



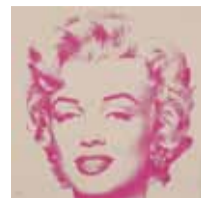
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south african Jewish Report

■ Volume 21 - Number 22 ■ June 30 2017 ■ 6 Tammuz 5777

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'One Kotel for one people'

Photo courtesy Flash90

Natan Sharansky, who heads the Jewish Agency, is at the international forefront of the battle to get Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to reinstate their broken commitment to create an egalitarian prayer area at the Kotel. See pages 4, 5 and 6.

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Local kosher chicken prices: much to crow about

ADAM MIDZUK

While South African Jews are convinced that our kosher chicken is so much more expensive than non-kosher birds in other Diaspora communities, the opposite is actually true.

Johannesburg ranks comparatively among the best-priced kosher chicken in the world. However, it is certainly not the cheapest when compared to non-kosher chicken in the same city.

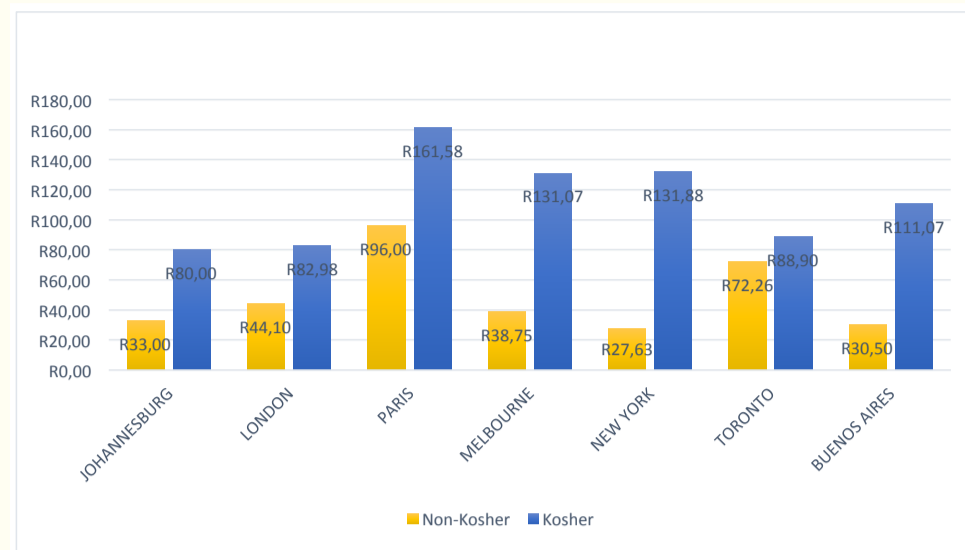
The SA Jewish Report did an Internet spin around the world, looking at how our kosher and non-kosher chickens compare to those in London, Paris, New York, Melbourne, Toronto and Buenos Aires.

While prices varied, we did our best to find the most average-priced fare in the cities, both kosher and non-kosher.

Our kosher chicken was the cheapest of the sample at R80 per kg. This was followed closely in second and third position by London and Toronto, with prices equating to R82,98 and R88,90 per kg respectively. The most expensive kosher chicken came from Paris, costing the equivalent of R161,58 per kg.

Kosher chicken was also rather expensive elsewhere, ranging from R111,07 per kg in Buenos Aires to roughly R130 per kg in Melbourne and New York.

When it comes to ranking how expensive kosher chicken prices are compared to non-kosher chicken, Toronto wins first place for



being the most reasonably priced. There, a whole kosher chicken costs 23 per cent more per kg than a non-kosher bird.

While Paris has the most expensive kosher chicken in terms of absolute price, compared to non-kosher chicken it was only 68 per cent more expensive. This puts it in second place for reasonable pricing.

By comparison, kosher chicken in Johannesburg costs 145 per cent more - 2.5 times the price of non-kosher chicken, fourth best, behind London at 88 per cent.

Nonetheless, the price hike on Johannesburg kosher chicken, pales with those of New York, where a single kosher chicken can cost close

to five times as much as a Perdue-brand whole chicken.

Almost as expensive are Melbourne and Buenos Aires, where kosher prices are upwards of triple the supermarket price of non-kosher chickens.

Shabbat Times this week

Starts	Ends	
17:09	18:01	Johannesburg
17:30	18:25	Cape Town
16:49	17:43	Durban
17:10	18:03	Bloemfontein
17:01	17:56	Port Elizabeth
16:54	17:49	East London

Parshat Chukat

Medical symbol - from the Greeks or G-d?

Rabbi Dr David Nossel Waverley Shul



Ever wondered what the medical emblem of the snake wrapped around a stick means? No doubt you're familiar with it - it's used around the world and it's in the centre of the Magen David of the emblem of our very own Hatzolah. But what does it mean?

I did a search on it and discovered that the snake and stick emblem has been given a name: the Rod of Asclepius.

According to one site the Rod of Asclepius is an ancient Greek symbol that has become an internationally recognised symbol of medicine. The symbol is associated with the Greek demigod, Asclepius who was renowned for his unsurpassed medical prowess and healing powers.

According to myths, he got his medical knowledge through the whispering of snakes that have the ability of periodically shedding their skin and emerging bigger, healthier and shinier than before. The symbol was displayed at the Temples of Asclepius that became popular healing centres of the Greco-Roman world. Later on, it came to be adopted by doctors all over the world.

Greek? It certainly sounds like Greek to me. I prefer to go with an alternative explanation that is no less plausible, far more Jewish, and much more meaningful. In this week's Torah portion, Chukat, we read of the outbreak of a plague of snakes sent against the Jewish people.

In order to protect them from harm, G-d instructed Moses: "Make for yourself a fiery

serpent and place it upon a pole, and it will be that anyone who was bitten will look at it and live" (Numbers 21:8).

So, the snake on the stick has Jewish origins! Very Jewish origins: G-d Himself was the graphic designer and Moses was the artist. But what does the symbol mean? In order to understand this, we need to go back to an earlier episode with snakes and sticks: G-d instructs Moses to tell Aaron to take his stick and throw it down before Pharaoh's sorcerers.

He does so, and it turns into a snake. Shockingly, the sorcerers are able to do the same. This was not some sort of power-play variation of snakes and ladders. This was about the way we are supposed to approach life.

All challenges in life, and illness is one of life's greatest challenges. It offers us two options: the snake or the stick. The snake represents the mindset that life is out to get us. It bites. The stick represents the opposite - that life is here to empower us. It's a tool.

When Aaron and the sorcerers let go of their sticks, they saw a snake - they became vulnerable and victims; when they were "hands-on" they had a stick - they were equipped with a tool for life.

Illness is the same. When we see illness as a cause for our downfall, we become vulnerable and victims; when we look at illness as an opportunity to grow, we have an impetus for growth.

When G-d told Moses to put a snake on the pole and to tell the people to look up at the snake in order to be healed, He was teaching us an additional lesson: when we look at life via the stick, we are able to look up and see that even the snake, even the greatest challenges in life, are sent to us by our Father in Heaven.

He sends them not to knock us down, Heaven forbid, but quite the contrary, to bring out the positivity and greatness that we have within us.

What a relief it is to know that Hatzolah - and indeed the entire medical world - instead of having a symbol which is nothing more than an inexactitude of Greek, is nothing less than the inspiration of G-d.

Jewish Report

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Public Protector's cohort is not just anti-Jewish...

NICOLA MILTZ

South Africa's Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane this week denied punting notorious Holocaust denier Stephen Goodson's book on the history of banking, in which he blames Jews for all the ills in the banking world.

In his book, *A History of Central Banking and the Enslavement of Mankind* he makes outrageous claims, placing Jews at the centre of the so-called "rot" that permeates international banking. "A must-read book", Mkhwebane wrote on her Facebook status, showing a photograph of the cover of Goodson's book.

"The post was informing the friends about the book she will be

that Jews were responsible for all the financial ills of the world.

A YouTube video of this event shows him continually making use of phrases like the unwelcome "flood of Jews", "the connivance of Jews", "the unsound business practices of Jews". The Rothschilds' "malevolent banking empire" takes a persistent beating throughout.

Goodson said that when the ANC came to power "each Cabinet minister has a Jewish adviser who writes their speeches. A lot of these people can't write their name. The black government is just a front. It is a puppet government", he maintained.

Goodson claims in this talk that a manager told him: "These blacks are very good with theory. They will learn, pass their exams,

invented to extract vast amounts of compensation from the defeated Germans".

In the M&G article, Goodson claimed the genocide of millions of Jews during the Second World War was a "huge lie".

The M&G this week said Goodson and the Public Protector met on April 23 and two days later her Facebook page featured the cover of his book. Goodson, a former director at the Reserve Bank, served in his role for nine years until 2012, when it was believed he resigned because of his controversial views.

When the Jewish Report asked Mkhwebane whether it concerned her that the country's Jewish community might find it disturbing that she appeared to publicly endorse Goodson's book, her spokesman's response was that the Public Protector "has a right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion about any matter which she conducts in her private capacity".

She said she would be meeting the Jewish Board of Deputies to address these "wrong perceptions" of her supposed endorsement of Goodson's controversial book.

Goodson was investigated by the Hawks in 2015 for breaching the Reserve Bank Act that year, after the publication of another book, "Inside the South African Reserve Bank - its origins and secrets exposed".

Last week Mkhwebane instructed Parliament to change the Constitution, with wording she drafted unilaterally, to remove the Reserve Bank's mandate to keep inflation under control. This sent shock waves throughout every financial crevice, including ratings agencies, causing the rand to plummet further. It took bankers by surprise.

The Reserve Bank this week tore into Mkhwebane, calling her attempt to rewrite the Constitution, "ill-informed and reckless".

According to the Mail & Guardian, Mkhwebane held no meetings with economists, central bankers or constitutional experts, in preparation for this report and instruction. And there is "no evidence" she consulted the Reserve Bank, Parliament, or any other body, about her proposed change.

Reports suggest she only had two

meetings on the issue. One was with the department of State Security and the other with Goodson.

In a statement released this week, The South African Jewish Board of Deputies said it was "following up this matter" with Mkhwebane and would be meeting with her next month "to obtain clarification".

A YouTube video of this event shows him continually making use of phrases like the unwelcome "flood of Jews", "the connivance of Jews", "the unsound business practices of Jews".

The Board explained that Goodson's book has as its central theme "that the system of international banking is and always has been, an unadulterated evil and that Jews, through their supposed underhanded, unscrupulous practices, have been guilty of foisting

that evil on humanity at large".

Among other things, said the Board, "Goodson persistently justifies anti-Jewish persecution by attributing it to the alleged criminal behaviour of Jews themselves, blames Jews for instigating wars, revolutions and other such disasters and asserts that the Holocaust, in which six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis during the Second World War, is a Jewish-spawned lie aimed at extorting reparations from Germany".

Said the Board: "As we have stressed in our initial correspondence with the Public Protector, such thinking is typical of ultra-right-wing, white supremacist thinking the world over, and indeed, Goodson has been rapturously acclaimed in those circles."

The Board says it takes statements, particularly by public representatives seriously, particularly those who appear to endorse anti-Semitic ideologies. The Board will raise this at its forthcoming meeting with the Public Protector, following which it will report back to the Jewish community about the outcomes and way forward.



reading. It was not promotion," insisted Mkhwebane's spokesman Cleopatra Mosana this week.

However, the Public Protector and Goodson have been in close talks. This emerged last week when Mkhwebane released her shock report into the apartheid-era Bankorp bailout in which she "inexplicably" demanded that the Constitution be amended to change the mandate of the Reserve Bank.

Goodson is no stranger to controversy. Notorious for his anti-Semitic "banking conspiracy theories", he has expressed his admiration for the social achievements of the Third Reich.

His racial aspersions are cast not only on Jews. In 2013 he was asked to give a historical overview of South Africa at a memorial service in Lancashire. He told his audience

but when it comes to the practical implementation, they are totally useless."

He concludes his talk by painting a bleak picture of the future of South Africa, saying that the percentage of whites had declined and "by the end of the century there will be no white people. Whites are the cement keeping the country together. As they decline, everything is going to unravel."

Goodson had spewed his "contentious views" to the Mail & Guardian in 2012, which included his admiring the economic policies of Hitler. He told of his belief that international bankers financed and manipulated the war against Hitler because they saw his model of state capitalism as "a threat to their usurious ways", and that the Holocaust was "a fiction

A union made in Zion

DINA DIAMOND

This couple - whose engagement was announced on Sunday - may have many shared interests - one of them being a deep love of Israel and the Jewish people.

She is Olga Meshoe, daughter of Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, a member of parliament, a defender of Israel and president of the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP). Her betrothed is Joshua Washington, son of Pastor Dumisani Washington from Stockton, California, an international pastor and leader of the Congregation of Zion and of the Christians for Israel Movement in the US.

Joshua is a professional musician who works with his father in the church and school. He loves and supports Israel and is involved with his father in strengthening Christian ties with Israel in the US.

Olga, a qualified attorney and a



Joshua Washington and Olga Meshoe

favourite guest at Shabbos tables, is an avid supporter of the Jewish community and of Israel. She is currently studying for her MBA in the US.

Olga is the chief operating officer of DEISI International (Defend Embrace Invest Support Israel). This organisation was established to create platforms for all people to be educated and exposed to the truths regarding the Middle East conflict and the right of the State of Israel to exist within safe and secure borders.

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Norma Robinson 082 554 7260 | Romaine Buchalter 082 685 5177



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Chrissie Hammer 082 568 0440 | OTI 880 3550



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Directions: Directions: Along Northfield into Kingswood Road.

Joel Harris 082 926 0287 | Marco 082 048 2644



ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

Glenhazel – Inviting buyers from R2.399 Million

Chilton Avenue. Set on 2075sqm in a 24 hour guarded enclave. Hurry to stake your claim on this, value galore 4 bedroomed family home. Spacious reception rooms onto covered patio, big garden and pool, 3 bathrooms (2 en-suite). Well fitted kitchen, 4 garages, staff rooms, excellent security. Asking more. Web Ref: I17022

Directions: Along Cross Road into Chilton Avenue.

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Netanyahu alienates Progressive Jews over the Kotel

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ) and the South African Association of Progressive Rabbis (SAAPR) have “condemned the decision by the Government of Israel to suspend the implementation of its own decision to establish a dignified space for egalitarian prayer at the Western Wall”.

Progressive Jews in South Africa have joined the massive international protest against this decision. The Jewish Agency for Israel, itself, is at the forefront of this protest.

The Israeli Cabinet on Sunday suspended this already government-approved plan to establish the pavilion at the Jerusalem holy site, which was to have had joint oversight by all streams of Judaism, following calls by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s ultra-Orthodox coalition allies to scrap the deal.

“By most counts, there are about 14-15 million Jews in the world today... On Sunday, the prime minister of the world’s only Jewish state made clear to many millions of them: Israel really doesn’t want you,” wrote Times of Israel editor David Horowitz.

He cited the Israeli Minister of Health Yaakov Litzman’s declaration: “The government’s decision to freeze the Western Wall arrangement sends a clear message to the entire world: The Reform do not and will not have access or recognition at the Western Wall.”

Rabbi Greg Alexander, a leading rabbi of the 6 000-strong South African Progressive community, says: “This is bad for world Jewry who will continue to be presented with one face of Jewish prayer - the Orthodox, separate-gender model, where a woman cannot lead a service, read from the Torah, or wear tallit or tefillin,” says Rabbi Alexander.

