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# south african Jewish Report

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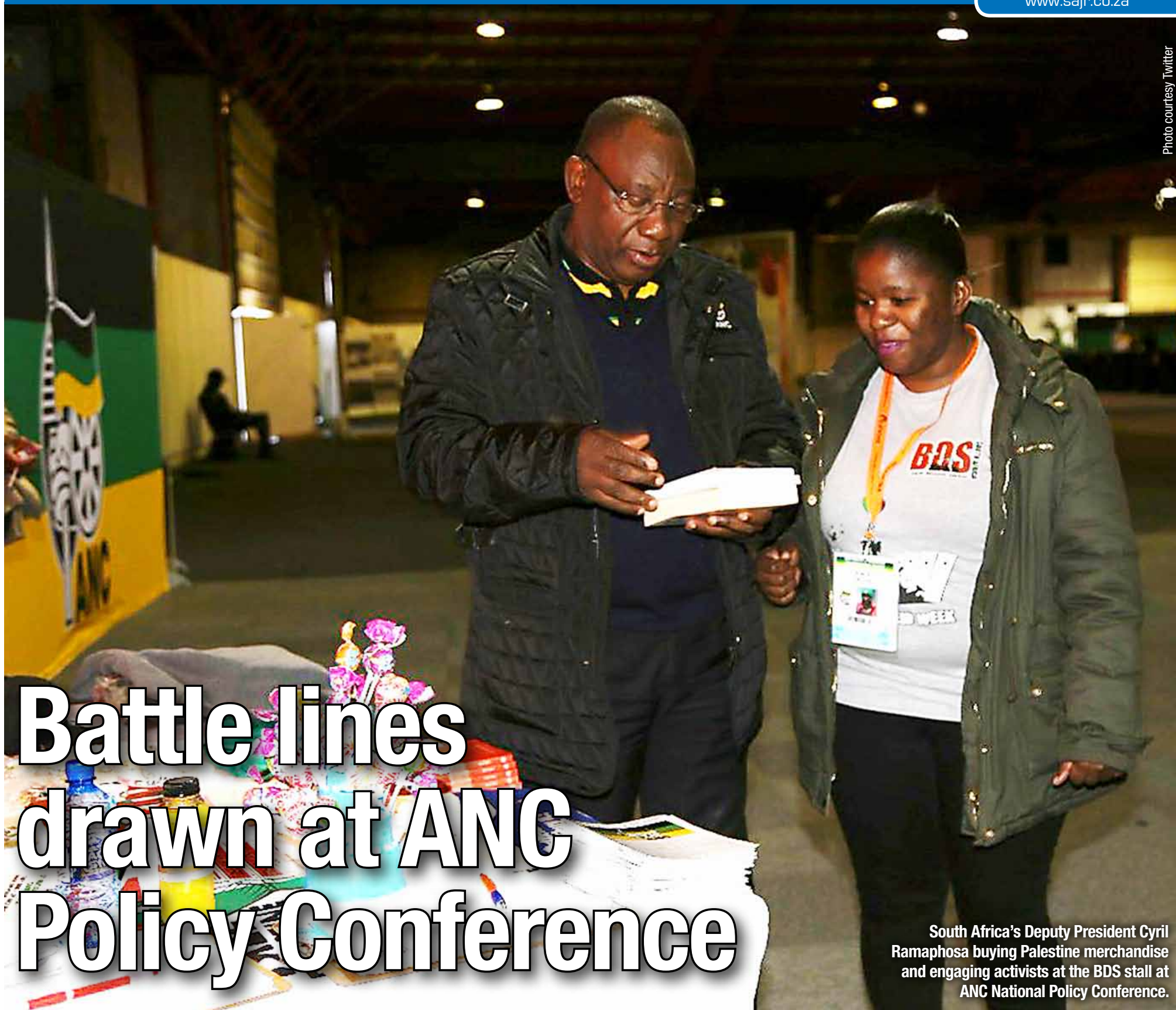


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## Battle lines drawn at ANC Policy Conference

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# ANC considers SA embassy downgrade in Israel

ANT KATZ

There was heated debate over the possible downgrading or closure of the South African embassy in Israel at the ANC Policy Conference at Nasrec this week. No decision was taken, however, and the ANC has five months in which to investigate this and make a recommendation to the ANC's elective conference in December.

Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs

Edna Molewa, who heads up the ANC's Foreign Affairs portfolio, convened the International Relations Commission of the Conference. She said Israel took up a great deal of time during their day-long deliberation.

Speaking to Jewish Report from the conference, Molewa said there were factions with totally opposing views, so it was impossible to come to a final recommendation.

She explained that their decision was to explore four options regarding the embassy: a downgrade; a total shutdown; a view that a risk analysis should be conducted; and another view that the risk analysis is not necessary.

Molewa said the International Relations Commission she chaired, drew up a report (following the deliberations) that was presented to the Conference Plenary. This report will pave the way for what needs to be researched, discussed and then consolidated before presenting it to the party's 54th National Conference on December 16. There, the decisions are to be ratified.

Another issue that will definitely be taken to the December conference, is the party's desire to "internationalise the Palestinian struggle", Molewa said: "We cannot turn a blind eye on Israeli efforts to galvanise support from Africa and elsewhere, with a view to undermine the Palestinian cause."

The ANC also planned to "engage progressive forces on the continent on the need to develop a common position and posture in preparation for the upcoming Israeli-Africa Summit scheduled for October 2017 in Togo", she said.

Molewa told Jewish Report that she found the concept of an Israel/Africa conference in Togo problematic. "It is called Israel/Africa... and not Israel/AU," she said, which she felt was wrong.

She said there were diplomatic forums in place that should be used to convene such conferences. If it were between Europe and Africa, she said, "it would be an EU/AU conference".

Asked whether, if the AU had hosted it, would South Africa attend, Molewa said she didn't



Edna Molewa

know. "I don't even know if my President is invited," she said. She deferred that question to the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation.

"What is the purpose (of the conference)," asked Molewa, "and who funds it? Why not use the AU as a platform?"

The AU, she said, co-operates with Japan, China, the EC, the Non-Aligned Movement and many more countries and regions. "I don't remember the AU ever refusing to convene discussions," she said.

Coming back to the embassy issue, Molewa explained that the call "for the downgrading of the South African embassy, (was) to send a strong message about Israel's continued illegal occupation (of) Palestine and the continued human rights abuses against the peoples of Palestine".

The ANC felt strongly that the downgrade would make sure that Israel recognised that South Africa noticed that "several resolutions were taken in the past that have not been implemented; (and) Israel continues to arrogantly expand settlements in defiance of UN resolutions and international law", according to

the report.

Molewa said she believed "that (Israeli) atrocities are continuing" and conceded that "maybe we (the ANC) need to speak to Israel" to assist as peacemakers.

"We are going to ask the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation to play a part in this analysis," she says. She, herself, will also be involved in her capacity as head of ANC International Relations.

The ANC would also consult the Board of Deputies, Molewa said, and had already agreed with Board President Mary Kluk to hold talks.

She also agreed that she would consult the Israeli Ambassador and SA Ambassador to Israel Sisa Ngombane, before a final report is tabled to the ANC's December conference.

## Shabbat Times this week

Starts	Ends	
17:11	18:04	Johannesburg
17:33	18:28	Cape Town
16:52	17:45	Durban
17:13	18:06	Bloemfontein
17:04	17:59	Port Elizabeth
16:57	17:52	East London

## Parshat Balak

### If someone wants to do something good - embrace it

The story of Bilam presents a glaring question to us about Hashem's attitude towards us and the decisions we make.

After the Moabite King Balak sends emissaries to engage Bilam's services in cursing the Jewish people, it seems that Hashem is willing to endorse the mission. Although, when Bilam initially communicates his dastardly intentions, Hashem denies him permission; when the request is repeated the following night, Hashem says that Bilam may indeed go - with the significant condition that he will only be able to speak the words Hashem gives him.

As Bilam leaves, riding his trusted donkey, an angel with a sword is dispatched to oppose him, but this angel too, eventually gives permission to Bilam to continue.

Why not stop him? Significantly, both in the night-time communication with G-d and with the angel, Bilam asks if he may go. This is different to the usual question of theodicy: "Why does Hashem allow bad things to happen in the world?" but rather "Why does

Hashem say 'yes' to Bilam asking to do something bad in the world?"

Rebbe Tzadok HaKohein of Lublin, the great Chassidic thinker of the 1900s, proposes a radical idea: Hashem helps people who want to do something good.

We are often familiar with the concept of *siyata dishmaya*, the help of Heaven. Many of us even write this at the top of our documents - we ask Hashem for assistance in all of our endeavours.

Our Sages tell us (Gemora Yoma 38b): "One who comes to be made pure, they help him."

Hashem helps all who call upon Him to do what is right. But we must think more deeply: On what basis is Hashem's help given? For something that is objectively "good", or for a person who believes that they are doing the right thing?

I had always assumed the former, but life is too complex for most of our actions to be entirely good (or entirely evil). Everything we do has a lifetime of consequences, many of them far beyond what we could ever know and intend.

Should Hashem only help us in actions

Rabbi Sam Thurgood  
Beit Midrash  
Morasha @ Arthur's  
Road in Sea Point



that will lead only to purely good outcomes? Rebbe Tzadok says no. Hashem helps us every time we make a genuine attempt to do the right thing.

If a person is knowingly and willingly going against what Hashem taught us is good and right and holy, he should know that his behaviour is unsanctioned and unsupported. However, if he is inspired to do something good, something for the sake of Hashem and His people, he can count on Heavenly support.

As radical as this sounds, I believe that this should be a model for our own behaviour towards those around us. How often have we approached someone with a good idea, and all they have pointed out is what is wrong with it, why it will fail, why it's naive and no good?

Let us rather learn from Hashem. If someone wants to do something good, embrace it, support it, guide it if necessary, but let's not let our uncompromising high standards get in the way of a great vision for the future. Shabbat Shalom.

