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south african Jewish Report

Volume 21 - Number 14 ■ May 5 2017 ■ 9 Iyar 5777

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Am Yisrael Chai

Photo: Jason Crouse

Ari Kruger and friends enjoying the Yom Ha'atzmaut festivities at Huddle Park on Monday night.



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Chief Rabbi leads SA's protest

OWN CORRESPONDENT

"Viva the rainbow nation, viva" shouted Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein as he addressed thousands of protesters at the Freedom Movement Rally in Pretoria last week Thursday.

He was the only religious leader speaking at this anti-Zuma rally on Freedom Day. The other speakers included DA leader Mmusi Maimane, Cope's Mosiuoa Lekota, UDM's Bantu Holomisa, ACDP's Reverend Kenneth Moshoe and the late former resident Nelson Mandela's private secretary, Zelda le Grange.

The chief rabbi was given the honour by being the first speaker at the rally and was led up on stage to the sound of a hit Israeli song:

"Hashem Melech, Hashem Malach (G-d is king, G-d was king...)"

South Africans are special, the Chief Rabbi said, because "we are the rainbow nation", being made up of all the colours of the rainbow. "And as such, we come together in unity," he added.

He told the diverse crowd gathered at Caledon Stadium that G-d sent a rainbow after a flood that wiped out the world. "The rainbow was a symbol of hope for the future of the world and our rainbow nation is a symbol of hope for the world."

He said the rainbow was also the symbol of a covenant between man and G-d that we would be honest, good and help other people, be kind and generous.

"We want to build a country of honesty and integrity, decency and compassion. That is why we are here to say to the president, the government and the whole country that we are the rainbow nation and we are unified. We are committed to G-d and G-d's values to build a great country."

He ended his speech to great cheers when he chanted: "Amandla Ngawethu (Power to the people)".

Shabbat Times this week

Starts	Ends	
17:17	18:07	Johannesburg
17:44	18:36	Cape Town
17:00	17:51	Durban
17:20	18:11	Bloemfontein
17:15	18:07	Port Elizabeth
17:08	17:59	East London

Parshat Acharei Mot Kedoshim

Spirituality: Is it always good?

This week's parsha, Acharei-Kedoshim, begin with the words: Acharei mos shnei bnei Aharon.

Hashem told Moshe the laws of the Yom Kippur sacrifices after the death of Aharon's two sons Nadav and Avihu. We read about their death two weeks ago in parshat Shemini, how they entered the Holy of Holies to bring a sacrifice on the day of inaugurating the tabernacle and passed away.

As to the cause of their death, there are various opinions. Some say it was a punishment either for entering the Mishkan inebriated, or for the lack of respect to Moshe displayed by bringing a sacrifice without asking him.



Rabbi Eli Spinner, Chabad of Glenhazel

However, there is a novel approach brought by the Or Hachayim that it wasn't a punishment at all. Rather, they were seeking a form of spiritual ecstasy on that Holy day, by bringing a sacrifice into the holiest place. As a result of the body not being able to contain the immense pleasure of their soul, they simply expired and passed away.

But there was no sin. This is implied in the literal meaning of the words "when they came close to G-d and they died". They died as a result of coming close to G-d.

This interpretation of the story seems very nice as there was no sin involved. But were their actions right?

Is that what is desired by G-d, for us to expire in pursuit of spiritual bliss?

Sure, G-d wants us to appreciate the spiritual, and strive to be holy; to not be overcome by the material world. But He also wants us to lead physical lives. To have a job, eat, drink,

go to gym, be healthy, and most importantly, be alive.

How do we balance these opposite worlds? To appreciate the spiritual while living in a physical body? And even when we're doing something that seems good, how do we know that we're not making the same mistake of Aharon's sons of taking it too far?

There is a story in the Talmud (Chagiga 14b) of four sages who delved into Pardes - the deepest secrets of the Torah and understanding of G-d. One died, one lost his mind, and one became a heretic.

Only Rabbi Akiva "entered in peace and left in peace".

All four went through the same journey, but only Rabbi Akiva remained complete. The others had a personal agenda. It may have been holy and good, but it was for their own achievement. Ultimately they were either corrupted or lost.

Only Rabbi Akiva entered in peace, meaning he had a different mentality and approach. He went on this spiritual journey only because he knew that's what Hashem wanted from him. Therefore he left in peace, and was able to safely accomplish his goal.

Whenever we are faced with a difficult choice, we can take a lesson and ask ourselves: "Why am I doing this? Is it for a personal reason, to impress someone, to prove something to myself? Or is it because this is the right thing that Hashem wants from me at this moment?" When we delve deeply enough, we may be surprised at the answer. Good Shabbos.

South African Jewish Report

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Ugly protest tarnishes Cape Yom Ha'atzmaut

KIM FELDMAN

Hostile protesters marred Cape Town's unusually low-key Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration by preventing the community from entering the Baxter Theatre on Monday evening.

Unlike the peaceful protests that had taken place the year before in Cape Town by the South African Jews for a Free Palestine (SAJFP), where the group held placards on the other side of the road from the Herzlia campus, the protest this year were led by aggressive UCT Palestine Solidarity Forum (UCT PSF) who had only found out about the event hours before.

Because the venue was at a UCT facility, UCT students and societies cannot be barred from entering the venue. They exploited their rights as UCT students on a campus facility to enter the venue and create disruption.

The protesters forcibly blocked the entrance to the theatre complex and attendees had to be rerouted to a back entrance, where the protesters quickly followed and proceeded to barricade the ramp again.

Attendees - including the elderly and small children - were then forced to climb over balustrades and dustbins to avoid the protesters. Sporadic swearing and pushing occurred between the protesters, CSO and attendees, but nobody was injured and those there for Yom Ha'atzmaut were eventually able to enter the venue and move onto the evening as planned.

The protesters were out to confront what they called the "arrogant display of joy in the face of mass suffering" and "[force] the Zionists to confront the violence they have committed and continue to commit" as was explained in a public statement on the UCT PSF Facebook page before the event.

They waved Palestinian flags and held up signs to "Remember the Naqba" - The Catastrophe - as Yom Ha'atzmaut is known in Pro-Palestine circles globally.

This was the first year that the Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations were held in a theatre in Cape Town. For many years it was a huge affair at Ratanga Junction and subsequently with carnivalesque celebrations at the Herzlia Weizman campus.

Previous years had attracted over 3 500 people (at the height of the Ratanga Junction years) and around 2 500 last year.

This year heralded this wholly new format. Julie Berman, executive director of the SAZF-CC, explained that they "wanted a change from the same old, same old" and to showcase Israeli culture.



Images sourced from Facebook



The decision was taken to try something completely new - a concert-style function would take place with a headline act from Israel that could pull in the crowds, especially a younger audience.

Prices started at R150 a ticket, with a half-price discount for under-12s. But the 638-seater theatre was only three-quarters full, with only 500 tickets sold. There had been concerns about the long weekend increasing the likelihood of a smaller turnout.

Despite the rather eventful start, the celebration was rather restrained.

After introductions by the chairman of the SAZF-CC, Rowan Polovin, and the deputy ambassador for Israel, Ayellet Black,

the evening's entertainment began with the Herzlia Vocal Ensemble, led by Cantor Ivor Joffe. They performed a medley of Hebrew and English songs, ending in Hatikvah.

Caely Jo Levy and Yid Dish took to the stage next for an upbeat contemporary selection of Yiddish songs from across the globe. A quick setup change and the main act was ready to take the stage.

Taram was billed as a "drum and dance sensation". Their high-energy beats upped the celebratory atmosphere with the crowd watching in amazement at the mix of percussion, Capoeira dance and physical comedy.

The new format proved rather tame with the passive audience that a formal theatre

space encourages, leading to a less than party atmosphere, albeit a joyful one.

Polovin said that "despite the attempted disruptions and uncomfortable start, people left feeling more empowered. The hatred and vicious anti-Semitism displayed is part of being a Jew.

We need to stand up and be proud of [our] Zionism.

"Ultimately, this was a victory on our side."

However, those there felt that while Yom Ha'atzmaut had always been the largest communal event on the Cape Town calendar, there was much work to be done to create a far more inclusive, and contemporary event in the future.

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Directions: Along Summerway into Bradfield Drive
Joel Harris 082 926 0287 | Marco 082 048 2644

The mystery of kosher meat prices

ANT KATZ

It is generally believed in the community that the price of kosher meat is much higher in Johannesburg than in Cape Town - and that Durban is the highest.

Johannesburg butchers agree that the prices may be higher here than in the Cape on certain items, but they ascribe that to having to pay "much higher shechita fees", say Max Klass and Trevor Wainer of Maxi's. And the Johannesburg butchers claim they have higher overhead costs, too.

Both Maxis and Ian Lurie of Nussbaum's, say another factor is that there is only one meat wholesaler servicing the Johannesburg kosher market.

However, the truth is that kosher chicken and red meat prices vary more widely from shop to shop within a city, than between cities. There are frequently specials and some careful price checking can result in substantial savings.

The Beth Din (BD) is in the final stages of compiling a long-awaited report on the costs of kashrut as a whole, according to Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein. One of its main drivers has been Nando's founder Robbie Brozin. The report is just weeks away from publication, he says,

The Jewish Report did an extensive survey around the country over the past week, checking the prices of meat to find out the facts.

We found that chicken - fresh, frozen and breast-portions - is cheapest in Johannesburg by, in some cases, as much as R10 a kilo. The most expensive frozen and fresh chicken are from Checkers in Sea Point at R100 a kilo. At Maxis in Johannesburg, you can get fresh chicken at R74 a kilo and Pick n Pay in Norwood and Checkers in Balfour has frozen chicken at R56 a kilo.

Durban's cheapest chicken is frozen at Pick n Pay Musgrave at R60 and their frozen chicken is the same as at Pick n Pay

Umhlanga's fresh chicken, which is R80. If you want to splash out on fresh chicken breasts, you will pay R85 at Musgrave and R120 a kilo at Umhlanga. In terms of breast, Cape Town is not far behind with R110 a kilo being an average.

Lean beef mince is cheaper and most expensive in Cape Town, depending where you shop and just how lean you want your meat. If you choose the Spar in Sea Point, you could pay a whopping R162 a kilo, but you could go to Pick n Pay in the same area and pay R90 for the same amount.

In Johannesburg, you pay anything from R89 a kilo at Maxi's to R129 at Nussbaum's for lean mince and in Durban, your mince will cost between R100 to R109 a kilo this week.

Boerewors prices vary hugely depending on quality and where you live, with the cheapest being at Maxi's at R89 a kilo and the most expensive at R129 for the same amount from

Nussbaum's.

In Cape Town it also varies from R90 a kilo at Checkers in Sea Point to R142 for the same at the Spar in the same suburb. In Durban, you will pay an average of R99.

You pay a premium to have those delicious braai lamb chops, with the most expensive being from Maxi's at R286 a kilo and the cheapest at Checkers and Pick n Pay in Cape Town at R160 for the same amount. While Cape Town is the cheapest, you will pay R280 at that Sea Point Spar.

In Johannesburg, the price varies from R203 at Pick n Pay Norwood to the very expensive Maxi's chops. In Durban there is also a big difference between the Umhlanga (R280 a kilo) and Musgrave Pick n Pay (R200) prices.

For beef raisin rib roast you can pay anything from R262 a kilo at the Spar in Sea Point to R120, but the latter is a special that is on at Checkers in the same suburb.

In Durban, you can only get it at Musgrave for R200 a kilo, while in Johannesburg, you will pay anything from R160 a kilo at Moishe's and Checkers Balfour, to R209 at Nussbaum's.

However, as most stores were at pains to point out, prices change from week to week depending on market prices and special offers.

Johannesburg and Cape Town have full service kosher butcheries, while Durban offers three outlets. Meat, however, is mobile and moves around the country - and even beyond our borders.

The kosher community waits with bated breath to read the forthcoming reports from the Beth Din, for only then will we have a qualified understanding of whether kashrut in South Africa is out of kilter. Maybe then the community will be able to find something else to occupy their dinner table chat.

TABLE OF COMPARITIVE MEAT PRICES

All prices are per kilo

	SHOP	Fresh Whole Chicken	Frozen Whole Chicken	Fresh Chicken Breasts	Lean Beef Mince	Beef Boerewors	Lamb Chops	Beef Raisin Rib
Cape Town	Spar S/Point	R90	R90	R110	R162	R142	R280	R262
	PnP S/Point	R100	R60	Do not stock	R90	R100	R160	R190
	Checkers S/Point	R100	R100	R110	R96	R90	R160	R120
Jo'burg	PnP Norwood	R80	R56	R90	R103	R95	R203	R200
	Maxi's	R74	Do not stock	R89	R89	R89	R286	R169
	Moishe's MC	R90	R74	R90	R105	R95	R245	R160
	Nussbaum's	R89	Do not stock	R94	R129	R129	R225	R209
	Checkers Balfour	R80	R56	R90	R100	R97	R260	R160
Durban	PnP Umhlanga	Do not stock	R80	R120	R100	R98	R280	Do not stock
	PnP Musgrave	R80	R60	R85	R109	R100	R200	R200

Nominations for the 19th annual Absa Jewish Achiever Awards are now open



This annual event culminates with a gala banquet which is the highlight of the South African Jewish social calendar. The dazzling gala honours members of South African Jewry who have excelled in business and the humanities.

Nominations are open to the public and all nominations should be sent via e-mail to nominations@SAJewishReport.co.za - and anyone can nominate as many people in as many categories as they wish.

The three Absa business awards are for listed and unlisted companies, and entrepreneurship. The audited judging in the business categories has been described by top financial pundits as the most rigorous and credible business awards process in the country.

The Jewish Report humanities awards include: Lifetime Achievement Award; Community Service Award; Arts,

Science, Sports & Culture Award; and a Humanitarian Award.

Past winners read like a Who's-Who of the Jewish community and include the likes of: Brian Joffe, Adrian Gore, Raymond Ackerman, Alec Wapnick, Gill Marcus, Brett Levy, Steven Joffe, Philip Krawitz, William Kirsh, Herschel Mayers, Abe and Solly Krok, Johnny Copelyn, Arthur Gillis, Jeff Zidel, William Kentridge, Danny K, Phillip Tobias, Ina Perlman, Johnny Clegg, Dr Ali Bacher and Pieter-Dirk Uys.

NOMINATIONS SHOULD INCLUDE: The nominee's name, telephone number and e-mail address; the award for which the nominee is nominated and a short motivation for the nomination.

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Waverley / R2.099 million / Ref# 1JE1311735
Bedrooms 2 / Bathrooms 2 / Parkings 2
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South Africans at the 'Jew-nited Nations'

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The World Jewish Congress in New York resolved last week to urge Internet companies to implement mechanisms to remove illegal and offensive content from their platforms, according to Wendy Kahn, South African National Jewish Board of Deputies director, who attended last week's WJC Plenary Conference as a delegate.

This resolution followed the release of a WJC report on online hatred. The congress also passed another vital resolution, urging "law-enforcement agencies in all countries to closely monitor all anti-Semitic acts and to enforce existing legislation proscribing hate speech and acts to the fullest extent", says Kahn.

The 600-strong conference, which takes place every four years, represents the Jewish communities of some 90 countries, ranging from those numbering in the millions, like the United States, through to those, like Bahrain, which number only a few dozen.

The WJC concerns itself with the welfare of Jews all over the world, including Israel.

Conference delegates called for renewed efforts to reach an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement, with the WJC clearly declaring that the only solution was a two-state solution because "two states for two peoples is the only workable, realistic basis for a

true and lasting peace", relayed Kahn.

