something to joke about. But I won't quickly forget being stopped at one, years ago, in Algiers, Algeria.

The soldier couldn't stop laughing as he relayed that just before us a busload of Chinese tourists had passed through. "Made in China, Made in China!" he kept repeating, to booming laughter all around. The joke was lost on me. It turned out that while products bearing the label "made in China" were commonplace across the country, Chinese people were a rarity.

Algerians thought it very funny that not only goods, but people too, could be "made in China".

It's the most recognisable label in the world today - "Made in China" - and it talks to the country's standing as the largest manufacturer and exporter in the world. But "Made in China" doesn't readily translate to "invented in China" and for this, the country of nearly 1,4 billion

people is looking more and more to a country in the Middle East that is 60 per cent desert and home to only eight million.

China's economy is some 35 times larger than Israel's, but when it comes to cutting edge technology, the Jewish State punches far above its weight. And so, a mutually beneficial relationship is born - Israel innovates and China buys.

The result is that China has become Israel's largest trading partner in Asia and third largest in the world, with trade volumes reaching over \$11 billion.

No wonder then that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, along with about 100 Israeli business leaders and five government ministers, recently spent five days in Beijing signing agreements with the country's largest corporations whose turnovers reach into the tens of billions of dollars.

In the words of Netanyahu, it was a "marriage made in heaven". While China gets to access Israeli know-how aimed at reshaping its economy from one based on cheap labour to one driven by technology and innovation, Israeli companies get to seek out new opportunities and markets in Asia, specifically in China.

Slowly but surely Israel is pivoting eastwards. This was Netanyahu's second visit to China in four years, hot on the heels of visits he made - the first by an Israeli Prime Minister - to Singapore and Australia last month.

Later in the year Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, plans to visit Israel - this too will be the first such visit by a sitting Indian prime minister. In the Middle East where political considerations are never far in the background, the implications of these meetings are important.

The European Union remains Israel's largest trading

partner - but Asia is steadily closing the gap. An important difference between the two, observers will point out, is that much to the chagrin of Jerusalem, co-operation with the EU comes with political pressures.

The EU has published guidelines for member states to place consumer labels on products originating in the settlements, indicating they're not made in Israel, and has also supported Palestinian construction in Area C of the West Bank, which is under Israeli military and civil rule. By comparison, the Chinese seem to be interested only in Israeli technology with no political strings attached.

Still, it would be foolhardy to believe that Israel carries as much importance for China as China clearly carries for Israel. Beijing has good relations with all parties in the Middle East and her ties with Iran, Turkey, and the Arab world are rapidly growing.

Over the last nine years, Chinese investments and contracts worldwide reached a staggering \$780 billion. Israel represents only 0,02 per cent of that total compared with 13 per cent for Iran and the Arab world. Even more sobering, many analysts believe, is that as time passes Israel may lose its competitive advantage when it comes to technological innovations.

Interestingly, Israel was the first Middle Eastern country to recognise the People's Republic of China back in January 1950. But that didn't stop the then Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong from placing China firmly in the anti-Israel camp.

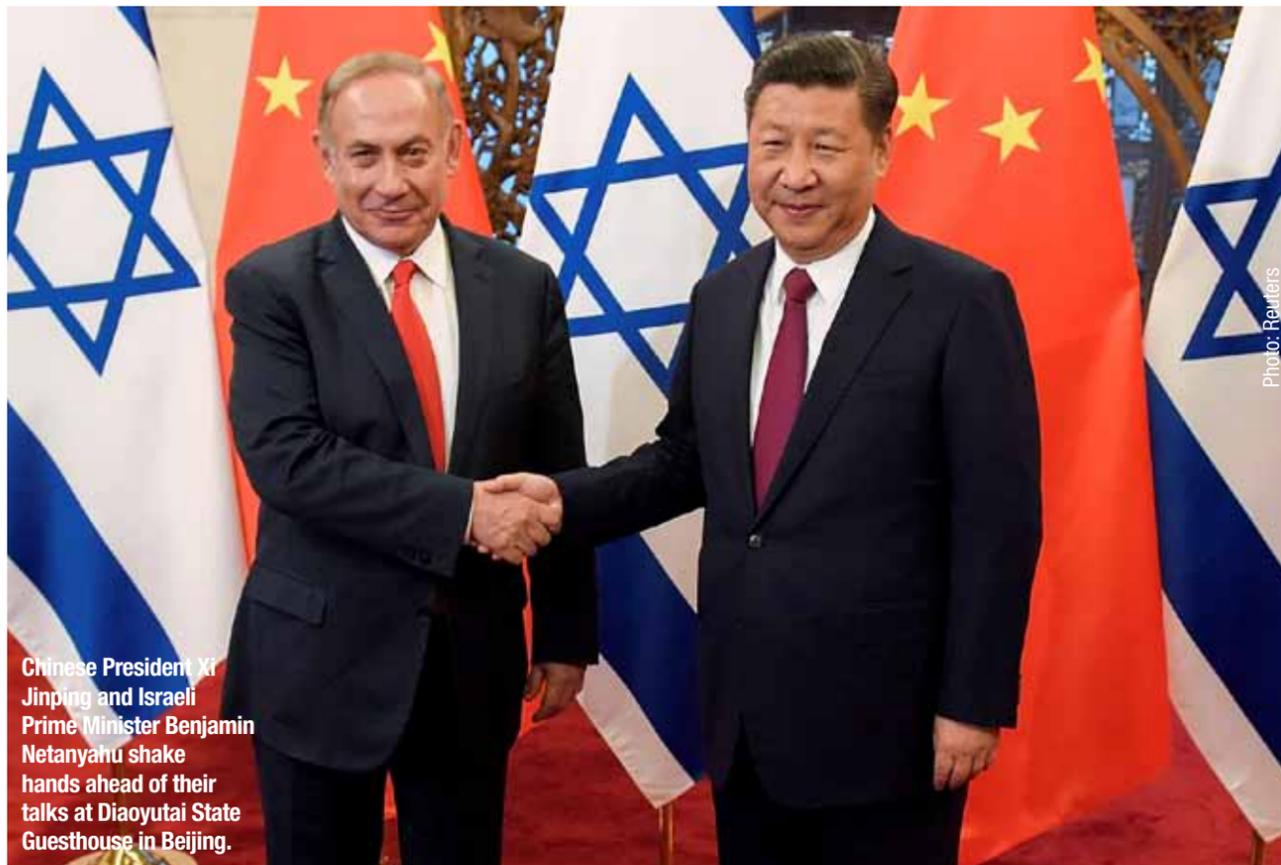
India, as a co-founder of the Nonaligned Bloc, backed the Arab world against Israel; and Japan, although that country established diplomatic ties with Israel in 1952, was part of the Arab boycott because of her dependence on Arab oil. Israel only established diplomatic relations with China and India in 1992.

The love affair Netanyahu refers to, like all romances, has more than a little baggage in the closet.

Beijing has expressed concern that Israeli policies towards the Palestinians could destabilise an already unstable region. It also recognised the Palestinian state in the United Nations, opposed any military attack against Iran, and does not consider movements such as Hamas and Hezbollah as terrorist organisations.

Almost 60 years ago, Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, warned the Knesset that US/USSR dominance was "transient" and would in the future be replaced by China and India. The Israeli premier seems to be heeding that call, but he would be wise to do so with his eyes wide open.

• 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.



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shake hands ahead of their talks at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing.

## Cape Town campus IAW stopped short of violence

SUZANNE BELLING

The University of Cape Town campus was the scene of an exploding confrontation on Wednesday between the South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) and the Palestinian Solidarity Forum (PSF) during the Israel Apartheid Week (IAW). IAW was held two weeks later in Cape Town than in Johannesburg.

"It was a totally hostile environment," said Rowan Polovin, chairman of the South African Zionist Federation Cape Council, who was on the scene.

SAUJS had set up their tents to promote



Heated debate at UCT

dialogue. "Then the PSF members entered our tents in an attempt to cause trouble. They all started screaming at each other."

The arguments became vicious and the campus security - that were very heavy at Wits University during their IAW - were nowhere to be seen, according to Cayla Urdang, who works for SAUJS. "While the students may not have been nervous, I was because of their absence. However, the university insisted they were there," said Urdang.

Polovin said the incidents stopped just short of exploding violence. "It became very heated, with PSF members pointing fingers in the SAUJS students' faces. Thank G-d no one was hurt," he said.

The PSF was targeting not only Jews, but those of other races they accused of supporting the killing of Palestinians. One girl, who is not Jewish, was wearing a Magen David and was the target of violent verbal abuse and was believed to have had her necklace pulled off her neck.

But, according to Polovin, SAUJS was the victor of the day, as its members silenced the PSF agitators, who eventually withdrew from the tents "in the silence of defeat".

## Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma stands behind BDS, but not anti-Semitism

ANT KATZ

Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma - one of the top contenders for the next South African president, ostensibly with the backing of her former husband President Jacob Zuma - insisted that no racism or anti-Semitism would be tolerated in the ANC's support of the Palestinians.

She said this in addressing a Rustenburg audience in North West Province in solidarity with BDS and Israel Apartheid Week at UCT this week.

"As we debate tactics towards the ANC policy conference in June," she said, "we must ensure that we are disciplined, inclusive and principled."