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# Losing friends and creating controversy in four easy minutes

TALI FEINBERG

When Progressive Rabbi Sa'ar Shaked stood up to say a prayer at the opening of the ANC Policy Conference at Nasrec last Friday, he took a nasty swipe at Israel for "religious intolerance".

"Here in South Africa we have wider religious tolerance and freedom than in my country, in Israel. It is a source of strength and pride to South Africans, as much as it is a source of shame and distress for all Jews," he declared to much applause from the big ANC audience.

Shaked, the Beit Emanuel Progressive Synagogue rabbi, was invited to say a prayer on behalf of the South African Jewish community at the conference, which ran from last Friday to Wednesday this week.

The leadership of the Jewish community are furious, not least of all considering the ANC's clear anti-Israel stance.

SAZF Chairman Ben Swartz said: "It is mind-boggling that Sa'ar Shaked chose the ANC NCP to air our dirty laundry. Does he sincerely believe in his cause? If so, why did he choose the occasion to vent his anger to an audience that will have absolutely no impact on a cause that the broader South African Jewish and Zionist community has shown a huge degree of support and understanding for?"

"In fact, his actions are almost definitely going to have the exact opposite effect. Instead of engaging with those who stand to positively impact the outcome of his cause, he chose to ignore the community's strong overtures of support and instead seek the overtures of an audience that is known to harbour the most anti-Israel sentiment globally.

"In doing so, he has chosen to fuel anti-Israel sentiment in the South African political structures and done much harm not just to SA-Israel relations, but to the Jewish community that he 'claimed' to represent."

SA Jewish Board of Deputies National Director Wendy Kahn, expressed similar sentiments: "It was unfortunate that Rabbi Shaked chose this important platform to express his frustration with Israel. This message would be more appropriate



Rabbi Sa'ar Shaked sharing his views at the ANC Policy Conference last Friday. He is surrounded by other religious leaders invited to say prayers.

directed to the Israeli government," she said.

Rabbi Shaked was unrepentant, insisting it was the right platform to share his views. "My role as a rabbi is to hold a mirror up to society, to demand equality and justice, and to hold Israel accountable. I am not here to just say what the community wants to hear."

Rabbi Shaked also said he thinks that we might be underestimating the knowledge of the ANC delegates, who he says do read the news. He also feels that we should look at history - specifically Israel's support of apartheid South Africa - to understand the ANC's distrust of Israel today.

He added that at first he declined the invitation to say a prayer. Eventually he agreed, and decided unilaterally that he should use the platform to share his stance.

"It was clear to me that this is an opportunity to promote the Jewish agenda of the day - religious freedom in Israel. As most Jews around the world, I feel betrayed by the last actions of the current regime regarding the Kotel and the conversion bill. Rabbis and organisations all over the Jewish world are expressing their deep disappointment."

The rabbi acknowledges that his statement made people uncomfortable, but "I am here to speak the truth and to ensure Israel is the best it can be", he concluded.

According to tradition, the

privilege of saying a prayer at ANC conferences is usually granted to the Chief Rabbi of the country, as the spiritual leader of the community. In this instance, the Office of the Chief Rabbi confirmed Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein had received no such invitation. Rabbi Goldstein was out of the country this week and could not be reached for comment.

Asked why Rabbi Goldstein had not been invited to say a prayer, conference organiser Rev Dr Vukile Mehana told Jewish Report that he

"He has chosen to fuel anti-Israel sentiment in the South African political structures and done much harm not just to SA-Israel relations, but to the Jewish community that he 'claimed' to represent."

had simply selected Rabbi Shaked "from a list I was given from Luthuli House".

Mehana said that the invitation to offer prayers was a late decision and that the only reason Chief Rabbi Goldstein had not been on the list, was because it only included those who had accepted an invitation to attend.

It is believed Rabbi Shaked was invited because of his close relationship with the late Struggle stalwart Ahmed Kathrada and the

Ahmed Kathrada Foundation.

Rabbi Shaked said a prayer at Kathrada's funeral in April, and was taken to task by some members of the Jewish community because Kathrada had been a staunch Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) supporter. At the time, Rabbi Shaked told Jewish Report that Kathrada and his wife, Barbara Hogan, had been his guests at Beit Emanuel services a number of times. He added that a number of guests from the Kathrada Foundation had also attended a special Human Rights Shabbat Service at Beit Emanuel last year.

SA Union of Progressive Judaism National Chairman Monica Solomon said: "Rabbi Shaked was approached directly by the ANC to deliver this prayer. As in every organisation, we have rabbis with different backgrounds and political views, and Rabbi Shaked's remarks do not reflect the ideologies of the Progressive Movement."

Rabbi Greg Alexander of the South African Association of Progressive Rabbis, issued a statement from the United States, where he is travelling: "Rabbi Shaked was personally invited to speak at the opening of the ANC Policy Conference in Johannesburg. While the majority of his address was a reading from our own Mishkan T'filah siddur, he also took the opportunity to make some impromptu remarks.

"However, the words that he chose and the occasion that he chose to say them, were not phrased in the

clearest or most opportune manner, and we regret any embarrassment that has ensued because of them.

"It is important to note that Rabbi Shaked, as all our rabbis are, is committed to Israel as a Jewish state, while also espousing the values of tolerance and Jewish pluralism that we would like to see in the Jewish homeland."

Reeva Forman, a leader of the Progressive Jewish community and chairman of Temple Israel in Hillbrow, said in her personal capacity that "Rabbi Shaked made it clear that he is not speaking on behalf of South African Jews when he said 'As a minority within a minority, as a Progressive Jew...' so it seems he was in fact talking on behalf of himself.

"However, I question if the audience understood this. In no way can Rabbi Shaked claim to speak on behalf of the South African Jewish community, the majority of whom are Modern Orthodox.

"As a South African Jew and member of the Progressive Jewish community, I personally do not agree. Israel has extensive religious freedom, albeit an Israel within borders still to be defined.

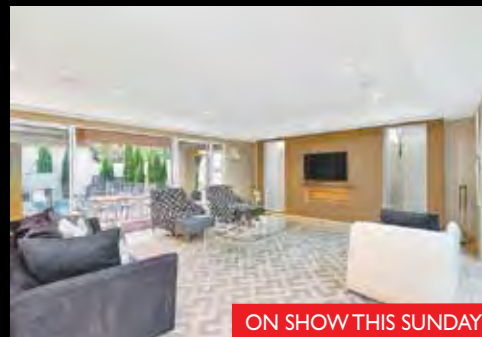
"Every religion is respected. If the rabbi was referring to the current dispute in Israel between the ultra-Orthodox and the modern Jewish world, this would in my opinion have been totally lost on his audience, and his words construed as part of the usual 'cant' of those who delegitimise Israel."

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# Cosatu's Masuku must say sorry for hate speech

NICOLA MILTZ

Eight years ago, Bongani Masuku, Cosatu's International Relations Secretary, threatened to subject some of South African Jews to "perpetual suffering" - among other hateful utterances - and he has been ordered to apologise... for the second time.

In 2009, the Human Rights Commission ordered Masuku to apologise for his hate speech. When he refused, the commission took it to the Equality Court. Last week Judge Dimpheletse Moshidi ordered Masuku to make an "unconditional apology" to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) for the hurtful and harmful comments he made.

"I make the finding even though the Constitution protects and recognises rather strenuously, freedom of expression," said Judge Moshidi.

He said Masuku's statements were found to be hateful and hurtful. "In essence... made to instil detestation, enmity, ill-will and malevolence towards Jews in South Africa. It is distinct advocacy of hatred - nothing else.

"The statements clearly fall outside the right to freedom of expression, and are... to be separated from the protection of constitutional protection since the statements infringe negatively on the right to dignity of the Jewish and Israeli community and probably cause harm," Moshidi said in his judgment.

The impugned statements and exchanges in question, occurred during February and March 2009. The majority of the statements took place in a packed lecture hall on Wits University's East campus during a lunch-time lecture hosted by the Palestinian Solidarity Committee (PSC) and the Young Communist League.

It was Apartheid Week 2009 and the war in Gaza was still fresh in the minds of activist students.

Masuku - an invited guest speaker and known critic of Israel - arrived and it turned ugly. Student at the time, Benji Shulman, recalls the day on March 5, 2009: "It became very heated, there was chanting, shouting, heckling. The speaker became aggressive. In terms of what he was saying he was threatening people and people as a group. He moved from aggressive political talk to hate speech. He had crossed over."

A recording of the event was played out in court.

Masuku said: "...Cosatu has got members here even on this campus; we can make sure that for that side it will be hell..."

"... Any South African family who sends its son or daughter to be part of the Israel Defence Force must not blame us when something happens to them with immediate effect..."

"...Cosatu is with you, we will do everything to make sure that whether it is at Wits, whether it's at Orange Grove, anyone who does not support equality and dignity, who does not support rights of other people, must face the consequences even if it means that we will do something that may necessarily cause what is regarded as harm..."

He also reportedly said that Jews who continued to stand up for Israel should "not just be encouraged, but forced to leave South Africa".

Only a few weeks prior to the March 5, 2009 Wits incident, Cosatu had marched on the offices of Beyachad, upping its anti-Israel ante. Things were tense.

On February 10, 2009 Masuku had said: "...As we struggle to liberate Palestine from the racists, fascists and Zionists who belong to the era of their friend Hitler! We must not apologise, every Zionist must be made to

Bongani Masuku



drink the bitter medicine they are feeding our brothers and sisters in Palestine.

"We must target them, expose them and do all that is needed to subject them to perpetual suffering until they withdraw from the land of others and stop their savage attacks on human dignity. Every Palestinian who suffers is a direct attack on all of us."

Judge Moshidi said: "The statements conveyed more than ordinary detestation for the Jewish and Israeli community and their origin and religion, and were accompanied by threats of potential violence, and aim to subject this minority targeted group, to probable mistreatment, based purely on their religious and ethnicity affiliation.