The South African delegation - punching way above its weight in global Jewish politics - was led by SAJBD national president and WJC executive member, Mary Kluk. She chaired the Nominations Committee that conducted the elections for the incoming international WJC executive.

SAJBD Gauteng Council co-vice-chairman, Marc Pozniak, was elected to the new WJC executive, despite representing a country outside of the powerful Latin-American and Euro-Asia blocs. At the conference he chaired a session on cyber hate.

Pozniak had previously served as chairman of the WJC's Jewish Diplomatic Corp.

The rest of the South African delegation included Eric Marx and Chaya Singer, who were joined by Karen Miller and Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft from the African Jewish Congress.

Kluk described the plenary as "an opportunity to meet and share ideas from colleagues from around the world" while also showcasing the important projects spearheaded by the WJC.

Kahn said that the South African Jewish community have experienced first-hand the impact of the WJC, which has supported it on a number of occasions on issues of concern in their countries.

With reference to the conference,



Kahn said: "Ninety countries bring 90 unique sets of issues. The WJC addresses the individual issues as well as the issues that affect all of us, such as growing anti-Semitism, the delegitimation of Israel and global concerns around terror. It is truly a privilege being part of what was referred to as 'the Jew-nited Nations'."

Ronald Lauder was re-elected for his third term as WJC president. In his opening address, he echoed Kahn's characterisation of the organisation's international reach, saying: "We come from different places, we speak different languages but in the end we are one people."

Commenting on the continuing unfair discrimination against Israel at the United Nations, Lauder observed

that the previous year, the UN had passed one resolution against North Korea, three against Syria and 20 against Israel. Cause for cautious optimism, however, was provided by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley.

In his address, Guterres stated: "The modern form of anti-Semitism is the denial of the existence of the State of Israel" and urged that Israel be "treated like any other member state".

Haley, who was greeted with a standing ovation, assured the plenary: "It's still early in my time as ambassador but I think I can safely say it's a new day for Israel at the UN."

Israeli Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon, remarked: "Today, whenever there is anti-Semitism, the

WJC is there. What a fight that is! The obsession with Israel never stops."

Unesco Director General Irina Bokova, said that she considered the work of Unesco against anti-Semitism to be a core part of its mission to build peace and prevent extremism.

In launching Unesco's new policy guide on Holocaust Education and Genocide Prevention, she said: "When people say the Shoah is a myth, we need to equip young people with these documents and stories to respond."

She likewise acknowledged that a new anti-Semitism today was "expressed through the denial of Israel's right to existence".

• *The Next WJC National Directors' Forum will be held in Cape Town.*



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South African Jewish Report

A heartfelt reminder

At one minute to 10am on Monday morning, I was transported back to Israel and from then on the day was one that reminded me of a deep-seated love – that I share with you – of a crazy country in the Middle East.

At that moment, I heard the Reshet Gimmel radio presenter before the sounding of the Yom Hazikaron siren. I was at the Israeli Embassy in Pretoria to commemorate this auspicious time on the Jewish/Israeli calendar, but in my mind I was transported to Israel, where I was able to share that special moment with the whole country.

I was reminded of wonderful times I had living in the country and the experience of the entire country coming to a halt during the siren - something you can't understand unless you have experienced it. I was also reminded of the real cost of ensuring the existence of a Jewish State.

I thought about the mothers in Israel who know from the moment their children are born that one day they will have to wave goodbye to them as they go off to serve their country, never knowing what will happen to them. As a parent, there can be nothing tougher. It is such a huge commitment to keeping a country - at odds with all its neighbours - alive.

I looked around me in Pretoria and saw families of young soldiers - most of whom were South African - who had made that ultimate sacrifice. My heart breaks for them.

What also struck me is that each of those 88 South African soldiers who lost their lives in active duty in Israel were remembered. There were not just numbers, they were human beings who were loved and are still missed.

My sense is that each one of those 23 544 fallen soldiers will not be forgotten despite their huge sacrifice. That is something remarkable about Israel, that no matter how many wars are fought, each death is so deeply felt by the country.

On Monday we later moved onto Huddle Park, where as Yom Hazikaron ended, we began celebrating the birthday of this unique country, for which these soldiers sacrificed their lives.

A friend suggested it didn't make sense for us to be celebrating immediately after commemorating the loss of these loved ones, but that is Israel. There is no happiness without sadness. There is no day without madness and sanity. There is no day where everything is dark, there is always some lightness.

I haven't been back to Israel for a long time and there are many times that I get very angry with things that Israel does. However, on Monday I was reminded of my deep emotional bond to that country.

In the newspaper this week, we not only look at the commemorations of Yom Hazikaron and celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut around the country, we have a story paying tribute to the South Africans who died serving in the Israeli army and we look back at the South Africans who served in the original Israeli Air Force.

Interestingly, Yom Hazikaron and the beginning of Yom Ha'atzmaut fell on Workers Day in South Africa. This brought to light the many Jews who were part of the original Communist Party in South Africa and how Habonim Dror - which was the socialist Jewish Youth Movement in South Africa - has altered its political ideology over the years.

And as this is clearly a week of closeness to Israel, it seems the perfect week to launch our new weekly Times of Israel supplement. Suffice to say, we have heard our readers and believe there is a call for this value addition. Please let us know how you feel about it.

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor



Dateline: Middle East

Both Israelis and Palestinians have justice on their side

PAULA SLIER

A few years ago I had the pleasure of interviewing Benjamin Pogrund, former deputy-editor of the Rand Daily Mail. His newspaper was the only one catering to white readers in South Africa during apartheid and reporting on events that affected the country's black population.

Pogrund had the respect and confidence of leaders such as Nelson Mandela who used to call him "Benjy Boy". I remember him chuckling at the memory of being viewed by Mandela's children as their "Jewish uncle".

Pogrund immigrated to Israel 20 years ago and as we chatted in the Yakar Centre for Social Concern that he founded in Jerusalem, he reflected on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He said something I've never since forgotten: "Both Israelis and Palestinians have justice on their side," he observed. "Both have truth. Both have pain."

His words are especially poignant now as very different celebrations and commemorations are taking place across Israel and the Palestinian territories over the exact same events in history. If ever we need a reminder of just how polarised the sides are, now is that time.

Sitting in her Tel Aviv home, she showed me videos and photographs of David. With her pain still so raw, I remember her saying she understood from the start she had a choice - to seek revenge, which instinctively she was against - or to spread the message of reconciliation, tolerance and peace. She chose the latter.

This is a year of anniversaries. Israelis are celebrating the 50th anniversary of their victory in the Six Day War, the centennial of the signing of the Balfour Declaration and the 70th anniversary of the UN Partition Plan for Palestine.

But come May 15 and Palestinians will commemorate Naqba Day - "Day of the Catastrophe" - in remembrance of the displacement that preceded and followed Israel's Declaration of Independence. In December they will also mark the 30th anniversary of the First Intifada - "Palestinian Uprising" - that started in Gaza and spread rapidly throughout the Palestinian territories.

But perhaps no event conflates these two very different narratives of one history more than what happened this past week in Tel Aviv.

For 12 years an alternative Yom Hazikaron ceremony remembering both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been held. It is controversial because while most of Israel stands to attention for the official Memorial Day Service (in the past year 97 Israelis were added to the list of fallen soldiers, 37 of them disabled

IDF veterans who succumbed to their injuries, as well as soldiers who died off the battlefield) thousands of Israelis were paying their respects to Palestinians and Israelis who've died over the years.

Except that there were no Palestinians present. Ever since a Palestinian teenager entered Israel last month with a one-day pass and attacked four people in Tel Aviv with a pair of wire-cutters, Israeli authorities have cancelled all one-day passes until further notice.

The more than 200 Palestinians who were supposed to attend the ceremony, linked up via video. Naturally, Israeli organisers were outraged saying the participation of Palestinians was important as "a message of hope in a society consumed with despair". But the dozens of right-wing Israelis who protested outside the event, were also outraged. They called those present "Nazis" and "traitors", highlighting the deep divides between Israelis themselves.

One of the co-sponsors of the event was the "Parents Circle", an organisation that brings together Palestinians and Israelis who have lost loved ones to the conflict. Its spokesman, former South African Robi Damelin, is another interviewee whose words have remained with me over the years.

Robi's uncle, Judge Maisels, defended Mandela in the Treason Trial. She immigrated to Israel in 1967 to volunteer on a kibbutz. Fifteen years ago, her son, David, was killed by a sniper while on reserve duty in the Israeli army. He was 28 years old.

Sitting in her Tel Aviv home, she showed me videos and photographs of David. With her pain still so raw, I remember her saying she understood from the start she had a choice - to seek revenge, which instinctively she was against - or to spread the message of reconciliation, tolerance and peace. She chose the latter.

"The pain is the same pain," she reflected. "Whether it's an Israeli mom, or a Palestinian mom, if you've lost a child, the pain is the same pain."

One of the first stories I ever reported on from Israel was about two 15-year-old girls, a Palestinian and an Israeli, who shared the same ward in Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital.

Marian Saadeh had been travelling with her parents and 12-year-old sister Christine to a supermarket in Bethlehem late one night when Israeli soldiers opened fire, mistaking their car for one they'd been tipped off was carrying Hamas members.

"Why did they shoot at us?" she whispered to me, her big brown eyes clouding over with tears. "We didn't make anything. Why did they shoot at us?" A bullet was removed that morning from Marian's right leg. Hours later her sister was declared dead.

In a nearby bed, Adi Huja, was waiting for the 19th operation she needed after surviving a suicide bombing in Jerusalem's main pedestrian mall a year earlier.

"My whole life has changed," she smiled sadly, "I need crutches all the time and have stopped going to school because I need to have so much medical care."

The pain is the same pain. As celebrations and memorials take place across Israel and the Palestinian territories, it would do well for both sides to remember that.

• 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*.



SA Jews: the original Communists

STEVEN KRAWITZ

Communism is often seen as a particularly Jewish enterprise. Karl Marx, a German Jew living in Victorian England, birthed Communism with “Das Kapital”. Many Russian Communists and Bolsheviks were Jewish: Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev...

The earliest Jewish Communists in South Africa were immigrants from particularly Greater Lithuania. Socialist and Communist ideals found fertile ground among young Jews in the Pale of Settlement. The 19th century for a Russian Jew was characterised by poverty, high mortality rates, unemployment, famines and pogroms.

Nascent industrialisation resulting in exploitation was accompanied by political repression. All this created a politicised militant Jewish working class, which organised itself into the “Bund”, the General Jewish Workers’ Union. Many Bundists joined the Communist Party and were involved in the 1917 revolution.

When they immigrated to South Africa, these Jewish socialist traditions came with them, especially among the sizeable Jewish working class.

Their experience of anti-Semitism made them sensitive to racism. After the First World War broke out, the anti-war faction of the Labour Party transformed itself into the International Socialist League (ISL), which became the political home for Jewish trade unionists, Bundists and Socialists. In 1917 the ISL set up a Yiddish-speaking branch, based on the Jewish wing of the Russian Bolshevik Party.

The ISL cultivated links with the Comintern in Moscow, the Russian’s outreach office to spread Communist revolutions around the world, and the ISL, though tiny, was informally recognised by Moscow as the pre-eminent revolutionary group in South Africa.

By July 1921 intensive pressure on all groups sympathetic to the Russian revolution resulted in their union with the ISL, including various Jewish Socialist organisations. This was the official formation of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). In theory the CPSA focused on the needs of black and white working class unity, in practice its initial efforts were concentrated on skilled white workers.

Jewish Communist Lazar Bach’s story is a sad one. Born in Lithuania, Bach became a key figure in the CPSA when he was included in the Stalin-selected leadership of the Party. He was called to Moscow in the late 1930s over a political split in the CPSA.

Stalin’s security police arrested him and two of his South African supporters in 1937. His two comrades were sentenced to death for the dubious charge of “organising sabotage” whereas Bach was sent to a Siberian labour camp, where he died in 1941.

Another iconic Jewish member of the CPSA was Ray Alexander. Born in Latvia in 1913, she became a Socialist while a teenager, got involved in illegal revolutionary activity and came to the attention of the Latvian police. Her mother sent her to South Africa to avoid the inevitable consequences of her activism. In South Africa, Ray joined the CPSA and was instrumental in creating the Commercial Workers Union in 1933. She was elected as a Member of Parliament in 1954 by Africans in the Western Cape.

During and after the Second World War, a

disproportionate number of new white recruits to the CPSA were Jewish, drawn to the party by the radicalising influences of street fights with Afrikaner neo-Nazi fascists, the Second World War and in its aftermath, the Holocaust.

During this period the CPSA was multiracial, unusual in South African politics - even the ANC was still only open to blacks. The CPSA’s gains were reversed after the National Party victory in 1948 and the passing of the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950 which aimed at destroying the opposition and the advocacy of blacks’ rights, as much as dismantling the Communist Party.

When the Bill passed through Parliament, Sam Kahn MP, announced the voluntary disbanding of the CPSA. The banned opposition focused its attention on fighting apartheid and on promoting Communism.

Even after the CPSA was disbanded, Jewish names continued to appear prominently in anti-apartheid opposition. Many listed as Communists under the Act, were put under house arrest or under detention. Jews also continued to appear disproportionately among the names of whites accused of political crimes.

Of the 23 whites arrested and accused in the Treason Trial of 1956, for allegedly attempting to overthrow the state violently and replace it with communism, 13 were Jewish.

On July 11, 1963 the police raided Arthur Goldreich’s home in Rivonia, where they captured most of the leadership of MK. In all 17 people were arrested, five of them white - all Jewish: Goldreich, Lionel Bernstein, Hilliard Ferstenstein, Denis Goldberg and Bob Hepple.

These and other Jewish activists contributed an extraordinary amount to the development of a progressive, non-racial political culture in South Africa.

Generally Jewish Communists were already alienated from their Jewish religion and the Jewish community. Many were atheists and regarded themselves as internationalists and revolutionaries. To many, there was no connection between their ethnic identity and their politics.

Goldreich was not even aware that fellow comrades were even Jewish. This lack of Jewish identification could be related to traditional Marxist-Stalinist orthodoxy whereby identity politics was seen as a distraction and a potential threat to the revolutionary consciousness. Stalin’s anti-Semitism could also have caused Jewish Communists around the world to suppress their ethnic identity.

The official policy of the SA Jewish community’s main organ, the Jewish Board of Deputies, was non-involvement in politics, except when Jewish interests were directly threatened.

This covered both right- and left-wing Jews. Non-involvement meant that the Board was quick to criticise appeals to Jews as Jews to support or oppose apartheid. It also meant that the Board was quick to dissociate the community from the views and actions of radicals.

Radicals were ignored and ostracised, omitted from communal newspapers and in many cases support was not made available to their families

when they were imprisoned or detained.

In the late 1940s the Board met with Sam Kahn, the most prominent Jewish Communist. It insinuated that Kahn was putting the safety of SA Jews at risk. According to Joe Slovo, Kahn conceded that the link between Communism and Jews was a fascist ploy to encourage anti-Semitism, but that the link between Jews and Business was also exploited for anti-Semitic purposes. “I’ll tell you what, gentlemen,” he said, “as a gesture of concern for the Jews, let’s enter into a bargain: you give up your business and I’ll then give up politics.”

The Board’s policy was in line with how Jewish communities in the West have generally calculated their political interests, based on their vulnerability as an identifiable, conspicuous and permanent minority group.

Jewish survival has always topped their agenda, obtaining guarantees for full political, economic, religious and national freedoms.

Chief Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz criticised the non-involvement policy of the Board, asking: “Have Jewish ethics ever descended to a more shameful nadir?”

After 1994 the community has encouraged a revised history of the apartheid era and has lionised Jews who were Communists and fought apartheid as part of the underground struggle.