Wearing a Palestinian keffiyeh over her shoulders, she maintained that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is "not a religious conflict", but a political one. However, she was unwavering in her total support and belief in the Palestinians' right to self-determination, as a South African and a pan-Africanist.

She insisted that the plight of the Palestinians had "very specific ramifications for South Africa".

Despite serious attempts of the international community, she said, "genuine negotiations have not been on the agenda for more than a decade". She was careful not to attribute blame to one side or the other, but her audience did - and they cheered her on.

Bring it home, was her message. "This country



Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

gave refuge to many Jewish people who faced persecution throughout the tumultuous 20th century," adding that many Jewish immigrants joined the struggle against apartheid because they saw in it the similarities between their own people's history and the oppression and persecution of black South Africans.

Dlamini-Zuma heaped praise on BDS and said that it was because the normal means of resolving conflicts in the world were not working, that the international community had caused BDS to "have decided to look at other tactics". She said BDS has looked to other less conventional means of pressurising Israel to "end the occupation and act against human rights abuses against Palestinians".

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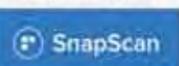


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# Positively coming to terms with grief

MOIRA SCHNEIDER  
CAPE TOWN

On December 24, 2013, Maxine Nerwich received the call that no mother ever wants to receive: her beloved youngest son, Brett, aged 30, had drowned while on an outing to a dam in Simonstown.

"The words 'Something terrible has happened to Brett' needed no explanation," the former long-time Herzlia educator recalled as she shared her story at the Nechama Counselling for the Bereaved seminar last week. "I knew instinctively that Brett had passed away."

Some 23 years earlier, Maxine had received another traumatic call informing her that seven-year-old Brett had been involved in a terrible motor accident. There followed years of struggle which included coping with minimal brain dysfunction and a "trache".

"I was determined that Brett's passing would be an opportunity for me to grow and learn," the single mother said. "I did have an idea of what I was capable of surviving," she said, referring to her son's childhood accident, "but Brett's loss was to become the greatest life lesson for me."

Maxine said she had never questioned: "Why Brett?" simply because there was no answer. Nor had she experienced feelings of guilt or anger at his passing.

"It happened. I was powerless to change the situation, so for me it was a case of live my best life thereafter. I will grieve for the rest of my life, every day and in my own way."

She made a conscious decision to make the best of every day. "I would continue to wear colourful clothes, paint my face every morning and look in the mirror at a face that knew there was a life worth living, albeit accompanied by an underlying sadness."

So, a few weeks after the tragic accident, Maxine resolved to resume her successful extra-lessons practice, something that proved to be "a wonderful escape".

Looking back, she realises that she has learnt "so much" in dealing with grief. "Grief is portable, silent, deeply personal and always present," she reflects.

"How I deal with its nature is dependent on what goes on around me on any given day. It shows up when and where it feels like doing so.

"In the box of bright green Future Life cereal Brett loved, the Axe deodorant on the Pick n Pay shelf, the smell of



Brett, Rus, Maxine and Craig Nerwich, a month before Brett passed away.

challah baking on a Friday morning, a Lionel Ritchie song - Brett couldn't stand him - the list of triggers is infinite.

"But each one of them is a slice of my loss. Sometimes I allow myself to be vulnerable and I have a mighty sob. Other times I stand and stare at the many photos of Brett that adorn every available space in my home.

"Brett's room has remained Brett's room. The mountain of clothes on his chair is still there... it's Brett.

"His siddur and kippah remain in the same place along with some of his other personal belongings. Not to be moved until I sell my home one day."

She has moved on, she says, identifying acceptance as being pivotal to the process. She recalls the early days after Brett's passing, when people would proceed to tell her how she was feeling.

"I made it clear to them not to assume that everything was terrible and awful and life not possible to continue... just ask me how I was feeling that day and give me the opportunity to tell you.

"I totally understand that if you have not lost a child it is not possible to know what goes on in the heart, mind and soul of the parent."

She says that she has gained the strength to face up to any issues. "I have crawled back from loss and now there is no longer fear of anything.

"What is there that is worse than losing a child? Nothing."

## A long life encapsulated in 80 big boxes...

ROBYN SASSEN

Acclaimed veteran architect Clive Chipkin launched the archives of his work - a veritable treasure trove of South African architectural history - in the name of his late wife, Valerie, who he called "the inspiration" to his collection.

"She created a no-nonsense system with limited resources," he says. "Everything collected went into files. Files went into box files. Everything was numbered, labelled, indexed, accessible... and aside from all the other things she did, she found the time to turn my manuscripts into published work."

Last week's launch of the Valerie Chipkin Archives at the Fassler Gallery, in the John Moffat Building on Wits University campus, was co-ordinated to honour Valerie's life. She passed away in March 2015, after a long illness. The exhibition is the tip of the iceberg of between four and five decades of Clive's architectural research and history, filling over 80 boxes.

It offers insights into Chipkin's architectural work, experience and methodology and above all, into the significant architecture books that he wrote over the years.

Chipkin graduated in architecture in 1954, and after enjoying a scenic foray into the industry, which saw him travel extensively, meet and converse with architectural luminaries of the ilk of Le Corbusier's brother, and open his eyes to different understandings

of Modernist architecture's textures and visual grammar, he set up his own architectural practice in 1958. Over the years, Chipkin upheld a warm commitment with Wits University, offering his services as a part-time academic.

In 1970, in collaboration with Valerie, who was an artist affiliated with the Johannesburg Art Foundation under Bill Ainslie, Chipkin designed the family's Craighall Park home in Portland Avenue, and as he describes in one of his publications, this house was a feast of textural detail, paying respectful tribute to the African context and the immigrant associations of the house and its residents.

Born in 1937, in Cape Town, Valerie was a member of the Black Sash and Clive remembers the bursaries for black learners which she established and administered, and the rural clinics and child-birth facilities which she had had a hand in establishing.

"The name Valerie Chipkin Archives is not incidental," wrote Clive in his opening address for the exhibition, mentioning that he had known Valerie for a "fulsome" 56 years to the day. Describing the opening event as "quite fun", he speaks of Valerie as the inspiration for this collection.

The exhibition comprises displays of photographs and drawn elevations, extracts from publications and personal drawings and paintings which offer insight into the richness of the relationship of Valerie and



Clive Chipkin

Clive.

Chipkin worked on a number of architectural commissions in and around Johannesburg, but he is more present in the awareness of architectural experts as a documenter of the history of architecture, an interest which considerably informs this valuable archive.

An honorary doctorate was conferred on Chipkin in 2013 in acknowledgement of the contribution he made to the industry, not only through his significant publications on the history of architecture in South Africa, but also because of his seminal role as a member of Architects Against Apartheid, an organisation begun by Struggle icon Rusty Bernstein in 1986.

Chipkin's magnum opus Johannesburg Transition: Architecture and Society from 1950 is a follow-on from his Johannesburg Style: Architecture and Society 1880s-1960, which was published in 1993.

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Harry Sideropoulos with Sydenham's Rabbi Yehuda Stern, in a light moment.

# NEWSMAKER

## Q & A

### Harry's Beth Din

**Why did you agree to talk at Sydenham Shul?**

I remember reading an interview with Kevin Spacey, in which he said: "If you're lucky enough to do well, it's your responsibility to send the elevator back down." To stand in front of an audience comprising tomorrow's leaders, hungry to interact with you and hungry to listen to your story, that's a privilege indeed.

**What was the personal message you wanted to give young adults?**

My message was one of bravery. Stand true to your convictions. Stand in the light of your truth and to always remember that they have every right not be who they are not. But most importantly that if they want something, they're going to have to work hard and I mean HARD. And in-between life, to learn to laugh.

**What is it that concerns you about the youth today?**

I get a sense that they feel lost, living a filtered life through a social media landscape, while showcasing their glamorous fictitious world. They don't talk, they text. The word patience doesn't exist - they want instant gratification.

I truly feel that quite a few "millennials" are over-indulged by their parents, honing this sense of entitlement. They want and they get it. So, their coping mechanisms when challenged in the real world, haven't truly been activated, hence the sense of being lost.

**What did you enjoy most about your experience at Sydenham Shul?**

It was spiritual. The choir was/is sensational. Rabbi (Yehuda) Stern and Rabbi (Yossy) Goldman are both extraordinary human beings who resonate enlightenment, yet are very grounded and human. We *hucked* and laughed together all night long. I was also moved by the community's generosity and kindness towards me. It felt like I had checked into a sanctuary for a couple of hours.

**What drew you to writing a "The Whole Megillah"?**

My love for my friend, Adrienne Bayhack. We studied at varsity together and she introduced me to your community some 23 years ago. I hold her very dear to my heart. Plus, let's get serious, what happens at a Shabbat table is an actor's dream. Of course, I was going to write about my Jewish experience through the eyes of a Greek and put it on a stage.

**How did you manage to write about Jewish people without upsetting anyone?**

I have my very own Jewish Advisory Board.

**What are your favourite quirks about Jewish people?**

*Vassing*. As a Greek I got it first time round. You *vas* and then you keep *shtoem* until you climb into the challah. By the way, MMMMMM-ING to each other after you have *vassed* is still considered talking!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! And, of course, shortening everyone's name to one syllable; from Harry to Ha. You are a nation that came out of your mother's womb relentlessly *hucking*, so why are the last two syllables of everyone's name such a linguistic challenge for you? "Howzit my Ha."