"Indeed, the protection of minorities and vulnerable members of our society has repeatedly been endorsed and promoted by

"Masuku's defence against a charge of anti-Semitism is to say that hatred of 'Zionists' is legitimate and defensible and has nothing to do with hatred of Jews."

the Constitutional Court."

Referring to another case, Judge Moshidi quoted: "...the more vulnerable group, the more likely it is that it will be harmed by the advocacy of hatred.

"In my view, this is precisely what occurred... a reasonable person in the Jewish community, in particular a Wits University student... would probably have been driven out of sheer fear and intimidation for their security.

"It is irrelevant whether any actual attack became likely or ensued. It is equally irrelevant whether the impugned statements... were aimed at Zionism when regard is had to persecution and discrimination inflicted on the Jewish community historically. The protection of their rights, especially to equality and religion, remain crucial."

UK-based expert on anti-Semitism, racism and Zionism, David Hirsh, explained to the court in minute detail during the trial how Masuku's statements were racist and anti-Semitic.

"Just as some kinds of criticism of South Africa are racist and some kinds of criticism of South Africa are entirely legitimate, so it is true with Israel. Some kinds of criticism of

Israel are anti-Semitic while other kinds are not.

"It requires knowledge, judgement and an appreciation of context, to make the distinction between legitimate criticism and racist demonisation."

Said Hirsh, also a lecturer in sociology at Goldsmiths, University of London: "Masuku's defence against a charge of anti-Semitism is to say that hatred of 'Zionists' is legitimate and defensible and has nothing to do with hatred of Jews."

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) ruled in April 2009 that Masuku's statements constituted hate speech and found that his remarks in the context of the tense meeting, were an incitement to violence.

It ruled that the statements made were of an "extreme nature" that implied that the Jewish and Israeli community are to be "despised, scorned, ridiculed". Masuku did not accept the order to apologise and so the case was moved to the Equality Court.

Fast-forward eight years following a protracted legal maze, and the SAJBD welcomed the Equality Court judgment. Judge Moshidi said Masuku's statements did not "add any value to the public discourse or contribute to the greater debate in a meaningful manner, whatsoever."

"The SAJBD welcomes the fact that in terms of the judgment, threats and insults against Jews who support Israel cannot be justified on the alleged basis that such attacks are aimed not at Jews but at Zionists," said Wendy Kahn, SAJBD national director.

"In the spirit of conciliation and acceptance of diversity, the SAJBD hopes that Bongani Masuku and Cosatu will comply with the court's judgment that Mr Masuku apologise to the Jewish community, thereby bringing this painful matter to finality and allowing all the parties to move on."

SAJBD National Chairman Jeff Katz added: "Credit must be given to the Human Rights Commission on its initiative of taking their 2009 ruling to the Equality Court, which resulted in Masuku's utterances being found to constitute hate speech."

Katz said the SAHRC finding confirmed - and "this is very important" - that there is a "very important legal line" between the protection of speech and what is considered hate speech.

Said Hirsh this week: "Cosatu needs to think hard about how and why it stood by a man who made credible and racist threats against South African Jews. It needs to

**"We are going to intensify the campaign of awareness so that the broader public understands what is happening in Palestine and that they understand that women and children are killed daily and that they understand that at times there will be emotional responses."**

understand how hostility to Israel has led to anti-Semitic hate speech and how it has led many people to rally round and defend the hate speaker."

In his judgment Judge Moshidi said that an order for an "unconditional apology is by no means lenient, and should not be viewed in the light of the proverbial slap on the wrist."

He said the apology remained vital to victims of hate speech.

Cosatu's organising secretary, Theodore Steele, said they would study the judgment before taking further steps.

"We are very disappointed with the outcome. We will study the judgment while the Palestinian campaign continues," he said.

"We are going to intensify the campaign of awareness so that the broader public understands what is happening in Palestine and that they understand that women and children are killed daily and that they understand that at times there will be emotional responses."

Masuku and Cosatu were ordered to pay legal costs.

## World News in Brief

### Qatar third country to ban 'Wonder Woman' over Gadot

DOHA - Qatar has become the third Arab-majority country to ban the screening of the movie "Wonder Woman" because Israeli actress Gal Gadot is playing the title role.

The film had been scheduled to premiere in Qatar last week Thursday and was being promoted by the local theatre chains VOX Cinemas Qatar and Novo Cinemas. But in the days before its scheduled release, the film was removed from cinema websites, Doha News reported.

The film, which has grossed over \$700 million worldwide, according to Forbes, has been banned in Lebanon and Tunisia. Jordan's Communications Commission initially banned the film before allowing it to be screened "due to a lack of legal precedent".

Gadot, 32, does not shy away from touting her Israeli heritage. She praised the Israeli military in a widely shared Facebook post during the 2014 Gaza War. She served in the Israeli army as a combat instructor during the 2006 Lebanon War. (JTA)



# Israel losing support among minorities and millennials

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What do you think of when you think of Italy? Maybe you picture beautiful works of art set against rolling Tuscan hills? Maybe a steaming plate of spaghetti topped with marinara sauce served with a deep red wine?

Now what do you think of when you think of Israel? If you're like most Americans, you picture walls of concrete enclosing an austere and strict country. The men wear black hats, the women long skirts. Everyone looks pretty serious.



**Haredi Orthodox Jewish men and Israeli soldiers are what many Americans think of when they picture Israel, according to a new study.**

That's what Brand Israel Group, a group of former advertising professionals who set out to sell Israel to Americans, found in a series of focus groups beginning in 2005. The group has since commissioned two surveys of the American public - in 2010 and 2016 - and didn't like what it found.

According to the surveys, Israel has pretty broad backing

among American citizens, but is losing support among a range of growing demographics. As pro-Israel advocates tout "shared values" between the United States and Israel, fewer and fewer Americans actually think they believe the same things as Israelis.

"Shared values are the bedrock of our relationship, and young Americans do not believe Israel shares our values," said Fern Oppenheim, one of the group's co-founders. "That's a huge issue. We have to have a narrative about the heart and soul and humanity of the Israelis."

The survey was conducted online last September and October and sampled 2 600 Americans among a range of demographic groups.

Knowledge of Israel has gone up - but favourability is down.

More people say they know more about Israel now than they did in 2010. While only 23 per cent of Americans said they knew at least a fair amount about Israel in 2010, the number rose to 37 per cent in 2016.

Knowledge of Israel grew among every demographic group except college students, where it fell precipitously - from 50 per cent to just 34 per cent.

But it appears that the more Americans learn about Israel, the less they like it. In 2010, 76 per cent of Americans viewed Israel favourably. In 2016, the number had fallen to 62 per cent. Levels of support have dropped as well.

In 2010, 22 per cent of Americans were "core" supporters of Israel, which dropped to 15 per cent by 2016.

Israel is losing out among a range of growing demographics, from Latinos to millennials.

The groups with relatively high levels of favourability toward Israel, according to the study, included men, Republicans and older Americans. The groups that like Israel less, are the mirror image: women, Democrats and millennials, along with African-Americans and Latinos. And those population groups are all growing. (JTA)

# Concerns about Jewish post mortem delays are allayed

**PETER FELDMAN**

When news of the forensic officers going on strike was reported, most Jewish people paid little attention, believing it didn't affect them. However, when your religion specifies that a body must be buried within 24 hours after death, this has a potentially huge impact on the Jewish community.

That is especially because post mortem examinations, where a death is considered to be due to unnatural causes, were not performed and burials had to be put on hold because of the situation.

The protest began in Johannesburg on June 8 and, while it appears that it has been resolved there, it spread to Cape Town and KwaZulu-Natal on June 28.

To date, the burial of one Jewish teenager who died while the strike was on in Johannesburg, was affected, according to the Chevrah Kadisha (the Jewish burial society).

Forensic officers, who assist a trained, qualified pathologist with post mortems, went on strike over several issues. One of them related to organ dissections. The officers were also unhappy that they were being made to do work for which they were not adequately trained and claimed they were not being compensated for this.

The workers claimed they were made to do post mortem preparations which included the dissecting of bodies, removal of organs, stitching of bodies and the preparation of the organs for investigation.

In the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, forensic officers in several mortuaries started with a "work-to-rule"

strike, which means they will not conduct dissections, as this is not part of their contractual agreements.

Tzivia Grauman, head of communications at the Chev, said: "The strike did cause some concern and anxiety for the Chevrah Kadisha, particularly since Jewish burials must be conducted at the earliest possible opportunity. Any delay is therefore troubling.

"Sadly, there was one family who was affected - the burial had to be postponed. Fortunately, we have a good working relationship with the Forensic Pathology Services and ongoing communication ensured that we were kept apprised of developments."

Dr Candice Hansmeyer, a specialist forensic pathologist, told Jewish Report that the strike had officially ended, though one union was allegedly not in agreement and their grievances were being addressed.

In an interview, Hansmeyer laid to rest rumours about cleaners doing the post mortems, saying this was patently untrue. She said they are assisted by paramedics from the South African National Defence Force and it worked like "well-oiled machinery".

She also said that during the strike, a number of "compassionate" post mortems had been done on people of the Jewish and Muslim faiths and she denied that there had been a backlog of any so-called "religious" cases, as was widely suggested.

"A compassionate autopsy," she said, "is considered on religious and cultural grounds and the merit of each case is fully investigated. Things won't be done as a priority. We do consider the needs of the family, but the law is paramount and we have to respect this."



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## South African Jewish Report

# On a whim and a prayer

When a Jewish person tells a Jewish joke to another Jewish person, it is invariably thought to be hilarious and can be enjoyed for the inside joke that only Jewish people can tell each other.

If a non-Jewish person tells a joke about Jewish people, showing stereotypical imperfections, it will most likely go down like a lead balloon. And when a Jewish person tells a Jewish joke to non-Jewish people, it might go down well, but it may well look to others like the Jewish person is laughing at himself.