• This story was gleaned from ‘That Spells trouble’: Jews and the Communist Party of South Africa, written by Mark Israel and Simon Adams in the Journal of Southern African Studies, 2000

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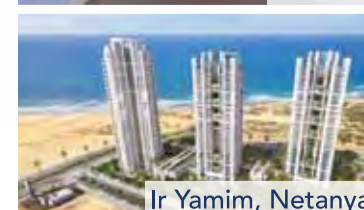
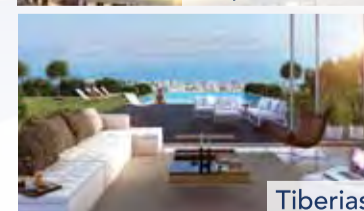
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Securing your future in Israel

Ari and Julian will be in South Africa until the 11th of May and will be available to discuss any property queries.



Remembering South Africans who died for Israel



ROBYN SASSEN

Israel's existence has been to a large degree shaped by wars over the decades. Many South African Jews were involved as volunteers or soldiers. We remember those who fell in the line of duty in defence of Israel. Some of these fallen heroes include:

Yehezkiel "Chatzi" Berelowitz and Zvi Lipschitz were both Bnei Akiva supporters who fell in the last days of Kfar Etzion's defence, on May 12 and 13, 1948, respectively.

Gideon Rosenberg, a member of Kibbutz Shoval, fell in battle in the Jerusalem Corridor while serving in the Palmach Harel Brigade on May 16, 1948.

Meir "Matey" Silber, fell while defending Kibbutz Ramat Rachel on May 25, 1948. Born in Eastern Europe in 1927, he had emigrated with his family to (then) South West Africa and then South Africa, as a young child. A Betar supporter with a yen for farming, "Matey" studied engineering at Wits and honoured his parents' wishes by completing his degree before he volunteered to fight in Israel.

Eddie Cohen, a pilot from Squadron 1 and Squadron 101 in the Israel Air Force, had been a pilot in Italy during the Second World War. Born in South Africa, he made aliyah in 1947 and lived on Kibbutz Mayan Baruch. He was shot down by anti-aircraft fire on May 29, 1948. He had been part of the flight of four Czech-built Messerschmitts in the historic engagement which halted the Egyptian advance towards Tel Aviv.

Leslie "Lionel" Bloch, was killed while flying a Messerschmitt over the Syrian border on July 10, 1948. It seems that he shot his own

Basil Sanders was one of the trainees who had learnt to fly in (Mr Justice) Cecil Margo's Germiston-based flying school, which had been designed to equip South African Jewish men with flying skills so that they could enlist in the Israel Air Force...

aircraft in error, given the improvised aerial technology of the IAF at the time.

Basil Sanders was one of the trainees who had learnt to fly in (Mr Justice) Cecil Margo's Germiston-based flying school, which had been designed to equip South African Jewish men with flying skills so that they could enlist in the Israel Air Force during the War of Independence. Sanders was a part of the batch of volunteers who landed on Israeli soil in 1950, but he succumbed to polio, three weeks later.

Natan Friedman was killed during aerobatic demonstrations during Yom Ha'atzmaut in 1951 when he fatally miscalculated a roll and flew into the ground.

David "Doody" Silbowitz and Neil Freed were members of Habonim who both made aliyah in 1971. Silbowitz was born in 1948 in Cape Town, and Freed, in 1949 in Johannesburg.

Freed gravitated toward Kibbutz Mayan Baruch in the late 1960s - he had volunteered in the Six Day War in 1967. He returned to South Africa to read for a Unisa degree in sociology and psychology and became a very

well-loved secretary of Habonim.

Foregoing the offer of a Rhodes scholarship for post-graduate study, Silbowitz, who had studied English and history at the University of Cape Town, went to Jerusalem in 1967 for a course in youth movement leadership.

In 1971, both young men made aliyah. They settled on Kibbutz Yizre'el and volunteered for the army. After basic training, they did advanced training in the tank corps and were allocated to reserve units. When the Yom Kippur War broke out in 1973, Doodi and Neil's unit was sent to the Egyptian front. They were killed while operating on the Egyptian side of the Suez Canal, on October 18, 1973.

Brothers Adam and Gideon Weiler made aliyah with their parents and four siblings in 1957. The Weiler brothers were the sons of Rabbi Moses Weiler, one of the founders of the Progressive movement in South Africa.

Adam enlisted in the IDF in 1962, interrupting his studies at the University of Sussex to fight in the Six Day War in 1967. He was killed in 1970 while serving as a tanks company commander near the Suez Canal.

Gideon enlisted in 1968 and like his brother joined the Armoured Corps. After Adam's death, Gideon was made a tanks instructor and was moved to fight in the Golan Heights during the Yom Kippur War. Three days after the outbreak of the war, he was killed in a battle with Syrian tanks.

Lone soldier Dylan Walt made aliyah in 2013 and settled in Ra'anana. He joined the IDF and was assigned to the elite Egoz unit in the Golani Brigade. He too lost his life while serving in the Zahal.

They will always be remembered.

The South Africans who fell in active duty

Avraham Isa Katz (01.07.1938)
 Yisrael Genosov (31.07.1944)
 Yonatan Levin (13.03.1948)
 Oded Kaploun (28.04.1948)
 Yehezkiel "Chatzi" Berelowitz (12.05.1948)
 Zvi Lipschitz (13.05.1948)
 Gideon Rosenberg (16.05.1948)
 Eddie Shlomo Cohen (30.05.1948)
 Lesley Morris Bloch (10.07.1948)
 Louis Hack (23.10.1948)
 Meir "Matey" Silber (23.10.1948)
 Benzion Sanders (11.07.1950)
 Shmuel Levinson (11.05.1951)
 Chaim Chait (23.09.1951)
 Natan Friedman (29.10.1951)
 Moshe Sidlin (25.12.1951)
 Joshua Levy (30.05.1952)
 Yitzchak Glazer (01.11.1956)
 Donald Lemkin (06.06.1967)
 Orit Lavi (12.08.1968)
 Harold Leibowitz (01.09.1969)
 Adam Weiler (31.03.1970)
 Daniel Kahan (02.04.1970)
 Avida Shur (10.04.1973)
 Rami Norman Katz (06.10.1973)
 Terrence Kaye (06.10.1973)
 Raymond Lowenberg (06.10.1973)
 Michael Goldman (07.10.1973)
 Avraham David Katz (07.10.1973)
 Michael Tamari (07.10.1973)
 Jacob Meir Bar-El (08.10.1973)
 Gideon Weiler (09.10.1973)
 Micha Urie (12.10.1973)
 Gideon Shanan (14.10.1973)
 Yigal Agayev (15.10.1973)
 Eli Aviram (16.10.1973)
 Ilan Haim Shapira (16.10.1973)
 Yitzhak Melcer (16.10.1973)
 David Jonathan "Doody" Silbowitz (18.10.1973)
 Neil Freed (18.10.1973)
 Rami Avraham Rubin (22.10.1973)
 Yochanan Comay (24.11.1973)
 Jonathan Shomroni (04.09.1974)
 Paul Whiteson (21.01.1975)
 Dr Yehonatan "John" Meir (23.07.1976)
 Chaim Solomon (10.05.1977)
 Shai Wittert (15.03.1978)
 Boaz Adar (15.01.1979)
 Alan Feldman (20.06.1979)
 Guy Golan (29.09.1979)
 Yochai Preiss (11.03.1980)
 Ofer Berman (08.10.1980)
 Roi Chemel (10.09.1981)
 Gary Myers (16.12.1981)
 Zohar Lipshitz (11.06.1982)
 Ran Zipper (11.06.1982)
 Ronen Eidelman (12.06.1982)
 Ron Messerer (16.06.1982)
 Joel Lahak (25.06.1982)
 Dan Fredman (28.08.1983)
 Jonathan Weinberger (30.11.1984)
 Yaron Gotsman (16.02.1985)
 Neil Ben-Atar (16.06.1986)
 Yonat Gordin (22.02.1987)
 Barry David Katz (09.09.1987)
 Idor Rabinowitz (25.11.1987)
 Mark Eilon (06.11.1989)
 Ilan Kaufman (22.04.1990)
 Tamar Zlotnik (01.10.1990)
 Avi Shemer (27.03.1991)
 Daniel Rockman (15.02.1995)
 Natai Shefts (19.09.1995)
 Gilad Moshe Misheiker (04.02.1997)
 Raz Aber (25.06.1997)
 Guy Loew (20.12.2000)
 Danny Ifrah (09.09.2001)
 David Damelin (03.03.2002)
 Steven Ian Kenisberg (03.03.2002)
 Avihu Jacob (03.05.2002)
 Matan Gadri (08.06.2003)
 Mark Shlomo Miller (13.08.2004)
 Yaniv Bar-On (12.07.2006)
 Lotan Slavin (24.07.2006)
 Naor Calo (09.08.2006)
 Asher Novick (09.08.2006)
 Maayan Rothenberg (30.11.2007)
 Dov Barry Harari (03.08.2010)
 Dylan Walt (23.12.2014)

This list is from Telfed, the South African Zionist Federation in Israel's website.

World News in Brief

Anti-Semitic graffiti defaces community building in Spokane

SPOKANE - Anti-Semitic graffiti defaced a building housing community support services and nonprofit groups in downtown Spokane, Washington.

The epithets, which were written in chalk on the side of the building, were discovered last Friday morning. Among them were "Hitler did nothing wrong", "Gas the Kikes" and "Judens Raus", German for "Jews out". The graffiti also called for a "race war now".

Interns for the Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane, which is

housed in the building, discovered the graffiti, the Spokesman-Review newspaper reported last Saturday.

The incident was reported to police and the graffiti was covered up, according to the newspaper. Organisations housed in the building said they would remain and continue their work

Last month, racist and anti-Semitic white nationalist fliers were posted on the building. (JTA)

Hananel Edri: 'Music chose me'

Hananel Edri is an acclaimed Israeli performing artist who was brought out by the South African Zionist Federation to perform at various Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations.

How would you describe yourself and what you do?

I am a performing artist - I sing, act and do musicals - and ever since I was a toddler I used to put on shows at home. I really enjoyed how my family reacted to things that I did naturally and so it eventually turned into a professional thing.

What drew you to South Africa?

When I did the Maccabiah ceremony in 2009, the production company I worked with had connections with South Africa, which brought me here. When I got here and connected with people, met the Zionist Fed, worked with Bryan Schimmel and all these people instantly became friends. Now, on my fourth trip, coming here is like coming home.

What are your plans while you're here?

My main focus is the Yom Ha'atzmaut - ensuring it is the best it can be. I'm working with South African musicians here, so the whole schedule revolves around rehearsals. But, I also spend time with friends and, after the show, I can go to Cape Town for a little down time. Then Amsterdam for a show and then on to Canada.

What do you think about South Africa?

I obviously love South Africa. I was supposed to do Yom Ha'atzmaut in the US but this was the place I wanted to spend Yom Ha'atzmaut. I'm really inspired by this place. I feel like Cape Town is a bit of a different story, it's more touristy and like a different country. It doesn't have the same atmosphere as Johannesburg. In Johannesburg I feel like people are living life in the moment, whereas Cape Town is more laid back.

You spent a few years living in the US, why did you go back to Israel?

The reason why I left Israel to live in New York was academic. I studied musical theatre on Broadway and got into the Circle and the Square Theatre School. I've always been attached to Israel emotionally, but I wanted to experience learning musical theatre in the best place in the world so I moved to New York. After I graduated I started performing there.

During my last two years there, I got a lot of work in Israel, so I flew back and forth eight times in one year. At some point I said to myself I'm 29, I need to decide whether I stay in the US or go home. So, for my 30th birthday, I gave myself a gift, I went to India and Sri Lanka for three months and then I moved back to Israel to started afresh in Tel Aviv.

What do you love about Israel and what do you want South Africans to know about your home country?

Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. Besides that, we suffer from a really bad image and bad PR worldwide. It saddens me to see how people abroad perceive Israel, which is a contradiction of what it is to like live there. Israel is an amazing country. Politics aside, our history forces us to be dealing with issues that other countries don't - our right to exist. Life in Israel is really special and safe. And people there are united and happy, celebrating life and culture. Even the culinary world is booming.

How would you describe the music you create and sing?

Music is just another way to communicate with people. It's a universal language. My music is pop-soul. It's my heart in my music.

What has been your favourite time in your career and why?

Every day is my favourite. I'm always focused on the now. Every day is a new day, every day you start fresh.

What is not so appealing about your life as an artist?

A lot of travelling - it can be exhausting. Sometimes there are back-to-back months of travelling, rehearsals and shows. Sometimes I just don't want to live out of a suitcase and just stay in one place, but when I go on stage I forget all about that.

What is Yom Ha'atzmaut like for you here and at home?

Yom Ha'atzmaut brings out the unification of Israelis and Jews because first of all we're celebrating the establishment of our State. Yom

NEWSMAKER

Q & A



Ha'atzmaut starts as a sad reminder of the price we have to pay in order to have our country, but then your heart explodes. You're happy to be alive, to have a place you can call home. I am privileged to share Yom Ha'atzmaut with people who haven't had the opportunity to celebrate it in Israel. To me it's a bit of a schlichut to create some of that vibe I've been feeling since I was born.

What do you wish for yourself in the future?

To continue doing what I do and continue with the privilege of bringing smiles to people and to get them up, happy and dancing. I also just want to stay happy and to keep that energy going.

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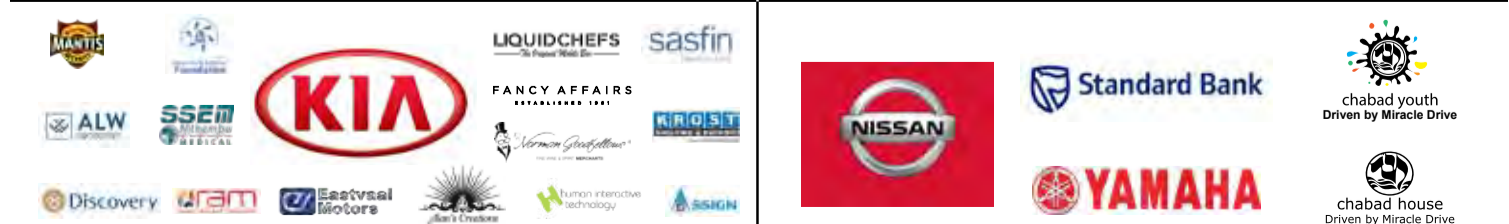
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Sharing Israel's pain at the embassy

PETA KROST MAUNDER

The ceremony started with a siren - the same siren (live on Israeli radio) that stopped the whole of Israel to remember their soldiers who fell in active duty. Although we were commemorating Yom Hazikaron in the garden of the Israeli Embassy in Pretoria, as Ambassador Arthur Lenk said: "For this instant, it feels like we are united, we are in Israel."

"It is moving for me to know that we are together here this morning, at exactly the same time as in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa and all over Israel, people are gathered in the same way for the same purpose," he says.

"We stand together, all of us, to recognise the ultimate sacrifice of 23 544 men and women, of their families so that we have a State of Israel."

Lenk says that over the quiet 2016/2017 year, 60 individuals on active security duty died and another 37 who had earlier been recognised as wounded veterans. There were also 3 117 victims of terror attacks who were murdered simply because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time, like in a coffee shop, at a bus stop or on a university campus.

He quoted former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Lord Jonathan Sacks in saying that only in Israel can Jews live Judaism in anything other than an edited edition.

"In Israel, and only there, Jews can walk where the prophets walked, climb the mountains Abraham climbed, lift their eyes to the hills that David saw, and continue the story their ancestors began."