**What are the similarities between Jews and Greeks?**

A sense of family and a sense of community. The Jewish community holds a beacon and shines the light on nurturing and creating incubators for YOUR COMMUNITY and those around you. Irrespective of colour and religious beliefs. Then, our mothers. Don't ever get in the way of one. And food, which becomes the backdrop to our lives. We happy, WE EAT. We sad, WE EAT. We gather around a table, we break bread, we talk, we share and sometimes we cry and most times, we shout a lot, but that's I guess who we are. But we need to seriously talk about gefilte fish.

**Tell us about going to Greece to explore your "Jewish roots".**

As of 2015, I now live in Athens for five months of the year. I knew that I wanted to write a piece about my Greco-Jewish experiences. Athens always inspires me and some of my best work has been created while sitting on my quaint little balcony writing. Greece played a very important role in sheltering members of the Jewish community from Nazi Germany. So, I decided to go do research and I came across Chabad of Athens.

I hooked up with the rabbi and we had a glorious, hilarious afternoon chatting. What was so astoundingly funny was seeing all these Jewish folks entering Chabad, speaking to me fluently in Greek. And of course everyone wanted to feed me! KOSHER GREEK CUISINE.

• Sideropoulos's newly adapted show, "The Whole Megillah" will be back at the end of May before embarking on a tour of Australia and Canada. He will be performing at his Pop-Up Theatre in the hall of the Greek Church on Glenhove Avenue, Johannesburg.

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# South Africans living in Trump's America

When Donald Trump became president of the United States of America, South African Jews had a great deal to say either in support of or against this man. The Jewish Report has since run numerous political articles written by Americans about the Trump administration, but this week we bring you the views of three South African-born Americans on the impact of Trump on their lives.



Leora Rajak and her husband, David Lipschitz and their children Rafi (left) and Tal at JFK airport when they immigrated to the US.

## LEORA RAJAK

I'll always remember that awful moment in November last year when I woke the kids for school to tell them Donald Trump won. Not just because of the horror of the election results, but because I'd spent weeks assuring them that there was nothing to fear, people in our newly-adopted home would not choose someone like Trump to lead them.

We soon realised that we had no idea who we were really sharing the country with. Living near New York City, in the Democrat state of Connecticut, we are sheltered from the anger and frustration felt by the Trump voter, usually depicted as middle American, white, scared and with their jobs under threat.

But after the elections the hidden Trump voters started to show themselves. At dinner parties and business meetings we came across the well-educated, successful business woman - a Republican who detests Hillary Clinton and thinks Trump will be good for taxes and business.

She's Jewish, so she believes Trump will be good for Israel (his son-in-law is Jewish, she reminds me). And that meant she could forgive him everything else.

I have met several people like this. I am shocked each time, and reminded of how, when living in South Africa under apartheid, it was hard to fathom how people one would meet at weddings and barmitzvahs were able to forgive so much of what was wrong in the present because of their fear of what lay in the future.

Thankfully, as in South Africa in the 1980s, I have again learnt that decent-minded people, of which there are many, do not wait passively for things to change. Trump's election has spurred civil action and community advocacy.

The wave of energy felt when women marched on Washington and elsewhere, is being harnessed, whether it's about immigration, gun control or reproductive rights, people are organising.

And while it's very exciting, I can't help but feel a combination of envy and amusement at

what it's like for the American activist in 2017. Meetings and demonstrations get called in minutes over social media, there is no fear of reprisal, no inkling of what it means to work under an oppressive regime.

Protesting the Trump administration means receiving "calls to action" tweets that explain how to phone a senator, or joining Facebook groups detailing each step required to defeat problematic issues coming up for a vote in State congresses.

It's all done formally according to specific norms and protocols. It is about activists and ordinary citizens working within the system, not trying to overthrow it. At worst, they say, it will be like this for four years. At best, they say, we can win issue-based victories and smaller elections along the way and see change emerge earlier from within.

• *Businesswoman Leora Rajak recently moved to the US with her family.*



## RONIN VAN MIR

It's a very long way from Vanderbijlpark to New Jersey. In fact, it's about a lifetime and a half, and then some... spanning three continents and two countries - first Israel and now the US.

Childhood in Vanderbijlpark and then Johannesburg in the 1970s was very protected. I learned more about the politics of South Africa in my first year in Israel than I had in 13 years in South Africa.

Having left soon after the Soweto riots in 1976, just before the amazing transformation of South Africa, it's exciting to be a part of what's happening now in the US.

Only in my early 20s when the new South Africa was founded, it's through a very different lens that I now view the current changes in the US and with a much broader global focus.

As a father of teenage and young adult children, and as a Jew in a world where the threats to both the US where I live and to Israel which will always be my home, are very real and imminent, I'm feeling a sense of true optimism for the first time in many years.

The globalist socialist philosophy of his predecessor has left President Donald Trump with a plethora of pressing issues that all need to be addressed urgently (economy, national security, healthcare, civil discourse, hostile media and more).

Despite the resistance from his detractors, including the mass media, he is pushing forward to make good on his campaign promises. Most encouraging is his drive to return the US to a market-driven society, away from the centralist, government-dictated society that brought the US to break away from Britain in the first place 250 years ago.

While the social discourse and attempts to violently undermine and delegitimise his presidency are extremely troubling to me, and are tantamount to sedition and subversion, I have faith that as people begin to feel less and less of a government hand in their pockets and purses, this atmosphere too will change.

• *Ronin van Mir describes himself as a traditional conservative Jew, who is passionate about Israel and his Jewish identity.*



## MIRIAM LACOB STIX

Like so many other people, when Donald Trump first announced his presidency, I didn't take him seriously. It was hard to believe that an individual this ill-informed, whose main currency was fear and outright prejudice, and whose reputation as a businessman was somewhat sketchy, could be a serious candidate for the highest office in the country.

There is still an element of unreality to Trump's ascendance. His isolationistic rhetoric, choice of Cabinet members and attacks on the media go against everything I stand for.

I was born in Johannesburg in 1950, two years after the Nationalist government started to put the system of apartheid in place, and

just five years after the end of the WWII. My psyche has been impacted by the awfulness of the Holocaust and the terrible privations and poverty endured by black South Africans.

I was witness to the ugliness of a political system that segregated, divided, and discriminated against people based on the colour of their skin. And, while I was fortunate that my extended South African family did not directly suffer from the Holocaust, it is a deep part of my identity. In fact, I can proudly report that my father was one of the demonstrators who pressured the then-South African government to preserve its allegiance to the Allied cause.

Nevertheless, in my childish imagination, the inescapable terror of being hunted and murdered only on account of one's religious identification, was indelibly imprinted in my mind. Thus, when Trump speaks about registering Muslims, it sends chills through my spine. When Trump bans people from certain countries from entering the US, it gives me goosebumps.

The fact is that no one from any of the targeted countries has committed an act of terror in the United States. Rather, I am horrified that the US Government can engage in such a heartless act as to deny desperate refugees the kind of sanctuary that is inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty.

As a privileged immigrant to the US myself, I am attuned to the reasons people have for immigrating to the United States, where its Constitution and the Rule of Law make a life that was impossible for them on their home countries, possible and full of hope here.

And I am enormously saddened and afraid that Trump's administration and the individuals who are in positions of enormous power, do not honour either the Constitution or the Rule of Law.

Many Jews endorse Trump based on his support of Israel. I honour them and him for that. I was raised in a milieu in which Zionism and support of the State of Israel was a given, and the self-reliance and courage of the Israelis was celebrated.

However, I question whether that is a reason to support him unequivocally, particularly when the hateful rhetoric he expressed in his campaign, appears to have unleashed terrifying xenophobia and racism that has often been targeted at the Jewish community and Jewish journalists.

My only wish is that Trump would take a leaf out of Nelson Mandela's book and unite rather than divide. If I were his communications coach, I would make him read "Long Walk to Freedom" and look up to exemplary leaders who preached reconciliation to bring people together.

I would work with him to understand the term Mandela referred to as ubuntu - we are human through the humanity of others.

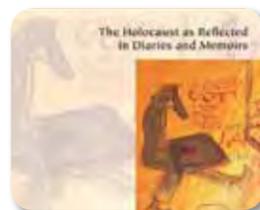
His actions and rhetoric up until now are certainly devoid of this sentiment, but I am hopeful.