We are great at laughing at ourselves and, in fact, most Jewish jokes are Jewish in origin. We are not that great at having other people laugh at us, which stands to reason considering our past and our sensitivity around anti-Semitism.

We are also not great at having Jewish people unfairly badmouthing something we hold dear to an audience of people who are opposed to that very thing.

A week ago, Rabbi Sha'ar Shaked accepted an invitation to say a prayer at the opening of the ANC Policy Conference. Until recently, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein was always invited to give this opening prayer. That is as it should be, considering he is the Chief Rabbi. However, I guess certain members of the ANC are not happy with his public calls for President Jacob Zuma to step down.

However, Rabbi Shaked was chosen to give a prayer. That would be acceptable, because while he is representing the community, it is saying a prayer on our behalf. Not a terrible thing!

But Rabbi Shaked didn't just pray, he chose in four short minutes to say a prayer and run Israel down in front of the ANC, who as a political organisation, has come out as pro-Palestinian and extremely critical of Israel.

He likened Israel to South Africa, saying that South Africa was a country of religious tolerance, whereas Israel was not and "this caused much shame and was a source of distress for all Jews".

He gave no context to this. The way he put it, it was as if he was making a statement of fact.

He did not mention that this particular feeling stems from last week when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu changed his mind on a commitment to create a non-denominational prayer area at the Kotel. He also didn't say that although around the world there are many people who may be angry about this, the predominantly Orthodox South African Jewry are not.

Rabbi Shaked - like most Progressive Jews around the world - was angry about this. He is entitled to be angry, but to say just that in front of an audience where anti-Israel sentiment was the norm, was absolutely unacceptable.

What did he expect the audience to think? Here is an Israeli rabbi who seemingly confirms that Israel is bad and intolerant, causing its own people shame and distress. Really!

The fact that he is Progressive and represents a small minority of South African Jews, is irrelevant to the audience. That audience doesn't know or care whether he falls under the banner of Progressive or Orthodox Jewry; they see him as representing the Jewish faith in South Africa.

So, to the ANC audience, the South Africa Jews believe Israel is intolerant and causing us shame and distress. Really! Astounding!

I go back to what I said earlier about the jokes. And I add to that.

When you are angry with someone close to you, be it your teacher, your parent, or even your best friend, do you call this person X aside or speak to someone close to both of you first and then address it with X? Or do you get up on stage in an auditorium packed with people who despise X, and ridicule and humiliate X in front of this audience? That is exactly what Rabbi Shaked did.

If he had spoken in a room full of Jewish people - who know the history of this particular situation and argued it out - that is acceptable. If he went home, to Israel, and tackled it with senior officials there, that too is acceptable. If he wrote an opinion piece for a newspaper, putting his views in context, even that is acceptable.

But, Rabbi Shaked, you may well be a wonderful rabbi to your community, but you really did real damage in what was supposed to be a prayer for the ANC's conference.

Shabbat Shalom!

**Peta Krost Maunder**  
Editor



## Dateline: Middle East

# The dangerous game played with Syria

PAULA SLIER

In the last week, the north-eastern part of Israel has come that little bit closer to the war in Syria. Cross-border missile fire and mortar bombs are now landing with increasing frequency in the Israeli part of the Golan Heights.

It started with 10 errant shells last Saturday in an incident the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) acknowledged was a spillover from internal Syrian fighting.

Nonetheless the army fired in the direction from where the shells had come, hitting Syrian army positions and killing two Syrian soldiers. At the same time, the IDF ordered Israeli residents to stay away from open fields and prepare their bomb shelters.

While there were no reports of damage or injuries inside the country, the army later declared the area a closed military zone.

The country's defence minister, Avigdor Lieberman, predicts the situation could escalate. "We won't let anything pass,

whether it's just spillage or not. Everything will get a powerful response," he said.

He's also warned the Syrian government and its backers in Tehran: "We will not accept Syria being turned into another base and front against Israel."

On the face of it, the Syrian army is panicking. They're embroiled in bitter fighting against numerous rebel groups and the last thing they need is for Israel to enter the fray. In recent months, they've been making advances with the help of Russia and Iran, but increasingly several rebel groups based in villages near the border with Israel, have been flexing their muscles.

This border area is particularly important to Syria's President Assad, because it includes a strategically important road between Damascus, the Jordanian border and the city of Daraa in south-west Syria. Anyone holding this road can move easily towards the Syrian capital.

This could be the reason why the Syrian army seemingly threw caution to the wind and fired at rebel forces on the border, despite knowing that some of the fire could spill into Israeli territory. Damascus knows just how quickly, and harshly, Israel responds when its territory is violated. Jerusalem's policy is simple. It believes if there is no

serious response to any spillover fire, the wrong signal is sent. The right signal is that red lines cannot be crossed and firing into Israel, however unintentional, is one such line. A trickle of fire today, ignored, could lead to worse tomorrow.

But there are two issues of concern. Firstly, the number of mortars and shells that are exploding in Israeli territory are a far higher number than usual. There has been errant fire over the years since the Syrian conflict began, but not at this scale. The Syrian tank cannons that fired, knew they would hit Israeli territory.

Secondly, there were thousands of Israeli tourists in the area at the time of the fire, especially over the weekend. They could have been injured. The Syrians keep a close eye across their border and knew this.

Damascus has since accused Jerusalem of involving itself in the internal Syrian war. It says there was no way to pinpoint who fired the initial shells and hence the Israeli response effectively provided cover for those militants it is fighting - most notably, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham.

This organisation is the rebranded al Qaida cell formerly known as Jahbat al Nusra or Nusra Front, who has connections to Islamic State or ISIS.

Jerusalem has always been careful to remain neutral in the Syrian conflict, but there are many who accuse her of quietly assisting the Syrian rebels in their fight against Assad. While there is no proof of this, should it be true, it is a very dangerous game Israel is playing.

Reports circulating, suggest that Israel has allegedly been providing Syrian rebels with substantial funding and aid in the form of food, fuel and medical supplies as a way of maintaining a buffer zone in the Golan Heights.

While it's been well known for some time that Israel has given medical help to Syrian civilians and fighters inside its own borders in the past, these new accusations raise the stakes substantially. The current status quo where Assad's army patrols the Israel-Syrian border, is not ideal, but it has existed for decades.

The alternative could be a whole lot worse. Should Assad's army lose, it will be ISIS that Israel will be contending with on her northern border.

• 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.



An Israeli soldier directs a tank near the Quneitra crossing with Syria last week Thursday.



# What does the ANC Policy Conference mean for us?



## DR IVOR SARAKEYNSKY

In the past weeks, expectations and fears over the direction of the ANC appeared in headlines around the world. The ANC Policy Conference at Nasrec in the south of Johannesburg, is now finished and there is a clearer sense of the ANC's future direction.

The Policy Conference traditionally identifies weaknesses in existing policy and drafts proposals on corrective measures and new initiatives, in order to respond to the changing social, economic and political environment in South Africa.

All of the proposals will be tabled and voted on at the December conference, making them official ANC policy. The ANC's 2019 election manifesto will synthesise all the resolutions in a high-level election manifesto. There is a long road between June and December this year and then April 2019.

These processes have always led to uncertainty and concern among South Africans. This year's Policy Conference was the most contested ever and the diverse messages emanating from it has increased perceptions of political risk. This is because of the leadership succession struggle deep within the ANC, with the different camps proposing different approaches to addressing the challenges the country faces.

Halfway through the conference, there were some positive developments with President Jacob Zuma announcing that land restitution will not be pursued through expropriation. Furthermore, the tabling of ANC Secretary General Gwede Mantashe's warts and all report on state capture, corruption and leadership failure, indicated that the majority accept the need for corrective measures.

A negative was the statement from the ANC Women's League wanting the reinstatement of the death penalty, which will require an amendment to the Constitution.

The most divisive and decisive arena of discussion was in the Economic Transformation Commission. Here the proponents of Radical Economic Transformation (RET) were attempting to shape future policy.

Their success was visible in the way politicians from both camps (Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa, the seeming front-runners to be elected ANC president in December) are now singing this chorus.

RET includes greater state involvement in the economy through diluting the mandate of the Reserve Bank, amending the Public Finance Management Act and amending the clause in the Constitution on property rights.

Furthermore, the intention is to drive the growth of black participation in the economy through allocating a greater percentage of government and State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) procurement to previously disadvantaged communities.

A differing interpretation of RET aims to grow the economy by abiding by the existing macro-economic framework, so as to calm markets and placate the rating agencies.

Through stability and sustainable interventions, this camp aims to grow the economy by managing inflation and higher interest payments on loans. This will ensure that households have

Like other communities, Jews have no reason to be concerned about the Policy Conference's outcomes. These settled issues had not even been on the agenda.

more available income with the state being able to allocate more for socio-economic development.

It remains to be seen how these contesting views will be reconciled and then translated into resolutions for voting at the ANC's December conference.

Perhaps the focus on policy and policy change, misses the point. Policy alone cannot fix complex societal challenges like the economy and development. What is clear is that the priority ought to be implementing existing policy effectively.

Examining the Auditor General and

other oversight bodies' reports since 1994, show that significant resources allocated to growth and development have not been used efficiently nor effectively. Instead of arguing over RET, the real debate should be on how to put in place technocratic capacity insulated from political interference, to get things done.

Nonetheless, it is urgent that the ANC reach a consensus on these issues and stabilise investor perceptions and markets, showing how policy and economic activity might be reconciled. This is the most desired output of the Policy Conference.

However, reaching consensus on this will not be easy and even if reached, will not be easily communicated as it feeds directly in the main fracture line dividing the ANC. The personalities involved in the succession struggle represent different policy options and the phrasing of options might just be too vague to achieve consensus, thereby exacerbating rather than combating, uncertainty.

As the fracture lines within the ANC were on display in the Policy Conference, the delegates had been insulated from the media, so as to manage the public statements through high level briefings.

This suggests that the public is not fully aware of the dynamics, but that the lobbyists of the contenders for future leadership of the ANC have fertile ground to work with. Their respective supporters and opponents were on display, indicating the regional and personality sources of support.