But it didn't just happen for Jews to be able to live like that, says Lenk. "It needed generations of soldiers, officers, of police and diplomats, of a variety of security forces and the participation of every single one of us," says Lenk.

He points out the stone memorial to the "88 Israeli South African heroes who gave their lives so we can live". To put a human face to these 88,

The Ambassador of Israel to South Africa, Arthur Lenk, addressing fellow community members, Israelis and families of the fallen heroes.



Lenk singles out Ashi Novick, who was killed among eight other soldiers in a building that was hit by a Hezbollah anti-tank rocket in a village called Dabbel in Lebanon on August 9, 2006.

He told how Ashi was born in Johannesburg in 1970 and his family moved to Ra'anana in 1977. "A childhood friend remembered how quickly he integrated into life in Israel, finally losing his South African accent in Hebrew, but keeping the worldly attitude of someone who had been to places," says Lenk.

He told how Ashi served in an elite Sayeret unit in the Engineering Corps. In 1994, he married Osnat, travelled the world with her before settling in the Golan Heights, where they had two children and helped to establish a new

Yishuv, called Kanaf.

"He didn't hesitate when he was called up for the second Lebanon War in 2006," says Lenk. "People like Ashi and others whose names are etched in stone behind me, are some of thousands of South Africans over the years who have decided their future was in that only place where Jews truly control their destiny," the ambassador says.

"Israel will continue to succeed, despite the strife in our broken, complex region. Israel will continue to thrive, to bring blessings for the world and a homeland for all our people."

"But what a price we, and especially the families of the fallen, have paid."

Israelis in SA on Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut

SUZANNE BELLING

South African Jews gather annually to commemorate Yom Hazikaron and then Yom Ha'atzmaut, but it is not quite as personal for us as it is for Israelis living in South Africa. The SA Jewish Report asked a handful of Israelis what they do so far from home on these special days.

For **Benzie Burstain**, who has lived in South Africa since 1980, every Yom Hazikaron brings back the horrors of the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

He was the commanding officer of the Israeli troops who moved from the Golan Heights into Syria on the fifth day of the war.

"I remember the Valley of Tears and conquering all the villages until we reached the edge of Damascus.

"We lost a hell of a lot of soldiers and could not even give them a proper burial until months after the war ended, when the Chevrah Kadisha moved them to Israel, giving them the funeral every soldier who dies in action deserves," he said.

Burstain views the Yom Kippur War as the most critical in the history of Israel since the 1948 War of Independence.

"It was a war of survival - make or break - and we came very close to losing it."

Burstain attended the Yom Hazikaron ceremony at Yeshiva College on Sunday night and the Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, celebrations with his children the following evening at Huddle Park in Linksfield.

Naomi Hadar, executive director of the

Israel United Appeal-United Communal Fund (IUA-UCF), said both the events "are so important in our lives.

"On Yom Hazikaron I remember our best friend, Chanan Ziv, who was killed in Lebanon in 1982. He left a wife, who was pregnant with their third child.

"It is such a significant day," she said.

"Without our soldiers, we wouldn't have a Jewish state. The soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice to protect it."

With her husband, Ishi, and her son Liad, she attended the Yom Hazikaron memorial at the Israeli embassy in Pretoria, at which a siren was sounded at the same time as in Israel, to commemorate the fallen.

Nissim Levi, a former combat soldier in the Israel Defence Forces, as was his father, Itzhak, who fought in both the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War, went to both Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut events at the Israeli embassy.

"My father and I both lost friends and comrades in the course of action. I try to attend every year, as I think it is very important that our children should know about their Jewish heritage and where the Jewish people come from."

Some years he spends Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut in Israel and next year his son Yuval will be celebrating his barmitzvah there.

He praised the South African Jewish community for its ongoing support of Israel and for organising the event - which was held under the auspices of the South African Zionist Federation.

Ezra Sislosky, who has been in South Africa since 1981 and served in the IDF, said he was fortunate not to have lost anybody close to him. Living as a South African and feeling part of the country, he said his heart was in Israel and he hoped to return one day. Both his daughters were born in Israel and one of them has returned to live there.

He and his wife Leah (also an Israeli) participated in the Yom Hazikaron commemoration. As a Chabadnik, however, he said he would not be taking part in the Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations.

"I do celebrate in my heart and I do sing Hatikvah. I do believe in the State of Israel and it is my intention to go back to live there."

He is a staunch defender of Israel, He feels that the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) is the "most destructive thing" that has happened to Israel and "must be neutralised".

Ido Rieger and his wife **Ilana** participated on both days. He said part of being an Israeli was that everyone knew friends and relatives who had suffered losses.

He said he was very happy to see how well-organised both events were. "I tend to go to them, but they have a different meaning for me. I think it is extremely important that the world and humanity should not forget [our past]."

He added that South African history should also be remembered, in line with what was happening here today.

"I am very proud of Israel, not only on one day, but throughout the year."

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THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Israel cuts another \$1m from UN budget

Israel said Wednesday it would further reduce the amount it pays annually to the United Nations in retaliation for the latest resolution critical of its policies.

One day after the UN's cultural agency passed a resolution disputing Israel's claim to Jerusalem, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would cut another \$1 million from its payments to the UN, bringing the total cuts since December 2016 to \$9 million.

"This systematic harassment has a price," Netanyahu said at the beginning of the weekly Cabinet meeting, referring to the UNESCO resolution, which calls Israel an "occupying power" in Jerusalem and criticises the government for archaeological projects in the capital and in Hebron, and lambasts its naval blockade of the Gaza Strip.

"In the wake of the resolution, I have instructed Foreign Ministry Director-General Yuval Rotem to deduct \$1 million from the funds that Israel transfers to the UN. Israel will not sit by while the organisation calls for the denial of our sovereignty in Jerusalem," he said. Netanyahu's statement marks the third time in less than a year that Israel has reacted to UN resolutions it deems biased against it by announcing the slashing of its payments to the body.

In December, after the Security Council passed Resolution 2334, Netanyahu ordered \$6 million cut from Israel's payment to the UN. And in March, after the Human Rights Council passed five anti-Israel resolutions, Netanyahu vowed to cut \$2 million more.

"This considerable sum, almost NIS 40 million, will be transferred to the Foreign Ministry, which is doing exceptional work," he said at the time. "They will use it to develop our relations with countries that want to be close to Israel and are cultivating friendship with it."

The General Assembly requires all 193 UN member states to pay a percentage of the United Nations' regular budget, based on their GDP. According to the UN Secretariat, Israel is expected to pay \$11.7 million this year, or 0.43 per cent of the regular budget.

Under Article 19 of the UN Charter, any country in arrears of its dues payments in an amount that equals or exceeds

the contributions due for two preceding years can lose its vote in the General Assembly.

After three rounds of cuts, Israel will pay only \$2.7 million. However, Israeli officials said there is no need to worry about Israel losing its voting rights. "We're not there yet, not at all," one senior official said.

UNESCO's Executive Board on Tuesday passed the resolution with 22 countries in favour, 23 abstentions, 10 opposed, and the representatives of three countries absent.

Israeli politicians condemned the vote.

"Yesterday, UNESCO again passed a ludicrous resolution regarding Israel's status in Jerusalem, the capital of the Jewish people for 3 000 years," Netanyahu said at the weekly Cabinet meeting. "I very much appreciate the across-the-board unity of almost all political parties in rejecting this absurd decision."

However, the prime minister also mentioned that the number of countries supporting the biannual anti-Israel resolution at UNESCO had dropped.

"More countries opposed this resolution than last year and fewer countries supported it," he said. He thanked Italy for being the first European country to announce its intention to vote against the text, which destroyed the hope of other countries on the continent to reach an agreement on supporting or abstaining on the resolution.

Netanyahu also thanked the US, the UK, Greece, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Ukraine, Paraguay and Togo for voting against it.

"For the first time in UNESCO, more countries voted to oppose or abstain than voted in favour, and of course this is important," he said.

However, that statement appeared to be inaccurate. In April 2016, 24 countries voted for a similar UNESCO resolution, with six opposing and 26 abstaining.

"We are working constantly to increase support for Israel in international bodies in order to reflect our growing status vis-à-vis bilateral contacts with countries," Netanyahu said. "We are also working constantly to reduce, and I hope one day to cancel altogether, the UN theatre of the absurd regarding Israel."



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks at a reception for foreign diplomats in Israel marking Israel's 69th Independence Day. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY PRAYS AT WESTERN WALL

The head of the Anglican Church prays at the Western Wall in Jerusalem as part of a Mideast tour.

Justin Welby, the archbishop of Canterbury, is seen praying at the Jewish holy site alongside Britain's Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis.

Earlier in Jordan, Welby met with Iraqi Christian refugees and led prayers at the Bethany Beyond the Jordan archaeological site, believed to be the place where John the Baptist baptised Jesus of Nazareth.

At the site, he called for greater support for those in need, saying: "In this place where we hear birdsong and running water we are surrounded, within a few kilometres (miles), with violence."

ABBAS STOPS FUNDING GAZA ELECTRICITY TO 'DRY UP' CASH FLOW TO HAMAS

The Palestinian Authority will stop paying for electricity in the power-starved Gaza Strip and "dry up" the flow of funds to the territory's Hamas rulers, a senior official says.

Hussein al-Sheikh, head of the PA Civil Affairs Department, says the terrorist group profits because it collects electricity payments from Gaza residents. "We are not going to continue financing the Hamas coup in Gaza," he tells the Voice of Palestine radio station.

Al-Sheikh says the aim is to "dry up Hamas' financial resources". He says efforts would be made not to harm services to Gaza residents, but did not elaborate.

Meanwhile Abbas aide Ahmed Majdalani says that as a next step, the West Bank government would sharply reduce the amount of medicine it ships to Gaza every month. Majdalani alleges that Hamas is "selling the medicine and collecting the money".

He says that only "necessary medicine" would be sent directly to Gaza hospitals. — with AP



YESH ATID FINED FOR USING HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS' INFO IN CAMPAIGN

The Justice Ministry fines the opposition Yesh Atid party NIS 40 000 (\$11 000) for using "sensitive," personal information on Israeli Holocaust survivors for political campaigning purposes during the 2015 election.

According to the ministry, the party received the information from The Centre of Organisations of Holocaust Survivors, headed by former lawmaker Colette Avital.

Avital, who is also fined NIS 10 000 (\$2 760) by the ministry, handed over files to the political party without the consent of the survivors and without completing the formal, legally mandated registration process.

Yesh Atid proceeded to use this "sensitive" and "personal" information to campaign to survivors, including through direct mail, the ministry says, in what it described as an illegal breach of the survivors' privacy.

The party says in a statement Wednesday the incident was a "one-time mishap done during an election campaign, in good faith, and with no knowledge that the practice is improper."



SOUTH
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UN official who resigned amid Israel 'apartheid' furore has no regrets

Last month's report by Beirut-based agency sparked an international uproar that prompted the walkout of its head, Rima Khalaf.

It is deeply offensive to the real victims of apartheid."

The report says apartheid is more than an exact replica of conditions in pre-1994 South Africa. It notes that international conventions and the ICC define it more broadly, as "inhumane acts" committed in the context of institutionalised and systematic oppression of one racial group by another, with the intention of maintaining that regime.

According to critics of Israeli policy, such expanded parameters could conceivably apply at least in some of the Israeli-controlled territories.

In the West Bank, military rule has sharply curtailed Palestinian movement, trade and access to

to the World Jewish Congress, an umbrella group of Jewish communities, he suggested he was siding with some of the complaints, saying that "the state of Israel needs to be treated as any other state".

He stuck by his principles even when it required decisions that "create some uncomfortable situations," he said in an apparent reference to ordering the report removed from the ESCWA website.

"As far as we are concerned, it was not published by ESCWA," said Guterres' spokesman Stephane Dujarric.

Khalaf, who resigned two weeks before her scheduled retirement, believes Guterres was pressured by the US, Israel's

KARIN LAUB
AMMAN, Jordan

Labelling Israel's treatment of Palestinians as "apartheid" is like flinging a burning match into spilled petrol - so combustible are the passions on both sides.

Rima Khalaf did just that when a report commissioned by her UN agency at the request of 18 Arab member states accused Israel of having established an apartheid regime designed to dominate the Palestinian people as a whole.

In a swift outcry, Israel slammed the 65-page document as anti-Semitic. The US demanded its removal and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres ordered it taken off the agency's website, saying it did not reflect his views. Rather than comply, Khalaf resigned as head of ESCWA, a Beirut-based agency, one of several UN regional bodies dealing with economic and social issues.

More than a month later, Khalaf has no regrets. The report's charge of apartheid - a 'crime against humanity' in the eyes of the International Criminal Court - deserves serious examination, she said in an interview.

"We are not here for defamation," Khalaf said. "We are here for solving the problem."

The former UN undersecretary general said the international community has failed the Palestinians and must sanction Israel if it wants to regain credibility.

Kulanu MK Michael Oren disputed the apartheid charge as a "big lie", portraying the report as the latest attempt to "apply a completely unique standard to Israel which by definition is anti-Semitic".

Israel and its supporters are outraged at comparisons to apartheid-era South Africa, pointing to the many differences: Unlike disenfranchised blacks in segregated South Africa, Israel's Arab citizens, about 20 per cent of the population, can vote, are represented in parliament and on the Supreme Court, and easily mingle with Jewish Israelis in daily life.

"There are no separate bathrooms, there is no apartheid here," said Oren, a deputy minister of diplomacy. "It's not just deeply offensive to Israelis.



Rima Khalaf

resources, while Jewish settlers in the same territory enjoy full rights of Israeli citizens. Jews and Arabs in the West Bank live under different legal systems, with Jews having far more protections.

"While we recognise the Palestinians as a people, endowed with the right of self-determination in what they regard as their homeland, that recognition is not reciprocated," Oren said, reflecting the widespread view in Israel that those making apartheid claims want to delegitimise and eliminate Israel as a Jewish state.

Many Israelis feel singled out because only their country has suffered the apartheid allegations so far, despite the fact that there are many cases of discrimination elsewhere, including in the Arab world.

UN chief Guterres hasn't discussed the substance of the report despite appeals by Khalaf. But in a recent speech

strongest ally, at a time when the Trump administration is threatening to cut UN funding significantly. Dujarric declined comment.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has praised Khalaf for "courage and support" for the Palestinian people.

Khalaf rejected allegations of bias by those who produced the report. One author is Richard Falk, a former Princeton University professor who published blistering critiques of Israeli policies in his former role as UN special rapporteur on Palestinian human rights.

"Let's not focus on the messenger," Khalaf said. "Let's focus on the facts." She said she hopes the debate started by the report will continue.

"This is not a verdict by a court," she said. "It is a scholarly work. We want to make sure everyone has a chance to look at it and discuss it openly, because we want a solution."



News and views from the Fed



Yom Hazikaron 2017 – fitting remembrance to Israel's fallen heroes

Ben Swartz, chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, addressed the extensive audience at the Yom Hazikaron ceremony, which took place at Yeshiva College on April 30.

The moving ceremony showcased members of all the youth movements reading out letters of those who have lost a loved one to war or terrorism. Ben had very poignant words in his moving and emotional speech, where he highlighted the importance of empowering the youth and giving them the responsibility of carrying this message and connecting to this day. Here is an extract from his address.

"I am going to ask you, and to emphasise how important it is to truly internalise the magnitude of what we are gathered here for. We need to ensure that not just tonight but for all time that we come to terms with the fact that the destiny of Israel and the Jews is so inextricably interwoven that there is no - and can be no - separation of the two, and for this reason it stands that the loss of one is a loss to us all.