“This will definitely hurt relations between Israel and the Diaspora and weaken the connection of millions of Jews to Jerusalem. The Progressive

movement alone represents nearly two million Jews across the world, who have a deep love for Jerusalem, but this stabs at their hearts.

“It effectively says that Israel does not see their prayer as legitimate,” Rabbi Alexander adds.

The establishment of a dignified and secure space for egalitarian Progressive prayer at the Kotel, was the result of years of intense negotiations, led by Natan Sharansky, chairman of The Jewish Agency for Israel, according to a statement by the SAUPJ this week.

Last year he reached a solution that was accepted by all major denominations and was then adopted by the government and embraced by the world’s Jewish communities.

Monica Solomon, chairman of the SAUPJ says: “South African Progressive Jews are proud and committed Jews with strong ties to Israel and our common Jewish heritage. Instead of allowing us to pray with dignity at the Western Wall, we are now faced with an uphill struggle to bring Israel and the Jewish world closer together.

“Millions of Jews around the world - whether Progressive,



Jewish women praying in the women’s section of the Western Wall.

irrevocable, “but it is certainly the sign of a union in deep trouble”.

The SAUPJ statement adds: “Israel should be doing everything it can to avoid alienating its core supporters, its own flesh and blood. Non-Orthodox Jews, in Israel and abroad, may not agree

Zionist vision and dream of Herzl, Ben-Gurion, and Jabotinsky, to establish Israel as a national home for the entire Jewish people”.

It called on Knesset members, “those we have met today and all the others, to take all necessary action to ensure that these dangerous and damaging steps are halted.

“The Jewish Agency calls upon the government of Israel to understand the gravity of its steps and change course accordingly,” it said.

The advertisement concluded by stating that the Jewish Agency “will continue to ensure that all Jews are connected to the story of the Jewish people and to Israel”.

Sharansky, who was intimately involved in making the now-nixed Western Wall deal, said that the problem was Israel’s refusal to recognise Reform Judaism.

“It all exploded because the State of Israel did not recognise the Reform,” he said. “This is a very dangerous message that can keep Jews away. We must do everything possible to change the message from the Israeli government.”

On Monday the Jewish Agency approved a resolution, passed unanimously by its Board of Governors, calling on

the government to rescind its decision. It marked the first time the institution - which predates the existence of the State of Israel - has explicitly called on the Israeli Cabinet to walk back a decision.

The Jewish Agency also cancelled a planned gala event at the Knesset to which Netanyahu was invited. The agency’s board also passed an unprecedented resolution calling on the government to reinstate its previous commitment to create a permanent Western Wall prayer platform for non-Orthodox Jews.

“The prime minister himself is no ultra-Orthodox zealot,” writes Horowitz. “The prime minister, politically, however, has quite evidently decided that his future depends on keeping the coalition’s two ultra-Orthodox parties happy.”

Horowitz adds: “...Israel’s Diaspora-savvy prime minister, in capitulating to the narrow-minded demands against his better judgement, showed that survival in office now even takes precedence over the deepest sensibilities of the global Jewish nation he aspires to lead.” - Additional reporting from JTA and Times of Israel.

Sharansky, who was intimately involved in making the now-nixed Western Wall deal, said that the problem was Israel’s refusal to recognise Reform Judaism.

“It all exploded because the State of Israel did not recognise the Reform,” he said.

Orthodox or secular - will not support this insulting decision.

“It is ironic that Israel, formed as a Zionist state, is one of the few places in the world where Jews do not enjoy religious freedom.”

The SAUPJ insists that Netanyahu’s decision is both short-sighted and “fraught with long-term danger”. However, the SAUPJ is “far from a call to sever relations with Israel”, as they don’t believe the damage

with everything that the Jewish State does, but the arguments and our passion, reflect the connectedness of the global Jewish family.”

The Jewish Agency for Israel took out large advertisements in major Israeli newspapers this week, saying that this government decisions “endangers the unity of the Jewish people”.

The advertisement said that the decisions “undermine the

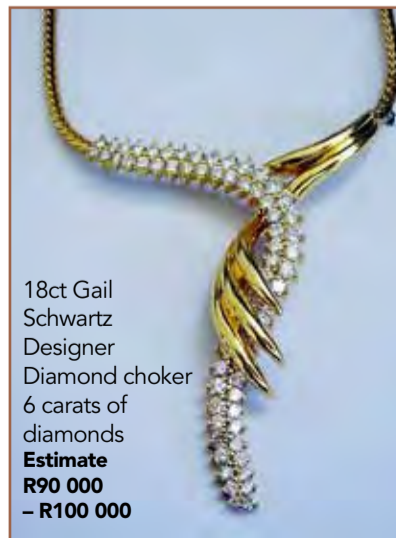
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Egalitarian minyanim - a South African perspective



HOWARD FELDMAN

Forty years ago, Jewish Johannesburg was a very different place. The community was largely "Traditional" in observance, which meant that they drove to an Orthodox shul on a Friday night, but picked the bacon bits out of their salad on a Saturday.

Pesach adherence meant removing the bread from the cheeseburger and Yom Kippur ended with a Yom Kippur dance that required preparation from mid-afternoon. Hardly a woman covered her hair (or pretty much anything else) and satin kippot had a firm and noticeable pocket crease.

Today things are more than slightly different. Despite tremendous political and economic uncertainty (as well as criminal), the community is thriving. Multiple Jewish day schools, yeshivot, shuls, aged homes, a sophisticated and caring welfare system, a Jewish newspaper, its own Jewish radio station, Beth Din and Hatzolah all thrive.

A spirit of inclusiveness is what defines the community. And although everyone still complains about the cost of kosher chickens, there is a sense of pride of what has been established at the tip of Africa. What began with a group of bedraggled and tired survivors, has culminated in a strong and dynamic force that is in many ways an example to the world.

There are many reasons why Johannesburg has seen such a strong return to Jewish observance. One of them was the approach of the rabbinate who had to make "compromises" that they might well have not been comfortable with.

The fact that many Jews drove to shul on a Friday night (filling the parking lot), could not have been easy for them. And yet, no one stood on the pulpit demanding that they cease to do so.

The rabbis knew full well that if their members didn't drive to shul, then they would drive elsewhere and that the link to Judaism

would be severed. They were encouraged to attend and were not made to feel "less than" for having done so.

Rather, many shuls introduced a "Kiddush" after shul on a Friday night, rosters for Shabbat day attendance, classes in prayer and they made sure not to berate members who might not adhere to the strict letter of halachic law.

The Shabbos Project is a South African export. And it could only be. Brainchild of South Africa's Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, the concept is one of inclusiveness.

It is designed for non-Shabbat observant Jews to "keep it together" with those who already adhere to the laws of the day. People are encouraged to invite neighbours and streets are blocked for Shabbat dinners.

An alternate approach of course could have been to close off roads and to throw stones at cars driving through the area while screaming "Shabbos!" but it takes no expert in human behaviour to know which will yield more results.

Which makes the Kotel debacle so frustrating to watch. The fact that a compromise for an egalitarian prayer area was "frozen" because of ultra-Orthodox pressure, will no doubt result in more damage than it will do good.

It will keep members of the Conservative and Reform communities away from the holiest places open to Jews and in doing so, send a message that they have no place in community. It tells a large number of Jews that rather than "not driving to shul" on a Friday night, they should find something else to do.

What makes it more puzzling is that even if the goal of those objecting to the egalitarian minyanim is to ultimately make the attendees more "Orthodox", then surely, having them at the Kotel where they might engage and educate, would be way more fruitful. Surely it's obvious that there is more to be achieved by inviting someone to Shabbat dinner than by throwing stones at them.

The Johannesburg Jewish community is imperfect. There are multiple challenges that exist. And that would exist within any community that strives for cohesiveness. But what counts above all, is that at its heart beats the desire to bring fellow Jews closer to each other. And not further apart.

Bibi defends controversial Kotel decision

**BEN SALES
JERUSALEM**

Netanyahu says he didn't betray anyone by effectively cancelling a historic agreement to provide a non-Orthodox space at the Kotel, Judaism's holiest prayer site, and caving to the interests of his Haredi Orthodox coalition partners.

Far from killing the compromise, he believes the vote has given it new life. And far from betraying Diaspora Jewry, he says the vote shows his concern for Jews around the world.

A senior Israeli official provided some insight into Netanyahu's defence of the vote freezing the 2016 Western Wall agreement: why he did it, what the vote leaves in place and what it means moving forward.

The agreement, which was passed by the Cabinet in January last year, has three components. First is a physical expansion and upgrade of the non-Orthodox prayer section south of the familiar Western Wall plaza. Second is the construction of a shared entrance to the Orthodox and non-Orthodox sections. Third is the creation of a government-appointed, interdenominational Jewish committee to govern the non-Orthodox section.

Last Sunday's decision, the senior official said, leaves in place the physical expansion of

Photo: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90



Israeli parliament member Nachman Shai, left, and Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky, at a meeting in the Knesset on Tuesday.

the prayer site while suspending the creation of the interdenominational committee. Netanyahu's Haredi partners, the official said, objected to the idea that the committee amounted to state recognition of non-Orthodox Judaism.

With the controversy over the committee frozen, the official said, actual building at the site can start unhindered and will be expedited.

"The symbolic piece was holding the practical piece hostage," the official, who wished to remain anonymous due to the sensitivity of the issue, told JTA. "What was frozen yesterday, was the symbolic part. The practical part of advancing the prayer arrangements, that can now move forward. Regrettably, there are those on both sides who are spinning this as cancellation." (JTA)

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Mount Scopus Memorial College

בית הספר הר הצופים



South African Jewish Report

Finding unity in our diversity

This week the media in Israel has been filled with every angle on how Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reneged on, or suspended his agreement to create a special egalitarian prayer area at the Kotel, where Jews can pray in the way that befits their tradition.

The Jewish Agency is furious about this as its chairperson, former human rights activist, Natan Sharansky was a central figure in formulating the plan for the prayer section.

Because of this broken promise, the Jewish Agency and other religious leaders snubbed the Prime Minister by cancelling a scheduled dinner engagement with him.

They are not against the government, but its decision that puts a further wedge between Orthodox and other sectors of the Jewish world.

Sharansky explained: "Five years ago, the Prime Minister asked me to lead a joint effort to bring about a workable formula that would transform the Western Wall into - in his own words - 'one wall for one people'.

"After four years of intensive negotiations, we reached a solution that was accepted by all major denominations and was then adopted by the government and embraced by the world's Jewish communities."

He believes that last week's "change of heart" will make the Jewish Agency's work in bringing Israel and the Jewish world closer together, much more difficult.

Looking at this from a South African perspective where most Jewish people are Orthodox, this may not seem like a big deal. But it is. You just have to read the article on page four to see how upset it has made the local Progressive Jewish leaders.

What Sharansky was trying to do was simply to bring Jews of all religious persuasions, political leanings and views, together as "one people".

That makes sense to me. We may all choose to practise our Judaism in slightly different ways. Some of us may choose to wear a sheitel, others may choose to drive on Shabbos.

Some in our community won't watch television and make a point of putting on tefillin every day. Others see the inside of a shul only on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah. And those are just the Orthodox community.

I may not feel comfortable praying in the midst of men and I certainly haven't considered putting on tefillin myself, but that is not my background or a path I chose.

But I believe every Jew has a right to practise Judaism and be a part of this greater community.

It is about unity in diversity! It is about accepting that we are all different and we may not agree with the way someone else does things. As long as that person does it with integrity, honesty and morality, surely they have a right to do it.

When people, like Steven Goodson - the Holocaust denialist who appears to have influence over our new Public Protector - considers Jews, they don't care how we pray or the nuances in our traditions.

Goodson doesn't care whether we are Chabad, Ohr Somayach or Modern Orthodox. He sees us as Jews, all the same and paints us with his Nazi-sympathising brush.

He is not alone. All those people who look down their noses at Jewish people, couldn't care about our differences - to them, we are all the same.

We aren't, though. We are a fascinating, colourful, opinionated (in the most positive sense) and diverse-thinking community and that makes us wonderful.

We all know the saying: "Two Jews, three opinions". What about the story of the Jewish man who was found on a desert island after living there for years? He had built two shuls: one in which he prayed and the other into which he would never set foot.

We all chuckle at this, knowing it epitomises how we are. We also know that if that person praying in the "other shul" needs help, we are going to move mountains to help him.

But isn't it time we realised that we are just brothers and sisters from the same family? We need to care for each other and look out for one another - see our similarities and not just our differences.

I hope that Netanyahu gets off his political high horse and backtracks, because it is right. "One people, One wall!"

Let him and all of us find unity in our diversity!

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor



Opinion and Analysis

Dateline: Middle East

Israel is becoming energy independent

PAULA SLIER

There is a joke that asks why didn't Moses go right to the oil fields instead of left to the olive groves. The answer is that being a man, he refused to ask for directions. This could explain why some 60 per cent of the world's oil reserves are found in the Middle East, but none of them exist in Israel.

But jokes aside, it means that for decades Israel has been forced to rely on foreign sources of energy and suffers from the vulnerability that comes with that.

A case in point is when the Arab Spring in Egypt erupted in 2011 and Cairo curtailed its exports of natural gas to Israel because of energy shortages at home. Those supplies are not expected to resume any time soon, especially in light of Egypt's announcement that it was indefinitely suspending its gas supply agreement with Jerusalem.

But in the end, it seems Moses might not have been so off the mark. There's a lot of excitement in Israeli financial circles that recent natural gas discoveries off the country's coasts could be a game changer.

Nearly 20 years ago two small natural gas fields were found off the beaches of Ashkelon and then in 2009 and 2010 significantly larger ones were discovered in the waters off Haifa. They are among the largest offshore fields in the world.

Natural gas is fast becoming a popular alternative to oil or coal. It can produce about 20 per cent more electricity than oil or coal and is more environmentally friendly. Currently in Israel, 60 per cent of the country's electricity derives from natural gas. The goal is to reach 80 per cent.

Challenges aside, these discoveries offer Israel a level of energy independence it has never known. Not only does the country now stand to become more energy independent, but it could also become a major gas exporter. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said hundreds of billions of dollars will find their way into Israeli coffers, to in turn be used for welfare, health and education.

But most importantly, the new gas fields will make Israel a global energy player for the first time in its history, greatly altering its political and economic clout throughout the world, especially Europe.

Already the world's longest underwater pipeline that would carry gas from Israel to Cyprus, Greece and

Italy, to the tune of six-and-a-half billion dollars, is in the works. This would bring Israel's natural gas into the European market and has the support of the EU's Climate and Energy Commission.

It says it would help limit Europe's reliance on Russian-supplied gas. Moscow in the past has used its large reserves to play politics. After a pricing dispute with Ukraine, Moscow cut off gas exports to Europe, prompting The New York Times a few years ago to run with the headline: "Russia Cuts Gas, and Europe Shivers".

Jordan has already signed a \$15 billion, 15-year letter of intent to import Israeli natural gas, the first quantities of which were sent earlier this year. While less desirable to the Kingdom from a political point of view, such an agreement represents the most expedient and least costly option for Jordan to compensate for its loss of Egyptian gas.

And it's still not so unforeseeable that Cairo itself may someday obtain natural gas from Israel, though so far Egypt has rejected such deals on political grounds.

But there are challenges. At the moment, a single pipe connects the one gas field, Tamar, to the Israeli shore. Should a technical problem arise or a Hamas or Hezbollah missile hit it, those on the receiving end would be in darkness. It also costs billions of dollars to develop these offshore fields and there have been problems over regulation in the past.