This information will probably inform a lobbying agenda extending beyond the conference itself.

Despite the contest of ideas and principles, especially on the economy, there is no backtracking on a range of existing positions relating to diversity and the rights of communities to practise their beliefs and culture.

Like other communities, Jews have no reason to be concerned about the Policy Conference's outcomes. These settled issues had not even been on the agenda.

• Dr Ivor Sarakinsky (PhD) teaches at the Wits School of Governance.

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# Raymond Suttner speaks about politics from the outside

SUZANNE BELLING

Professor Raymond Suttner risked life and limb in opposing the apartheid regime as a member of the ANC and SA Communist Party. Now, he gives his reasons for severing these connections in 2005.

In conversation with Apartheid Museum curator, Emilia Potenza, at the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre last Wednesday, he tells how he made this break based on the same ethical grounds which made him join in the first place.

These reasons included: "When people endorse Nkandla (Jacob Zuma's homestead) and divert funds which are meant for the poor, what they are doing is rupturing the connection with the oppressed."

The Zuma project entailed personal ambition and a breaking away from the

she accused Zuma of raping her), when she "was treated with cruelty. We fought against cruelty. No member of the SACP or ANC said a word [against it] in public."

Suttner's leaving his former comrades was not

commonalities between people who may never have joined together - the richest of the rich and the poorest of the poor - who have a common interest in clean government and legality."

Advocating "baby steps", he said South Africa should find a way of uniting people around limited goals, such as defending the Constitution, ending corruption and being

of his trial in the Durban Supreme Court, he said: "I am not the first person, nor the last, to break the law for moral reasons. I realise that the court may feel that I should have shown more respect for legality."

"Normally, I would show this respect. I would consider it wrong to break laws that serve the community. But I have acted against laws that do serve the majority of South Africans, laws that inculcate hostility between our people and preclude the tolerance and co-operation that is necessary to a contented and peaceful community."

"For this I will go to prison. But I cannot accept that it is wrong to act as I have done, for freedom and equality, for an end to racial discrimination and poverty. I have acted in the interests of the overwhelming majority of our people..."

He was placed with the few whites who had been sentenced for their activities in the ANC, including, Rivonia trialist Denis Goldberg, who was serving a life sentence; the blacks convicted, who included Nelson Mandela, were sent to Robben Island.

After Suttner's release, he resumed his activities and was arrested and sentenced a second time. After serving this sentence he was placed under house arrest in 1988.

He was severely tortured by the security police, including electric shock treatment. He was often subjected to verbal and anti-Semitic abuse as well.

"For this I will go to prison. But I cannot accept that it is wrong to act as I have done, for freedom and equality, for an end to racial discrimination and poverty. I have acted in the interests of the overwhelming majority of our people..."

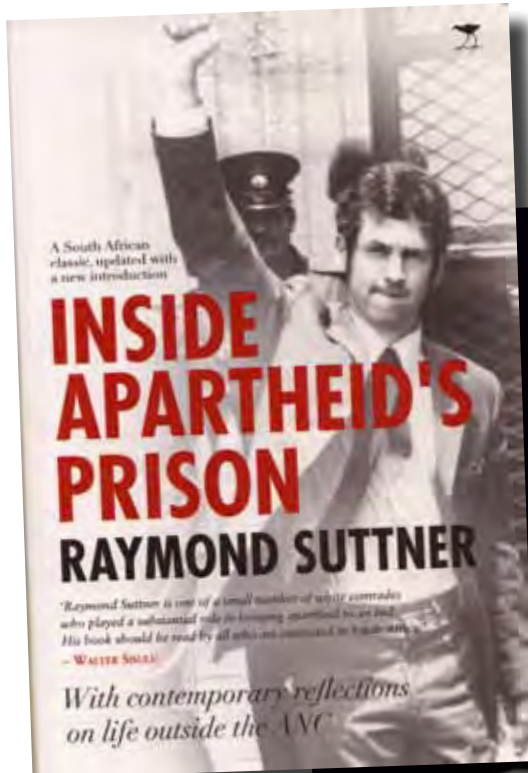
"I heard some people held out for a very long time, but then told things they had never been asked, because they were so exhausted from the torture. As far as I knew, I was the first white to be given electric shocks."

"I was a Communist and they treated my being Jewish as equally criminal. They would say: 'Hierdie Jood, ek gaan hom doodslaan - This Jew, I'm going to kill him'. It was almost interchangeable."

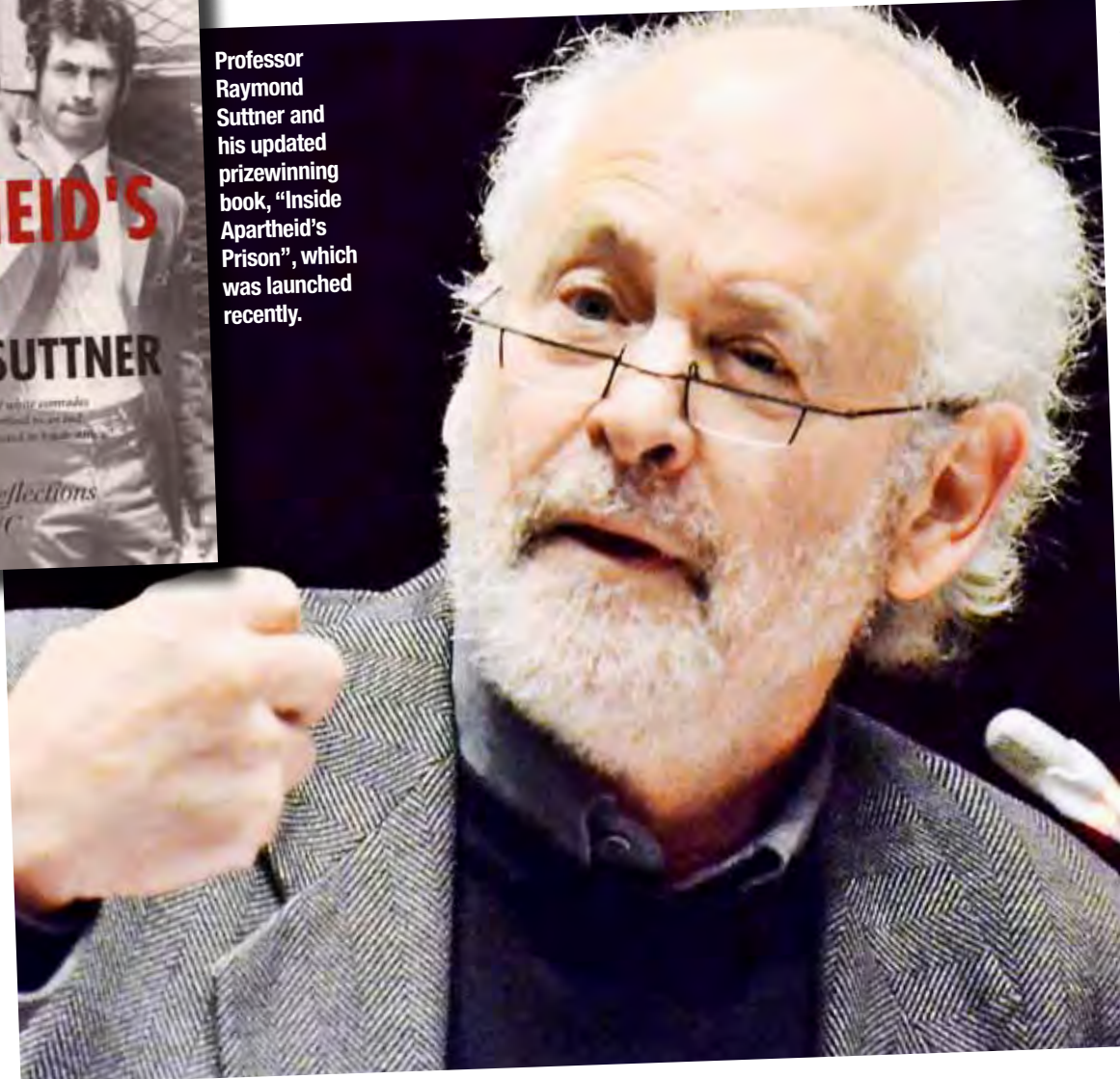
"There was widespread anti-Semitism among them, but it didn't make things worse for me because they were going to torture me whether I was a Jew or not."

Back to the present, Suttner was asked whether he was hopeful about the future in this country.

He replied: "I don't think it's helpful to be optimistic or pessimistic. I am not leaving South Africa. This is my country. The thing with hope and good luck is, you have got to work for it."



Professor Raymond Suttner and his updated prizewinning book, "Inside Apartheid's Prison", which was launched recently.



"People are already out there on the streets defending the Constitution, but a lot of them are linked with returning the ANC to what they regard as its 'true self', a sort of romantic golden age.

easy. "I have a sense of loss and loneliness... but companionship relates to shared values and shared experience; these values were ruptured and the experiences they are now embarking on, are ones that I want no part of."

"It's cold outside here, but what sort of warmth do they have inside there, where they got to negate everything they believe in?"

On the future of South Africa, Suttner posited that people mustn't expect a messianic figure to be put in place at the end of the year and that everything will fall into place.

"I believe we have to look for

led by unifying people who were non-party partisans - for example, religious figures.

"People are already out there on the streets defending the Constitution, but a lot of them are linked with returning the ANC to what they regard as its 'true self', a sort of romantic golden age.

"And they are not asking themselves: 'Where did Jacob Zuma come from? What is it in the ANC that made this possible?'"

He had to ask himself these questions, because he had trained some of the young people who had voted for Zuma and regard him as only an aberration.

"We've got to rebuild wherever we are. If you are in the Apartheid Museum, you have a role to play with people's consciousness. If you are a nurse, it is how you treat the patients. If you are a teacher, it is how you do your job. Are you drunk? Are you womanising..."