We have been witness to one of the greatest miracles of history and that is the re-establishment of what one could say is the third sovereign republic of the Jews in the Land of Israel.

Our dreams, prayers and yearnings of 2 000 years is a stark and bold reality; and each one of us has the honour of sharing in the gift which is created by that reality - the gift of a sovereign, robust and beautiful State of Israel.

However, "those dreams, prayers and yearnings of 2 000 years in as much as it comes as an honour and gift to us - it comes at an immeasurable expense and cost to those who live the dream in order to protect that dream".

A long list of the many wars was shared with the audience, highlighting the ongoing attempt at the destruction of the State of Israel and its people: "[be it] those that sacrificed their lives in the founding of the state under the Palmach or Irgun; or those that fell in the mighty battles of Suez, the Six Day War or Yom Kippur. Or those that fell in Lebanon or defending against the 15 000 missiles fired from Gaza - to them we are indebted.

"Whether it be the battles of Ammunition Hill, or Matla Pass in the Sinai or Bint Jbel or Marjayoun in Lebanon, or pushing back the divisions of tanks that stormed the Golan Heights in the Yom Kippur War. Or those taken in the streets of Haifa, the buses of Jerusalem or the restaurants and night clubs in Tel Aviv.

"Each and every one of those souls we stand for here tonight, we internalise and introspect and we remember them - for we are indebted to them.

"The South African Jewry is inextricably linked to Israel, as their ancestral land and epicentre of Judaism and Jewish cultural identity. It is the SAZF's role to ensure that this profound connection to Israel is maintained."



**SOUTH
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Re-enacting their iconic Six Day War photo



TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

The David Rubinger photograph of three paratroopers standing in silent awe in front of the recaptured Western Wall after the battle for Jerusalem in 1967, has become the defining image of one of the most significant moments in Israel's history.

With the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War approaching, Zion Karasenti, Haim Oshri, and Dr Itzik Yifat returned to the Old City last week to remember the moment.

Karasenti, Oshri, and Yifat described to Channel 2 News how they, as 20-something reserve duty soldiers, inadvertently became the symbol of a nation fulfilling a 2 000 year dream.

"There were snipers everywhere, especially from overhead. They could have thrown a grenade on us and finished us," Karasenti recalled of the battle for the Jerusalem holy site.

Since none of them had ever been to the Western Wall, which had been under Jordanian rule since 1948, they admitted that, at first, nobody was really sure they had even captured the "real thing".

"Everyone talked about the Kotel [Western Wall] all the time, but we were new and we had never been there. That day was the first time any of us had ever been there," Oshri said.

At the time, there was only a narrow corridor separating the Western Wall of the Temple Mount from the nearby houses and buildings of the Old City.

"When they [our colleagues] raised the flag over the Western Wall, that was our sign," Karasenti said.

"After the 48 hours of battle, we were tired and sweaty, our uniforms were dusty and bloodied, but when we walked down the stairs and saw the stones of the Western Wall, a lot of the guys started

The photograph of paratroopers Zion Karasenti, Haim Oshri, and Itzik Yifat has become the defining image of Israel regaining the Western Wall; they're still friends and they still argue...

crying. It was an extraordinary thing. It's hard to describe," Karasenti said.

It wasn't until after the war was over that the three men realised that the picture of them taken by legendary photographer Rubinger had become famous worldwide.

"After the war, my neighbour who was a brand-new immigrant from Poland, came running out to show me that my photo was in the Polish newspapers. I was shocked," said Yifat. "We did become a symbol of our strength," he added.

Karasenti said he too was surprised to see it on the front page of the Haaretz daily the following week.

"I showed it to my girlfriend at the time, I couldn't believe it, I told her 'look, someone took our picture!'"

To many, the 50th anniversary of Israel's victory in the Six Day War - in which Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and the Sinai Peninsula - is a bittersweet one. It represents half a century since the Old City and other historic Jewish sites returned to Jewish hands, but also half a century of Israeli military rule over the Palestinians.

Asked about the dual nature of the jubilee, the men appear to be as divided as Israeli society.

"There is something to be said for that

[calling the image the start of the tragedy of the state of Israel] Yifat said. "I don't believe that we should be ruling over another nation."

"How can you say that as an Israeli who fought for something after 2 000 years of longing?" Karasenti shot back. "We returned the heart of the Jewish people to this land."

Retorted Yifat: "What am I supposed to tell my grandchildren? That there will be war every year?"

Despite their political differences, the three men, now in their 70s, say they have remained close friends over the years.

As Karasenti, Oshri, and Yifat approached the Wall to take a picture last week, a passerby stopped the three to thank them.

"All of the people that are here right now are only here because of you," this man said. "It's you, and all of the other soldiers who fought then. This is all thanks to your courage and your faith. So again, thank you so much."

Nehru dynasty Jew dies at age 108

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

A Jewish-Hungarian woman who escaped European anti-Semitism and married into India's most prominent political dynasty, died last week at the age of 108.

Shobha Nehru, born Magdolna Friedmann in 1908, originally hailed from a family of wealthy assimilated Jews in Budapest, before moving to India after marrying BK Nehru, a cousin of Indian independence movement leader and the country's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, placing her at the centre of politics on the subcontinent. She died of age-related complications, her family said, according to the local press in India.

Shobha Nehru met her husband at the London School of Economics where she was sent at the age of 20 as anti-Semitism began to gain ground in Hungary, leading to the introduction of quotas for Jews in Hungarian universities, according to The New York Times.

Despite the misgivings of both families, the two eventually married, and Nehru left her family in Hungary to move to India.

As the Holocaust broke out, many of her family and friends managed to narrowly escape, while Nehru herself remained in India dealing with the chaotic and violent ethnic partition taking place between what would go on to become India and Pakistan.

In 1949, Nehru returned to Hungary in order to visit Budapest with her three sons.

"She used to go out every day to meet her friends," The New York Times quoted her son Ashok as saying. "Many of them had disappeared. Many had been raped by the Russians or killed by the Germans. They were harrowing tales. I remember her coming back crying," he added.

While she would remain in India for the rest of her life, Nehru also lived for a brief stint in the United States, as her husband served as the Indian ambassador to the US from 1961 to 1968.

The late British historian Martin Gilbert recalled that he was surprised when Nehru, who he always assumed to be Indian, asked him to recommend some reading on the history of the Jews, until she told him of her childhood in Hungary.

Even though she moved away from Budapest at an early age, Nehru maintained her attachment to Hungarian Jewry. At diplomatic events, she told Gilbert, she would not shake the German ambassador's hand.

"I have a feeling of guilt," The New York Times quoted her as saying. "I wasn't there. I was safe. The guilt feeling is still with me. Why should I not have suffered?"

In addition to Jawaharlal Nehru, Shobha Nehru was also related to the longtime former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi by marriage, and was the aunt of Rahul Gandhi, who is viewed as the heir apparent to the Nehru-dominated Congress Party, which ruled India for much of its history.



Message from Naomi Hadar May 2017



As we recently celebrated with joy, Israel's 69th birthday, we realise the importance of securing our vibrant local Jewish community with a strong Israel in our hearts.

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Hamas thanks North Korea for being anti-Israel

STUART WINER AND TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

Hamas last week Sunday thanked North Korea for its support of the Palestinian cause, saying that Israel was "the leader of evil and terrorism in the world".

Hamas and North Korea came together after Pyongyang launched a scathing attack on Israel and Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman, after Lieberman had insulted North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

"Hamas appreciates North Korea's statement in which it supported the Palestinians' struggle and rejected the continuation of occupation," the terror group's spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri wrote on his Twitter page.

"Hamas (rejects) Israeli abuse of North Korea and confirms that Israel is the leader of evil and terrorism in the world."

Last week Saturday North Korea condemned Israel for its nuclear policy and accused the Jewish State of abusing the rights of Arabs across the Middle East.

In an official foreign ministry statement Pyongyang threatened to punish Israel and accused Lieberman of "rash and malicious" statements that insulted its leadership, after he the week before criticised the Asian nation and called its leadership "extremist and insane".

"Israel is the only illegal possessor of nuclear weapons that enjoys the support of the United States, but Israel is attacking North Korea for possessing nuclear weapons," the statement read, going on to claim this was a cynical move intended to distract from Israeli "occupation" and "crimes against humanity".

"Our consistent message is to mercilessly punish those who offend the dignity of our leadership," the statement said. "We warn Israel to think twice about the implications of its defamation campaign against us."

Last week Thursday Lieberman said Pyongyang "seems to have crossed the red line with its recent nuclear tests", adding that its nuclear weapons programme posed more of a threat to world order than Iran or any terrorist group.

"We're just ahead of a new era of accurate missile and unconventional weapons in the hands of irrational people," Lieberman said.

In an interview with the Walla News website earlier in the week,



Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri (AP/Hatem Moussa)

furthermore, Lieberman referred to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un as "the madman from North Korea". He said Pyongyang was allied with Syria, Iran and Hezbollah - all part of "an axis of evil" led by "an extremist and insane group" whose single purpose was to "destabilise the entire world".

Lieberman's comment drew condemnation from fellow ministers who said he was pushing Israel into a war of words with North Korea, Israel Radio reported last week Friday.

The radio station did not name the top Cabinet members who said Lieberman should speak less and focus more on maintaining national security.

"We have nothing to do with North Korea, so why jump up?" one incensed minister reportedly said. "Don't we have enough enemies?"

The unexpected diplomatic row with North

Korea sparked criticism of Lieberman by other Israeli politicians as well.

MK Shelly Yachimovich of the Zionist Union remarked on Twitter: "We have enough enemies. Let's focus on them."

The US aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson last week Saturday kicked off a joint drill with the South Korean navy, officials said, as tensions rose over North Korea's latest test-fire of a ballistic missile.

The drill came hours after the North launched a ballistic missile in apparent defiance of a concerted US push for tougher international sanctions to curb Pyongyang's nuclear weapons ambitions.

*AFP contributed to this report.

Rivlin calls for more effort to return those missing in action



Israeli soldiers stand at attention and bow their heads as a siren is heard to mark a minute of silence during a Memorial Day ceremony at the Western Wall, in Jerusalem's Old City, April 30, 2017. (Hadas Parush/Flash90)

STUART WINER

As the wail of sirens to mark a minute of silence faded away last Sunday evening, President Reuven Rivlin opened the official Memorial Day ceremony for the fallen, speaking of the price the country pays for its freedom and the debt still owed to those missing in action.

"Our liberty is sacred, both sacred and hard. We know that there is a price to be paid for our existence here, for our liberty. There is a price, and we, in awe and terror, are willing to pay that price,"

Rivlin said standing before the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem.

"Our commitment to the future is also our commitment to remembrance; the memory of the boys and girls, our heroes, our loved ones," Rivlin said at the official ceremony commemorating those killed in war and terror acts in the years leading to and since the establishment of the State of Israel.

"The true staying power of a nation grows from the living memory of our roots, of our history, and our tradition," he said, adding that the nation needed to

make greater efforts to return the bodies of soldiers killed and missing in action.

"Nor do we forget, the soldiers who did not return from the battle fields. The task of bringing home the missing and the fallen soldiers whose place of burial is unknown has not been completed. Our commitment to those boys remains firm. And, together, this evening, we send our prayers for a full recovery to all the injured as they struggle day by day."

The Hamas terror group claims to be holding the bodies of two IDF soldiers, Hadar Golding and Oren Shaul, killed during the 2014 war in the Gaza Strip. Returning the soldiers' remains, and the cost it may entail in negotiations with Hamas, is a painful issue of debate in Israeli society.

Several other soldiers remain missing, including Yehuda Katz, Zachary Baumel and Zvi Feldman who went missing in Lebanon in 1982 and navigator Ron Arad, shot down in 1986.

Rivlin also spoke of the emotion he feels when, in his role of president, he visits families mourning fallen soldiers.

"Like an accursed decree of fate, I always arrive too late," he said. "I always miss meeting them."

Since 1860, when the first Jewish neighbourhood was established outside Jerusalem's Old City walls, 23 544 men and women have died defending Israel and the pre-state Jewish community,

according to official figures. In the past year, 97 additional Israelis were added to the list of the fallen, with 37 of them having been disabled IDF veterans who succumbed to their injuries.

IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot spoke of the strength he drew from the families of those who died. "You, who struggle daily with loss and emptiness, the mental strength you demonstrate is an object of appreciation and gives us great strength. Although the lives of the fallen were cut off in hostility, thanks to them, we can say wholeheartedly tomorrow that the music of the people of Israel will not stop, the people of Israel are alive," Eisenkot added, referring to the Israeli Independence Day celebrations that began on Monday evening at the close of the memorial day.

At 11:00 on Monday, a second two-minute siren rang, marking the start of the day's official ceremonies throughout the country, attended by some 1.5 million Israelis. The official ceremony honouring those who died in acts of terror, began at 13:00.

The commemoration day, established in 1951 by then-prime minister and defence minister David Ben-Gurion, was set for the 4th of Iyar, the day before Independence Day, which began immediately after Memorial Day on Monday night.



Martin Skudicky - Chairman Zionist Youth Council and Israeli Singer Hananel Edri

Youth movements remember fallen heroes

OWN CORRESPONDENT

“When you lose someone, your life and the way you knew it will never be the same - everything is different... It’s not true that life continues. It stops and then re-starts, differently...”

These were the words of Martin Skudicky, chairman of the Zionist Youth Council, when he opened the Yom Hazikaron ceremony at the Yeshiva College campus on Sunday evening.

The youth movements ran the traditional candle-lighting ceremony and as the Israeli flag was lowered, Arthur Lenk, the South African Ambassador of Israel, lit the flame of

remembrance, which was followed by a moment of silence and Yizkor.

“Lost Voices”, a series of readings gathered together by Dan Bacher, was read out by representatives of the various movements - Bnei Akiva, Habonim Dror, Betar and Netzer.

The clearly moved audience took these personal accounts of pain and loss to heart and were left silent as the candles were lit in memory of these heroes.

As the evening drew to a close, the audience was encouraged to consider where Jews would be without a Jewish State.

Israeli soloist Hananel Edri performed a moving song and led the audience in the singing of Hatikvah.

Durban’s poignant ceremony to remember some of the fallen

MICHELLE CAMPBELL

The KwaZulu-Natal Zionist Council focused its Yom Hazikaron commemoration on the lives of six individuals who lost their lives during Operation Pillar of Defence, fallen soldiers and civilians among them.

On Sunday evening, some 120 community members heard poignant recollections from those who knew the six and audio-visual material from that time. They gently conveyed the experiences of those who took part in this operation in 2012 and the tragic loss of their loved ones’ lives. The ceremony at the Durban Jewish Centre included a well-accepted talk by Cheryl Unterslak, the driving force behind an organisation called Durban-Israeli Victims of Terror Enterprises (DIVOTE), which defines itself as a project of gemilut chasadim (acts of loving kindness).

Founded in 2001 at the height of the Second Intifada in Israel by Durbanite John Moshal, the organisation is committed to advancing the cause of kindness in the face of violence and destruction.

DIVOTE runs a number of different projects which all give comfort, happiness, dignity and support to as many “heroes of terror” as possible.

The projects include filling backpacks or baby bags with gifts, clothes, and toys, to be sent to people of all religions and nationalities whose lives have been affected by terror in Israel.

Every single one of the 23 544 who gave their lives in defence of the State of Israel, and every one of the 3 117 victims of terror, was a son, a daughter, a father, a mother, a sister, a brother, a beloved friend.

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S T E P S

Yom Ha'atzmaut in the Park

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Around 5 000 Johannesburg Jews descended on Huddle Park in Linksfield at dusk on Monday to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut. With an autumn chill in the air, they donned their Jewish jackets – predominantly black puffer jackets – and their party shoes and escorted their children to a safe and fun evening celebrating.