At the moment two main companies control the drillings, with critics arguing they will be able to impose exorbitant prices. The Israeli and Palestinian markets are relatively small and if Europe doesn't materialise as a major buyer, it will be difficult to interest more companies in financing further exploration. At the moment, there is also an oversupply of gas and prices are low.

But exciting for Israel is the geopolitical implications. Of course, some countries will never buy Israeli gas, but those who do, like countries in Europe, might land up becoming more lenient towards Israeli policies.

The question of course remains whether or not this new political clout will lead governments to back away from their support of the BDS (Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions) movement and criticism of the Jewish State. But even if it doesn't, when you do the maths, the promise of these new discoveries does seem to make Moses' wanderings that little more successful.

• 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.



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The man who turned Judaism outward

With this week being the yarhrzeit of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, we pay our respects by running this personal tribute to him by **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**, the former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation of the Commonwealth, which was penned in 1994.

A great leader died and the Jewish world has become a smaller place. History will chart the achievements of the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. My own tribute is simple. This was a man who changed the religious landscape of Jewish life.

We first met in 1968. I was an undergraduate, visiting American Jewry to seek out its intellectual leaders. They were impressive. But my encounter with the Rebbe was unique. In every other case, I asked questions and received answers.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe alone turned the interview around and began asking me questions. What was I doing for Jewish life in Cambridge? What was I doing to promote Jewish identity among my fellow students?

The challenge was personal and unmistakable. I then realised that what was remarkable about the Rebbe was the exact opposite of what was usually attributed to him. This was not a man who was interested in creating followers. Instead, this was a man who was passionate about creating leaders.



He himself was a leader on a heroic scale. Chosen to succeed his late father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, as head of Lubavitch in 1950, he set about reconstructing the movement in the inhospitable climate of secular America.

At that time it was widely believed that Orthodoxy had no future in the United States. No one had yet found a way to make traditional Judaism a living presence in an America called the treifa medina.

Like all classic rabbinic leaders, the Rebbe began with education, creating a network of schools and yeshivot. Then he took the decision that was to change the face of Lubavitch and ultimately the Jewish world.

He sent his followers out to places and communities which had never known a Chasidic presence. He began with university campuses. Already, in the early 1950s, Lubavitchers could be found working with Jewish students, telling Chasidic stories, singing songs and introducing them to the hitherto remote world of Jewish mysticism.

It was an extraordinary move, nothing less than the reinvention of the early days of the Chasidic movement when, in the 18th century, followers of the Baal Shem Tov had travelled from village to village taking with them the

message of piety and faith.

Chasidism had proved to be the most effective way of protecting Judaism against the inroads of secularisation. But it was limited in its impact to Eastern Europe. Nothing was less likely than that a strategy from the Old World could succeed in the new. But it did. Drawn by its warmth, intrigued by its depth, hitherto assimilated Jews were attracted to Lubavitch and, on meeting the Rebbe, became his disciples.

The second decision was even more remarkable. Though the faith that drove the Rebbe was traditional, the environment to which it was addressed was not. Earlier and more profoundly than any other Jewish leader, he realised that modern communications were transforming the world into a global village.

Religious leadership could now be exercised on a scale impossible before. The Rebbe began sending emissaries throughout the Jewish world, most notably and covertly in Russia. The movement was unified through his regular addresses, communicated through a series of mitzvah campaigns. Few international organisations can have been more tightly led by a single individual on the most slender resources.

It would be hard to find a historical precedent for this massive effort to reignite the flame of Judaism in a secular world. If today we are familiar with the phenomena of baalei teshuvah (religious returnees) and Jewish outreach, it is almost entirely due to the pioneering work by Lubavitch, since adopted by many other groups within Orthodoxy.

The Rebbe was preoccupied by the challenge of religious leadership. In a conversation we had in 1978, he expressed his concern at the shortage of rabbis throughout the Diaspora, and at the failure of yeshivot to direct their alumni to congregational work.

He encouraged me to enter the rabbinate and to train other rabbis and was particularly supportive of the work of Jews' College. He himself turned his followers into leaders at the earliest possible age and, if the decision to empower youth exposed Lubavitch to risks, it also gave it a vigour and energy that were to be found nowhere else in the religious world.

Behind all this activity lay a compelling vision, never formally articulated but clear nonetheless. The Jewish world, particularly the Europe from which he came, had been devastated by the Holocaust.

In the aftermath, one thing had happened but another thing had not. Jews had returned to the Land of Israel. But they had not returned to the faith of Israel.

In Judaism, physical and spiritual return, are inseparable. In the modern world they had become separated. This was the fracture he sought to mend. Where others devoted themselves to building the Jewish State, he dedicated himself to rebuilding the inner state of Jews.

The Rebbe himself was tireless in drawing connections between contemporary events and the Torah portion of the week.

His followers will not miss the significance of the fact that he died at the beginning of the week of Hukat, the Torah reading which records the poignant decree that Moses would die before leading his people into the promised land.

As Israel was to Moses, so the messianic age has been to Judaism's greatest leaders: a destination journeyed towards, glimpsed from afar but not yet reached.

Others will argue about the Rebbe's controversial stances on the great Jewish issues of our time.

I simply mourn the loss of a commanding intellect, a majestic presence, a man of spiritual fire and personal warmth, one of the very few in history whose influence was felt throughout the Jewish world, the man who turned Judaism outward and dedicated his life to bringing to post-Holocaust humanity the living presence of G-d.



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The secret of Chabad revealed

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

From the outside the Chabad community - described by many as the world's most successful and influential Jewish movement - may seem unusual and shrouded in secrecy. Rabbi David Eliezrie, American author of *The Secret of Chabad*, flew into Johannesburg this week to mark the Rebbe's yartzheit and provided some insights into the movement.

"The day the Rebbe passed away in 1994, there were 1 032 Chabad couples around the world," says Rabbi Eliezrie, who is executive director of North County Chabad Centre in California, speaker and the president of the Rabbinical Council of Orange County and Long Beach. "Today we have over 4 500 couples."

Known as shlichim (emissaries), these couples are rabbis and rebbetzins who are sent to locations far afield, to spread Judaism and Chassidut through providing leadership and establishing infrastructure for Jews who generally lack communities or are in danger of assimilation.

"As Chabad was emerging, the world was being transformed, especially the American Jewish community which is very different to the South African narrative and other countries," he explains.

Rabbi Eliezrie wrote his book to explain this phenomenal growth and demystify the movement. It took him over 10 years to write and involved more than 200 interviews. *The Secret of Chabad* was published in 2015, has sold over 20 000 copies to date and was a finalist in the National Jewish Book Award in the US.

"I felt that people really didn't understand, firstly, the scope of what we were doing, and secondly how rapid our growth was. Today we're the largest Jewish organisation in the world, we're in 92 countries including the likes of Morocco and Hong Kong.

"I also looked at the struggles and the difficulties in how a Chassidic rabbi takes a group of a few hundred families and turns them into a Jewish paradise, it's a remarkable story."

In his book, Rabbi Eliezrie explains what motivates and drives him and his wife and people like them, and looks at the Chabad business model. "In South Africa, it's more structured, but in America we had to create a totally new infrastructure as there Orthodoxy is limited to certain urban centres - the Jewish community in the US is dominated by the more

liberal movements.

The book also looks at how we do it globally and examines the Russian story - what Chabad did in the Russian underground in keeping Judaism alive in the former Soviet Union and how it's emerged from the shadows today to be a major force of Jewish life in Russia."

Rabbi Eliezrie argues that there's more mystery than misconceptions surrounding Chabad's success. "In today's world, it's hard to find idolism that's sustainable," he explains.

"People are feeling a sense of affinity with people with real ideals. They may not want to live the way that rabbis are living, but they want them as their role models."

Chabad's growth has also been driven by generational perpetuity. "According to a study we did for the LA Times, 67 per cent of the children of the Chabad shlichim become Chabad shlichim themselves, which doesn't exist today in any other religious segment, even outside the Jewish world.

"People - at least in America - don't understand the business model. It's more of an entrepreneurial partnership model than a board-driven model, which is a very different concept in institutional management.

"All Chabad 'business' is local. Every shaliach has to stand on his own two feet, supported by his community; shlichim need to get their own local funding.

"Chabad also has a fundamentally unique worldview that separates it from other parts of the Orthodox world, from the Haredi world,

People - at least in America - don't understand the business model.

It's more of an entrepreneurial partnership model than a board-driven model, which is a very different concept in institutional management.

from the religious Zionists, and so on."

"The Haredi world wants to detach itself from society, as they feel it endangers their way of life, but we're willing to engage the society while keeping Torah as the prime principle.

"Chabad has really profound things to say about this big question of how to live as a Jew



in a modern age. In the Chabad world, there are values in the secular society that we don't agree with, but we're willing to engage that society while keeping our principles central.

"One of the most important examples of that is the attitude to the army in Israel. In Chabad, boys after completing yeshiva, are encouraged to go into the army."

In taking care of the needs of world Jewry, Chabad has a presence in almost every small Jewish community at risk around the world. "We're taking a real sense of responsibility that we feel for other Jews; we're putting our lives on the line for them. These are very crucial things that people don't understand."

Acknowledging the phenomenal nature of South African Jewish life, where tradition and Orthodoxy is common and kosher restaurants abound, Rabbi Eliezrie explains the difference in America.

"South Africa has a community where 90 per cent of Jewish kids go to a Jewish day school, in America it's 10-15 per cent. Most Americans are not turned off to Judaism; they're just not turned on. They know nothing about it; they don't see the relevance of Judaism in their lives. They therefore don't feel a sense of identification.

"Since the 1880s when the Jews first came to the US, we've seen a process of assimilation. What we have to do is bring them meaning by

showing them how Judaism relates to their real lives in the real world.

"Chabad's a movement of big ideas, it's not an emotional movement, it's an intellectual movement. There are profound ideas that are animating the movement and changing the way Jews live their lives as Jews.

"It gives space for people who want to be involved with Judaism and connected to tradition, but they also want to do it at their own pace and to be encouraged."

Rabbi Eliezrie stresses the great power of South African Jewry. "South Africa has an unusual Jewish community that's very traditional. Everywhere in North America where South African Jews go, Judaism goes through a renaissance."

Yet, even though South African Jewry is very strong, Chabad is still important in the country as it strikes this balance. "When you're looking for rabbinical leadership, in Chabad you find a sense of real commitment to the people, the willingness to engage the world around them and the willingness to love every single Jew as they are, even though they may be different to them.

"There's quality in leadership. Chabad shlichim are there for life when they come to a country - that resonates with people, they feel they're really here for them."

Rabbi Eliezrie argues that Modern Orthodox has an even greater engagement with secular culture than Chabad does; in the US most Modern Orthodox congregations are made up of Orthodox-observant people.

"In Chabad centres outside core urban areas, almost 90 per cent of communities are not Orthodox-observant. We're willing to create congregations of communities; this is the revolution in American Jewish life today.

"We're holding the standard of Jewish tradition and we're growing."

He also explains the different role of women in Chabad as opposed to Modern Orthodox. "In the Modern Orthodox world they're struggling with the role of women. In Chabad, women are very empowered. One of the Rebbe's major principles was that he never sent single people, he always sent a couple to a new location and it was a partnership."

Ultimately, while they're built on a common core principle, each Chabad community is unique.

"Each shul where there's a Chabad rabbi, you'll find something different," says Rabbi Eliezrie. "The common denominator is a culture of accepting Jews where they are, not judging them and not trying to put them into a box, yet maintaining a fidelity to Jewish tradition.

"There's always a sense of welcome and of caring about people, which is the real central foundation of the movement."



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DAHLIA SCHEINDLIN

Fifty years of opposition

Fifty-fever, marking the anniversary since the 1967 war, has swept the Israelis, both left and right. The latter is dreaming up even more creative ways to celebrate Israel's triumph, while the left is grasping for ways to remind a largely-apathetic public about the ills of occupation.

The often-overlooked fact is that 50 years of Israeli occupation is also a half-century of opposition. The core goal of ending occupation has failed, and there is no political resolution.

But the history of opposition holds elements of success: the often-derided "peace industry" has produced not just dialogues and demonstrations, but has helped legitimise ideas in Israel that form the core principles for resolving the conflict.

Opposition to Israel's policy in the territories captured in 1967, go back to the war itself. Its consequences have never been a consensus in Israel.

Shortly after the war, the scientist cum

conscience-philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz railed against prolonged military rule over the Palestinians, arguing that Israel would lose its Jewish majority and Israelis would turn into security-obsessed occupiers, while destroying Palestinian society.

In 1970, a nascent movement of IDF pre-recruits protesting their service in "the territories" emerged. In 1978, a letter signed by several hundred officers protested government policy "perpetuating its rule over a million Arabs", which they argued "could harm the Jewish-democratic character of the state".

In 1978, just five per cent of Israeli Jews polled, supported withdrawal from the West Bank and 91 per cent rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state. There were already over 5 000 settlers.

During the 1970s and '80s, three core ideas emerged from the left: the notion that

the occupation was bad for both Israelis and Palestinians; that settlements were damaging to peace; and that there should be a Palestinian state.

The establishment of a Palestinian state - or the two-state solution - endured. The PLO formally adopted the notion (implicitly) in 1988.

Opinion in Israel began to shift. By the 1993 Oslo accords, Israeli Jewish public support for a Palestinian state was roughly one-third. By the mid-1990s public support reached half, then topped 60 per cent in the 2000s.

Losing momentum, changing direction

The failure of peace negotiations in 2000 and the second Intifada saw severe violence on both sides. Settlements had ballooned and by 2000, there were roughly 300 000 Jewish settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Israeli human rights activists tended to formally steer away from advocating specific political frameworks for resolving the conflict. They sought a human rights standard that could transcend politics, that they could demand of any party in power.

Some leftists wondered if the improvement of piecemeal human rights without addressing the underlying political policy that caused the violations, might actually make the occupation more sustainable. Those voices remained committed to a political solution.

Two states fade

By the late 2000s, the implementation of two states began to seem increasingly remote. The settlement juggernaut, with the infrastructure and IDF land takeovers, continued to spread.

An idea, long found only on the marginal fringes of the left in Israel, reappeared in

public discourse: one single, democratic state with equal rights for all. Both the Israeli and Palestinian leadership were formally against it.

By 2016, the number of settlers had roughly doubled since 2000, approaching 600 000. The two-state solution appears more unlikely every day. Although settlements represent the bullseye target of left-wing opposition for decades, some feel that instead of fighting windmills, there is a need for new solutions.

In recent years, some have begun to envision a modified version of two states, based on two governments for two peoples, with different national identities and a geographic border. But instead of a hard separation, this approach envisions a porous border.

Citizens of either side would be allowed to cross for travel, leisure, work or even residency.

This approach allows for citizens of each side to live as permanent residents in the other state - under local laws, with full rights, but national voting in one's country of identity (Arab citizens of Israel can choose their citizenship, or retain both).

Jerusalem would remain united, the capital of two states. Security co-operation between Israeli and Palestinian security forces can continue as it is today.

The word "confederalism" or "confederation" scares many. But the initiative has sparked interest and curiosity among settlers and other right-wingers. An organic social community has grown up around the idea, called "Two States/One Homeland".