"It's part of a contribution to building an ethos different from the dog-eats-dog ethos of the present."

Speaking on his joining the resistance to apartheid, he said: "To join the Struggle is to embody the pain of the oppressed in yourself."

"I grew up in the aftermath of the Second World War and experienced anti-Semitism. I asked myself when I looked round me and saw black people treated badly: 'If anti-Semitism is bad, how can I condone what is happening to the black people?'"

Initially working on his own after coming back to South Africa in the mid-1970s, when he abandoned prestigious Oxford doctorate studies to return to this country and contribute to the Struggle, he was arrested in 1975 and sentenced to seven-and-a-half years imprisonment.

In a statement from the dock at the end

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# Haredi rabbi explains why his community opposes Kotel deal

ANDREW TOBIN  
JERUSALEM

Haredi Orthodox Jews agree with their non-Orthodox brethren on one thing: The future of the Jewish people is at stake in the debate raging over who controls the Western Wall and conversion in Israel.

Other than that, though, there is little common ground.

According to Nachum Eisenstein, the chief rabbi of eastern Jerusalem's Haredi Maalot Dafna neighbourhood, Reform and Conservative Judaism threaten to undermine the survival of the Jewish people.

"The reason why Judaism is the only religion that survived throughout thousands of years and all the massacres and all the attempts to destroy it, is that ours is the only religion that has always been the same, the way it was given to us on Mount Sinai," Eisenstein said in an interview. "Who gave you, the Conservative and the Reform, the authority to make up a new religion?"

The government's suspension last week of a deal that would have expanded a non-Orthodox prayer area, has sparked a crisis in Israel-Diaspora relations that some are calling unprecedented.

Major US Jewish groups, led by the Reform and Conservative movements, rushed to Israel to complain that the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had caved in to Haredi Orthodox interests and insulted the Jewish majority that does not subscribe to

Orthodoxy.

They also railed against a government-backed bill passed the same day, and since shelved, to grant Israel's Haredi-dominated Chief Rabbinate a monopoly over all conversions performed in the country.

But like much of his Haredi community, Eisenstein welcomed the Western Wall decision as a victory over non-Orthodox Jewish meddling. And he said the subsequent tabling of the conversion bill was a setback in the same battle.

Interior Minister Aryeh Deri, speaking last week to lawmakers from his Sephardic Orthodox Shas party, explained his camp's resistance to non-Orthodox Judaism as a question of preservation.

"We have nothing against Jews in any place they may be. They are all our brothers," he said. "Our fight is against the approach, this ideology which is attempting to bring a new Judaism here, is trying to destroy everything that we built here over the years."

Haredi leaders often warn against the pernicious influence of non-Orthodox Judaism in Israel and disparage "Reformism", as they call its adherents in Hebrew. Although as few as five per cent of Israelis subscribe to Reform or Conservative Judaism, according to Pew, about half of Jewish Americans identify with one or the



Photo courtesy of Eisenstein.  
Rabbi Nachum Eisenstein.

other.

Under pressure from the Haredi political parties in the governing coalition, Israel last Sunday essentially withdrew its support for the Western Wall deal. Non-Orthodox Jewish leaders reacted with outrage.

"We love the State of Israel and will continue to do so. But we will not sit idly by while the State of Israel delegitimises us and frankly says to the Jews of North America and the Jews of the world: 'You do not matter'," Rabbi Rick Jacobs, head of the North American Reform movement, said on June 26 at the Knesset.

The Jewish Agency, which brokered the Western Wall deal on behalf of the Israeli government, took an unprecedented public stance against its reversal, and major Jewish groups warned of an erosion of support for the Jewish State.

But Eisenstein, who immigrated to Israel from Chicago decades ago, doubts the sincerity of the protestations, saying they were about politics, not religion. He said Reform and Conservative leaders do not represent their constituents, who generally "don't pray". and any way prefer to be part of Orthodox prayer when they visit Israel.

"Just a few leaders, carrying big salaries, want to use the Kotel to get recognition."

As far as concerns about a loss of American Jewish backing for Israel, Eisenstein said: "Anyone who threatens to withdraw his support from Israel doesn't really love the state anyway."

He said Western Wall Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz had made a mistake by initially backing the agreement, as had any Haredi politicians who may have consented to it.

"We did not agree to any compromise. Anyone who agreed to compromise, you have to speak to him. Who gave him the authority to do that?" Eisenstein said.

Non-Orthodox Jews have visited the pluralistic prayer space at the southern end of the Western Wall, popularly known as Robinson's Arch, since Israel recognised their right to do so in 2000.

In 2013, Naftali Bennett, in his capacity as Diaspora Affairs Minister, built a larger platform there as

part of what he called an "interim" solution. Bennett last week said the platform would still be expanded and made more permanent.

Asked about this ongoing supposed desecration, Eisenstein said Haredi opposition to the Western Wall deal was fundamentally about staving off state recognition of non-Orthodox Judaism.

The conversion bill requires the government to only recognise for immigration purposes conversions in Israel overseen by the Chief Rabbinate.

Although the bill would only affect the small number of foreigners who convert to Judaism in Israel each year, and not non-Orthodox conversions performed overseas, it would for the first time grant a degree of Knesset recognition to the Chief Rabbinate's de facto monopoly on deciding who is a Jew. (JTA)

## Feature

# What is the truth about Ritalin in our schools?

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Ritalin is one of the most controversial - and hidden - medications used in private schools. Some will insist that it is over-prescribed, others say that teachers are forcing children to go on it and still another group are adamant that far more children should be on it, but aren't.

The divide between the different schools of thought, often seems unbridgeable. And in certain quarters there is an "embarrassing stigma" attached to Ritalin. Some parents maintain that many teachers would like to see "restless" - or merely "lively" - children medicated, to make their life in the classroom easier.

In a recent programme on Talk Radio 702, spokesman for the Department of Basic Education Elijah Mhlanga, confirmed reports of an increasing use - and abuse - of Ritalin by pupils in private schools.

Jewish schools, however, would not discuss the number of pupils on Ritalin and those who would comment, merely said that while some pupils were on this medication, it was as the result of an appropriate professional prescribing it. There was no discussion about abuse.

According to the Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Support Group of Southern Africa (ADHASA), South Africa has one of the highest rates of prescribing medication for ADHD - even higher than in the US.

"My experience is that Ritalin and medications like it, are widely used in all private schools, including Jewish schools," says Johannesburg-based child psychiatrist Dr Brendan Belsham.

"If one considers that the international

prevalence of ADHD is six per cent among school-aged children, then clearly there is over-prescription and overuse of these medications in certain sectors of society. ADHD is certainly over-diagnosed in more affluent communities."

"There are several reasons for this. One is the increasing use of stimulant medications for performance enhancement - to help with studies or learning, in the absence of a proper diagnosis. Another is the misdiagnosis of other conditions such as anxiety disorders as 'ADHD'."

Dr Belsham, who has many Jewish patients, says: "Seeing many Jewish families in my practice, both religious and more secular, I've observed an ethos of accepting medical explanations and pursuing medical treatments, which can be a double-edged sword.

"On the one hand, it's wonderful to work with a progressive mindset regarding neuropsychiatric matters and it allows children access to the help they need, but on the other it's sometimes overly reductionist [tendency to reduce complex matters into overly simplified one-dimensional diagnoses]."

Reductionism, however, is largely a reflection of the times. Quoting his book, "What's the fuss about ADHD?", Dr Belsham says: "A particular error of our age is that of medical reductionism."

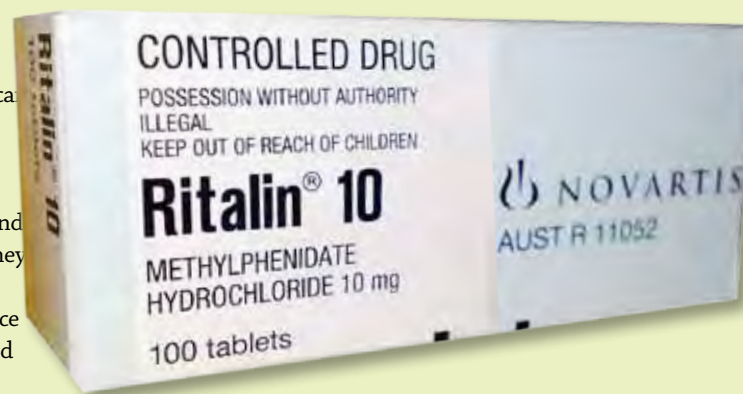
This is because a doctor may prefer to simply offer a treatment for an identifiable problem or a parent may prefer a label for a condition rather than have to examine their parenting or other factors, he writes.

"However, there are also frustrating examples of parents and/or children who refuse much-needed treatment."

This is largely the experience of Ruth Ancer, a Jewish clinical psychologist based in Blairgowrie, whose patients include children from surrounding private schools. She argues that parents - Jewish and otherwise - are in fact reluctant to put their children on Ritalin, often to the detriment of the child.

"It is because of negative stories they've heard, or a lack of understanding of what it's used for. I struggle to get parents to acknowledge that their child will benefit from medication," she says.

There obviously needs to be a proper diagnosis, though, cautions Ancer. It can't just



be prescribed because there are behavioural issues or the teacher says the child needs it - it's vital that the child is assessed.

"You cannot fix all emotional and behavioural problems with medication, otherwise you may miss the underlying factors contributing to the difficulties. Incorrectly attributing them to ADHD means you may lose an opportunity for them to be appropriately addressed."

"However, if there's a diagnosis of ADD or ADHD through a proper educational assessment administered by an appropriate

medical professional, Ritalin is a lifesaver and can have the most significantly positive impact on the child's ability to learn and on their emotional and psychological state," she adds.

"Parents who are just opposed to Ritalin because it's Ritalin, often are doing their children a huge disservice.

"If there is no medication given for ADHD, where impulsivity is also a problem, the child will also be at risk for high-risk behaviour when they get older."