As the gates opened at 17:00, the crowds arrived in their numbers for the “Party in the Park”, celebrating Israel’s 69 years of independence.

As they entered, the adults gathered their flags and made for the food stalls and shopped around the “shuk”, which provided delicious sweet treats, novelty toys and children’s items to beaded pieces, an array of jewellery and other crafted goods.

The children headed straight for the kiddies carnival area, where they had all sorts of fabulous adventure rides, jumping castles and the like, which kept the young’uns very busy.

The best thing about this was that although there certainly were parents seen searching for their kids, there wasn’t reason to worry. Despite the thousands of people, the area was totally closed in and there was a huge security presence. So, our children were safe, which meant the adults could relax and party to Israeli soloist, Hananel Edri and the Johnny Sklar Band.

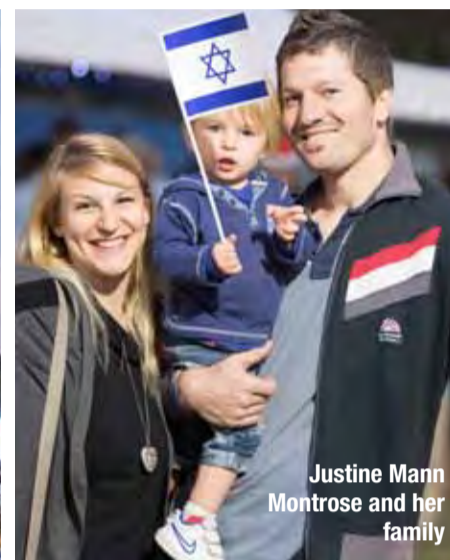
They got the crowd on their feet to dance with an awesome line-up of contemporary and traditional Israeli songs. The highlight of his performance was the exclusive debut of his first-ever self-written song “I live to love”.

King David Linksfield’s flag dancers wowed the audience with their performance before the organisers announced that Karen Camberg was the lucky raffle winner, winning two return tickets to Israel to spend a weekend in Jerusalem, courtesy of El Al.

Once the younger families went home with their schoolgoing children, the party continued with DJ Ronen pumping out the hits.



Sharon Spiegel Wagner



Justine Mann Montrose and her family



Quizzical Yom Ha'atzmaut in Pretoria



DIANE WOLFSON

Although low-key in comparison to other cities, Pretorians came out to celebrate Israel’s 69th birthday with a typical Israeli supper.

Old and young participated in a fun quiz on Israel together, with a myriad questions ranging from historical facts to Olympic medals and Nobel laureates.

Organisers Batel Shina and Miri Yohanan were a hit with the crowd with a fun photo booth with take-home fridge magnets as a reminder.

Israel is looking very fine at 69!



Noa Tzimer, Ben Ventura, Micaela Browde and Neta Hakim from Project Ten Durban

MICHELLE CAMPBELL

The Durban Jewish community celebrated the 69th birthday of the State of Israel on Monday evening in a festive atmosphere and with delicious food. A crowd of about 230 gathered at the Durban Jewish Centre main hall, which was decorated with white draping, blue lighting and with Israeli flags adorning every wall.

Grant Maserow, past director of the KwaZulu-Natal Zionist Council, welcomed everyone to the event and KNZC Chairman Prof Antony Arkin, followed with a short address.

Falafel, hot dogs, boerewors rolls, beef burgers and hot chips were devoured in vast quantities, followed by ice lollies and fruit

salad, while Israeli music added to the party atmosphere.

A photo booth again proved to be a tremendous attraction, generating a long queue wanting to take home photographs of themselves wearing appropriately festive blue and white props.

Much fun was had by the young ones on the jumping castles and many a little one went home absolutely exhausted.

Face painters and balloon artists kept the kids busy in the minor hall, giving the parents time to schmooze in peace and quiet.

The teenagers enjoyed the fooseball and pool tables and an added attraction this year was the “Israel Mini Cinema” which looped a one hour collection of short videos, all about Israel.

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Wounded soldiers finding solace in SA warmth



Amnon Worko

BETH AMATO

Amnon Worko's mother was heavily pregnant with him when their extended family fled Ethiopia by foot due to famine and ill will towards Jews there. It was 1984 and they were headed for Israel, where a mission had been initiated to rescue them and countless others. After walking about 1 190 kilometres to Sudan, Amnon was born.

After enduring this treacherous journey, his family made it to Israel and lived there ever since. This remarkable man was recently in South Africa as part of a delegation of wounded Israeli soldiers, sponsored by Brothers for Life (BFL) in Israel.

The purpose of their trip was to find a healing, loving and nurturing space together with fellow soldiers and their host families in Johannesburg. Many of the soldiers had never met and for Amnon, it was his first time on a plane.

Amnon's, whose story was just one of the many heart-wrenching experiences of these young soldiers. His started at birth in Sudan when his family was arrested when his father tried to secure transport for them to get medical care for his mother in Egypt. So, he spent his first four months in a Sudanese jail.

Starving and weary, the family was dramatically rescued by a Mossad agent, who organised their escape through a Sudanese refugee camp to Egypt. They were given fake French passports, flew to France, and were eventually welcomed in Israel. Amnon's father tells him of being robbed, climbing mountains and suffering from illness. The Workos were one of the lucky ones. Many didn't survive the treacherous journey.

Amnon's story suggests a calling from a young age to a heroic pursuit. He had survived, as a helpless infant, the unimaginable. As a 19-year old, he knew his fate rested in serving in the Israeli Defence Forces. Young and eager, his unit was tasked with destroying a terrorist weapons laboratory in the Gaza Strip.

The vehicle in front of Amnon's was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) and most of his friends, as he knew them, were killed. It was up to Amnon to rescue their belongings and all he remembers is an inordinate amount of blood. He notes he was "injured forever on the inside" after witnessing this.

For Amnon (and indeed for the others),

BFL was a lifeline.

Mark Gordon, BFL's South African chairman, said that by the time the group left after their week of rest and recuperation here, they "felt like rock stars". Gordon recalled many of the soldiers arriving sad and withdrawn, but left being able to meaningfully connect and laugh with others. In addition to a trip to the Kruger National Park, the delegation met with Holocaust survivors at a moving event held in Athol, Johannesburg on April 27.

BFL's purpose is to restore meaning and connectedness to injured Israeli soldiers through physical and communal acts. BFL was started by Yaniv Leidner and Gil Ganonyan - both injured soldiers who saw the dire need to create a haven for the many wounded men who had become lost souls after suffering emotional and physical injuries in various military operations. They hoped, that through BFL's programmes, these men would return as productive and happier members of society.

The organisation's seed was planted in Rambam Hospital in Haifa in 2006, but its first meeting was held in Seattle, US. Ten injured men, who had been soldiers in the Second Lebanon War, were welcomed by the Seattle community.

"It was there, in the homes of the Jewish families who opened their hearts and adopted the soldiers as their own sons, that the soldiers began to heal. In a matter of days they went from isolation in their lives of rehab to feeling like they would never be alone again as long as they had each other", according to BFL.

Amnon and his injured soldier companions came to South Africa, in the tradition of the first Seattle trip.

Often, as in the case of Amnon, wounded soldiers (whether physically, emotionally, or both) spend years in abject internal terror and at a loss as to what to do with their lives, post their time in the army.

Says Rabbi Chaim Levine, president of Brothers for Life: "Each of our soldier initiative projects is remarkable, but they act simply as a vehicle for our injured soldiers to heal each other.

"A way for them to share an understanding with their eyes that no words can possibly come close to communicating. This miraculous, magical understanding occurs in BFL on a daily basis."

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Sarsour: symbol of US Jew vs Jew

BEN SALES
NEW YORK

One of the best symbols of the current Jewish political divide is a Muslim woman.

To Jews on the left, Linda Sarsour is a courageous and effective activist who builds bridges and breaks stereotypes. To Jews on the right and some in the centre, she's an Israel-hating apologist for Islamic extremists.

Both sides point to evidence backing up their claims: Sarsour supports a boycott of Israel and favours a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And earlier this year, she raised more than \$100 000 to repair a vandalised Jewish cemetery in Missouri.

She's also a rising star in the protest movement against President Donald Trump, with a record of success in organising and advocating for legislative change. As her profile rises in progressive circles, the tension over her attitude toward Israel keeps surfacing.

Born in Brooklyn in 1980, Sarsour was married at age 17 and had three kids by the time she was 24. She began engaging in activism after the 9/11 attacks in 2001, volunteering at the Arab-American Association of New York. Four years later she was the group's executive director.

In the years since, she has effected change for her community and drawn praise from liberal politicians and activists. She participated in the successful campaigns for New York City schools to close on Muslim holidays and for an independent review of racial profiling from the city's police.

This year, Sarsour's profile rose as one of the co-organisers of the Women's March on Washington, a large protest for women's rights and against Trump. Time magazine included Sarsour and three other organisers on its list of 100 most influential people.

Sarsour also was recognised by President Barack Obama, whose White House named her a "champion of change".

Sarsour, who is of Palestinian descent, is a



harsh critic of Israel. Soon after the Women's March, she drew fire from Jewish leaders for saying unabashed supporters of Israel cannot be feminists.

"It just doesn't make any sense for someone to say: 'Is there room for people who support the State of Israel and do not criticise it in the movement?' There can't be in feminism," she told the magazine in March.

Sarsour backs the BDS movement. She told NY1 that she supports a one-state solution that would create a shared country for Jews and Palestinians - a solution that many Jews consider a formula for the demise of Israel.

Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organisation of America, called her "a bigot and divider" and "extremist".

"She's bigoted because she loves Jews but hates Zionism," former Anti-Defamation League director Abraham Foxman said. Her progressive activism, he added, "doesn't excuse bigotry".

Jewish groups on the left have lavished praise on Sarsour.

Rebecca Vilkomerson, executive director of Jewish Voice for Peace, which backs the BDS movement, has described Sarsour as "passionate and compelling, very smart, committed and an impressive person".

Yehuda Kurtzer, president of the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, cites Sarsour as the test of "the choices we make about our alliances in the pursuit of our political causes".



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White man's ingrained superiority

NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR

“I’m not here to talk about Penny Sparrow,” Justice Sharise Weiner tells the audience at ORT SA’s Houghton premises in Johannesburg. “When I say let’s talk racism, it’s not the Penny Sparrows of the world I’m talking to; it’s you and me.” (Her Penny Sparrow remark alludes to the South Coast estate agent who got herself into trouble through racist remarks on Facebook.)

Part of ORT2Talk’s lecture series, Weiner - shortlisted for the position of Public Protector in 2016, a founding member of Lawyers for Human Rights and a High Court judge - is eminently qualified to take us to the brink of discomfort.

“Preoccupation with individual racists is a gross misunderstanding of the problem.” This is merely the opening salvo of her main hypothesis: Structural racism and white privilege is the insidious problem behind the problem.

Weiner defines the idea further: “Structural and systemic racism is a system in which public policies, institutional practices and other norms work in various ways reinforcing and perpetuating racial group inequality.”

It allows, she says, privileges and advantages associated with whiteness to endure with regards to, for example, good education and decent jobs. It’s covert, not overt, its disguised and subtle. “It shapes the world in which we live.”

She quotes from a paper by US women’s studies scholar Peggy McIntosh: “As a white person,



Ellis Falkof, Chairman ORT SA, Judge Sharise Weiner and Redi Tihabi.

I realised I’d been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.”

And: “White privilege is an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in every day.”

Moving on to constitutional law expert Pierre de Vos, she says he wrote how, on a recent trip to Thailand, he was struck by the fact that every model displayed on a billboard had

a lighter complexion than most people there.

“Assumptions about white superiority are so deeply embedded in modern society that they can easily appear to be normal and natural when, in fact, they’re nothing more than a manifestation of structural racism.

“If you happen to be white, it may be more difficult to become aware of how your view of the world and of yourself is held up as superior to other ways of being in the world. We might find it difficult to accept that this helps

to prepare us for success in the world.”

But how to address this white privilege? Weiner says it can’t be by merely creating opportunities for black people to assimilate. Instead we have to transform society and challenge our basic assumptions about how society operates and how opportunities are distributed.

“In short, you attack and dismantle white privilege which is the flipside of the coin of structural racism. Some of us call this transformation.”

This is scary and threatening. “We stand to lose not only our unearned advantage but also our sense of wellbeing, our sense of being inherently virtuous and superior, of never being judged collectively for the evils done by other white people.”

Still, she says, it’s in our interests to do this. It makes for a better, more capable society by harnessing the talents of all its members.

Weiner challenges us to lose the guilt. “You didn’t create apartheid, but just be aware of how privileged you are.”

One way to do this, perhaps, is how we raise our children. She cites a New York Times article by educator Jennifer Harvey called: Are we raising racists?

We must speak honestly to kids about racism, she says. “Parents who rely on messages like ‘We’re all equal’ or ‘We’re all the same underneath our skin’ in the hope of teaching our children the values of inclusion and equality, is paying lip service to the issue.

“When they see racial inequality, they won’t blame racism. Instead, they’ll blame people of colour for somehow falling short.

“Change one person at a time and you’ll change the world,” Weiner advised during question time.

702 presenter Redi Tihabi, was in the audience. She says the assumption is that the people committing corruption are in the majority. “They’re not. Who loses the most? Poor black people. Not just whites are victims. And we all pay taxes. The poor also pay taxes. Corruption is done to all.”

Helen Lieberman gets top French award

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

Helen Lieberman was “overwhelmed” when she was informed of her latest and possibly most prestigious award as Officier de la Légion d’Honneur (National Order of the Legion of Honour) “in recognition of her lifelong commitment to the eradication of poverty, injustice and human misery”. The honour is the highest that France can bestow on a foreign citizen.

However, her lifelong work in helping people with very little to help themselves, was never done for acclaim or celebrity, it was, she says, “part of who I am as a Jewish woman - it is an expression of my Judaism. Rather than prayer, I’d like to live it,” she explains her life’s work.

Today her social services organisation, Ikamva Labantu, that operates in Cape Town’s townships, is involved in over 1 000 projects.

At the recent award ceremony in Cape Town, French Ambassador Christophe Farnaud announced that the French embassy was also giving a R115 000 grant to Ikamva Labantu.

“I work quietly,” the soft-spoken Lieberman tells Jewish Report. “I don’t really look for newspapers or celebrity - I just want to get the work done on the ground.”

Lieberman stresses that thousands of individuals helped her build the organisation. So, with characteristic

humility, she asked the ambassador and the President of France if she could dedicate the award to “my mamas”.

“I’ve had the privilege of working alongside them and enjoying watching how lives change and how people are able to change their own lives. There is no ownership of anything by Ikamva,” she says of the group’s emphasis on empowerment.

“The community is in control and we work for the community. We are there trying to help people help themselves, so it’s a shift from people being our beneficiaries. Those who work for Ikamva are the beneficiaries,” says Lieberman, who is very much a proponent of the power of the collective.

She acknowledges that the award has opened doors for her in France and she hopes to go there to meet with potential supporters.

Lieberman’s lifelong commitment to uplifting the underprivileged began in 1963 when as a young speech therapist at Groote Schuur Hospital, she decided to follow up a patient in the black township of Langa. What she witnessed there shocked her to the core and set her on her future path.

In those early apartheid days, her mere presence in the township attracted the attention of the police who arrested her on several occasions. She was even told by Jewish leaders that she was bringing discredit to the community by engaging in her then-illegal activities.

But this did not deter her. She believed

that Jewish people needed to play their part in uplifting others where they could, because of their past.

“We’d just come out of Holocaust - although you can’t compare it. We’d been marginalised, victimised.