• *Miriam Lacob Stix is a former South African journalist living in New York City.*

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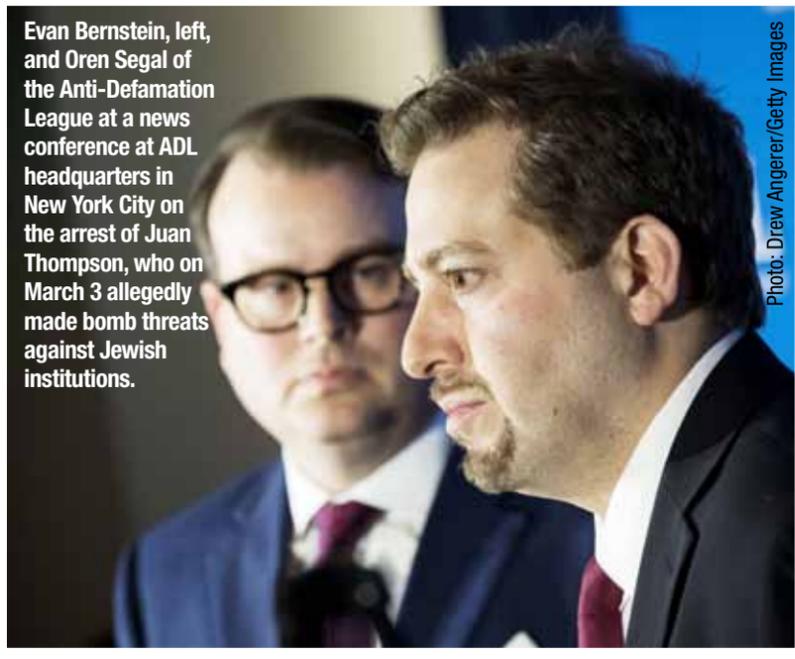
# Jewish bomb threat suspect undermines groups' narrative on anti-Semitism

**BEN SALES  
NEW YORK**

Many Jewish groups blamed white supremacists, emboldened by Donald Trump's campaign, for the bomb threats that have plagued Jewish institutions since the beginning of this year. It appears the groups were wrong. The news that one Jewish teen - an Israeli, no less - was behind most of the approximately 150 bomb threats that have hit Jewish community centres since the start of 2017 is a shocking twist in light of months in which the Anti-Defamation League and other

reports. And his father may have known what he was doing. Israel's anti-fraud squad arrested the 19-year-old suspect at his home in southern Israel and searched the premises last week Thursday. He was brought to court and ordered held until this week Thursday. The other suspect in the bomb threats, arrested earlier in March, also does not appear connected to the far right. He's a left-wing African-American former journalist who apparently made the calls in a convoluted vendetta against a former romantic partner. ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt told JTA last week Thursday

elderly, teens and others who have been terrorised by these attacks," Greenblatt said. The JCC Association of North America said it was "troubled" by the news that the suspect is Jewish, while the Jewish Federations of North America called the news "heartbreaking." For long-time observers of anti-Semitism, the news showed the need to be cautious when analysing hateful acts. Former ADL National Director Abraham Foxman, who has previously called for cooler heads in responding to recent hateful acts, said last Thursday that the arrest shows the pitfalls of making assumptions. "Always take these things seriously, but don't jump to conclusions," Foxman told JTA.



Evan Bernstein, left, and Oren Segal of the Anti-Defamation League at a news conference at ADL headquarters in New York City on the arrest of Juan Thompson, who on March 3 allegedly made bomb threats against Jewish institutions.

Photo: Drew Angerer/Getty Images

groups pointed their collective finger at the far right. "We're in unprecedented times," said Oren Segal, director of the ADL's Centre on Extremism, at a recent news conference on the bomb threats. "We've never seen, ever, the volume of bomb threats that we've seen. White supremacists in this country feel more emboldened than they ever have before because of the public discourse and divisive rhetoric." The ADL has repeatedly charged Trump with emboldening extremists, anti-Semites and far-right groups in the US. Other groups were even more explicit in linking rising anti-Semitic acts this year to the new president.

that the organisation stands by its prognosis of a surge in anti-Semitism and hatred in the US since the campaign. Aside from the JCC bombings, Greenblatt pointed to a range of other hateful activities tied to white supremacists, from abuse of journalists on Twitter and harassment of Jews in Whitefish, Montana, to a South Carolina man who plotted a mass shooting at a synagogue. "The impact is still the same: You've got children, families, the

Jonathan Sarna, a professor of American Jewish history at Brandeis University, said this incident shows Jews may not be as hated in America as it may have seemed. He cited a recent study by the Pew Research Centre showing Jews to be the most popular religious group in America. "It's good to take a middle ground," he said. "Yes, there are people who hate Jews, but we're not seeing storm troopers at the gate." Still, Sarna and Foxman noted the string of other anti-Semitic acts recently - the cemetery desecrations and swastika graffiti, as well as a deluge of anti-Semitic harassment on Twitter. Because anti-Semitic acts, beyond the JCC threats, remain frequent, Foxman does not believe that last Thursday's arrest will lead to anyone downplaying future acts of anti-Semitism. "It's there," Foxman said of anti-Semitism. "So there's one guy who, whatever his problem was, that doesn't change the fact that every day there are incidents of anti-Semitism in this country." (JTA)

On January 10, following the first wave of JCC bomb threats, Bend The Arc, a liberal Jewish group, said: "Trump helped to create the atmosphere of bigotry and violence that has resulted in these dangerous threats against Jewish institutions and individuals." In February, the Anne Frank Centre for Mutual Respect said in a statement to Trump: "Rightly or wrongly, the most vicious anti-Semites in America are looking at you and your administration as a nationalistic movement granting them permission to attack Jews." But the perpetrator of the anti-Semitic acts does not fit the profile of a white supremacist. According to reports, he's a mentally ill Israeli-American Jewish teenager. He worked from home, using a computer lab with sophisticated equipment, encryption and transmission systems, and a powerful antenna, according to



## TRIBUTE TO A LEGEND

On 16 December 2016, South African Jewry lost one of its greatest-ever leaders and benefactors with the passing of Gerald Leissner, zt"l.

In a communal career spanning over four decades, Gerald was at the forefront of some of the most significant developments in South African Jewish life, whether in the political, educational, welfare or Holocaust commemoration spheres. Through his unmatched organisational and financial skills, foresight, energy and tireless commitment, he made an immeasurable contribution to our Jewish community, and indeed to South Africa as a whole.

Yeshiva College School and Shul, The SA Jewish Board of Deputies, The IUA-UCF and Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, will be hosting a Memorial evening in tribute to Gerald Leissner.

We invite you to join us in paying tribute to this great Jewish South African.

**Date:** 3 April 2017  
**Time:** Mincha will start at 5:15pm, the memorial will follow at 5:30pm  
**Venue:** Yeshiva College Shul

No RSVP. Further information: Cheryl.tih@yeshivacollege.co.za  
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# And they call themselves Nigerian 'Jews'

HEATHER MASON

"They say I must convert. I say: What can I be converted to? I've been a rabbi since I was 21 years old."

So says Nathan Obiekwe, 56, who calls himself the "rabbi" of the Bethel Messianic Assembly in Yeoville in Johannesburg. Obiekwe has been a so-called rabbi for 35 years and leads a congregation of between 50 and 100 people at his small temple.

Obiekwe is tall and confident, with a beatific smile. He wears long white robes and a white yarmulke. Three things set him apart from other rabbis in Johannesburg:

First, Obiekwe leads a congregation of what they call "messianic Jews" who believe that Jesus Christ, or Yahshua, was the messiah. "We believe that the messiah has been here, and he will come again," Obiekwe explains.

Second, Rabbi Obiekwe is Nigerian. And third, he is black.

Obiekwe comes from southeastern Nigeria, home of the prominent Igbo tribe. While most Igbo people practise Christianity and traditional religions, many believe the tribe originated in Israel, migrating across Africa 3 000 years ago.

A small number of Igbos identify as Jewish and practise Judaism, although Halachically, they are definitely not Jewish.

They believe differently. "We see ourselves as Jewish," says Obiekwe. "Both biologically and religiously."

Obiekwe came to Johannesburg in 2006, after seeing South Africa in a dream. He knew virtually no one and remembers waking up his first morning in Johannesburg, wondering where all the people are. Compared with Lagos, the streets seemed empty.

He visited various local synagogues at first, primarily attending Temple Israel in Hillbrow. But Obiekwe tired of being told he must convert to become a Jew. He began to meet other Nigerian "Jews", praying with them in his one-room flat, and eventually started a congregation of his own.

Today, Bethel Messianic Assembly worships in Obiekwe's modest home on tree-lined Regent Street in Yeoville. A white Jewish man originally owned the house, Obiekwe says, and after the owner died Obiekwe was able to purchase the house himself.

On a rainy Saturday morning in January, cars park end-to-end along the street in front of Bethel Messianic. Across the road is a Pentecostal church - the palm trees in front of it are draped with Christmas lights. Loud wails emanate from inside.

Bethel Messianic has a pleasant blue gate painted with a gold menorah and Jewish star of David. A man in a yarmulke welcomes us in; we hurry through the outdoor passage in the rain, struggling to cover our heads and remove our shoes in the downpour.

We duck into the synagogue, a makeshift building with a low ceiling and corrugated iron roof behind the main house. A woman thrusts a sarong into my hands.

"Women aren't allowed to wear trousers in the temple," she whispers curtly. I struggle to tie the sarong over my jeans.

The congregation is mostly men, with two rows of women and children at the back. In the far corner, dark and shadowy



Nathan Obiekwe rallies his congregation in Yeoville.

on this rainy Sabbath, a band sets up.

Obiekwe stands at the front on a small stage, arms aloft. "Say Hallelujah!" he commands.

"Hallelujah!" the audience responds. Rain batters the roof.

Obiekwe holds a bible and refers to readings from both the Old and New Testaments. He frequently signals his daughter, seated near the back, to read verses.

"Who won the election?" Obiekwe asks. "TRUMP!" The audience calls in unison.

My jaw drops.

"We prayed for this!" he says. "Say Hallelujah!"