• *Dahlia Scheindlin is an international public opinion analyst and strategic consultant, specialising in progressive causes, political and social campaigns in over a dozen countries. She will be presenting at Limmud. Limmud Johannesburg takes place from August 4-6; Limmud Durban August 9; Limmud Cape Town August 11-13.*

Dahlia Scheindlin



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Ivor Chipkin on the betrayal of a promise

Antony Altbeker (left) and Ivor Chipkin



DAVID ANSARA

The institutions of the South African state have been captured in a “silent coup” by a corrupt, powerful elite. As a result, a “shadow state” has emerged which is threatening the country’s constitutional framework. These are the views of Professor Ivor Chipkin, of Wits University’s Public Affairs Research Institute (PARI).

Chipkin is one of the lead authors of the recent academic report into state capture: *Betrayal of the Promise: How South Africa is being stolen*. He was being publicly interviewed about the findings of the report by author and researcher Antony Altbeker on Tuesday evening.

Chipkin says the motivation for the report was to “join the dots” of the many journalistic accounts of corrupt activity that already exist in the public domain, and to organise these into a single coherent account of state capture.

“We were trying to move the analysis away from endless stories of corruption. We wanted to make sense of the fact that this is not simply criminals who have seized the state’s power and are looting for their own private interests. Rather, we need to understand that there is a political project that creates the context in which some of this criminality happens that creates a space for illegality to occur,” Chipkin said.

This political project is given a cover of legitimacy by the concept of “radical economic transformation”. Chipkin argued that while it was necessary to reconfigure the South African economy, the concept of “radical economic transformation” was being used to attack democratic institutions and subvert the law.

Altbeker asked him how the concept of radical economic transformation came about and why it was being used in this way. Chipkin said this change began in 2007 at the ANC elective conference in Polokwane. This represented “not just a revolt within the ANC, but a fundamental repudiation of a particular political economy, and especially the politics of Thabo Mbeki”.

Chipkin argued that the early conception of black economic empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action, were premised on the idea that you can “cajole, push and incentivise white business to transform itself by putting in place quotas and incentives”.

However, while this resulted in the emergence of a small, black upper class, it also led to “massive economic exclusion” of poor, uneducated people. Because of this imbalance, Chipkin believed there was a sincere attempt on behalf of the ANC government to transform the economy after Polokwane and that this was done “in good faith”.

One of the primary pillars of this new economic strategy was the use of public procurement as a mechanism for incentivising local production, Chipkin explained.

By leveraging the significant procurement budgets of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), government sought to achieve two aims. The first was to displace white business and the second, to incentivise a new black industrial economy.

However, he said, this resulted in procurement contracts being channelled to “black-owned companies, irrespective of price and irrespective of experience”.

He added: “Here is where things get very complicated. We argue [in the report] that this model of transformation radicalises when it comes up against the Constitution, the law, and when it comes up against National Treasury.”

Chipkin explained that given Treasury’s constitutional mandate to ensure due process is followed with regards to state procurement, this new transformation strategy is met with increased resistance from the Minister of Finance.

“As a result, from 2011 we start to see the government increasingly move outside of legal norms and procurement begins to actively flout the law. This is motivated by political self-righteousness, and the idea that the rules of the game are rigged against black people, so the only way of achieving real break-throughs, is to break the rules,” he posited.

Chipkin noted that this period also saw sustained assaults being made against public institutions, particularly those with significant investigative and prosecutorial capacities.

The first example of this was the attack on the South African Revenue Service (SARS) in December 2014, which had begun to investigate tax evasion among politically-connected individuals, including those operating in the illegal tobacco industry (Chipkin noted that the Zuma family is alleged to be involved in the illicit trade of cigarettes).

These attacks took the form of fabricated intelligence reports of a “rogue unit” in SARS, and other spurious allegations, such as spying on the President and (even) running a brothel.

These allegations were then used to suspend the entire senior leadership of SARS and to lay criminal charges against then Deputy Commissioner Ivan Pillay and Pravin Gordhan, the former Commissioner and later Minister of Finance. Similar moves were made against the leadership of the Hawks and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA).

In parallel to these attacks on independent institutions, a “shadow state” has emerged, where key decision-making has receded from Parliament, the Cabinet, and even the ANC. Real power and decision-making now resides in informal locations such as the Gupta family residence in Saxonwold, Chipkin said.

This has resulted in a “repurposing of state institutions” away from governance and towards large-scale rent-seeking and patronage distribution.

Chipkin argued that the Constitution must not be seen as a barrier, but rather as an enabler of transformation in South Africa.

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THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Ultra-Orthodox threaten to leave government if conversion bill is endangered

SUE SURKES

Health Minister Yaakov Litzman on Wednesday threatened to take his party out of the governing coalition if a bill cementing the ultra-Orthodox monopoly over religious conversion, does not become law.

The bill, approved by Cabinet ministers on Sunday, but slammed by non-Orthodox Jewish groups in Israel and overseas, will pull the government's recognition of private conversions, namely those not conducted by the Chief Rabbinate, if it completes passage through the Knesset.

It would negate the conversions of the Giyur Kahalacha private Orthodox conversion court, which was established two years ago, largely in order to help Jews from the former Soviet Union who qualified as Jewish in order to immigrate to Israel but who cannot marry under the auspices of the rabbinate, because according to Jewish religious law, a Jew who is not a convert must have a Jewish mother.

It would also rule out conversions by the nationalist-religious Tzohar organisation.

Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman, who heads the Yisrael Beytenu party, which represents many immigrants from the former Soviet Union, opposes the bill. On Sunday, he said that in its current form, the legislation would deter anyone interested in growing closer to Judaism from converting.

But on Wednesday, Litzman warned: "If they want to appeal against this or that, we won't allow it - we'll leave [the coalition] if

we have to."

He also lashed out at Reform Jews, who have been vocally protesting a second controversial Cabinet decision this week - to scrap a plan for a pluralistic prayer pavilion at Jerusalem's Western Wall.

"They don't run for elections here in a

democratic way like I and my colleagues do," he said.

If they did, "I'm not sure they would get 1 000 votes", Litzman added. "There are coalition agreements; everything is open and everything was on the Knesset table."

Litzman heads the Agudath Israel party, part of the United Torah Judaism ultra-Orthodox faction in the Knesset.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu needs the support of both Yisrael Beytenu and the ultra-Orthodox parties to keep his governing coalition stable.

Capturing Israel's beauty and diversity



When the world sees photographs of Israel, they are often accompanied by reports of conflict and violence. But a photo exhibition that opened last week at the Jerusalem Theatre, is bound to make people see Israel in a more flattering light. The images, which will be on display until July 28, show Israel's people and geography from a variety of angles - from flocks of birds descending on the Hula Valley to a little boy carrying a rainbow flag.

OVER 2 000 TERROR ATTACKS THWARTED WITH CYBERTECH

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

The Shin Bet has used cybertechnology to prevent more than 2 000 terror attacks since the beginning of 2016, the internal security agency's head said at a conference on Tuesday.

The opportunities that the cyber world present to the organisation are dramatic, Nadav Argaman told the Cyber Week 2017 conference at Tel Aviv University.

Using unspecified technological means, the Shin Bet, along with other Israeli intelligence agencies, have prevented terror attacks in Israel and also passed on information to stop terrorists elsewhere in the world.

He told conference-goers that groundbreaking cybertechnology has also helped to protect against lone-wolf attacks - not directed by terrorist groups but sometimes inspired by social media incitement - that would have been unpreventable using traditional intelligence-gathering means.

"Our rivals focus on connecting computers to the physical world, and we are creating an effective preventive defence system," he said. "We've carried out dozens of smart and successful operations."

Argaman said his agency protects

against threats from world powers, terror groups and individual hackers.

He also warned that hackers who attempt to attack Israel are in for a surprise. "We are not only defending, but also attacking hackers in the world," he said. "Hackers who operate against Israel

around the world, find they experience unexpected problems.

"We learn the patterns of activities of the enemy and know how to surprise him with counterattacks in many different ways," Argaman said.

"We will continue to thwart threats in distant locations, and hackers who work against us should be prepared for surprises, not only in cyberspace but also in the real world. Anyone who attacks us will get a total response," he said.

Israel recruits the best minds in the world, Argaman said, and is competitive in the private market. However, he added, its agencies must remain quiet about their capabilities in order to stay ahead of those trying to attack.



Shin Bet head Nadav Argaman speaks at Cyber Week in Tel Aviv on Tuesday.

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The news and views expressed on these pages are not the views of the SA Jewish Report nor the SA Zionist Federation. This content originates from the Times of Israel.

Attorney who represents Hebron shooter to defend bomb hoaxer

Attorney Yoram Sheftel.



Photo: Flash90

The district psychiatrist was supposed to submit its report on May 6, they said, but was granted a postponement, and then a subsequent postponement. On July 3, a hearing is scheduled on whether to keep the suspect in jail until the end of proceedings against him, and on July 18 a hearing is scheduled to discuss the case itself.

The parents cited an incident several weeks ago when their son, who was being taken back to jail after a psychological evaluation in Ashkelon and was in a traumatised state, attempted to break out of the police van that was transporting him, smashing a door.

They said a prisons service guard smashed him in the face with a rifle butt, drawing blood. They also said he was lifted up by his handcuffs, causing him considerable pain.

A spokesman for the Prisons Service said he was aware of the incident, and that the suspect "went wild" in the van, and that officers had no choice but to use force to restrain him. The spokesman said he had never heard of a previous incident in which the door of these reinforced vans had been broken in such a way by a detainee.

If the family believed unreasonable force was used to subdue him, said the spokesman, they had the right to file a complaint about the incident.

The spokesman added that the family "may well be right" to argue that their son should be held in a more appropriate facility. "But that is a matter for the courts".

He said the suspect was indeed kept in a "special facility" in the jail - stressing, however, that this was not solitary confinement - "to ensure that he cannot harm himself or others".

The suspect's parents said they decided to hire Sheftel after explaining the case to him and recognising that Sheftel "understood right away" what was at stake and that their son is "one million per cent not fit to stand trial... This is unmistakable within

a minute when you see him."

Asked how they would pay their legal fees, they said they would take out loans.

Sheftel is currently defending IDF soldier Elor Azaria, convicted of manslaughter in the killing of an injured and disarmed Palestinian assailant in March 2016. Azaria is appealing his conviction and 18-month jail term.

Sheftel defended John Demjanjuk against charges that he was the notorious Treblinka death camp guard Ivan the Terrible. Demjanjuk was convicted and sentenced to death in 1988, but the verdict was overturned on appeal by the Supreme Court five years later.

Does her work encourage Israel's enemies to resort to their own "lawfare" against Israeli targets? Times of Israel will be asking those questions and more.



News and views from the Fed

Israel has tech mojo

JAMIE MITHI
SOUTH AFRICAN FRIENDS OF ISRAEL

I only recently found out that Apple had invested R9,87 billion in the last six years to buy four Israeli tech companies.

Apple began acquiring Israeli tech companies in 2011, with the first being Anobit Technologies (maker of flash memory controllers) for \$400 million. They continued to purchase PrimeSense, a 3D sensor making company, for approximately \$345 million in 2013, and then LinX (a camera module maker) for around \$20 million, in 2015.

Their latest acquisition took place in February this year, with the acquisition of a company called RealFace, whose tech is likely to be used in facial recognition security features for Apple devices. (Apple is also developing iPhone tech in Israel for the much-anticipated iPhone8.)

It has become very apparent that Israel has fast become the new Silicon Valley. With so many vested interests by international companies, such as Intel and IBM, it shows that Israeli companies must be making a serious innovative dent, in order to attract the attention of these industry moguls.

This hawk eye on Israeli tech and innovation, speaks volumes about Israeli educational standards, universities, and its "Startup Incubation" capacities. These are things that the African landscape sorely needs, in order to address the challenges of youth unemployment and inequality, which beleaguer our continent.

From a purely pragmatic perspective, perhaps South Africa (and the rest of Africa) needs to rethink their relations with Israel. It would be in the best interest of the country to empower the youth through education, mentorships and knowledge sharing, which extends beyond the African borders.

Our Millennial and Generation X generations are hungry for originality, entrepreneurial skills, and making their mark on the world, both locally and globally. Israel is at the forefront of these fields and is eager to share its knowledge with us.

Further to this, a closer diplomatic partnership with Israel, will enable us to create prosperous growth, economically and environmentally, safeguarding a better landscape for the younger generations.

How amazing it would be to see the day when South African companies are utilising and leading the trend in agricultural and tech innovation in Africa, as Israel is so boldly doing now.

Market visitors get a look at the future of food in Jerusalem

MICAH DANNEY

Liquor-infused ice cream and protein powder made from fruit fly larvae, were among the emerging food products showcased in Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda Market last week, as visitors to the market mingled with startup founders and venture capitalists, to get a taste of what our food will look like in the coming years.

It was the third 'ShukTech' event this year in the city's popular market-by-day, which turns into a buzzing nightlife scene when the sun goes down. It was organised by Strauss Group, an Israeli food technology company, and the firm Jerusalem Venture Partners (JVP), to highlight a variety of technologies being developed in Israel.

Visitors sipped beer and munched on nachos as they watched presentations of promotional technologies like that of Icebow, which can create ice cubes with three-dimensional brand logos formed inside. In one of the market's bustling corridors, a table displayed bread with words and images burned onto it by OnBread Ltd.

One representative promoted a small piece of hardware that adds up to 20 layers of colour imaging to cameras. He said there are plans for a mobile phone application that could assess a piece of meat's remaining shelf life, among other uses.

Stations also offered free samples of products like high-protein smoothies and sugar-free snacks. YoFix handed out samples of its oat-, lentil-, grain- and seed-based yogurt, which



passersby tasted and nodded approvingly over.

Gadi Lesin, president of Strauss Group, said the event was part of his company's five-year effort to invest in and develop food technologies of the future.

"We started the journey to build new companies because we believe that, according to the megatrends, this is the future of the food industry," he said. "Here in Israel, as a hi-tech country and startup land, this is part of our culture and our duty."

Gadi Tirosh, a managing partner of JVP, said that ShukTech events demonstrate the new possibilities that food represents for various industries.

"The importance of this particular event is to see that technologies we know from a lot of different places, whether it's computer vision, whether it's artificial intelligence and even cybersecurity, are very relevant for the food industry."

The Jerusalem Development Authority and the Jerusalem Affairs and Heritage Ministry also helped organise and finance the event.



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Hundreds of Israeli buildings 'as vulnerable' as Grenfell Tower

RAOUL WOOLLIFF AND MELANIE LIDMAN

Numerous buildings across Israel are potentially as vulnerable as London's Grenfell Tower, the residential high-rise where a June 14 fire killed at least 79 people, The Times of Israel has been told.

British police have said the Grenfell Tower fire - the worst in Britain in over a century - was spread by flammable materials in the building's façade, and indicated that prosecutions for manslaughter may ensue.

Israel's Fire and Rescue Authority said there may be hundreds of buildings nationwide that are similarly vulnerable, but that it has no idea how many there actually are. And even if it were able to establish which buildings are at risk, it is not empowered to do anything to alleviate the danger.

Indeed, just last year, despite strong opposition from the fire department, the Israeli government amended the building code to loosen the country's already lax regulations and allow certain construction projects to use the same flammable material suspected to have been a major factor in the deadly London blaze.

Amid a national UK operation to identify buildings with insulation panelling akin to the 24-storey Grenfell Tower, which has so far seen the evacuation of some 650 London apartments in other buildings deemed unsafe, Israeli officials admitted that dangerous loopholes exist in the country's own fire safety regulations. Those loopholes bear striking similarities to questionable practices currently

A building on fire in Haifa last year.