"If the medication (Ritalin) is correct for the child, it shouldn't only assist with the core symptoms of ADHD - inattentiveness, hyperactivity, impulsivity - but the overall well-being and self-esteem of the child should also improve," says Belsham. "As with any medication, there can be side-effects, but with proper monitoring - which is vital - these can usually be minimised and managed."

There are, of course, alternatives to Ritalin for children suffering from ADHD.

"Other treatments include both medication like Concerta or Strattera and non-pharmacological interventions, for example, parent management training, minimising electronic screen exposure, adequate sleep, regular exercise and so on," says Belsham. He adds, in serious cases, Ritalin is often the right solution. "There are three groups of specialists who deal with ADHD: child psychiatrists, developmental paediatricians, and paediatric neurologists," says Dr Belsham. Clinical or educational psychologists also administer and interpret the educational assessments that diagnose ADD and ADHD.



# Turning the lens on Goldblatt

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

David Goldblatt is an iconic South African photographer who has shone a light (or, rather a camera) on South Africans in all their glory. For decades though, he steered as far from personal limelight as possible.

Finally, executive producer and owner and director of the Goodman Gallery, Liza Essers has turned the camera on him in a documentary simply called Goldblatt.

“Goldblatt marks the moment when we finally turn the lens on this shrewd witness to social change in South Africa and document his remarkable contribution to photography,” says Essers.

A moving and confronting documentary, Goldblatt looks at the life and work of this celebrated South African photographer and it recently premiered at the Encounters South African International Documentary Festival to sold out theatres in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Through the documentary, the now 87-year-old, often self-effacing, notoriously private and deeply introspective, questions his judgement, and discusses his work, the thinking behind his photography, and artistic struggles he still faces.

The film also delves into Goldblatt's life growing up in the West Rand mining town of Randfontein and his interest in the miners who toiled around him, which influenced much of his work.

Speaking of his unique and effective approach to photography during the tumultuous years of apartheid, Goldblatt says: “Events themselves were to me much less interesting than the conditions that led to the events. I was looking obliquely at things.”

Reflecting this undeniably effective strategy, Goldblatt's photographs, which are interwoven throughout the documentary, show striking images of people on both sides of the Struggle such as his famous portrait of a young black man wearing a white cast on each arm after being interrogated by police, or an Afrikaner mowing the lawn, a seemingly routine activity that had much deeper significance.

On apartheid, Goldblatt says: “I



often didn't know how to respond, I was in despair...”

One of his strategies was therefore taking pictures of white people in Boksburg on the East Rand, subconsciously hoping that whites would realise that his depiction of them wasn't very complimentary.

“At best, I hoped that we might see ourselves revealed by a mirror held up to ourselves.”

Speaking of his black nanny who essentially raised him, Goldblatt says: “She was really another mother to me. To me, the ultimate indignity was when I, as a teenager, had to write a special pass [“a special”] for her to go from our house to her home in the township after curfew. I can't tell you how ashamed I felt having to do that for her.”

Overall, the documentary reveals that no matter how acclaimed an artist Goldblatt may be, the struggle of reconciling himself to social injustices and to see the same things through “new eyes”, is one that is never resolved and keeps him working.

This, despite the despair this sometimes brings - with numerous scenes of the photographer placing his head in his hands as he battles his demons and tries to find a fresh perspective through the lens. He also speaks of his fear of “the act of dying” and how he envies people who are deeply religious who find solace in their faith when facing death. “I think that we're either alive or we're dead - there's nothing in between,” he says.

Co-produced by Essers and Josh

Ginsburg and directed by Daniel Zimble, Goldblatt is the first-ever feature-length documentary on one of South Africa's most prolific working photographers who has two current exhibitions in British prisons and a retrospective at the Centre Pompidou in Paris scheduled for 2018.

In addition to intimate discussions and photographic journeys with the

man himself, it also includes commentary from artist William Kentridge and late author Nadine Gordimer.

In getting to know the man behind the lens, producers also speak to Goldblatt's wife Lily, who still keeps her husband on his toes, revealing that he jokes “I'm an internationally renowned photographer” to get out of arguments.

Goldblatt offers a captivating and enlightening look at an undeniably gifted but often conflicted artist, who despite his fears and challenges, always maintains his good humour - with a smile that visibly lights up his face - and a love for the South African landscape as he sees it.

For Essers, her close relationship with Goldblatt was also a driving force behind the making of the documentary.

“David is family to me,” she says, “I love spending time with him.

I consider him to be one of the most significant contemporary

photographers of our time. Over the decades, he's produced many of the iconic images of apartheid-era South Africa, which have been seared on our nation's conscience.

“He continues to photograph South Africa... questioning values. I feel massively privileged to represent him at the Goodman Gallery.”



David Goldblatt

## A love across Israeli-Palestinian lines

SUZANNE BELLING

Every journalist is a frustrated author and dreams of writing a great novel, says South African-born writer living in Israel, Joel Gordin, whose book “Love Song To A Stranger” fulfils this ambition.

The book portrays the Israeli-Palestinian problem in both a knowledgeable and somewhat naïve way.

“It has no pretensions to be a heavy discourse on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; it is simply a romantic drama set against this background,” says Gordin.

The romantic scenes are explicit but not perturbing. They are natural and highlight the difference in attitude between Jews and Arabs.

The book is cleverly simplistic, but shocking in its revelation of dishonesty and hatred on the part of both sides. But it serves to gain sympathy for Israelis and Arabs alike, revealing an innate understanding of the bystanders - ordinary people who become involved in the conflagration of the Middle East purely by being in the wrong (or right) place at the wrong or right time.

It is the story of Yossi and Samira, who, although obsessed by their own personal complexities, cannot escape the war lurking in the background and the bomb placed in Samira's bag without her knowing.

“They are a couple made in hell, but made for each other,” is the summation according to the blurb on the book cover.

Gordin's writing is appealing through its clarity. A former Capetonian, he attended Herzlia School from 1958 to 1962. His mother, Micky Gordin, chaired the Cape Town branch of the Union of Jewish Women of South Africa.

In the early sixties, Gordin and his family moved to Brakpan on the East Rand and he graduated from Wits with a BA in history and economics.

Gordin worked as a sub-editor on a now-defunct Soweto newspaper, The World, the Cape Times and Cape Argus, before returning to the then Transvaal, where he was a sub on the Sunday Times and also a reporter “under the legendary Joel Mervis”.

In 1973 he left for Australia, where he worked on the Melbourne Age.

His former Capetonian wife, Tessia, is a committed Zionist and he went with her to Kibbutz Gan Shmuel, where Gordin was a member for 12 years.

Tessia remained on the kibbutz and Gordin became a reporter for the Jerusalem Post and also motoring editor and sports reporter.

“I simultaneously established a distribution business for quality overseas newspapers, among them The Economist, The New England Journal of Medicine and Business Week.

“I wrote articles for publications, among them Playboy, and got paid \$4 000 for three pages - I kid you not!”

He served in the Israeli Army as a liaison officer to the United Nations.

Gordin's brother, Jeremy, is a well-known South African journalist and author.

Gordin and Tessia had two daughters - Jacqui, who was killed in a car accident in 1989 at the age of 20 (the book is dedicated to her), and Tali, a clinical psychologist in Sde Boker. They have three grandchildren.

“Love Song To A Stranger” is an easy read, but shakes the reader out of complacency, as it is a story that can happen to anyone.

To obtain the paperback in South Africa, contact Gordin's agent at 071-470-9439 or (011) 486-0159 or e-mail [gordin@mweb.co.za](mailto:gordin@mweb.co.za)

The Kindle version of the book can be bought on Amazon UK for £6,34 (about R100). The paperback costs about the same and postage to South Africa is an additional R100. On Amazon.com, the Kindle version costs \$5 and the paperback version \$11,43.



Joel Gordin

Photo supplied



Photos: David Goldblatt





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# THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

## Bibi turns to yoga to show warm ties with India

AP AND TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu used some yoga know-how during his meeting with Indian counterpart Narendra Modi on Tuesday, as he sought to drive home his message of the two nations' shared values and warm relations.

During the two leaders' joint statements in Jerusalem, Netanyahu entered meditational territory when he said: "When I do a relaxing talasana pose in the morning and I turn my head to the right, India is the first democracy that I'll see."

He added: "And when Prime Minister Modi does a relaxing pose of vasistasana and he turns his head to the left, Israel is the first democracy that you can see."

While it is somewhat doubtful that Netanyahu regularly engages in lotus postures or downward-facing dog exercises when he rises every day, the gesture was surely appreciated by Modi, a known yoga aficionado.

Netanyahu greeted Modi at Ben-Gurion International Airport on Tuesday and accompanied the Indian leader throughout the three-day visit. Israeli officials said the warm treatment went well beyond diplomatic protocol and reflected the importance of the visit.

Modi, who did not meet Palestinian officials while he was in town, was welcomed with an honour guard and warmly hugged Netanyahu as he descended from the aircraft.

"We receive you with open arms.

We love India. We admire your culture, we admire your history, your democracy, your commitment to progress," Netanyahu said. "We view you as kindred spirits in our common quest to provide a better future for our peoples and for our world."

Modi said it was a "singular honour" to be the first sitting prime minister of India to visit Israel.

"Alongside building a partnership for shared economic prosperity, we are also co-operating to secure our societies against common threats such as terrorism," he said. "A progressive partnership in all these areas will shape the scope of my conversation with prime minister, my friend, Netanyahu."

During the Cold War, India was a leading member of the Nonaligned Movement of developing countries and sided staunchly with the Palestinians in their conflict with Israel. Before ties were established in 1992, India would not even allow its citizens to enter Israel on an Indian passport.

But over the past quarter century, the two countries have cultivated warm ties, particularly in the areas of technology and defence co-operation.

India is a major buyer of Israeli arms.

Photo: Afp Photo / Pool And Afp Photo / Debbie Hill



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shake hands following a statement on Tuesday in Jerusalem.