Obiekwe signals it's time for worship. "We praise G-d like black people," says the rabbi, winking in our direction. The band, which includes a guitarist, a trumpet-player, a drummer, and men with various Nigerian percussion instruments, begins to play. The congregation rises to its feet and dances.

The music hits me in my solar plexus. Nigerian jazz mixes with the sound of pattering raindrops.

A Bethel Messianic trainee with a bushy black beard boogies at the front of the temple, hoisting a shofar. He widens his arms, head up, and bellows joyfully toward the heavens.

Bethel Messianic struggles to make ends meet. The temple's ceiling leaks in places, and the home is in need of repair. Obiekwe's oldest son has just begun university, training to take over his father's work some day.

But Obiekwe doesn't like to ask for money, wary of being viewed as a scammer. And anyway, money isn't everything. What he says he craves, above all, is validation from the greater Jewish community.

"We still need more recognition, more help from whoever is serious with Judaism... We need to be recognised. We need religious help." Unfortunately, this dream is not going to be realised.

## World News in Brief

### Yeshiva head admits to 'inappropriate' comments on female soldiers

JERUSALEM - The rabbinic head of a religious Zionist pre-military yeshiva in the West Bank has acknowledged that he was wrong to denigrate female soldiers by saying the Israeli army drives them "crazy" and upsets their Jewishness. Rabbi Yigal Levinstein, who runs the Bnei David academy in the Eli settlement, in a letter to his students and to graduates of the yeshiva said the tone of the remarks he made earlier this month to several hundred students visiting from another West Bank pre-military academy was "inappropriate".

Levinstein however defended his point, saying: "Women have been taken hostage by the feminist movement" and he added that he made his comments to better prepare students for service in the military.

"I am trying to save the girls from feminist captivity and to fight for their honour as Jewish women and against liberals staining their honour," he said in the five-page letter sent out on Monday.

"They draft them. They go in Jewish and they're not Jewish when they come out - not in terms of genetics. Their whole system of values becomes confused, their priorities - home, career. They'll make them all crazy. Agreeing to this is forbidden," Levinstein said.

"Someone told me recently: 'Don't worry. They're just practising putting on makeup for their wedding day.' I don't know who will marry them. She'll tell the kids battlefield stories at night."

Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman threatened to withdraw official recognition of the Eli pre-army academy and hesder yeshiva if Levinstein did not resign over his remarks.

In the wake of the speech, leaders of religious Zionist yeshivas in Israel called on religious students to refrain from serving in mixed-gender combat units and called on the heads of the Israeli military to show sensitivity to the soldiers. (JTA)

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# Ahmed Kathrada: a man of balance



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Struggle veteran Ahmed Kathrada's death on Tuesday follows the furore about Western Cape Premier Helen Zille's controversial tweets on benefits white colonialism brought to Africa. The two events are vastly different, but throw light on each other.

Kathrada brought some sanity to today's climate of political correctness, a censorious atmosphere in which many things cannot be mentioned. Apartheid is over, but what legitimacy do whites - Jews among them - have here now? What are they allowed to say amidst the increasingly strident anti-colonial, anti-white rhetoric? The rageful reaction to Zille illustrates the problem.

Jews came as immigrants mainly from Eastern Europe in the late 1800s and early 1900s to escape Jew-hatred and poverty, when the British Commonwealth was thriving. Are they also colonisers or do they belong here? The silencing of white voices raises serious questions.

Kathrada was a gentle man who dismissed hateful rhetoric against whites or others. In June 2012, he attended the funeral of world-famous Jewish palaeoanthropologist Phillip Tobias, with former President Thabo Mbeki and Struggle veterans Tokyo Sexwale and advocate George Bizos, and saluted Tobias as a true son of Africa.

Consistent with his belief in human dignity and his love of Africa, Tobias had been a leader in the campaign to bring the Khoisan woman Saartjie Baartman's remains home from Europe. Born in 1789, she had been taken there and her naked body displayed for decades in the UK and France as a freak for people to gawk at.

After she died at age 28, her body continued being displayed in a museum. Her remains were buried on Women's Day, 2002 in her birthplace in the Eastern Cape.

Kathrada also confronted issues unpleasant for Jews, including those who blindly supported Israel no matter the topic. He participated in Israel Apartheid Week organised by BDS, alongside Cosatu and individuals such as SACP Secretary-General Blade Nzimande and ANC National Chairman Baleka Mbete.

The event riles Jews who believe applying the apartheid label to Israel is false and anti-Semitic, which Kathrada certainly was not.

Another Jewish Struggle veteran, Denis Goldberg, a Rivonia trialist alongside Kathrada, said emotionally after his passing: "We went through facing the gallows together, absolutely certain we were going to be hanged." Goldberg went to prison in Pretoria; Kathrada went to Robben Island.

Kathrada had the balance to see through false rhetoric from whatever source, but with a humanity that made people listen. Last year he called on President Jacob Zuma to resign because of his violation of the Constitution, the theft of state assets and negation of "the values we stood for". Sadly, Zuma is still in office.

Next week Jews celebrate Passover and freedom from slavery. The festival had a particularly large "elephant in the room" during apartheid. It celebrates freedom, yet in numerous Jewish homes a black maid stood in the kitchen, captive under the racist regime while the white Jewish family sang liberation songs. What would Kathrada say about the meaning of freedom in South Africa today? One aspect is knowing you are welcome, no matter your race, ethnicity or religion.

This country has not yet come to terms with its multi-cultural identity and the role of minorities in it - Jews or others. You can't undo centuries of colonialism and apartheid in one generation. It is legitimate that black South Africans are seeking their African identity, as Jews seek their Jewish identity after centuries of persecution. Inevitably, "outsiders" sometimes get offended.

All sides need to aim at everyone being part of this nation, despite the history. The silencing of people such as Zille doesn't help this cause. Kathrada and people of principle like him who had much to say about building this new country, will be sorely missed.

• Read Geoff Sifrin's regular columns on his blog [sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com](http://sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com)

## A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



**Above Board**  
**Jeff Katz**  
National Chairman

## Weapons cache wake-up call

From time to time, caches of illegal weapons are discovered in South Africa. Generally, the authorities have assumed the motives of those responsible to be criminal-related. However, if media reports are accurate, this does not appear to be the case concerning the arms cache discovered in Randburg earlier this week.

While AK47s and revolvers are typically used in bank robberies and other similar crimes, that is not true for mortar bombs and suicide bomb vests. For the time being at least, it must be assumed that a terrorist attack was being planned, or at the very least being seriously considered.

One of the immediate lessons our community should draw from this incident is how the weapons were discovered. On discovering a suspicious bag in a dilapidated building basement, workers did not ignore it, but immediately contacted the South African police.

Similarly, it was through careful observation and diligent intelligence gathering that the authorities learned of planned terrorist attacks in the past, including one in the last year aimed at an unidentified Jewish installation

It is a fundamental responsibility of our entire community to maintain the same level of vigilance when going about our daily activities. We need to be constantly aware of what is going on around us and in the event of discovering anything in our environment that might, if only potentially, be a cause for concern, to report it without delay.

High levels of vigilance must be maintained at all times, but particularly over the upcoming Yomtov period. The CSO runs a 24/7 call service (0860 276 276), and will ensure that every incident reported to it will be followed up, thoroughly investigated and, if necessary, taken further.

### Tribute evening for Gerald Leissner, zt"l

This coming Monday evening, April 3, the SAJBD will be partnering with Yeshiva College, the IUA-UCF and the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, in hosting a tribute evening to one of South African Jewry's greatest-ever communal leaders and benefactors, the late Gerald Leissner.

The event will take place at the Yeshiva College (Glenhazel) Shul, commencing with mincha at 17:15.

In a communal career spanning over four decades, Gerald was at the forefront of some of the most significant developments in South African Jewish life, whether in the political, educational, welfare or Holocaust commemoration spheres.

Parallel to this was the enormous contribution that he made to the country as a whole. Following his passing in December last year, I devoted a column to reflecting on what he had done for our community and my own personal debt to him for all the advice, support and guidance given to me over the last few years. I hope that as many people as possible can join us in paying tribute to this great Jewish South African.

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

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

## World News in Brief

### Ken Livingstone defends himself against anti-Semitism accusations

LONDON - Ahead of a British Labour Party disciplinary hearing, former London Mayor Ken Livingstone has defended himself against accusations of anti-Semitism.

He also denied saying that Hitler was a Zionist, but said that he just claimed that Nazi policy "had the effect of supporting" Zionism.

Livingstone on Tuesday posted a 17-page summary of the defence he will present later in the week before the party's National Constitutional Committee.

He was suspended from the party following an April 2016 interview with BBC radio in which he said: "Let's remember when Hitler won his election in 1932 his policy then was that Jews should be moved to Israel. He was supporting Zionism."

Livingstone made the remarks in defence of Labour lawmaker Naz Shah, who was suspended a day earlier over a Facebook post in 2014

suggesting Israelis should be moved en masse to the United States. She apologised a day after the remarks came to light.

Asked during the interview whether he regarded her statement as anti-Semitic, Livingstone said: "No, it's completely over the top, but it's not anti-Semitic."

After making the original comments in April, Livingstone was suspended from Labour amid accusations that the party and its leader, Jeremy Corbyn, had not done enough to curb rampant anti-Semitism among party members. Livingstone has defended his statements several times since making them.