Photo: AP Photo/Ariel Schalit

under scrutiny in Britain.

In June last year, a small fire broke out in an apartment in a multistorey building in Ramat Gan, quickly spreading along the exterior and climbing up to other floors. Twenty-eight firefighters battled the blaze for over five hours as it consumed apartments on 10 floors on the south side of the building and spewed burning debris onto the street below, destroying several cars.

Dozens of residents and workers in the joint apartment-office building were treated for smoke inhalation after they were rescued, using ladders and cranes.

The fire likely would not have been able to spread the

way it did if it were not helped

by flammable insulation panelling lining the building's exterior. According to the fire department, it was the same panelling that contributed to the Grenfell inferno. The polythene composite panels, found in both buildings, have been widely blamed for the rapid spread of the London fire.

A source in the Haifa Municipality, told The Times of Israel that an apartment building in the city that caught alight during a rash of wildfires that spread across Israel last November, also used similar material in its insulation panels. The fire department, however, said investigations of that fire did not show the use of any prohibited materials and no polythene residue was found at the site.

Experts point to loopholes in construction inspections that allow those renovating buildings to use cheaper, non-flame-resistant material, putting apartment-dwellers at risk of fires spreading from apartment to apartment.

Last week Thursday, UK Prime Minister Theresa May's office said that some 600 buildings in the UK may have been fitted with flammable external panels like the ones believed to have contributed to the Grenfell Tower fire. By last Sunday, officials said 60 buildings in 25 areas were found to be unsafe, and that all buildings checked thus far had failed safety tests.

The cladding in the Grenfell Tower is an aluminium and plastic composite - polythene. It was used in hundreds of Reynobond panels which were fitted to the outside of the London high-rise last year. Reynobond panels come in three types - one with a flammable polythene core and two with fire-resistant centres.

As in Britain, building regulations in Israel prohibit the use of the polythene Reynobond panels during initial construction, but loopholes have allowed for it to be used unchecked in some cases during renovations, where contractors are specifically looking to cut costs.

A simple Internet search shows that Reynobond panels have been used in projects all over the country, including in massive residential and corporate construction projects in Haifa, Rehovot, Tel Aviv, Herzliya and Petah Tikva. The company declined repeated requests from The Times of Israel to disclose which type of panel had been used at those sites.

Reynobond representatives for both the international office and the Israel distributor, also declined to comment on which type of materials the company provides to Israel and whether the company has ever imported the controversial Reynobond panels in question.

The Standards Institution of Israel, which is responsible for testing and certification of all products used in Israeli building projects, could not confirm testing these Reynobond panels and said that specific results were not public information.

According to Haim Tamam, head of the Israel Fire and Rescue Services Safety and Investigations department, it is impossible to estimate how many buildings in Israel may have been renovated using the dangerous and non-approved panelling material. There could be hundreds, he acknowledged, saying that under the current conditions certain buildings were "as vulnerable" as Grenfell Tower.

Without permission from the fire department, including confirmation that all construction materials are approved, contractors cannot get permission to begin.

But once a building has already been built, Tamam said, it is more complicated to oversee changes made during renovations.

Paddington Bear author dies aged 91

AFP AND TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
LONDON

British children's writer Michael Bond, creator of the much-loved fictional character Paddington Bear, has died at the age of 91, his publisher HarperCollins said on Wednesday.

Bond's famous series about a friendly teddy bear from darkest Peru, sold more than 30 million copies worldwide and was turned into a blockbuster film in 2014.

"He was a true gentleman, a bon viveur, the most entertaining company and the most enchanting of writers," Ann-Janine Murtagh, executive publisher at HarperCollins Children's Books, said in a statement.

"He will be forever remembered for his creation of the iconic Paddington, with his duffel coat and Wellington boots, which touched my own heart as a child and will live on in the hearts of future generations," she said.

The inspiration for the character came on Christmas Eve 1956 when Bond, a writer and BBC cameraman, saw a lonely-looking teddy bear in a shop near his home close to Paddington railway station in London, and bought it for his wife.

Bond based Paddington's arrival at the train station on his memories of Jewish refugees arriving in London just before the outbreak of the Second World War, the British newspaper The Telegraph quoted him as saying in a 2014 interview.

"I remember their labels round their necks and then I remember going to the cinema and seeing on the newsreel that Hitler had moved into some new country and seeing footage of elderly people pushing prams with all their belongings in them.

"Refugees are the saddest sight, I still think that," he told the paper.

In the books, the impeccably polite stowaway turns up at Paddington Station with a battered suitcase containing a nearly-finished jar of marmalade, and a label on his blue duffel coat reading: "Please look after this bear. Thank you."

Bond told the Telegraph that another character, Dr Gruber, Paddington's friend who owns an antique shop, was inspired by a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany.

"I've such a clear picture of Dr Gruber. I wanted someone foreign because he was based on my first agent, a lovely man, a German Jew, who was in line to be the youngest judge in Germany, when he was warned his name was on a list, so he got out and came to England



Michael Bond

with just a suitcase and £25 to his name," he said.

Movie revival

The movie "Paddington" sparked a resurgence of interest, with exhibitions, statues and the publication of a new book of the bear's adventures.

The author brought out a new story, "Love from Paddington," on December 23, 2014.

The book is in the form of letters written to Paddington's aunt Lucy, back in Peru, telling her about his new life in London.

Actor Hugh Bonneville, who in the film plays Mr Brown - the hapless but friendly father who adopts Paddington - said the movie contained very simple themes.

"Apart from being 86 minutes of good fun, I suppose if there are some delicate emotional themes underneath, it's about an evacuee, a refugee coming to a foreign country and having been told certain things about that culture to expect," the actor told AFP at the film's launch.

"Of course, the reality is very different."

Paddington finds a home, but has a "spectacularly sticky journey to get there," Bonneville added, involving a car chase through London, and a taxidermist on his tail, played by Nicole Kidman.

"It's a glorious journey to go on for a small bear from Peru," or at least for a computer-generated version of him standing 1,07 metres tall.

Bond had said he wanted the trail to end when he passed away, telling The Times newspaper in 2014 that he was taking legal action to prevent sequels after his death.

He said he would "hate" further works, adding: "I have just made a will and gone to a lawyer in the City who specialises in that very thing of stopping people doing it."

He said the practice was "wrong", adding that characters like Paddington Bear were "sacred".

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Moscow's Schneerson Collection goes online



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JULIE MASIS MOSCOW

In 1922, a few years before he fled the Soviet Union, the sixth Chabad-Lubavitch Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, petitioned the Russian government to return 35 crates of books they had seized years earlier.

The books had been passed down to his father, Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneerson, by his grandfather and had belonged collectively to generations of Lubavitch Hasidim going back to Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady, who began the collection in the 18th century.

There was an illustrated haggadah, published in 1712 in Amsterdam, its pages stained by wine that was spilled at Passover seders hundreds of years ago. There was a book printed in 1552 in Venice, not long after the printing press was invented, with a handwritten inscription in cursive Hebrew reminiscent of Arabic.

There was a Torah from 1631, with comments in Latin, written in pencil by Christian scholars who had studied the Jewish holy book.

The Soviet government did not return the books, and for almost a century they remained on the shelves of the Lenin public library in Moscow. But this month the Russian State Library will finish scanning and putting online the more than 4 500 books in the Schneerson Collection, making them accessible to everyone in the world at the click of a mouse.

"We have about 10 to 20 books left to scan. They'll be on the site in a month," said Svetlana Khvostova, the Russian State Library employee in charge of the Schneerson Collection at the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Centre in Moscow.

The international dispute

These contested books are claimed by both the United States and Russia, with each side demanding that the other pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines for failing to return them.

The dispute goes back to the First World War, when Rabbi Sholom DovBer Schneerson (the fifth Chabad rabbi) and his son Yosef Schneerson fled the village of Lyubavichi in the face

of advancing German troops and placed the books in storage in Moscow.

In the 1922 letter on display at the Jewish Museum in Moscow, Yosef Schneerson explains that he placed the books in storage because he did not have anywhere else to keep them. But when a few years later he wanted to take the books back, the government refused to return them. Instead they moved the books to a public library in Moscow.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, Chabad sued the Russian government in an American court for the return of the books, and in 2013 an American judge ruled that Russia should pay a fine of \$50 000 per day for failing to do so.

The Russian government, in return, opened its own case concerning seven books from the Schneerson Collection that were loaned to the Library of Congress in Washington DC in the 1990s, but were never returned to Russia, Khvostova said. Instead, the Library of Congress gave the books to Chabad.

Yet the Russian government did take a step towards a resolution of the matter, when they invited a Chabad librarian to Moscow to pick out the books that had belonged to the Schneerson family. He selected the 4 651 books, which were moved from the Russian State Library to the

special Schneerson Collection at the recently opened Jewish Museum and Tolerance Centre in Moscow. American court documents mention 12 000 books, but Khvostova says she isn't sure how they came up with this number.

Manuscripts, letters and photos still inaccessible

However, the manuscripts, letters, documents and family photographs of the Schneersons were not handed over to the Jewish Museum.

Allegedly, Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson left these letters and documents behind in Poland when he fled to America during the Second World War and they ended up in the hands of the Nazis.

When the Soviet Union won the war, the Red Army took them to Moscow. The letters are currently kept at the Russian State Military Historical Archive in Moscow, and have all been scanned.

The handwritten manuscripts of Chabad-Lubavitch rebbes, are still in the Russian State Library because the Jewish community didn't mention them specifically, Khvostova said.

"The Hassidic community wrote a letter to (Russian President Vladimir) Putin and they requested 'the books from the Schneerson Collection' - so the manuscripts remained at the Russian State Library," she said.



Svetlana Khvostova, the Russian State Library employee in charge of keeping the Schneerson Collection.

Visitors can see the manuscripts at the Library, but a written request needs to be made in advance and few people bother to do so, Khvostova said.

So far, only the published books from the Schneerson Collection have been made available online, but they are already being used by researchers outside of Russia.

"We always find something new in the margins of these books," Khvostova said. "We see children's drawings, scribbles, and even people practising their handwriting."

The books are kept in special cardboard boxes - microorganisms can't

survive in this acid-free cardboard, Khvostova said - in a temperature-controlled room with a gas-operated fire extinguishing system that ensures that the precious volumes wouldn't be damaged even in case of a fire.

Not many Russians come to look at the books. These religious works are in Hebrew and are not of much interest even to Russian Jews, most of whom aren't literate in the language.

The Schneerson Collection can be viewed online by visiting the site of the Russian State Library, clicking on "Online Catalogue," then "Databases." The collection can be searched through in either Hebrew or Russian.

NASCAR's first Israeli driver on the fast track to success

GABE FRIEDMAN

Israeli race car driver Alon Day's rise to the highest ranks of NASCAR, has seen him have to make several surprising turns on the way to success.

The 25-year-old has done the bulk of his training on computer-screen simulators. That's because Israel didn't have a motor sport race track until this year. And on Sunday, he will become the first Israeli to compete in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series - the sport's highest league of competition - when he races the No 23 car for the BK Racing team at the Sonoma Raceway in Southern California.

Another anomaly: While NASCAR has made efforts to diversify its pool of participants, the sport's fans and drivers remain mostly white and Christian - at times to a controversial extent.

Day, by contrast, wears his Israeli and Jewish identities proudly. His car for the race will sport a few Israeli flag stickers, and he'll also have Stars of David on the left arm of his racing suit and on his belt. He has previously driven a car featuring an Anti-Defamation League sticker.

Day, speaking to JTA from a taxi following his flight to California last week Thursday, is well aware of the unlikeliness of his story - one that involves Israeli go-karts, plenty of computer games and a Florida attorney eager to get a Jewish driver into NASCAR.



"I'm going to make history for myself and for my country, Israel," the Tel Aviv resident said.

Day grew up in Ashdod, where he learned about NASCAR from playing video games such as Grand Prix Legends. Motor sports have never been popular in Israel, in part because an old British Mandate law (dating to the days when the British ruled Palestine) that banned any cars that could be used for more than commuting, was only recently scrapped.

In his early teens, Day became champion of the country's only semi-professional motor sport league: go-karting. He began racing in Formula Three and was on a trajectory toward Formula One.

But a couple of years ago, Day decided to switch gears (pun intended). He shifted from driving the Formula One open cockpit style of car to stock cars, the ordinary cars that have been modified for NASCAR.

It was mostly a business decision - the world of motor racing is driven by sponsorships. Since Israel's business ties with the US are much stronger than those with Europe, Day recognised he had a greater likelihood of being sponsored to drive for NASCAR.

He raced a full season in a sub-league of the Indy 500, the US version of Formula One and was selected early last year to be part of the 2016-17 NASCAR Next programme, which highlights young, up-and-coming racers.

Two buildings, three opinions: A dialogue between Jerusalem's buildings

STEVEN KRAWITZ

The Talmud states that 10 measures of beauty came down to the world and nine of them were given to Jerusalem and one to the rest of the world.

The natural setting, the light and the spiritual perfection, all contribute to Jerusalem's beauty. Today the built environment also adds to the unique beauty of the city.

The original master-buildings in Jerusalem were the First and Second Temples, expressing in stone the Nation of Israel's relationship with the G-d of Israel. The architecture and architects, have continued to add to the long tradition of dialogues, and debates, representing the very history and ideological battles of the modern state through stone, steel, glass and cement.

She focused on three architects:

Erich Mendelsohn, a German émigré, Austin St Barbe Harrison an architect in the British Colonial Service, and Spyro Houris, a Greek Orthodox Alexandrian.

If two Jews represent three ideas, as the old joke goes, then it is also very true that Jerusalem's buildings represent at least one and a half opinions each.

Three seminal Jerusalem architects and their contribution to the city's architectural legacy, was the subject of an eye-opening talk given by the top Johannesburg architect Nina Cohen at the Academy recently. Cohen, who is currently overseeing the construction of the Mpumalanga University, is a passionate guide through the layers of Israeli architecture.

She focused on three architects: Erich Mendelsohn, a German émigré, Austin St Barbe Harrison an architect in the British Colonial Service, and Spyro Houris, a Greek Orthodox Alexandrian.

She gave her insights in a talk based on Adina Hoffman's recently published book, *Till We Have Built Jerusalem: Architects of a New City*.

Cohen emphasised that modern Jerusalem needs to be seen as one half of a fundamental argument within the Zionist enterprise, with Tel Aviv as the other half.

The architects of Tel Aviv, Jews who had fled Europe where they had identified with the Modernist movement, wanted their city to express a break with the anti-Semitism of the Jewish experience in Europe.

For them, Tel Aviv and its buildings were the symbols of the transition from centuries of being an oppressed minority to the promise of literally constructing an autonomous self.

In the early years of the city, a fascination with the Orient could be found in Tel Aviv. However, from the early 1930s, any attempt to co-opt local indigenous and orientalist forms into buildings proved untenable, owing to the tensions between Zionists and Arabs, allowing Modernist principles to become the very

foundations of Tel Aviv architecture.

For the Zionists and Socialists, architecture was no longer to be an extension of a pre-existing culture, but a new expression of the Zionist movement. To this day Tel Aviv has an international feel, a modern-prototype city that happens to be situated in Israel, but not reflecting the particularities of its context or environment.

However, decisions of remarkable men reflect a very different architectural philosophy and built environment in Jerusalem, according to Cohen

In her view, probably the single most important contributor to modern Jerusalem's aesthetics, was not an architect. The military Governor Ronald Storrs, who arrived in late 1917, made the city's physical conservation a top priority.