“I was so set on living a different life in South Africa,” she remembers. “I could not have lived here and watched what was going on, watched the human suffering, watched the deprivation and not given my little bit,” she says in something of an understatement, adding that “over a million children have passed through my hands!”

Lieberman has lost none of the passion

and sense of purpose that has driven her efforts over the past 54 years and is still actively involved on the ground. “I wake up in the morning and I want to be there,” she says simply.

“There’s always a purpose, there’s always somebody who’s got an idea, somebody who I need as much as they need me.

“It’s an exciting, fulfilling and inspiring world when the world you allow to be around you is one that embraces the lives of others and not uses the lives of others to embellish your credentials.

“It’s an amazing privilege to have been able to immerse myself in the real South Africa.”



Helen Lieberman, who has just been awarded France’s highest honour for foreign citizens. She is pictured here with some of the participants in Ikamva Labantu’s programmes.

A kaddish to Kovno in art



Yda Walt presenting *Where is Kovno* at the Biennial in Lithuania.

GILLIAN ANSTEY

When textile designer Yda Walt first went to Lithuania, the thing that struck her was not what she saw, but what was missing. “I was shocked,” she said. “I felt this absence of the Jews. The absence was very present, all the time.”

Almost overwhelmed by her reaction, she joined forces with artist Cheryl Rumbak and composer Philip Miller to create a multimedia installation called “Where is Kovno?”. They presented this at Lithuania’s 2009 textile biennial in Kuanas, the country’s second largest city.

“Where is Kovno?”, which refers to the Jewish name for Kaunas, was ultimately a Kaddish space to pay respect to the Jews from that area who perished, Walt explains. Prior to the Second World War, there were about 40 000 Jews - a quarter of the population - in Kaunas. Ninety per cent of South African Jews are believed to be descendants of Lithuanians.

The multifaceted installation included a soundscape. Miller recorded sounds in the forests where Jews had been murdered, overlaid with sounds of the Lithuanian University choir learning the Yiddish lullaby *Oyfn Propetshik*.

Much of the space, including the floor, was papered with a replica of a 1939 Lithuanian phonebook, a physical representation of how many Jewish people had lived there before.

A key focus was a fabric map of Lithuania, bordered by traditional black and white Xhosa blankets, on which Walt and Rumbak had sewn large colourful buttons to indicate



Miriam Zaborskiene, Kovno ghetto survivor in the Kaddish installation the *Where is Kovno?* project at the Kaunas Textile Biennale, 2009. Miriam is looking for her lost community in the 1939 phone book which the artists used as wallpaper and flooring of their installation.

The palpable absence Walt felt, has now been articulated in an artistic form that is fascinating, thought-provoking and, in a strange juxtaposition, aesthetically pleasing.

the numbers massacred in each site. “Sites of mass murders in Lithuania” is embroidered on the top with the Lithuanian equivalent at the bottom.

That large blanket was one of the main exhibits at the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre at a preview of the “Where is Kovno?” installation last week.

Walt kept referring to this wall hanging as a blanket, which jarred, and therein lies some of its impact. A blanket is warm and comforting and it is eerie to equate this fabric presentation of a sombre subject with something cosy.

Less dramatic but perhaps more engrossing, is a printed map of Lithuania. Each town is shown as a pie-chart, illustrating its proportion of Jews in 1987. It felt exhilarating to report back to relatives that Krok, the village of my paternal grandfather, was north of Kovne, and almost a quarter of its population had been Jewish.

The exhibition is meticulously curated, with all sources identified and the linocuts, created by Walt and Rumbak, all clearly captioned.

The linocuts include some of the 40 former shuls in Kaunas. Most intriguing was the explanation of the telephone and typewriter linocuts. These were objects Walt saw at Sugihara House, from where Japanese Consul-General Chiune Sugihara helped Jews escape by issuing them transit visas to Japan.

“After struggling and agonising,” Sugihara is reported to have said: “I concluded that humanity is paramount. Then, fearing nothing, I decided to issue those visas.”

A year before his death in 1986, Yad Vashem honoured him as a Righteous Among the Nations.

The palpable absence Walt felt, has now been articulated in an artistic form that is fascinating, thought-provoking and, in a strange juxtaposition, aesthetically pleasing.

The exhibition at the Cyril Harris Centre is a taster and fundraiser for the extended one planned for the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre in October.

It will feature the Kaddish space plus two additional elements. One is a film of three women’s testimonies about surviving the Lithuanian Holocaust. Another is an audio interview with well-known South African photographer David Goldblatt of his visit to his father’s village, Popolyan.

“David has also allowed us to use his photograph of the forest where the killings happened of that town. So that is an entirely new installation which will be shown for the first time in South Africa,” said Walt.

• *Lithuania - The Journey Back: A Introduction to the Where is Kovno?* project is at the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre in Oaklands until May 8.

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The ultra-nationalists and John Lennon's broken dreams



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

A piece of popular history which throws light on today's confusing world is the release 50 years ago in 1967 in England of The Beatles' album "Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" - soon to be re-released.

It was followed in 1971 by John Lennon's iconic song "Imagine" with its key line "Imagine there's no countries...", positing a globalised world based on individualism - self-expression, feminism, gay liberation and similar values. Countries' borders were less important.

Things have changed. Last year's statement by British Prime Minister Theresa May at her Conservative Party conference epitomised the resurgence of identities defined by nationhood and rejection of "the other": "If you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere."

Other countries such as France are following. Its national election next Sunday will determine

if ultra-nationalist Marine Le Pen will become president. Her National Front party is accused of Holocaust denial; last month she caused outrage by suggesting France was not responsible for the round-up of Jews - perceived as "the other", despite being citizens - who were sent to Nazi death camps during the Holocaust.

Will France embrace hard right populism with its anti-immigrant, super-nationalism?

Human identities are a balancing act between competing sentiments. For South African Jews, Israel is a key part of their identity, epitomised by moving ceremonies this week for Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzamut. The former mourns 23 544 men and women who died defending Israel and its pre-State Jewish population, and 3 117 terror victims.

The latter celebrates Israel's independence. This year also marks 50 years since the Six Day War in which Arab countries tried to obliterate the nation of Israel.

But there are other forces vying for South African Jewry's attention in rivalry with Israel, such as dramatic local events crucial to South Africa's future.

These include what happened on Monday in

Workers Day ceremonies around the country. Some descended into chaos. In Bloemfontein, President Jacob Zuma was booed out of a Cosatu rally and departed in his 12-car motorcade surrounded by bodyguards, without delivering his keynote speech. People ask how long the ANC will survive before it implodes, and what happens afterwards? Will African nationalism and anti-colonialist rage dominate, and what will be the place of whites and Jews?

Zuma never cherished South Africa's democracy and nationhood, and the country should celebrate the shaming of a man who has robbed it for personal enrichment. Hopefully, its citizens will regain their optimism individually and collectively.

Israel's nationhood, in contrast, seems solid, despite vulgar arguments in its body politic. A survey by the Israel Democracy Institute and Tel Aviv University shows both its Arab and Jewish populations are optimistic and have a sense of national identity.

It found 71 per cent of Israelis (73 per cent of Jewish respondents and 61 per cent of Arabs) were either "very" or "quite" optimistic about the country's future, and over 80 per cent said

they were "quite proud" or "very proud" to be Israelis. Not surprisingly, Jewish respondents took greater pride in Israeli identity (86 per cent), but even 51 per cent of Arab respondents described themselves as "quite proud" or "very proud" to be Israeli.

The clash between aggressive nationalism and those individuals attempting to cross boundaries is ugly, however. Ultra-right protesters heckled a 4 000-strong alternative Israeli-Palestinian Memorial Day Ceremony in Tel Aviv on Sunday - held for the 12th consecutive year - featuring bereaved Israeli and Palestinian families. They called Israeli participants "traitors".

Wherever it is in the world, the cosmopolitan counterculture of The Beatles and the ultra-nationalism epitomised by Theresa May and Marine Le Pen, cannot ever happily exist together.

For South African Jews, Israel's and South Africa's place in this universal tussle will never be simple, but the ride is certainly interesting.

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

Community Columns

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Terror plot challenges

When the Thulsi brothers were arrested last July on charges of planning to carry out Islamic State-inspired terrorist attacks in South Africa, it was reported at the time that Jewish individuals and institutions were among those considered for possible attack. Last week, in the indictment submitted to the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court, further details were released regarding potential targets.

Understandably, these reports have generated much concern in our community. We must, however, maintain our sense of perspective. Terrorism poses a global threat and it is unrealistic to expect South Africa to be immune from it.

Rather, our response needs to be to maintain the highest levels of vigilance against acts of terrorism, reporting anything that comes to our attention that may appear to be unusual or out of place to the CSO and diligently maintaining efficient, sensible security procedures at all our communal installations and events at all times.

The SAJBD has full confidence in our country's law enforcement agencies' abilities and it has been particularly encouraging to see how effective these were in both detecting the current threat and in acting decisively against those responsible.

We are in constant contact with both the NPA and the Hawks and will continue to work closely with them whenever asked to do so.

WJC coup for SA Jewry

As reported elsewhere in this week's issue, our representatives did our community proud at last week's World Jewish Congress plenary conference in New York. In particular, congratulations are due to SAJBD National President Mary Kluk and Gauteng Council Vice-

Chairman Marc Pozniak.

The esteem in which both are held on this august body, was demonstrated by Mary's being entrusted with heading up the nominations and elections process, while Marc, in the face of strong competition, was elected onto the WJC executive for the next four years.

Both Mary and Marc also facilitated important sessions at the plenary. Their role underlines the close association that the Board has established with the WJC, as well as the influential part that our relatively small community is able to play in its activities on behalf of international Jewry.

In the course of the conference, our delegates also met with social media companies in the US at a forum arranged by the Anti-Defamation League to raise our concerns.

Israel - celebrating and remembering

This week, the Jewish world marked Yom Hazikaron - the annual day of remembrance for those who died in defence of the State of Israel - followed immediately afterwards by Yom Ha'atzmaut - Israel's Independence Day.

There was again an excellent turnout for both events, demonstrating once more the powerful spirit of Zionism that permeates within South African Jewry and how much our community continues to identify with both the triumphs and tragedies of the Jewish State.

Congratulations to the SAZF for organising both these inspiring gatherings.

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



Above Board
Jeff Katz
National Chairman



Sunday (May 7)

• WIZO invites organisations/schools/businesses/teams to join it for a walk to celebrate Israel's 69th Birthday. Venue: Huddle Park, Linksfield. Time: 09:00. Cost: R69 for 69 years for 6,9 kilometres (or the distance you can walk). Further details: Zee 083-377-5644 or Jenny (011) 645-2515.

Tuesday (May 9)

• WIZO Women Inspired hosts "From my Heart to Yours" with Roz Basserabie, motivational speaker. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Venue: Home

of Joceline Basserabie. Cost: R100 (incl tea and cake). Bookings and venue details: Jenny (011) 645-2515.

• Cape Town Holocaust Centre presents "I have a Name", a public lecture by Robin Ruizendaal. Venue: 88 Hatfield St, Gardens. Time: 18:00. Light refreshments will be served. RSVP: Dianne (021) 462-5553 or admin@holocaust.org.za



Letters

ALAS, DON'T WORRY, 'NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM' IS ONLY A SONG...

Anecdotally Koppel has had a very good year financially, and he and his wife Ruth have built a brand-new, fully-equipped Pesach kitchen. They have invited their close family from Australia to celebrate the holiday with them.

The home on seder night is impeccable - the result of great time and energy which the skilful ba'alat ha'bayit (woman of the house) has devoted to it.

The five-metre-long dining room table is covered with the finest Irish linen tablecloth. The china is the finest, in honour of the great night. On the insistence of their two sons learning in the nearby yeshiva, the matzot laying under a hand-embroidered silk cloth, are from the first 18 minute batch personally chosen by the rebbe of the shtiebel where the family daven.

The seder goes better than expected. Words of Torah are discussed throughout the seder. The afikomen is "stolen" by the youngest daughter, who for its return, has succeeded in extorting from abba a brand new outfit.

Songs of thanks to Hashem for freeing the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, are recited. For it is a mitzvah on this night for each person to consider himself as if he or she were slaves in Egypt.

Birkat hamazon, and Hallel are recited, and Chad Gadya puts the final touch on the mitzvot of the night.

Now, just as the song ends, father Koppel jumps up and gathering the entire family in a circle, they all break out in a frenzy of song - L'shana ha'ba'a Be'Yerushalayim - "next year in Jerusalem".

Again and again, around the table L'shana ha'ba'a Be'Yerushalayim is sounded. Louder and louder until their song merges with the same melody resounding from the neighbours' homes.

Suddenly Mama Ruth collapses into a chair crying hysterically. The singing stops. Father Koppel runs over and asks why she is crying just now at the apex of the sacred night.

What do you mean "Next year in Jerusalem"? the highly sensitive mother asks. What about our table and deep carpet and china and our new kitchen! How can we leave all this?

Koppel approaches Ruth and taking her hand while gently dabbing her tears away, in a voice full of compassion, says to his beloved wife: "Darling, don't cry, it's only a song."

Choni Davidowitz
Golden Acres, Johannesburg

KUDDOS FOR ROBYN SASSEN'S SHOAH REPORTING

I wish to congratulate Robyn Sassen on her lucid, accurate and compassionate report on this year's Yom Hashoah.

She understood the messages of the speakers well and was able to relay them with all their emphasis. Ours was not a call for revenge or a message of hatred, but echoed Eli Wiesel's philosophy: "Don't

dehumanise people!"

Without such dehumanisation the Shoah would not have been possible.

Don Krausz
Chairman Association of Holocaust Survivors in Johannesburg.

Disclaimer: The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report. **Guidelines for letters:** Letters of up to 400 words get preference. Provide your full name, place of residence, and daytime phone number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened. Email: editorial@sajewishreport.co.za

South Africans in the original Israeli Air Force

ROBYN SASSEN

Arguably, the opportunity to be in an air force has more romantic appeal than the infantry. When an opportunity manifested for young South Africans in 1947 to be on the Israel Air Force, it set many young hearts aflutter and motivated many young Jewish men to join up. Of course, many were untrained and went along for the adventure as much as for their unwavering support of Israel.

In 1998, in commemoration of Israel's 50th anniversary, several South African-based veterans of Israel's wars were interviewed for an article in the journal *Jewish Affairs*. There was a similar ring to many of their stories. Much like "Tuksie" Blau and Joe Katzew - who were both 15-year-olds during the time of the Second World War - bluffed their way into the SA Air Force to fight in the Second World War, although legally they were much too young. By 1947, they were skilled and gung-ho to do what they needed, for the burgeoning Jewish State.

But for the late Justice Cecil Margo, who was already an adult and had served with merit in the Second World War in the South African Air Force, it was a different story.

Israel's Minister of Defence and Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, sat up and took notice of Margo, who had more than 100 successful operational raids under his belt and know-how when it came to tactical air warfare. This was all from operations during the Second World War.

In 1948, Bernard Gering, chairman of the SA Zionist Federation, approached Margo with a personal request from Ben-Gurion. The IAF at the time consisted of a motley bunch of volunteers from the Diaspora with much enthusiasm, but virtually no direction.

Golden Acres resident Ellie Isserow, also associated with the IAF, recalls how during that time "everybody was their own boss. Everybody was their own warlord... there was no order."

Margo - who passed away in 2000 - recalled how he immediately left for Israel, with Trevor Sussman, who had been a bomber pilot during the Second World War.

Margo could see how the IAF's disorganisation left enemy air forces at an advantage. They were better equipped and they were more organised. He explained the IAF's faults: "The selection of targets, the type of aircraft, the time of day, and the type of tactics were not correct."