A government inquiry into anti-Semitism was launched last April to determine whether anti-Jewish prejudice has increased in the United Kingdom and to assess the particular dangers facing Jews.

Livingstone said in his defence: "I have broken no Labour Party rule. I am being attacked by the right-wing of the Labour Party because I support Palestinian human rights and strongly back our Leader Jeremy Corbyn. There is no real evidence against me, so hopefully the Labour panel will dismiss the charge against me. Only a biased and rigged jury could find against me." (JTA)

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# Crawford Prep's Mini Mayor

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Joseph Joffe of Crawford Preparatory Sandton, has been selected by his fellow councillors from 40 schools in the Greater Johannesburg area, as mayor of the Johannesburg Mini Council.

Another Crawford Preparatory learner, Shiraz Bodinger, has been elected as a mini councillor for 2017 – also a singular honour.

The Johannesburg Mini Council focuses on grade 7 learners who are encouraged, equipped and empowered to use their leadership skills to make our community's vibrant colours shine.

Johannesburg Mini Council's vision is to see an empowered generation of young South African leaders "who contribute to our country and region in a manner that is united in its diversity and strengthened by each unique voice, and provide a platform where the challenges that young people encounter, are addressed democratically and sustainably".

This is the fifth consecutive year that Crawford Preparatory has had one of its own learners represented on the leadership board.

The motto for the year is: "A child we help is a key to a door, as Minis we'll unlock them all."



Shelley Aarensen (deputy principal at Crawford Prep and teacher in charge of Mini Councillors); Shiraz Bodinger; Joseph Joffe; and Gordon Ewen (principal).

# The Matzah Man visits Sydenham

JENNY MILLER

The Matzah Man visited Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primary School on Wednesday last week to promote the Chevrah Kadisha's Pesach collection of non-perishable foodstuffs.

The children enjoyed interacting with Matzah Man and the Pesach collection of foodstuffs has gained momentum!



Photo: Marilyn Serebro

Sydenham Pre-Primary's middle group with Matzah Man.

# In the running for their houses

OWN CORRESPONDENT

There were track and field events and much more, as every child in Torah Academy Primary School participated in both categories, to be able to assist his or her team.

The winners were: Junior Victrix Ludorum: Yael Naparstek and Chaya Finkelstein; Senior Victrix Ludorum: Jordan de Villiers; Junior Victor Ludorum: Tzvi Bronstein; Senior Victor Ludorum: Yaacov Rabin.



Photo supplied

Grade 5 girls Rivki Kirsh and Batsheva Lurie get ready to throw the javelin.

## Letters

### SQUATTER CAMP FIRES: SUGGESTIONS OF PRE-EMPTIVE ACTION IGNORED

The Jewish Capetonians calling for social housing in Sea Point and other sites in an inclusive Cape Town, must be encouraged to succeed in their demands for equality to all people of the city.

What I find more alarming as an outsider from Brakpan in Gauteng - but a caring individual - is the utter despair and hopelessness of the people living in the squatter camps when a fire starts and around 1 000 shacks are burnt down, as happened in Umizamo Yethu in Hout Bay on Saturday, March 11, resulting in people dying and some 1 5 000 being displaced.

Letters and replies I received from the Premier of the Western Cape, the Mayor of Cape Town and Chief Fire Officer Ian Schnetler, dated January 18, 2016 belittled my concern and ideas I suggested to deal with fires when they start and my criticism of using conventional means with 20 to 30 fire engines, which resulted in whole camps being wiped out. Schnetler advised me that there are 200 informal settlements in Cape Town and he is doing his best.

Those Jews in Cape Town who are able to make a difference in the lives of unfortunate people, should act swiftly; they are there in person, whereas I as an outsider failed. They can succeed by hammering Schnetler and others to act before the fire starts and not after the damage has been done.

Ernest Waner  
Brakpan

### COMPASSION SHOWN TO ME IN HOSPITAL, MAKES ME PROUD TO BE JEWISH

During my recent stay at the Linksfield Clinic I was totally overwhelmed by the compassion and empathy bestowed upon me during my few days there by volunteers of Bikkur Cholim. It was a Friday morning and I was privileged to be visited by Charmaine Shulman, then a charming young gentleman and then three young boys from Yeshiva College with a huge (lucky) box of goodies for Shabbos and Purim.

I find it amazing that these young people give of their spare time to visit fellow Jewish people who are not well and to know what wonderful mitzvot they perform, makes me really proud to be Jewish.

Debbie Harman  
Lyndhurst, Johannesburg

### ISRAEL CAN LEARN A LOT ABOUT BANKING

From an experience many years ago, which is, I gather, applicable to this day, the banking system in Israel leaves a lot to be desired and could do with a massive upgrade. Israel, I understand, has more graduates per capita than any other nation in the world, except probably the US. The Israeli banking system, unless it has improved, is or was, positively archaic in comparison with the systems operating locally in South Africa, which has a pretty effective and efficient system. One would imagine that with the brilliant minds in Israel, creating the world's most advanced and complicated technologies, someone would have inspired the techno industry to develop a more sophisticated banking system, at least comparable to that of South Africa and perhaps even better!

Is anybody able to inform me as to what the actual situation in Israel is at present, lest I have been misinformed?

Jack Miller, Waverley, Johannesburg

### CYRIL RAMAPHOSA HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF SERIOUS 'MORAL DEFICIT'

Melanie Verwoerd (former ANC parliamentarian and ambassador) is in Cyril Ramaphosa's corner. In a recent article she sees a bright future for South Africa under a Ramaphosa administration.

Verwoerd is unquestionably enamoured with Ramaphosa's "charming, disarming [and] conciliatory" qualities.

It is true when one digs into the apple barrel of ANC elites, that Ramaphosa does not seem to be one of the rotten apples. This, however, does not necessarily mean, as Verwoerd believes, South Africa can correct its course under Ramaphosa's leadership.

There is another side to Ramaphosa that cannot be ignored, and which militates against giving him the keys to the kingdom.

For years Ramaphosa refused to dust off his moral compass. His blind loyalty to the ANC collective was absolute. His silence following multiple instances of corruption by ANC comrades, was deafening.

The fact that he did not speak out

is indicative of symptoms of moral deficit disorder wrapped up in a reservoir of political expediency and opportunism.

In a perfect parliamentary system, a ruling political party chooses its leader within a framework requiring focus on the long-term good of the country. This means a leader vested with statesmanship as opposed to being just a politician. As a prerequisite to statesmanship the qualities of integrity, responsibility accountability, conscience and character are essential.

The enunciated qualities do not, however, matter in the ANC's paradigm for replacing Zuma in 2019. The dynamic is simply a power struggle between competing factions.

Ramaphosa, the well-connected billionaire politician, does not need the trappings of the state to enrich himself.

He is beholden to his party for his wealth and refuses, in the name of party loyalty, to distance himself from Jacob Zuma and blindly supports and defends Zuma.

Ramaphosa has been consumed by years of ANC relentless collectivism, supplemented by a generous helping of self-interest and political need.

His nomination will be nothing more than a historical footnote of a failed nomination that was.

Errol Horwitz  
Fresnaye, Cape Town

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# Attracting young professionals to Yad Aharon

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Yad Aharon and Yad Michael launched its Young Professionals Division last Wednesday, with the aim of educating the up-and-coming young Jewish professionals and entrepreneurs in Johannesburg.

Sponsored events - appropriate and attractive to this age group (20 to 39) - will be held on a regular basis, to encourage their new donor base to partner with Yad Aharon and contribute in its quest to ensure nutritional security for the needy in the community's midst.

The cocktail event was held in Sandton, with Raoul Gamsu (founder and CEO of Consolidated Infrastructure Group) as guest speaker.

Yad Aharon & Michael's mission is to assist needy families in the greater Johannesburg area with weekly food parcels consisting of an array of seasonal fresh fruits and vegetables, potatoes, freshly baked bread, eggs and "proteins of the week".

At the launch of the Young Professional Division



Photo supplied



Moshe Fihrer's zeida, Cyril Fihrer; Adina Feldman (Glenoaks teacher and campaigner for the project); Kevin Barnes (principal); and Ryan Krawchuk (Hatzolah medic).

## Raising bottle-tops for wheelchairs

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The children of Glenoaks Remedial School in Kensington, Johannesburg collected over 3 150kg bottle top lids. These contributed to the handover of eight brand new wheelchairs to deserving recipients.

On Friday, March 17, Moshe Fihrer, a learner at Glenoaks, handed over a wheelchair to Hatzolah medical rescue, which was made possible by the number of bottle top lids he, his zeida - Cyril Fihrer - and family collected.

## Still strong after 70 years

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Jack and Ray Franks - who recently celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary - don't see themselves as a stereotypical elderly couple. They got married just after the Second World War in 1947.

The Franks are still young at heart and Ray, at 90, still works as a legal bookkeeper at a local law firm.

Jack (now 93) flew Spitfires during the war and kept his love for Ray alive by writing letters to her. After returning to South Africa after the war, with no job, he didn't even propose and just took it for granted they

would get married - which they did! Ray is still surprised that their families allowed it...

"We used to fight like hell and then get over it," she said. Jack just smiles and says tongue-in-cheek: "I wanted to kill her and then couldn't wait for her to come home from work."