Comparing himself to a "beneficent despot", he issued a ban on any building material other than stone, which over the next century would result in the architecture of the expanded municipal boundaries of the city unified by the visual coherence of Jerusalem stone.

In terms of the architectural input, she said, German architect Mendelsohn designed the Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus; the headquarters for the Anglo-Palestine Bank; and the Schocken Villa and Library, built for Salman Schocken, the German publishing magnate.

He was widely admired for his thumbnail sketches, which captured the essence of each of his projects, Cohen says.

She explains that Mendelsohn saw architecture as part of the wider social and political vision, responding to landscape, climate and both Jewish and Arab cultures. He believed firmly that Palestine "is in the Orient and of the Orient".

He was a passionate Zionist and saw Jerusalem as the centre of the Jewish Renaissance. He wanted his buildings to draw all these threads together and express them in stone.

Whereas Tel Aviv's architecture became the embodiment of Herzl's political Zionism as expressed by the Socialist leadership, Mendelsohn's was the expression of the cultural Zionism of Martin Buber and Ahad

Ha'Am.

Mendelsohn's idealism extended beyond architecture, employing Jews and Arabs to work on construction sites with an ultimate goal of creating a new Semitic commonwealth. His vision was not popular.

During the construction of the Haddasah Hospital, Revisionist Zionists loyal to Ze'ev Jabotinsky, violently attacked the building site because the labourers Mendelsohn had hired, were from the Socialist left. In 1941 Mendelsohn left Jerusalem for New York, embittered and defeated.

Austin St Barbe Harrison, was the official chief British architect of Mandate Palestine. He had a traditional training in Britain, and like Mendelsohn, his approach was to combine modern and local elements in their most simplified forms.

He designed most of the public buildings the British left behind, including the High Commissioner's

residence, Government House, the Government printing press; the Rockefeller Museum (Palestine Archaeological Museum); and the Jerusalem Central Post Office.

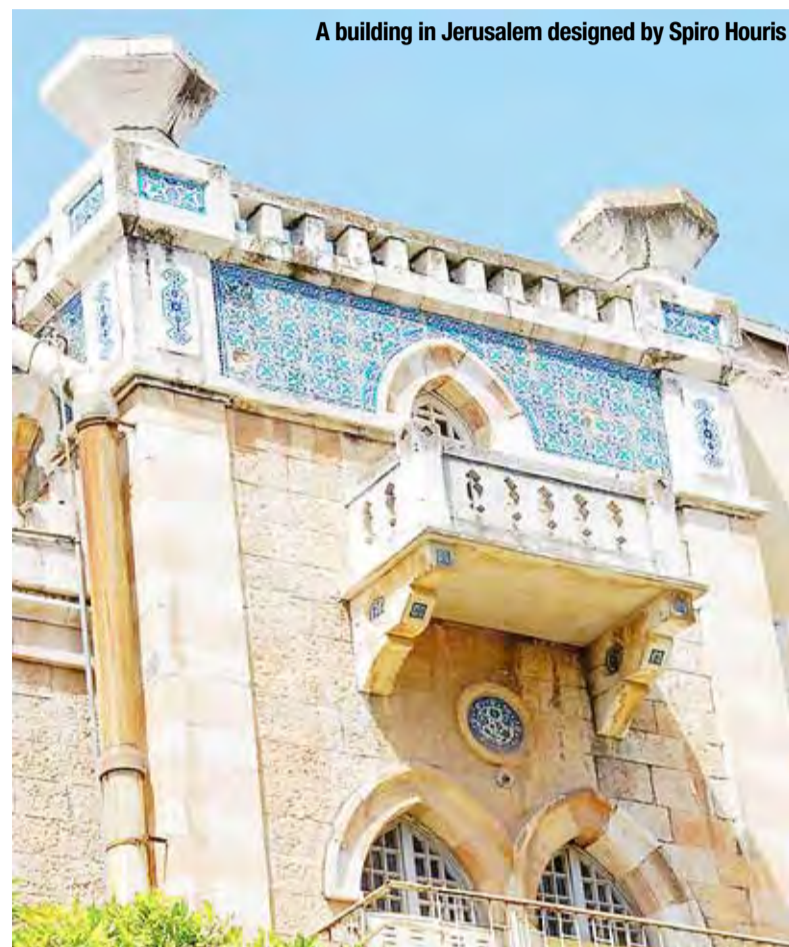
St Barbe Harrison spent 15 years and one day in Jerusalem, precisely the time necessary to claim his government pension and then fled in secret, abandoning most of his possessions.

Spyro Houris, a Greek Orthodox from Alexandria, moved to Jerusalem before the First

World War and built houses for Jews, Arabs and Greeks, adding more than a dozen buildings to the city.

Houris lived during a time when identities in Jerusalem were not rigid and could be multiple.

His buildings encapsulate the Oriental and express the local cultures. He worked with an Armenian ceramist, David Ohannessian, who had survived the Armenian Genocide and had



A building in Jerusalem designed by Spiro Houris

been brought to Jerusalem to retiling the Dome of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Ohannessian's legacy lives on in the city through the ubiquitous blue tiles of Jerusalem.

Cohen's depth of research about the personalities who contributed to Jerusalem's buildings, make her the ideal guide for the simple pleasure of strolling down Jaffa Street, identifying the dialogues and arguments each structure contributes to the golden city.

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Baying for parking blood in Glenhazel

ANT KATZ

When Alvino and Johnny Salgado bought a house opposite their Freshfellas business in the heart of Glenhazel in Johannesburg, they had no idea the brouhaha it was going to cause.

The Salgado brothers apparently bought the property with a view to alleviating their customers' concerns over parking - a huge problem in the area. But, when they applied to the City Council to rezone their new property from residential to business use, there was a huge negative reaction.

In their application, they say they wish "to obtain rights to develop and use the property for shops, offices and dwelling units". It also mentions "moving our business from across the road... possibly incorporating some offices or dwelling units on the first and second floors".

The house across the road...

The Saldagos paid over R6 million for the house of Lara and Russel Joselowsky at 4 Long Avenue. The brothers told the Jewish Report that their plan was to demolish the house and build a new 800m² store on the 1 500m² property, twice the size of the present Freshfellas.

They claimed that the most important thing they would be adding was 30 additional urgently-needed parking bays.

But it seems, from the many objections to the proposed rezoning, that the objectors believe the proposed development - despite more parking bays envisaged - would in fact exacerbate an already dire traffic situation.

When the time limit for objections to the rezoning closed, over 30 objections - a number of which were signed by 25 or more angry residents - were noted by the City's Development Planning Department. A City staffer said this was an abnormally high number of objections, which she describes as angry and unusually highly charged.

Local ward councillor, Steven Kruger, agreed that this was a large number of objections. He said in his experience, five was considered a lot. "I understand the concern of the residents. I am also worried that there won't be enough parking," says Kruger.

One objection points out there are only 106 parking bays to service the mushrooming business community. However, 44 may be illegal as they're on the pavement or "placed on previous pedestrian walkways", leaving just 62 legal parking bays.



Everything revolves around this traffic circle at Yeshiva College in Johannesburg, with five schools and a very busy shul on the campus. All the more so when school's out and Shabbos is coming in...

Louis Mielke, who lives two blocks away in Mejon Street, is livid "because the parking and traffic flow are terrible at the Strip shops". Driving on Long Avenue "has become a nightmare", he says, and stresses that the "already degraded roads" were not built to handle it.

Mielke, himself an engineer, submitted a six-point objection - which was in turn supported by signatures of 25 fellow-residents.

The six complaints are, briefly: (i) Dangerous and potentially deadly traffic congestion; (ii) Parking problems; (iii) Increased air and noise pollution during demolition and construction; (iv) Increased road damage; (v) Disruption caused by augmenting services such as power, water, sewage and waste removal; and (vi) Danger that rezoning will set a precedent and further developments it may "stimulate", will change the character of the leafy suburb.

The Saldagos appear to be perplexed by the objections. "We're doing this to create more parking and space for our customers," says Alvino. Johnny, who says they only have their customers' best interests at heart, adds: "We are giving the community something they want. Every second person complains about parking."

The Saldagos say rumours have been spread that they plan to build a three-storey building while they insist they are only planning to build their new shop and parking.

After perusing some objections and checking with the Council, SA Jewish Report (SAJR) went back to ask Alvino why the rezoning application specifies "12 dwelling units" and a height of "three storeys". Salgado referred SAJR to his town planners, Steve Jaspan and Associates (SJA), who are handling the rezoning.

Kevin Wilkins, of SJA, said that their client's "primary objective" was to erect a "purpose-built" store for Freshfellas and to offer better parking for its customers.

However, Wilkins confirmed that the rezoning application did also specify dwellings and offices and a height of three storeys. The zoning application is for a building "no different to the Weinprop building next door, which has businesses on the ground floor and offices and flats above," he admitted.

What are they planning to build?

"It's not completely untoward, given the area and what's built next door. We are applying for shops on the ground floor and, possibly - I don't know that (they) will - do any dwelling units or offices. They may be nice to have, or maybe not," says Wilkins. The City would, however, insist on the provision of on-site parking.

The Weinprop building houses Brioche restaurant, the huge new Nussbaum's retail butchery and other retailers. It also has two floors of office and residential space.

No parking specifications are available as no building plans have been filed. The City's parking requirements are 1,3 bays per flat; three per 100m² of office and six per 100m² for retail.

If the Salgado brothers have, in fact, changed direction and are only planning to build an 800m² shop, they would still have to provide 48 bays - 18 more than they are planning - unless the City allows them leniency.

However, the public may be rightfully concerned that a second Weinprop building could end up on the site, also that the present Freshfellas is let for retail and that the

existing congestion and chaos could be magnified many-fold and become even more dire.

Freshfellas still hope rezoning passes by the year's end so they can be trading from the new premises by late 2018. They're considering letting their present premises, or using it for storage and packing for their new shop.

However, it may not be so easy. Town Planning first needs to assess the situation, write and circulate a report among other relevant departments. With so many objections, the comments from other departments will require more scrutiny as each objection will be considered.

Once departments report back, Development Planning (if there is no obvious impediment to rezoning), will schedule a site inspection to which City officials, owners and objectors will be invited. This will be followed by hearings at the Civic Centre.

From a Piglet to a Rat in the National Children's Theatre

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

It wasn't long ago, he was just a piglet, but now Bradley Nowikow has grown into Mr Rat. This may sound confusing, but Bradley is an actor at the Children's Theatre and recently played Piglet in Winnie the Pooh and is set to play Mr Rat in the upcoming musical, The Adventures of Mr Toad.

A practising lawyer, Bradley (31) found his true calling a few years ago when travelling abroad. "I saw a few productions overseas and realised that this is what I'd like to do as a profession. I had acted in a production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory in primary school at the age of eight, but then I took a 20-year hiatus," he says.

In pursuing an acting career, Nowikow completed an advanced acting course at the University of Johannesburg. Other than his recent animal experiences, he is new to the National Children's Theatre (NCT).

The NCT, however, is an integral thread in the tapestry of South Africa's arts and culture heritage, taking young imaginations on unforgettable journeys and honing the skills of young thespians and children who dream of being in the theatre. Established in 1989 by Joyce Levinsohn, award-winning pioneer of children's theatre in the country, the NCT has always had significant Jewish connections.

Headed for the last five and a half years by Moira Katz, the NCT is known for the invaluable role it plays in developing a love of theatre, both in its young audiences and in the actors and actresses who start off their careers on its stage.

Katz, who holds a teaching diploma in speech and drama, is a training and communications specialist, having lectured both at Wits and later at Wayne State University in the US, where she lived for six years.

On her return to South Africa, she became the first secretary for the NCT Trust at Levinsohn's request, while also running her own training and development company for supervisors and managers.

"When over 20 years later the Board of Trustees asked me if I'd be interested in becoming the new CEO of the NCT, I saw it as a new challenge - and it remains a challenge every day," she says.

Under Katz's leadership, new processes have been implemented, the company's two "Heritage Houses" have been cleaned up, a second theatre has been started, a puppet theatre has opened and there are also plans underway for an outdoor amphitheatre.

Katz has also brought her passion for



educational development to the NCT. "We do a lot of theatre in education," she says. "I'm really a believer that children who attend theatre classes, even if they don't want to become actors, do the most wonderful work and achieve so much.

"They learn critical thinking skills, to use their imaginations creatively, to integrate with all different kinds of children of all races, and to act out different themes; they really have an advantage over other schoolchildren."

While Katz says that the NCT used to welcome large numbers of Jewish children to the theatre, that's no longer the case and she'd love to increase the numbers that come now.

"We have Saturday morning acting classes for about 150 children in different age groups from the ages of five to 17 and we'd love to extend these to classes during the week or to Sundays and offer them to Jewish children."

There are many opportunities for children who attend these classes and want to become professional actors. There's also a Shakespeare Club that meets on Saturday afternoons.

"We give people who are looking for a

chance, an opportunity to act on stage.

Along with Bradley in the cast of The Adventures of Mr Toad, we have a 19- and a 20-year-old who have never been in theatre before but show great promise; we give many actors that first chance."

Nowikow says he finds children's theatre particularly rewarding. "Kids don't come with preconceptions and aren't as critical as adults. Once they enjoy a production, they become so immersed in it and it's great to have an audience like that - onstage you're enjoying it with them and it makes your performance that much more effective and rewarding.

"But if they don't like something, they'll also tell you! Children's theatre's been a great learning curve for me, starting out." Nowikow is also enjoying acting with the children's cast of The Adventures of Mr Toad, which is based on the beloved children's book The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame.

Asked what audiences can expect from the production, Nowikow says it's ultimately a big adventure, as the name suggests. "It's also a story of camaraderie, where characters all come together to help each other out.

"The set will be amazing, we have car crashes, a horse and cart and much more. It's a very funny British script, adults will enjoy it too - there are even a few Monty Python elements in it."

Nowikow eventually plans to go to Canada and get into film. "Theatre is where you learn and get your grounding, though. I actually prefer it to film," he says. "Attaining success in the acting industry is ultimately about being proactive and putting yourself out there."

• The Adventures of Mr Toad runs from June 20 until July 23 at the National Children's Theatre. To book, call the theatre on (011) 484-1584/5 or e-mail bookings@nctt.org.za.



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These are the 2016 winners – who's next?

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Nominations for Absa Jewish Achiever Awards close on June 30. So, if Friday hasn't come and gone, send your nominations now. From then on, it's count-down time to find out who this year's cream of the crop are at the glitzy black-tie banquet on Sunday, August 13. This function, to pay tribute to Jews in business and industry as well as in various other fields, is the highlight of the Jewish social calendar.

The South African Jewish community has consistently been boxing above its weight and the awards recognise the tremendous contribution Jews have made – and are making – to the fabric of South African society.

Last year's winners were:

The Absa Listed Company Award went to Michael Metz of KAP Bedding

Metz's attitude to his life is that his work is his play and his leisure is his labour, so to speak – though he'd add that none of those would be worth much without his close-knit family and his Jewish values.

Starting with a small family business, he built it into one of the country's largest bedding brands. Metz is the divisional CEO of KAP's integrated bedding division.

JSE-listed KAP is a group of manufacturers, consisting mainly of companies acquired since 2004, as well as the industrial assets of Steinhoff Africa.

Metz was appointed chief of KAP's bedding division after the acquisition of his family business Restonic by KAP Industrial in 2015.