The type of aircraft was an issue too: Many volunteers flew Piper Cubs, which, said Tim Michel, another late war veteran, were too light for aerial warfare.

Further, many planes had bombsights installed that were designed for infantry, not aircraft. Without a great deal of skill - and a good deal of luck - these pilots could easily have shot off their own aircrafts' tails, a situation which befell SA volunteer Lionel Bloch.

Michel recalled that Bloch was "strafing Syrian troops in a Czech-built Messerschmitt-109 in the Mishmar Hayarden



area, when he suddenly disappeared, having shot himself down."

Not only was equipment in short supply, bombs and parachutes were, too. The late Manny Feldman - also in the IAF in its early years - remembered how the men improvised. Instead of bombs, they threw empty bottles from their cockpits. The rapidly descending bottles would emit a whistle similar to that made by a conventional bomb.

Creative bluff tactics were resorted to: Katzew described "bomb-chucking" - where bombs were thrown onto enemy territory through the aircraft's windows.

They also rigged loudspeakers along the front of an aircraft, amplifying, the soundtrack from the 1943 British Intelligence-produced film, *Desert Victory*, on the battle of El Alamein. This noise was spliced with that of rifle firing and, believe it or not, the racket of Purim graggers!

Margo offered many suggestions to Ben-Gurion - from accessing middle type aircraft, to restructuring ranks, which the leader totally supported. Ben-Gurion even offered Margo the command of the IAF. Taken aback by this offer, Margo returned to South Africa, to think about it. There, with Sussman, he established a flying school in Germiston on the East Rand, for the training of young men to be pilots for Israel combat.

Margo - who became the South African judge who presided over the investigation into plane crashes which saw the deaths of Samora Machel of Mozambique and all the passengers on the Helderberg aircraft in the 1980s - also referred to the need for radar technology in the IAF.

That's not completely true, says Isserow: he argued that he and his peers did indeed build a radar system of sorts in Squadron 505, at the Weizmann Institute, he remembers, referring to the radio ham skills of the late Maurice Ostroff.

"For lack of a suitable electric motor, a contraption comprising bicycle pedals,

sprockets and a chain had been built, enabling the antenna to be rotated by hand."

After consideration, Margo decided not to head the IAF. The Machal (acronym for Hebrew term for Volunteers from outside Israel) website deems Margo "a frustrated visionary", compelled to leave the fledgling IAF in other hands.

By 1956 and the Suez Crisis, the IAF was much better organised - there were fewer volunteers and the IAF had taken on its own momentum, by then. France was a major supplier of warplanes to Israel until before

the Six Day War in 1967.

It was a mix of strategy, know-how and hard work that saw the continued development of the IAF, through Israel's war-troubled history. While America supplied war aircraft to Israel after the Yom Kippur War, Israel has designed and produced its own war aircraft since the 1990s.

Many of the volunteers decided, after their experience in 1948, to go on aliyah. Others returned to South Africa, and continued their lives in the knowledge that they'd played a role in helping Israel.



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Taking up the cudgels of their late mother's work

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Michele Asa and her sisters have taken up the cudgels of their late mother in restoring the Roodepoort Jewish cemetery.

Having grown up in Roodepoort - whose Jewish community has now disappeared - they shared between themselves an article on the desecration of their cemetery that was in the SA Jewish Report last year.

Karen Melandowitz saw it and sent it to her sisters, Michele - who lives in the United States - and Sharon Brokensha, who lives in New Zealand and they decided to take it on themselves to help complete the restoration.

"The vandalised and sorely neglected Roodepoort Jewish cemetery on the West Rand epitomises that of many former outlying Jewish communities who no longer have a Jewish presence," says Michele. She described the Roodepoort cemetery as "wrecked", with nearly a third of the tombstones having been broken or pushed over.

"There is also no wall to demarcate the area from the general cemetery. Unfortunately, the Jewish community no longer exists there to deal with the problem, nor are there funds available from the now defunct community, to carry out the necessary restoration."

This they discovered when contacting Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, who fights a valiant battle to restore those now derelict cemeteries - and the dignity of the souls resting there.

It was only when Michele contacted

Rabbi Silberhaft that she found out that her mother, Val Melandowitz, had been working on restoring the cemetery. Val - who passed away in July 2015 -- had been the Roodepoort-Florida Hebrew Congregation treasurer. "My mother with the help of other committee members started the restoration, but was unable to complete it," says Michele.

The sisters, Rabbi Silberhaft and an anonymous donor have taken this on to raise the money and then to restore the cemetery. They need R70 000 and the donor will match whatever they raise, so effectively they need to raise R35 000.

The Roodepoort community was established in 1904. The oldest grave is that of Abraham Simeloff who died in 1914 and the last person to be buried there was, as far as could be ascertained, Max Silber in 1988. The last rabbi to serve the community was Rabbi Kay (Kwiatkovsky), who came to the congregation in the late 1960s and served there until the 1980s. The Josman, Traub, and Herson families were among the first founding families.

In the 1960s the community's funds were dwindling, so they combined with the neighbouring Florida Jewish Congregation, and became known as the Roodepoort-Florida Hebrew Congregation.

The restoration will be done by laying all the headstones flat - a practical step Rabbi Silberhaft has initiated - secured in concrete to ensure no further vandalism can take place to the headstones. A fence demarcating the Jewish area will be

put up as well.

The sisters and Rabbi Silberhaft are appealing to all descendants of the once vibrant and active congregation to make a contribution of R2 500 per family member's grave, to restore the dignity to those who have passed on. But any size contribution will be appreciated.

Rabbi Silberhaft has stated that it is not the Jewish way for Jews to abandon the graves of their loved ones, but to contribute to ensure that those graves are well-maintained and kept in the respectful condition they deserve.

The anonymous donor will match all contributions rand for rand toward this project. In this way it is hoped to raise the necessary funds for this important undertaking.

If you know of anyone descended from this congregation, please let them know of this crucial project. And maybe Jewish Report readers would also like to contribute to this very worthy cause. Anyone willing to contribute, should contact Rabbi Silberhaft at thetravellingrabbi@gmail.com, or at 082-440-2621. He has a list of people who are buried there, as well as of those graves that were vandalised. Pictures are also available of the graves.

Among those buried there, whose graves are vandalised, are people with the surname Boner, Losos, Adelman, Blumsohn, Tannenbaum, Miller, Schlapo, Morris, Shutz.



Jewish life in small Eastern Cape towns

MARGOT COHEN

It isn't usually a big deal to find a rabbi to do a baby boy's bris, but that is if you are living in a big city in South Africa, but brissing in a small town in the Eastern Cape is a whole lot more complicated.

Marc Kopman was living in Queenstown between 1982 and 1987 when his second son, Wayne, was born. He had to drive the rabbi from Stutterheim to Queenstown, where he performed the bris under the watchful eye of the local doctor. He then returned the rabbi to his car in Stutterheim, which apparently could not be trusted to complete the longer journey.

This is just one of the many anecdotes Kopman used to illustrate the poignancy of the life in the close-knit Jewish communities of the Eastern Cape, when he spoke at a recent Jewish Genealogical Society meeting.

Kopman's job as area manager for an insurance company took him and his family to far-flung South African towns.

During his stint at Queenstown between 1982-1987, Kopman recalled how the Jewish families made him feel welcome. Arriving with his wife and two-year-old son from Bloemfontein, local businessmen, doctors and lawyers were sources of great support to the Kopman family.

"The synagogue was situated across the road from the railway station. There were minyanim every Friday night. Young men from the Yeshiva in Johannesburg came to officiate for Jewish holidays."

The Queenstown community was formed as far back as 1904. It grew to 40 families under Rev Gordon and by 1965 there were 34 Jewish families who enjoyed communal seders.

The congregation included two Israeli families and Queens College pupils who were Jewish. Boarders were compelled to attend services at the shul on Friday nights.

The last bris performed in Queenstown was in 1985 by Rabbi Maisels and the last barmitzvah in the same year. Today there are perhaps two Jews left in Queenstown and the shul was long ago sold.

Another unusual occurrence was the joint celebration of



Succot by the Jews and the local Seventh Day Adventist community. Communal braais became a regular feature between the two communities.

Aliwal North was a big metropolis by comparison to Jamestown, for instance. Here an Afrikaans family donated the land for a Jewish cemetery. The shul was built in 1911. Previously a masonic temple was used. By 1955 there were 160 Jewish souls.

There were five Jewish mayors in Aliwal North. In 1965 there were only 30 families and by 1968 the shul closed. Between 1981 and 1982 the shul building was turned into Odendaal Engineering Works. It was sold in 2002.

King William's Town proved to be a popular retreat for the Kopman family. "We used to go there to escape the 14 per cent VAT imposed in South Africa. Because it was in the Ciskei homeland, we had to take our ID books and we could also gamble."

The Central Hotel was run by a Mr Rosenberg. However, the shul hall had just been sold so that improvements could be made to the shul itself. The huge airport in the Ciskei to be built for homeland leader Lennox Sebe, meant that 30

There were five Jewish mayors in Aliwal North. In 1965 there were only 30 families and by 1968 the shul closed. Between 1981 and 1982 the shul building was turned into Odendaal Engineering Works. It was sold in 2002.

Israeli technicians were hired in 1984.

Thus there was no problem achieving a minyan for the 1984 Rosh Hashanah services. However, the Israelis all returned home and the problem of not having a minyan for Friday night was not resolved.

In 1904 70 per cent of Jews lived outside of the major centres in South Africa. By 1970 this trend was reversed and Jews had left the Platteland and were living in the major cities of South Africa.

In 1987, Kopman was transferred to Krugersdorp on the West Rand, where he still lives.

Born in Elisabethville (Lubumbashi) Kopman has lived in Cape Town, Johannesburg, as well as Bloemfontein and Queenstown, having also worked in the southern Free State and the Eastern Cape Border region.



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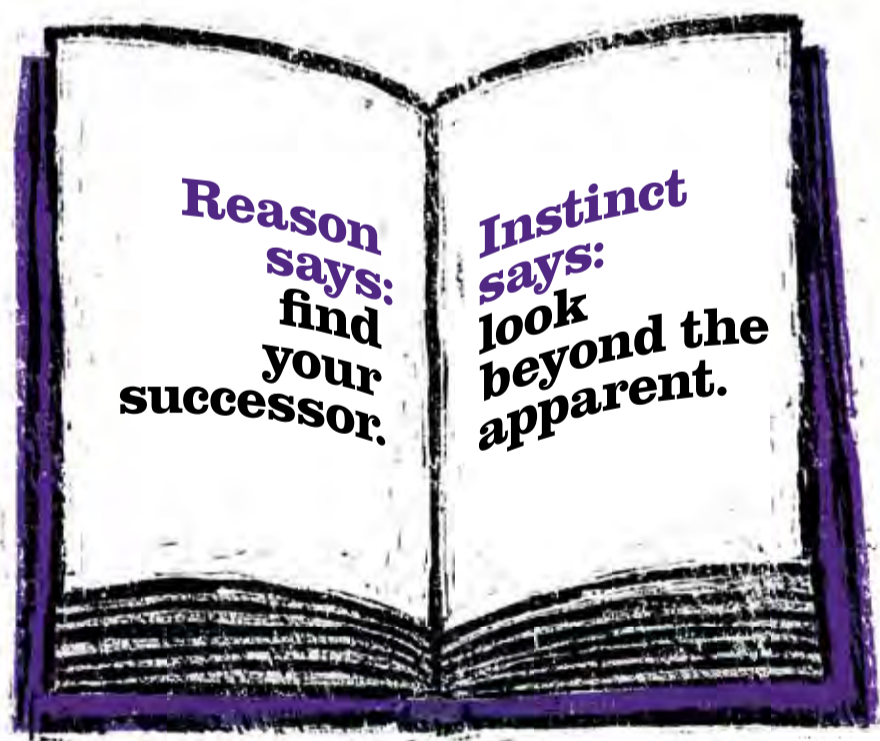
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South African money leads to an 'impish' revival

JACK MILNER

Thousands of people in the city of Lincoln lined the streets on Monday to cheer their heroes - the Lincoln City football team, nicknamed the Imps, who finished top of the table of the National League. They sealed the title when they beat Macclesfield 2-1 at their home ground of Sincil Bank and confirmed their return to the Football League after six years away.

The club's promotion caps a remarkable debut season in charge for manager Danny Cowley and his assistant, his brother Nicky, who led their side to the FA quarterfinals, the first non-

league side to do so in more than a century.

However, the success of the team in recent years has been attributed in the main to an investment from South African businessman Clive Nates who decided to get involved in soccer after retiring after a successful career in money management with Libam and Peregrine Capital.

Nates, who lives in Cape Town, picked the struggling amateur club because its chairman, who has a holiday home in Hout Bay, was prepared to allow him to be more than just a financial investor.

Nates invested a reported £300,000 in the



South African director of UK Lincoln City Football Club, Clive Nates (left) with coach Danny Cowley.

club for which he received a 25 per cent stake, but his role has been even more pivotal to the resurgence of the club. It was he who helped entice Danny and Nicky Cowley to the club and he has also helped find the new players who have been instrumental in the turnaround.

"We are extremely fortunate to have been able to entice Danny and Nicky to Sincil Bank in their first year as fulltime managers," said Nates in an interview. "The boost we have seen in season ticket sales and the positive reaction of fans to their appointment, has been extremely encouraging.

"There were other opportunities for them, but they saw the potential at Lincoln City. They did exceptionally well at Concord Rangers and continued that in their first season at a higher level with Braintree.

To get a part-time team that had finished 14th in the previous season up to third place and then only to lose in extra time in the play-off semi-final, was a fantastic achievement.

"That achievement was recognised with Danny being named Manager of the Year at the 2016 National Game Awards."

Speaking about his role in the buying of players, Nates added: "Although we discuss the various players who are being targeted, it's not really about what I want but what Danny and Nicky feel is necessary to improve the team.

"It's up to me and the rest of the directors to support them as much as possible to get the players they want within the constraints that we operate under. Danny has stated that he is looking for young, hungry players preferably under the age of 24."

Nates commented that he was not averse to looking towards South Africa for possible players. "We are trying to establish a relationship with SuperSport United in South

Africa that would be mutually beneficial and which could see some younger players come on loan. There are, however, a limited number of players in the country with UK or even EU passports."

Their FA Cup season was quite sensational and had the fans in raptures. The run is no small feat. It's the first time a non-league side has made the quarterfinals since Queen's Park Rangers did it all the way back in 1914.

In the fourth round they beat Brighton 3-1 at home and then travelled to Burnley for a fifth round clash and beat them 1-0. That triumph was truly historic. Squaring off against a Premier League side, most pundits expected the Imps, as Lincoln City are known, to be overmatched. But that wasn't the case.

Lincoln City battled and kept Burnley off the board all match long. A corner in the 89th minute gave the Imps the opportunity to score and they capitalised on the set piece. A looped corner found Luke Waterfall all alone in the box; he headed the ball to the far post, and Sean Raggett netted to put his side ahead. Turf Moor, which Burnley had turned into a fortress of sorts, was stunned.

In the quarterfinals in March they came up against Arsenal and the match was played at the Emirates Stadium in London. It was a massive occasion for the Imps and their fans, but this time they were outplayed, going down 5-0.

They held out until the first Arsenal goal, from Theo Walcott in first-half injury time, and then crumbled after the break.

It is worth noting that Lincoln City's entire salary bill is only one tenth of that paid to a single player in that night's opposition Arsenal team. "Nates is clearly taking value investing to a new level," commented Alec Hogg of BizNew



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Actual offers may differ from visuals shown. We reserve the right to limit quantities. While stocks last. EGOE

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