Ray says the last 70 years were great. They moved to Klerksdorp a couple of years after they got married and they've been living there ever since. Their two daughters now live in Johannesburg and want their parents to move to the city, but the couple wouldn't have any of it.

They have two grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. "My one daughter is a granny and retired and I still work," laughs Ray.

They are still both very active in the Jewish community. As a matter of fact, they have been active their whole life - Jack used to be a golfer and Ray had provincial colours for tennis and hockey.

Both agree that the highlights in the 70 years of their marriage have been the birth of their first grandchild and the birth of a boy as a great-grandchild.



Ray and Jack Franks

## Bloemfontein couple honoured

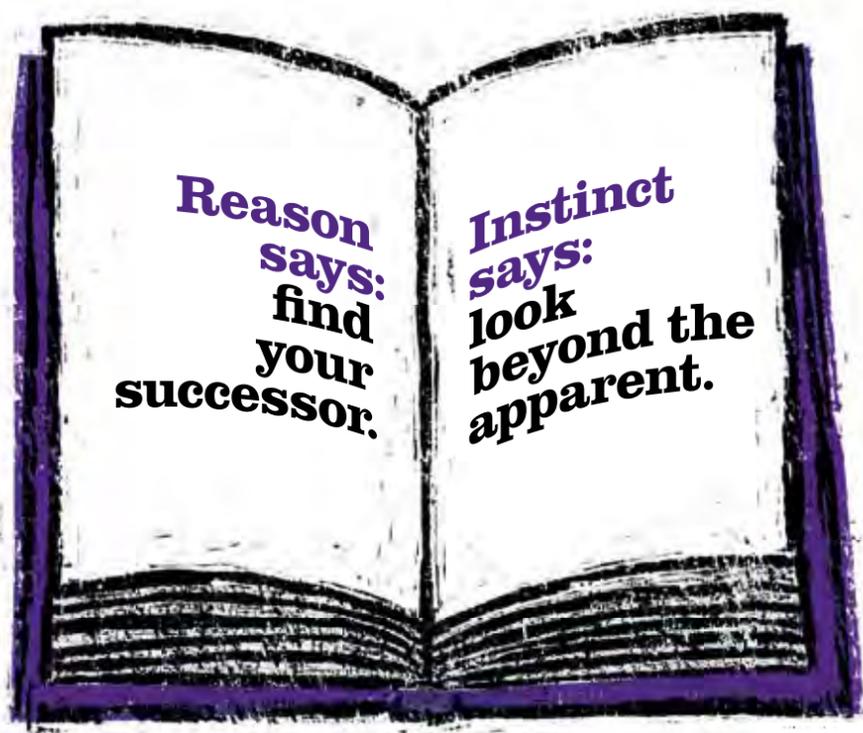
OWN CORRESPONDENT

Solly and Shirley Kroll were the centre of attending at Bloemfontein's Purim celebrations. They were honoured for their years of outstanding service and selfless commitment to the local community.

Solly, a past chairman, was made honorary life president and honorary life member, while Shirley received recognition for founding the David Davidson Nursery School in 1967, which is still in existence today and which will be celebrating its 50th birthday next month.



Solly and Shirley Kroll.



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# Women of courage

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Two hundred women listened in awe in Durban last Wednesday to the life stories of five women, each one undeniably a woman of courage.

Speakers at the Union of Jewish Women Durban's "Women of Courage" function, included Nikki Munitz whose "life of darkness has been transformed into one of forgiveness and recovery"; Gillian Pierce who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis 26 years ago and is now totally paralysed from the neck down and paints by mouth and gives motivational talks; and Kalsey Windsor, a brave young woman who found a haven of stability at Arcadia.

The function was sponsored by the Moshal family in memory of Zelda Moshal z"l, a founder member of the UJW, Durban.

Gillian Pierce and Kalsey Windsor.



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# Dressed to give



Olympic gold medallist Caster Semenya stole the show when she strode the catwalk.

DINA DIAMOND

Caster Semenya and fashion are not generally mentioned in the same sentence. However, Semenya – donning a chic Row-G suit – stole the "Dressed to Give" fashion show at The Reserve in Illovo on Sunday night.

This Olympic gold medallist was the surprise addition to the modelling line up as she traded in her running shoes for fashion, which had the glamour and celebrity guests on their feet, cheering her every step on the catwalk.

WIZO, the international women's charity organisation, partnered with The Lupus Foundation and Luminance, the chain of high-end fashion boutiques, to put on a show that would have stood proudly at New York Fashion Week. International producer Jan Malan ensured it was an evening to remember.

The event was opened by Helen Maisels-

Trisk who thanked all the generous sponsors and spoke about the wonderful work that WIZO does, caring for the most vulnerable in society. She introduced Judy Dlamini, CEO of Luminance who reiterated the Luminance positioning to "Live Life Beautifully" - mind, body and soul.

The CEO of The SA Lupus Foundation also spoke and thanked everyone for their support and wonderful contributions to very worthy causes.

The event attracted a full house of glamorous and celebrity guests, from Terry Pheto to David Tlale. Louise Carver, Laurie Levine and DJ Kimmy K had the guests entertained and tapping their feet at all times.

The clothes included treasures from the likes of Oscar de la Renta, Alexander McQueen and the best local designers such as David Tlale, Suzaan Heyns, Row-G and Erre.

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Friday (March 31)

- UZLC hosts Lionel Slier on "History of Dutch Jewry". Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.
- 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. Harp and piano recital by Susan Cock (piano) and Ventura Rosenthal (harp) playing works by Rossini, Debussy and Granados. Information: Daphne Kuhn or Mika Stefano (011) 883-8606.

Sunday (April 2)

- Second Innings hosts radio personality John Berks on "What a Boykie". Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Tuesday (April 4)

- Second Innings hosts an outing to The Joburg Ballet in Braamfontein to see "La Traviata - The Ballet". Cost: R80 per ticket; bus is an additional R110 per person. Time: The production starts at 11:00 sharp. Those who require transport must meet the bus at 09:30. Booking: Fay Smaller or Ros Berman. Enquiries: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Wednesday (April 5)

- Second Innings hosts an outing to the Lifestyle Garden Centre and a tour of the student garden exhibition. Cost: R150 (incl tea). Time: Bus departs 09:30 sharp from the parking area below Golden Acres. Booking: Laura Sher. Enquiries: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Thursday (April 6)

- ORT2TALK hosts Lauren Woolf, creative champion, on "Living, Learning & Leading for Creativity". Venue: ORT SA Academy, 44 Central Street, Houghton. Time: 18:00. Booking essential. Contact: nelly@ortsa.org.za or (011) 728-7154 or [www.ortsa.org.za/ort2talk](http://www.ortsa.org.za/ort2talk)

Friday (April 7)

- 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. Piano duet of Carin van Graan and Chaniel Preiss playing Brahms waltzes and Hungarian dances. Information: Daphne Kuhn or Mika Stefano (011) 883-8606.



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## Parenting and education, topics close to a Jewish heart



**STEVEN KRAWITZ**

*Cleverlands* by Lucy Crehan. Published by Unbound.  
*The Happiest Kids In The World: Bringing Up Children The Dutch Way* By Michelle Hutchinson and Rina Mae Acosta. Published by Doubleday.

As Jews, our children are our most precious asset. As such, education and parenting are uppermost in our minds. Here are two books that tackle just that: The first focuses on education and the second on parenting. Lucy Crehan, a British teacher and researcher, took a “geek-gap-year” off from teaching in London to visit five countries whose education systems always top international education league tables. She visited Finland, Japan, Shanghai, Singapore and Canada and spent a lot of time meeting principals, teachers, learners, parents and researchers.

In *Cleverlands*, Crehan finds that countries that delay the start of formal education, perform better than those that sit five-year-olds in desks and teach them to read. Until age seven, Finnish children learn through structured and unstructured play, mastering all the prerequisites for literacy and numeracy and years later are outperforming their early-starting British and American peers.

Another huge factor of success, she writes about is the growth mindset concept as a determinant of success. This refers to children who believe that anyone can achieve and that success is dependent on their efforts, rise to challenges and spur themselves onto greater successes.

This concept underpins East Asian education systems, the absolute world educational superpowers.

American and British school-goers have a much more fixed mindset, believing that a person has a fixed intelligence and abilities, resulting in giving up after their first failure and not having the grit to persevere.

*Cleverlands* is a valuable addition to the literature of educational success and is an important book for educators and parents and anyone interested in education.

In “*The Happiest Kids in the World*” Michelle Hutchinson and Rina Mae Acosta, a Brit and an American respectively, married to Dutchmen and living in Holland, are able to compare parental styles in the UK and the US to that in Holland.

South African Jewish parents are very American and British in parenting style: helicoptering, over-scheduling their children's free-time, booking extra lessons and restricting their young children's autonomy.

What a breath of fresh air from Holland, where Dutch parents believe in simplicity, sharing time with their children, not fancy gadgets and expensive experiences, following a common sense approach rare in the Anglo-Saxon world.

From pregnancy, through childbirth, childhood and adolescence, the secrets of being Dutch parents are described and explained. Dutch infants sleep through the night from a young age and there is even a chapter entitled “Dutch teenagers don't rebel”.

“What about homework?” I hear you ask. There's not much in primary schools in Holland, with a strong emphasis on play after school. Parks are full of kids, climbing trees, and playing on jungle gyms with parents nowhere to be seen; this encourages independence from a young age.