The Absa Unlisted Company Award went to Dionne Ellerine Hirschowitz, a member of the iconic Ellerine family. She runs one of the largest privately-owned businesses in South Africa, namely Ellerine Brothers, as well as the associated Eric Ellerine Trust.

Hirschowitz, who has a B Com, LLB degree and is a graduate of King David Linksfield, lived in London for 11 years working at Stenham Property, before returning to South Africa in 2006.

The core business activities of Ellerine Brothers and associated companies are equity investments, property investments and management, and private equity investments.

She has also worked hard to raise awareness of the role of women (particularly Jewish women) in the workplace.

The Absa Lifetime Achiever Award in honour of Helen Suzman went to the Donald Gordon Foundation (DGF), represented by Wendy and Hylton Appelbaum, for the Foundation's remarkable philanthropic work.

Wendy, the daughter of Sir Donald Gordon, is a trustee of the DGF, one of the largest private charitable foundations in Africa. Wendy was a trustee of the Helen Suzman Foundation and is a member of the Global Philanthropists' Circle. Hylton is a trustee of the Foundation, Kagiso Trust and various other organisations including The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund.

The DGF, whose beneficence is legendary, is clear about its mandate: to fund higher education institutions with a particular (but not exclusive) focus on business education; medical education and training; cultural affairs and the performing arts; conservation and the environment; and human welfare, with a particular focus on the poor and needy in the South African Jewish community.

The Chivas Humanitarian Award in honour of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris is open to all South Africans who have made South Africa a better place. Iconic struggle lawyer George Bizos, SC, the 2016 winner, was a popular choice.

Bizos, (87) the indefatigable prominent human rights lawyer, was part of the defence team at the 1963-64 Rivonia Trial and was a close friend of President Nelson Mandela. He defended Mandela, Govan Mbeki and Walter Sisulu. The defendants were sentenced to life imprisonment, but spared the death penalty.

The KIA Community Service Award winner was also a popular one. Marlene Bethlehem has, over many years, earned her stripes as a community leader par excellence.

Bethlehem's vivacity is truly remarkable – and over the last five decades a preponderant part of it has gone the way of the South African and international Jewish communities. Her passionate love for the local Jewish community and for Israel, shines through all her actions.

Bethlehem was also one of this country's leading sportswomen and participated in three Maccabiahs (1957, 1961 and 1985) and played with much success (as Marlene Gerson) on the international tennis circuit.

The Richmark Art, Sport, Science and Culture Award went to arguably the best surfer this country has ever seen, Shaun Tomson. Tomson has been listed as one of the 25 most influential surfers of the century and as one of the 10 greatest surfers of all time.

Recalls the affable Tomson: "You look around while you're surfing – and you don't see too many Jewish boys on the top of 25-foot waves. Actually, being Jewish and being a surfer is a bit of an oxymoron, isn't it?"

He added: "When I used to travel around the world and it was a Jewish holiday, I'd look around, say, for somewhere where I could join a seder at Pesach. Which was fine, but the people I was involved with, and competing with, and so on, they thought I was from another planet..."

The Creative Counsel Young Jewish Entrepreneurs Award went to the duo, Greg Blend and Grant Friedman, with their Standout Property Group, founded in 2013.

The two young men at the age of 27, and both products of King David schools – Blend Linksfield and Friedman Victory Park – both boast B Com degrees. Their company specialises in property investment, management, development and re-development and is going like the proverbial Boeing. They say a great deal of their success is that they manage their properties in-house. They also partner with larger tenants in co-

Vivienne, Michael, Gabi and Lance Metz.



owning their premises.

They feel their greatest achievement was reaching 50 000 sqm of gross leasable area under their ownership and management in only three years. And this is only the beginning!

The Europcar Jewish Women in Leadership Award went to the formidable Jewish High Court judge Sharise Weiner.



Danny K; Barry Taitz and Marius De La Rey.



Howard Sackstein, Mark Hirschowitz; Dionne Ellerine Hirschowitz; and Herby Rosenberg.



George Bizos.



Marlene Bethlehem and Shaun Tomson.

is, and has always been, beyond reproach."

Judge Weiner lives by a code of ethics that she says, "is core on Jewish values. These were inculcated in me by my late parents, especially my mother."

The moral and ethical Jewish teachings, as entrenched in the Constitution, were one of the reasons for her accepting her appointment as a judge.

In 2012, Weiner founded "Warm the World", a charity that donates blankets to the needy and empowers women by paying them for knitting and sewing the blankets.

The Absa Entrepreneur Award went to Barry Taitz of Blue Cellular. Blue Cellular is a story of hope and determination, of a "small man" making it big in business, the story of a man with a dream who just never would give up.

In 1988, he was sales manager of the year at Simba and in 1999 and 2000, he was top salesman at Simba.

But he had ambitions of his own. In 2003, Blue Cellular started with R50 000; since then it has grown to arguably the largest independent prepaid cellular starter pack distributor in the country, with strategic agreements with all the major cellular companies.

When the search was on for a new Public Protector to succeed the charismatic and well-loved Thuli Madonsela, whose term of office ended last October, a Jewish name sprung up. Although Busisiwe Mkhwebane eventually got the nod, judge Weiner was more than a worthy finalist.

She was nominated for the position by Group One Chambers of Advocates in Sandown Village, who stated: "Her integrity

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Absa Jewish Achiever Awards 2017

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- Lifetime Achievement Award in honour of Helen Suzman
- Humanitarian Award in honour of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris*
- Kia Community Service Award
- Jewish Report Art, Sport, Science & Culture Award
- Absa Entrepreneur Award
- Absa Unlisted Company Award
- Absa Listed Company Award
- The Creative Counsel Young Jewish Entrepreneur Award
- Europcar Jewish Woman in Leadership Award

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- * A short motivation for the nomination

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Hitler as model: Who is the Public Protector protecting?



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

While Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane's aggressive demeanour and politically suspect agenda offends many, care must be taken not to automatically dismiss everything she says because of dislike, or for her apparent embrace of certain views of anti-Semite and Holocaust denier Stephen Goodson.

Her punting of someone like him, has led outraged Jewish leaders to demand she distance herself from him.

We live in complicated times in a country struggling to find its way, where important debates are often stifled by people shouting each other down. Mkhwebane is particularly unpopular when compared to her predecessor Thuli Madonsela, who won the hearts of South Africans by confronting the country's most powerful people on the issue of state capture.

For Jews, it is alarming that Mkhwebane seems to be oblivious to the inflammatory implications of aligning herself with somebody like Goodson - a sinister sign for someone occupying so politically sensitive a position.

She has referred positively to a Goodson book entitled *A History of Central Banking (and the Enslavement of Mankind)*. Adolf Hitler and former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi appear on its cover.

She needs to be educated to the fact that the moment the word Hitler or Nazi is mentioned, rational debate is shut down by images of Auschwitz. It is strange that she seems not to know that - or to be ignoring it. Where is she

taking instructions from?

Anti-Semitism in South Africa has remained consistently low compared to many other countries worldwide. Mkhwebane threatens this by injecting suspicion towards Jews into the public arena through association with the likes of Goodson.

The important role of Jewish businesspeople, professionals and others in the South African economy, could be exploited by populist politicians with mischievous agendas. In our convoluted political environment, this is extremely dangerous.

Her recommendation, apparently based partly on her reading of Goodson, that parliament initiate a process to change the Constitution's definition of the Reserve Bank's mandate - its inflation targeting framework - has been slammed across the political spectrum, including by ANC heavyweights insisting that she has over-reached her constitutional powers.

Her task is to do what the Constitution demands of her, not attempt to change it. The Reserve Bank's independence is crucial, particularly in an environment where our democratic institutions are all under attack.

Mkhwebane has earned many times over the distrust she is now subject to. But not everything she has uttered about governance is unworthy of discussion - including the Reserve Bank's mandate. However, it would be taken more seriously if it came from someone with credibility.

This country desperately needs to extract

itself from the hole of low growth, poverty and inequality into which it has sunk. Other successful countries have adopted different models for the role of banks in economic growth, while retaining their independence.

Goodson joined the SA Reserve Bank in 2003 as a director and in May 2012 resigned under public pressure because of his anti-Semitic views. He has expressed admiration for Hitler's economic policies and said international bankers (read: Jews) financed and manipulated the Second World War against Germany because its leader's model of state capitalism threatened them.

In an interview in 2011 with American talk show host Deanna Spingola on Republic Broadcasting Network - a radical right-wing radio station - he said the Holocaust was a "huge lie" with the objective "to extract enormous sums of money from the Germans as compensation".

International bankers, he added, "tarnished that whole period as being one of great evil in order to keep you blind to what is possible". He praised the social achievements during the Third Reich.

Is Mkhwebane captured by the Zuma-Gupta self-enrichment project? Does her association with characters like Goodson serve their agenda? Jews and other South Africans are correct in being seriously alarmed.

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

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

When the Public Protector punts blatant anti-Semite's book

Few if any groups in history have been the targets of as many conspiracy theories as the Jewish people. With the spread of literacy and the rise in education levels, one might have expected this phenomenon to have declined, particularly in democratic countries committed to the values of liberalism, non-racism and equality.

Unfortunately, this has not happened - in fact, the trend would sadly appear to be the direct opposite. The primary reason for this is the electronic communications revolution which, for all its enormous benefits, also provides an ideal vehicle for racist conspiracy theorists to propagate their noxious theories.

The Internet will always have its dark corners. However, as long as responsible policy and opinionmakers are able to recognise the kind of material that emanates from these sources for what they are, there is a limit to the harm that they cause.

The danger, however, is significantly enhanced when proponents of hate, instead of being confined to the lunatic fringes where they belong, start to acquire a degree of credibility in mainstream society.

The most dangerous conspiracy theorists are those who package their theories in ostensibly plausible academic-speak, thereby creating the impression of ideas based on rigorous, objective research.

Unfortunately, public figures sometimes fall for this either knowingly or unknowingly. Such was the case with Public Protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane who, according to media reports, has enthusiastically endorsed as a "must read" a book by a notorious anti-Semitic conspiracy theorist, Nazi apologist and Holocaust denier, Stephen Goodson.

Entitled *A History of Central Banking (and the Enslavement of Mankind)*, the book repeats

the libel that Jews are guilty of foisting the evils of usury and corrupt international finance on humanity.

Goodson further presumes to justify anti-Jewish persecution, by attributing it to the alleged criminal behaviour of Jews themselves; he blames Jews for instigating wars and other disasters and describes the Holocaust as a Jewish-spawned lie, aimed at extorting reparations from Germany.

While endorsing the rantings of a Goodson does not necessarily make one an anti-Semite, (since often the anti-Semitism is to some extent disguised in a plethora of other facts and figures) it certainly has the effect of lending credibility to such poisonous theories.

It is therefore particularly incumbent on elected leaders, public representatives, intellectuals and opinionmakers, to be wary of extending such credibility, whether deliberately or inadvertently.

This is something the Board will emphasise at its upcoming meeting with the Public Protector next month, where we will urge her to refrain from endorsing, or appearing to endorse, the above book and to unequivocally distance herself from the views expressed by its author.

Conspiratorial thinking is often born and flourishes in environments of dishonesty; when people suspect they are being lied to and cheated, they are more inclined to give credence to alleged plots against them.

This again underlines the crucial importance of ethical, above-board behaviour on the part of all South Africans today. Only through this will it be possible to rebuild a culture of trust between all sectors of our society, thereby ensuring that conspiracy theories and their like die very quick deaths.

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



Above Board
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What to do with kids during the holiday

LAURICE TAITZ-BUNTMAN

The July holidays are here, bringing with it the big question: What can we do with the kids over this break? Here are some fun ideas.

City Sightseeing Bus Green Route

Ride the open-top double-decker City Sightseeing Bus Green Route from Rosebank to Constitution Hill. Hop off at the Military History Museum where there are loads of tanks, planes and trucks for kids to clamber over, pay a visit to Johannesburg Zoo, always a winner with little kids, and join the City Sightseeing Red Route at Constitution Hill.

City Sightseeing Bus Red Route

The hop-on hop-off City Sightseeing Bus Red Route, starts at Constitution Hill. Popular stops for young families include the

Gold Reef City theme park, the SciBono Discovery Centre and the Origins Centre. Between stops, kids can listen to their own specially-designed radio commentary and keep busy with the puzzles provided in the kids pack.

Soweto minibus

Linking up to the City Sightseeing Bus at the Apartheid Museum the Red Soweto minibus makes a whistle-stop tour of South Africa's most famous township, stopping in at all the major sights. An easy way to give your kids a brief introduction to the unique history and culture of Soweto.

Combination tickets for the open-top City Sightseeing bus and the Soweto tour, cost R420 for adults and R220 for kids.

Children's Theatre

This July you are spoiled for choice when it comes to children's theatre productions. Catch

Cinderella Kids at the People's Theatre in Braamfontein (until July 30), the Adventures of Mr Toad at National Children's Theatre in Parktown (until July 23) and look out for shows for young kids and teens at this year's 969 Festival at Wits Theatre (July 14-30, wits.ac.za/witstheatre/whats-on/969-festival/).

Young kids will also love the energetic Smurfs Live show at Emperor's Palace (July 13-30) and Puss in Boots at Gold Reef City (July 1-23).

See Homo Naledi at Maropeng

The remains of the recently discovered new species Homo Naledi, are on display at Maropeng in the Cradle of Humankind.

The extensive exhibitions have been designed with kids in mind and include numerous fun, interactive and educational displays.

Storytime at the bookshop

Take the little ones down to Love Books (lovebooks.co.za) at the Bamboo Lifestyle Centre in Melville for a kids story-time session every Saturday at 10:00. Also look out for Saturday story-time at Bridge Books in downtown Johannesburg (in the City Central building opposite the Rand Club, bridgebooks.co.za) where story-time sessions include a reading of the new picture book *Ballerina Dreams*.

Challenge the family at an 'escape room'

A cross between a game show and a Sherlock Holmes novel, "escape rooms" are a fun way to challenge the whole family to work together to solve clues and puzzles in a race against the clock. Ideal for kids aged 12 and up; challenges vary in difficulty. Try Lostland in Rivonia (lostland.co.za), or Escape Room in Dunkeld (escaperoom.co.za).

Family walkabouts at Wits Art Museum

Join the Wits Art Museum family walkabout on the third Saturday of each month at 12:00. The kids get to learn about historic and contemporary African art and get creative at the sketching table. It is essential to RSVP by e-mail to info.wam@wits.ac.za beforehand. wits.ac.za/wam/



Turbine Art Fair

Now in its fifth year, this contemporary African art fair has become a city fixture, attracting thousands to the Turbine Hall in Newtown. On Saturday July 15 and Sunday July 16, the fair hosts a special kids art corner.

There's also a special programme of art walkabouts of the fair for kids aged 6 to 11 and for those 12 years and up. turbineartfair.co.za

• Laurice Taitz-Buntman is the publisher and editor of *Johannesburg in Your Pocket*. www.johannesburginyourpocket.com

Luxury escape from the city

OWN CORRESPONDENT

When you live with the stresses and pressures of Johannesburg life, getting away is such a wonderful nice-to-have. And if you can afford to do it, it is often a situation of just how fast can you get there!

So, spending a few days at the 150-acre Lethabo Country Estate, which is 45 minutes out of town, is a gift because as you set foot out your car, it feels like you are in the bush somewhere. And as you step onto their guest deck and see the sun set over the Crocodile River, it is hard not to heave a sigh of relief and let those pressures subside and set aside the stress.

While this is clearly not the Hilton, where you know exactly what to expect down to the logo on the gown, Lethabo is an eclectic upmarket guest estate with each option for accommodation being totally different and an experience in luxury.

It is family friendly, but it also caters to the romantic in all of us. While families have room to roam, lovely walks to try and animals to visit, there are many uber-romantic spots where men have got down on one knee to ask that ultimate life-sharing question.

The estate is designed in such a way that couples and families hardly need to know that the other is there at the same time.

The calming water is a central theme through the estate, with the guest accommodation built around the running river. Many guest quarters have their own private dip pools and all have luxuriant Jacuzzi spa baths and wrap-around bush, waterfall or river views.

The languid relaxing atmosphere is conducive to time out, switching off from the rat race and

either spending quality family time, or having a romantic escape, or both.

Lethabo offers delicious ethical eating, with sumptuous lunches using organic ingredients from the estate's vegetable garden.

The estate is an old hand at catering to kosher guests, arranging kosher food to be collected from Johannesburg and serving it within the strictest regulations. However, guests are also welcome to bring their own, as there are facilities for self-catering in most of the units.

In the lounge-restaurant area, guests can while away hours playing on the grand piano or just listening to the river while reading a good book.

Each unit offers a selection of books for almost every palate, as well as exclusive magazines, to entertain you as you put your feet up on the king-size beds or on a hammock overlooking the fabulous view.

Returning from a weekend at Lethabo feels more like having undergone a long languid beach holiday than a quick escape from the city.



LEO TURVEY HAS WRITTEN A COMPILATION OF THREE STORIES

1/Life's Intentions: is about three women and how they affect the life of an entrepreneur.

The first woman is so much in love with her husband she is prepared to forego motherhood. The second woman is unhappily married, lonely and sexually frustrated. The third woman is attractive, successful attorney practising family law.

2/The Man From Stoke Newington: is the story of a 19-year-old patriotic Jew who volunteers for the British Army prior to the Second World War. He is captured in Holland, from there he is sent to Auschwitz, survives and returns home to find his father is sick. His Rabbi introduces him to a visitor attending the synagogue. A business relationship is formed to their mutual benefit.

3/Close To Reality: is the tragic tale of a young Jewish child and how she succumbs to anorexia due to family strife. She is committed to Groote Schuur Hospital and then to Valkenburg; falls in love and is forced to have an abortion. She desperately seeks love and affection, which she finds through teaching and caring for children, aged three to six. When she finally finds the man she wants to marry she is thwarted.

Leo's book is available at the Jacob Gitlin Library, the SA Zionist Federations Issy Maisel's library in Johannesburg and at Highlands House, and promises interesting and delightful reading.

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Sharing the warmth Schimmel's story touches many a woman's heart

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Great Park youth involved in the bar- and batmitzvah programme, together with learners from King David, distributed over 1 000 blankets and jackets to children cared for by outreach organisation Afrika Tikkun. The children attending the handover at Uthandu Centre, sang and danced and expressed appreciation to the Jewish community. Blankets and warm coats will also be distributed at other Afrika Tikkun facilities.

Raelene Tradonsky has involved the King David Foundation in partnering with the community-wide Lag B'Omer event, at which the blanket drive took place.

Rabbi Dovid Hazdan of the Great Park Synagogue, said that there is no bar- or batmitzvah gift as valuable as the one we gave.



OWN CORRESPONDENT

Musical maestro Bryan Schimmel unravelled his rollercoaster life journey to the WIZO Women Inspired last week.

He was an "inspired" guest at the home of clinical psychologist and media personality, Dorianne Weil - "Dr D" - in Johannesburg. There, he related his very poignant life story, taking his audience along on his heroic journey of overcoming a host of challenges, which included starting off with a bad speech impediment, being a recovered crystal meth addict and being HIV positive.

The chilly morning did not deter a "bumper crop" of guests who were warmed by a blazing fire and the heart-warming experiences of their guest.

Schimmel uplifted the senses with an audio-visual display of his work. He then relayed the important role his mother played in quite literally saving his life, and in helping him to beat the enormous odds stacked against him. He told how he turned his life around and found meaning in giving to others through mentoring students and fellow performers.

After a standing ovation, Weil pointed out the value in sharing one's vulnerabilities and how people need to take lessons from Schimmel's story in order to learn and to grow in our own lives.

As a fitting encore, Schimmel treated his audience to a stunning piece on the piano. An enriching morning well spent.



Lee Joffe; Joceline Basserbie; Bryan Schimmel; Dorianne Weil and Andrea Wainer.

Friday (June 30)	Saturday night (July 1)	Monday (July 3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UZLC hosts Shirley Zar on "Johannesburg in the Fifties and Sixties". Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 – 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851. Shalom Masorti Seniors Club meets on the last Friday of each month. It invites everyone who would like to make new friends and have some light-hearted fun. Tea is served and there will be a selection of board games, cards etc. Maurice Reznik will speak on "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow". Time: From 14:30. Contact: Esther (011) 485-5619, Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday mornings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second Innings hosts an outing to the theatre to see Jonathan Roxmouth in "The Big Band Musical" Venue: The Teatro, Monte Casino. Time: Show starts at 20:00 sharp. Cost: R180 in good seats in the stalls. Enquiries: Fay Smaller and Ros Berman (011) 632-9701. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primary's July holiday school, runs from Monday July 3 to Friday 7, from 08:00 - 12:30, for ages 18 months - 6 years. The cost is R750 per week per child, or R170 per child per day. For two children, the cost will be R1 400 for the week. Phone: (011) 640-011 or e-mail hello@sydpreschool.co.za
Sunday (July 2)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bet David hosts a "Talk and Tea" social afternoon, with a presentation by Roger Scheuble on his sailing trip around the world. Venue: Bet David, Morningside. No charge. Time: 15:00. RSVP/enquiries: Sharon admin2@betdavid.org.za 		



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Letters

VERY 'UN-JEWISH' BEHAVIOUR OF THREE JEWISH BUSINESSMEN SLATED

Many examples in history and in recent times, show Jews acting publicly in a manner presenting them with a certain face, which is very different to the manner in which they treat their fellow Jew. This phenomenon is understandable in so far as it portrays the individual in a positive light to the general public, but is unfortunate when it compromises a fellow Jew.

We have a pertinent example in Johannesburg, which demonstrates this behaviour.

A Jewish single mother with two children was retrenched in 2011 and was finding it very difficult at her age to find a job in order to support her family and service the bond on her modest home in the north-eastern suburbs of Johannesburg.

She took the decision to acquire an overseas clothing franchise and to open a ladies boutique. The franchise was granted and required that she sign a five-year lease for the premises in order to restrict any other interested party from opening within a reasonable radius from her store, which was situated in the CBD.

A lease was entered into with a company which owns a substantial portfolio in the CBD and the boutique was opened with the investment of all her savings, as well as her inheritance, to help make the business a success.

The boutique traded in the premises for three years and paid rent, including agreed annual increases until the devaluation of the rand and the recession forced her to close the business.

During the three years, she was aware of other tenants coming and going and even though leases had been signed, the outstanding amounts were written off, for whatever reason.

The owner of the property is a prominent Jewish businessman, his MD is a well-known Johannesburg Jewish executive and the credit controller is a retired well-known Jewish businessman. Between these three Jewish community members, they see fit to take this single mother to court to seize her home to settle the balance of the lease.

The owner told her to her face that he would not write off the balance of her lease, as she had a home which was of more value than the amount she was being sued for.

What I find reprehensible is the fact that I am aware of tenants in his buildings who walk out overnight and are never prosecuted, even though they could be forced to contribute to outstanding monies, but a single Jewish mother who paid rent for three years until she was forced to close down, is being subjected to this action.

**Lionel Marcus
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

KDVP Primary's concert is a rip-roaring success

NIRVANA ROGERS

King David Victory Park Primary hosted a special matinee performance last Sunday of "Providence", the school's annual major production, for residents of Selwyn Segal, Sandringham Gardens and Thuthuzela Orphanage in Alexandra. The guests thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon out and praised the talented young stars who

entertained them. Guests were seen bopping along to some good old tracks like "Mamma Mia" and "Footloose". Jeanette Isikov from Sandringham Gardens said: "I'm loving every minute of the play, I'm even moving and dancing along to it! Thank you to King David Victory Park for giving us this opportunity to see the play." Special guests, Andrew

Baker, headmaster of the high school as well as Renos Spanoudes, renowned King David Victory Park High School teacher, actor, radio and television presenter and award-winning writer, were in the audience. "I'm blown away - there's such a wealth of talent coming our way to the high school," Spanoudes said.

Sarah Rosenthal; Melissa Krawitz; Zara Wolfson; and Silvie Richards.



Photo supplied



Photo supplied

Instilling a love of books

OWN CORRESPONDENT

King David Pre-Primary School Linksfield recently hosted a Book Week which enthralled the learners and reinforced the importance of reading books from an early age. Every group - from playschool through to grade R - learnt about a specific book theme or a well-known author. The week featured a book market, a talented performance by Hooked on Books and a presentation by dynamic, young author, Refiloe Moahloli, who interactively read her book "How many ways can you say hello" to the children. The week ended with the children coming to school dressed as their favourite characters from the books they love the most.

Charlie Katz; Noah Klitzner; Shyla Hermann; Refiloe Moahloli; Shira Boruchowitz; and Mia Kiltzner.

Checkmate for KD chess whizzes

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The learners at King David Linksfield Junior Primary are getting better and better at chess. The school's Junior B chess team came second in the 2017 league. The players attended the official prize-giving on Monday night at Grayston Preparatory School. This is a game in which mental clarity and dexterity is required for solving problems. It teaches the children to analyse consequences and formulate future tactic, as well as develop their memory skills. It also helps in improving concentration and academic performance in the children.

Jesse Shapiro; Raphael Kaplan; Yariv Miller; and Ethan Slavin. Front: Ben Peretz.



Photo supplied

Celebrating South Africa Day in the spirit of ubuntu

JENNY MILLER

Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primary School last week held its own South Africa Day at the school and celebrated in the true spirit of ubuntu. South African flags, ethnic clothing, rugby jerseys, cricket shirts and face painting, were the order of the day. But the celebrations wouldn't be complete without pap and gravy and with the singing of Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika. Proudly wearing their South African colours are Gavi Porter; Jaron Riesnik; Chad Diamond; and Jarren Rosenthal.



Photo: Ingrid Seeff

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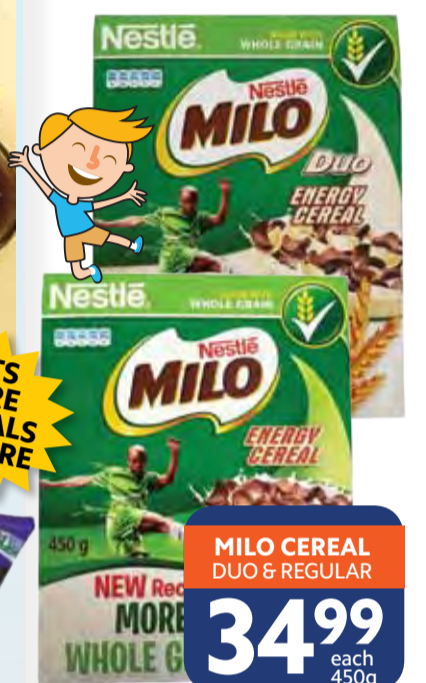


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Maccabiah ban on woman cricketer lands up in court



JACK MILNER

The 20th Maccabiah begins in Israel on July 4 and already the cricket event has been mired in controversy. A decision by the Maccabi Games Organising Committee to ban a girl from playing in the Israeli junior cricket team, has ended up in court.

Naomi Eytan, 14, has played in the Israeli national under-19 cricket team all season - the only girl in the squad of the top 15 youth players in the country. With the Maccabiah set to start early next month, she expected to join her teammates as they battle against Jewish cricketers from around the world, but was told by the organisers that she can't play because it is "for men only".

Backed by the Israel Cricket Association (ICA) and many fellow Israeli cricketers, she's now campaigning to beat officialdom and take her place on the field. The ICA is vowing to appeal to Sports Minister Miri Regev.

Eytan, from Tel Aviv, told the Times of Israel that she first heard about the decision to prevent her playing two weeks ago. "I am very angry and disappointed that they won't let me play," she said.

Eytan's mother, Carmel, said they did not deliberately plan to make a public campaign to reverse the decision, but that word spread through social media among local cricket players who have been very supportive. "There has been so much support it is very moving," she said.

Eytan explained her position: "If there was a girls' team I wouldn't have a problem, but there are no girls in Israel who play cricket and I was chosen to represent Israel as one of the 15 best. What kind of message is the Maccabiah sending to girls and to the world? Instead of being proud of me, they are sending me home because of rules and regulations that it is unclear who made up."

The decision has caused a furore among many local adult players, who are seeking to help Eytan compete.

Last week Roy Hessing, spokesman for the Maccabi Games Organising Committee, said the committee's decision was based on regulations laid down by the International Cricket Council (ICC), the world governing body for the sport.

Hessing explained that ICC regulations relating to gender separation were intended to make the sport fair and safe. "There will not be a precedent set for Eytan," he said. "It is not a rational request in relation to international regulations."

Addressing Eytan's campaign and the support she has received from many local cricketers, Hessing added: "We operate according to regulations and not public demands."

The particular rule cited by Hessing was from the ICC regulations regarding transgender players. It states: "Most relevantly for present purposes, because of the significant advantages in size, strength and power enjoyed (on average) by males over

females from puberty onward... it is necessary to have separate competition categories for males and females in order to preserve the safety, fairness and integrity of the sport for the benefit of all of its participants and stakeholders."

If necessary, Hessing said, the Maccabi Games Organising Committee is prepared to defend its position in court.

Carmel Eytan dismissed as "unreasonable" a decision to ban her daughter on the basis of regulations concerning transgender players.

The ICA has put itself squarely on Eytan's side, with director Naor Gudker appealing to Maccabiah officials to show some flexibility. "In the past, a female player from Beersheba played together with the men in the European championships after organisers let her," Gudker said. "I am optimistic that perhaps the decision will be changed. She is a talented and outstanding girl and it is a shame. I would expect them to let her play."

ICA Chairman Steve Leigh said he intends to contact Culture and Sports Minister Regev about the matter. "We selected Naomi for the team based on professional criteria, and we didn't think that it required a special request from the Maccabiah," he said.

"I hope you can help me because I understand that we need to fight for equality and that women really can't do what men can do - meaning, they are capable but the world does not always let them."

"We were surprised that she can't participate and it doesn't seem fair. The minister is a politician and a woman, and she's in a position to help, and so we'll ask her to get involved."

Eytan also sent a letter to Galia Wolloch, president of Na'amat, an Israeli women's rights organisation. "I worked hard, I practised, and I was accepted to Israel's youth cricket team. One girl among 14 boys. I was so proud! But then reality gave me a slap across the face..."

"I hope you can help me because I understand that we need to fight for equality and that women really can't do what men can do - meaning, they are capable but the world does not always let them."

Eytan and her mother, who is a spokesman for the Na'amat Israeli women's rights organisation, along with Na'amat itself, filed the request at the Tel Aviv District Court against the Maccabi Games Organising Committee and Maccabiah International.

Although it is rare, women have played in men's cricket teams in semi-professional and even professional leagues. Most recently British-born Sarah Taylor in 2015 played a match for Northern Districts against Port Adelaide in Australia.