On the other hand, in *Cleverlands* Lucy Crehan points out that in Japan, Shanghai and Singapore, high school children get a few hours of homework daily and many learners attend extra-tuition centres after school to prepare for university entrance exams. And these learners outperform the rest of the world.

It seems that homework and general stress around education is a function on how hard it is to get into a good faculty in a good university, with parents who have the means trying everything to get their offspring into a good course in a good university.

## The Chorus Line hits the high note



**PETA KROST MAUNDER**

Watching King David Victory Park High School's production of *A Chorus Line*, I could have been watching a professional Broadway musical that Hazel Feldman had brought to the country, not a school production.

It was so professional, I kept forgetting that I was watching school kids and not hungry actors and dancers desperate to get a shoe-in on Broadway (as is the storyline).

In fact, I bumped into an old colleague, Lara de Matos, the former editor of *The Star's* Tonight section, who was equally blown away by the quality of the performance. And this was only the first night of the show.

While the general quality was superb, there were clearly big stars-in-the-making. One of these was Georgia Stoller, who plays Cassie Ferguson, the talented actress who should have made it big and was desperate to get back onto the chorus line because she was out of work with no prospects.

Stoller has a magnificent singing voice, dances beautifully and appears to have a confidence that only star quality brings. I would be surprised if she doesn't join the King David grads who have made it in the theatre world, like Gina Shmukler and the late Lisa Melman.

And then there was Rebecca Matisonn, who played Sheila Briant, who shone brightly when it was her moment, as did Nathan Lieberman as the unfortunate Paul San Marco. Lieberman's performance left many youngsters in the audience quite troubled that he had been injured and that he might not get a part on the *Chorus Line*.

The truth is that while I have named just these youngsters, there were few - even those with small parts - who didn't do themselves and the school proud.

There were one or two instances that I battled to understand what was said by someone, but that did not detract from the sheer quality of the show.

While *A Chorus Line* was a huge Broadway hit, it could not have been an obvious choice for a Jewish school production for a number of reasons. Firstly, most of the female roles are done in leotards, which might not have been easy for all the girls. Then, then there were some lines that were bordering on risqué.

More than that, though, it couldn't have been an easy production to get youngsters to perform because there was no simple, easy-to-follow storyline.

Having said all of that, King David did it. *A Chorus Line* was slick and professional from beginning to end and I went home singing: “What I did for love!”

## The Zookeeper's Wife – a story of compassion in Hitler era

**PETER FELDMAN**

*Cast: Jessica Chastain, Jan Heldenbergh, Daniel Bruhl, Efrat Dor, Iddo Goldberg*  
*Director: Niki Caro*

Films about the Holocaust and the treatment of Jews during the Nazi era elicit powerful emotions, especially from Jewish cinema-goers, and to maintain a balanced perspective remains a challenge to any director.

Niki Caro's engrossing production, “*The Zookeeper's Wife*”, manages to do just that and, in its own way, reveals some semblance of humanity among the madness of the time.

“*The Zookeeper's Wife*” is an emotive, true story about a Polish couple whose enormous compassion and incredible will managed to save hundreds of Jews during the Nazi occupation of Poland.

Jan and Antonina Żabiński (Jan Heldenbergh and Jessica Chastain) run the Warsaw Zoo and seem content with their lot in life. She rides around the zoo on her bicycle accompanied by a baby camel named Adam. She greets the visitors and oversees the care and feeding of her animal wards. Her husband is the zoo's curator.

Then on September 1, 1939, the day of the invasion of Poland, many of the

animals die in the bombing. A Nazi officer, Lutz Heck (Daniel Bruhl), who is also a zoologist, arrives to take the best of the zoo's breeds and bring them to Berlin. The rest of the animals are slaughtered by the German soldiers. The zoo, in turn, is converted into a pig farm to feed the Nazi occupiers.

The Żabińskis are living in constant fear because if found to be harbouring Jews in the zoo's underground cages, it would mean instant death.

What exacerbates the situation is that,



Jessica Chastain in ‘The Zookeeper’s Wife’

apart from armed guards patrolling the vicinity, the nosy Lutz Heck, who has his eye on the attractive Antonina, is constantly sniffing around.

Based on Diane Ackerman's New York Times best seller, “*The Zookeeper's Wife*” continually tugs at the heartstrings, especially in sequences dealing with the tragic plight of those confined to the Warsaw Ghetto.

A plan is hatched by the couple to smuggle Jews out of the ghetto and these

moments are fraught with danger and suspense. The two risk everything to save the Jews.

In the face of utter hopelessness, Antonina manages to find the strength to keep spirits high through music (she plays the piano), conversation and even laughter at times when they dare let their guard down. Antonina and the sheltered Jews manage to restore each other's faith in humanity and together plot a harrowing escape to freedom.

There are numerous touching scenes,

especially those showing sad lines of humanity being loaded into cattle trucks destined for the death camps. The faces of innocent children being lifted into the trucks by the Nazi guards, strike a highly emotional chord.

This little-known story is delivered without frills and with

a straightforward screen treatment. The period, with its style of clothing, is faithfully depicted and the acting, especially from Jessica Chastain, is commanding. Chastain, given a Polish accent, has a pivotal role, showing a strong, compassionate woman to whom life, whether it be man or beast, is sacred.

“*The Zookeeper's Wife*” may appeal to history buffs, but it has more universal appeal because it conveys messages of love and compassion for all.

# Australia's first Jewish Super Rugby player, David Horwitz



The Waratahs' David Horwitz hopes to become a regular starter in the Super Rugby team this season.

## JACK MILNER

There are not many Jewish players in Australian national sporting teams. It could simply be because they are not good enough.

David Horwitz, however, has just become Australia's first Jewish Super Rugby player. He has not quite made a national team yet, but is now a regular in the Waratahs franchise.

While David is a born and bred Australian, his parents are from South Africa. He attended Moriah College, a Jewish school in Sydney.

South African rugby referee Jonathan Kaplan, who is friendly with David's uncle, says he has been watching the 22-year-old in action. "Right now, I think he is a good provincial player."

David was one of 10 players who made his debut for the Waratahs last year. He made an impression in the first match, scoring his very first try in his opening game in round one against the Queensland Reds, becoming the first of six Waratah players to score their inaugural try in their debut season.

He went on to play in 13 out of 15 games for the team last season and although he started off as a flyhalf, he has slotted in as a dependable option at inside centre.

David has spent the last few years as the starting flyhalf for Randwick in the Shute Shield. He was first invited to train with the Waratahs when he was just 18 years old and he is now in his fourth full year with the team.

He was selected to the 2014 Australian under-20 team, adding to an already impressive resumé which includes representative honours as a former New South Wales Barbarian (2013), Australian Schoolboy (2011/12) and New South Wales Colts.

David switched from Moriah to Scots College to develop his sporting talents and quickly proved himself equally adept at both flyhalf and inside centre.

In an interview ahead of the 2017 Super Rugby season, David said the team's aim is to make the semifinals and challenge for the title. That is a very tough call, indeed, considering the team has played five matches, winning against the Force and Reds - both Australian teams - but losing to the Lions, Sharks and Brumbies.

He didn't play in the first game, came on as substitute in the next three, but did start in the match against the Force, scoring a try in

the 79th minute (converted) which allowed the Waratahs to win 32-25.

Though his Jewishness it is not something by which he wants to be defined, it's hard for him not to feel like somewhat of an ambassador - he was named Jewish Sportsman of the Year last year.

"I don't want to be known for that kind of quirk or gimmick," he said in an interview with Australian Jewish News. "I want to be known as a footballer on merit and I also want to be known in the Jewish community because I'm a proud Jew and I know that does coincide with the rugby because it's almost a strange thing because there's not a lot of Jewish sportsmen out there."

In fact, when Rabbi Levi Wolff from the Central Synagogue in Bondi Junction attended the Waratahs' clash with the Rebels, it was a moment that held special significance for David.

"There's nearly 1 000 people who go to his synagogue and listen to his sermons, so for him to show that individual care, and come and sit with my family, and try and understand that part of my life even though it's so foreign to him, it's great," he said.

However, David is pragmatic when it comes to practising his religion, realistic about having to play on Shabbat, or observing fasting holiday Yom Kippur.

"When I've talked to my parents about it they've been quite flexible that this (rugby) is my passion, this is what I want to make a career out of and you've definitely got to make sacrifices because of that," he said.

"Although rugby's so important to me now, it is a sport at the end of the day, a game.

"It's one that I work very hard at and I am passionate about, but whenever it all seems like it's getting too much, it helps me to think back to the fact that it's not the biggest thing in life."

That is why David is also studying for a commerce degree at Sydney University.

"All you want to do is go out there and contribute and try to do some positive things for your team," he said.

"It's a learning curve, I definitely want to show the coaches that I can be impactful off the bench, but obviously I'm also chasing that starting role and cementing my spot in the team."

## CORRECTION

On last week's sports page, we carried a photograph of runners Anna Goldstein and Ruth Welcher, with a story about the South Africans running in the Jerusalem Marathon, particularly mentioning DL Link. The two teens were participating on behalf of Chayeinu, an Israeli-based organisation caring for the needs of children suffering from cancer, and not DL Link. We regret the error.

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