This year, Israel's state-owned Israel Aerospace Industries announced over \$2 billion in contracts to provide air and missile-defence systems to India.

Rafael, another state-owned defence contractor, is trying to finalise a deal to sell 8 000 "Spike" anti-tank missiles to India in a deal that is reportedly valued at some \$1 billion, according to an industry expert familiar with the deal.

Yuval Rotem, the director general of Israel's Foreign Ministry, said the decision for Netanyahu to spend so much time with Modi was not a standard practice

for visiting dignitaries and indicated "the highest level of importance" attached to the visit.

Mark Sofer, the ministry's deputy director for Asia and the Pacific, said the meetings focused on various areas of technology, including cybersecurity and space research, with a particular focus on Israeli water and agricultural technologies.

At the airport ceremony, Netanyahu announced the establishment of a \$40 million innovation fund to promote technological co-operation.

## FAREWELL TO SURVIVOR AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PRESIDENT SIMONE VEIL

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF AND AGENCIES

Holocaust survivors joined France's president and European dignitaries on Wednesday at a memorial ceremony for Simone Veil, who rose from the horrors of Nazi death camps to become president of the European Parliament and one of France's most revered politicians. She died last week at age 89.

Best known in France for spearheading the legalisation of abortion, Veil faced down sexist criticism and repeatedly broke barriers for women in politics.

During a national ceremony with military honours on Wednesday at the Invalides monument, home to Napoleon's tomb, President Emmanuel Macron announced that Veil will be inducted into Paris' Pantheon mausoleum, the final resting place of dozens of French greats.

She will be buried next to her late husband, Antoine Veil, whose remains will be moved to lie alongside her.

European flags around France were lowered to half-staff to honour the woman, whose experience at Auschwitz-Birkenau made her a firm believer in European unification.

Macron praised her as someone inspiring "respect and fascination".

He said: "She loved Europe, she always fought for it... because she knew in the heart of this European

The late Simone Veil



dream there were above all dreams of peace and freedom."

Veil lost her parents and brother in Nazi camps, and spoke frequently about the need to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive.

"She knew that memory is here so that the unthinkable does not happen again," Macron said.

"Just as you leave us, Madam, please receive an immense thank you from the French people," he concluded in front of the coffin, which was covered with a French flag, in the presence of hundreds of ordinary citizens and high-profile guests, including former Presidents Nicolas Sarkozy and Francois Hollande.

Veil's coffin was taken from the ceremony to the music of a song known in French as Le Chant des Marais, and in English as the Peat Bog Soldiers' Song, which was written by political prisoners in a Nazi camp on German moorlands.

The song was sung by a French army chorus in memory of the imprisonment of Veil and her family at Auschwitz.

Veil will be the fourth woman to be honoured at the Pantheon. She follows two women who fought with the French Resistance during the Second World War, Germaine Tillion and Genevieve de Gaulle-Anthonioz, and Nobel Prize-winning chemist Marie Curie.

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#### TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

Israel reportedly will soon launch a slew of lawsuits against the families of terrorists with the aim of recouping outlays on the associated costs of terror attacks.

Last month, prosecutors from the Jerusalem District Court filed the first such damages suit,

## State to sue terrorists' families

in which they are seeking NIS 8 million (\$2.3 million) from the widow and four children of Fadi al-Qunbar, the Haaretz daily reported last Sunday.

Qunbar, a resident of East Jerusalem's Jabel Mukaber neighbourhood, killed four soldiers in January when he rammed his truck into troops getting off a bus at a popular tourist site in Jerusalem's Armon Hanatziv neighbourhood, before being shot and killed by soldiers.

According to Haaretz, the state is seeking compensation from Qunbar's family for the costs of the burial of the soldiers and the payments to the bereaved families, as well as for "the loss of earnings for the lost years, loss of pension and pension rights, shortening life

expectancy" and "compensation for [the] pain and suffering that reflects the cruelty of the acts and the great suffering of all the murder victims".

In addition to the suit against Qunbar's widow and children, the state has already filed damages claims against the family of another terrorist and is expected to file additional claims in the coming days, the report said.

Defending its decision to file the lawsuits, the State Prosecutor's Office said that seeking damages from the families of terrorists would help deter would-be attackers.

"This suit, based on a terror incident in which soldiers were killed, was intended to reimburse to the state's coffers the expenses connected with events like these and to convey a clear and unequivocal message that the state will [also] settle accounts from a civil perspective with perpetrators of evil acts," Haaretz quoted the prosecutor's office as saying.

In addition to the lawsuit, Israel has taken a number of other retaliatory steps against Qunbar's family, including revoking the residency permits of 10 of his relatives and sealing off the family home.

The moves come as Israel, with the help of the US, has been pressuring the Palestinian Authority to stop paying stipends to attackers and their families.

The PA has so far resisted any change to its policy, which Israel charges incentivises terrorism.



## News and views from the Fed Rejecting the real racists

Rowan Polovin  
Chairman, South African Zionist Federation (Cape Town)

The anti-Semitic allegation that Zionism is a form of racism, has become a mainstream motif in the South African political discourse. This is a result of a systematic disinformation and propaganda campaign within our political, media and academic landscape.

It stems from well-funded and well-placed pressure groups and their useful proxies who promulgate the cause. When, for instance, Jews at places such as the University of Cape Town are surrounded by a mob of angry radicals who call them incorrigible racists for identifying with Zionism, there is a sense that this campaign is paying dividends for its provocateurs.

Zionism is the struggle for and continuation of Jewish freedom and self-determination in our ancient homeland. It is the righteous demand for the Jewish State, representing "Am Yisrael", the Jewish people, to be treated equally, morally and fairly among the nations and peoples of the world.

Few nations or peoples have a more noble or worthy cause than the Jews do of Zionism, and yet no nation has been more persecuted for identifying with its own right to sovereignty. Denying the Jews this right is anti-Semitic.

Zionism ought to have widespread support and sympathy in the South African struggle against historical oppression. And yet it regularly faces vicious enmity from many such movements and organisations, which are often hijacked in pursuit of a divisive anti-Zionist agenda.

This agenda often operates under the halo of not-for-profit, non-governmental or human rights organisations.

South Africans should be more circumspect about joining causes that are ostensibly about fighting disenfranchisement, but end up disenfranchising the Jewish people. When a cause starts incorporating anti-Zionist murmurings instead of fulfilling its stated mandate, as we too often see in this country, then its members ought to consider why they are being manipulated and treated for fools.

Conversely, when a cause reaches out to us, and shows it shares our values of democratic freedoms, religious tolerance, rights of minorities, spreading knowledge and repairing the world we live in, we should stand with it.

As Jews and as Zionists, we ought to emphatically reject the real racists who reject our own rights to freedom and self-determination, and embrace those who embrace us.



The scene of a truck-ramming attack in the Armon Hanatziv neighbourhood of East Jerusalem on January 8, last year.

## Bibi pleads for patience amid Kotel, conversion bill row

#### TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday pleaded for patience amid an ongoing row between the Israeli government and many Diaspora Jews over a pair of Cabinet decisions surrounding the Western Wall and the since-frozen conversion bill last week, that caused an uproar.

Speaking at Fourth of July celebrations at the residence of US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman in Herzliya, Netanyahu said he was committed and "will remain committed to making every Jew feel at home in Israel, including at the Kotel," which he repeated twice for emphasis. "All we need is patience and perseverance," he said.

Some 1 600 people attended the event, the first Independence Day gathering hosted by Friedman, who was sworn in as Israeli envoy earlier this year. Among the guests were the Prime Minister and his

wife, President Reuven Rivlin, IDF Chief Gadi Eisenkot and the head of the Mossad, Yossi Cohen.

The Fourth of July, said Netanyahu, "is a celebration of the victory of American values, a victory for freedom, a victory of independence, a victory for hope. Today we rededicate ourselves to victory - victory over barbarism, victory over terror, victory over tyranny. Our two nations stand shoulder to shoulder as we have countless times before in our noble fight for freedom."

Netanyahu has been facing harsh criticism over a pair of decisions last week to renege on a January 2016 commitment to significantly upgrade the pluralistic prayer platform at the Kotel and to advance a controversial bill, critics say grants the ultra-Orthodox a de facto monopoly over conversions to Judaism in Israel by pulling government recognition for private conversions (such as



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks at the Fourth of July celebrations at the US Embassy in Tel Aviv, on Monday.

those not conducted by the Chief Rabbinate).

The conversion bill was frozen last week Friday amid the uproar with Netanyahu announcing that a state-appointed committee would try to reach an "agreed-upon

arrangement within our people" over the next six months.

The decisions were met with fierce opposition from American-Jewish groups, philanthropists, businessmen and various figures active in the

Jewish world, as well as Israeli politicians, who expressed their dismay and disappointment.

Some have intimated the decisions might impact financial contributions to Israel and warned of eroding support for the Jewish State.

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# Starved of power, Gaza's Palestinians buckle under heatwave

DOV LIEBER  
JERUSALEM

Sami, a medical intern, is struggling to sleep. The same heatwave scorching Israel, is also roasting the Gaza Strip, where temperatures have been soaring to 37°C. The heat in his room is overpowering, and the mosquitoes don't help either. But due to an ongoing electricity crisis, he can't cool himself off, or even plug in the device that wards off the biting insects.

"Sometimes I go around flipping on different sides of my bed for an hour before I can fall asleep."

In a series of interviews with The Times of Israel, residents of the Strip described the debilitating effects of the power crisis. It dictates their routine. It turns basic goods, services and actions into luxuries. The normal strategies for cooling off in the summer heat - including showers, swimming, air conditioning and electric fans - have all but disappeared. Even drinking water is an increasingly rare commodity.

Depending on what neighbourhood one lives in, say the interviewees, the average Gazan enjoys either four to six or two to three hours of electricity a day. Residents have no idea when the power will come on, so when it does, they have to drop what they are doing and rush to complete tasks that require electricity.

"When the power comes, for two to three hours, you run like a madman to manage to recharge everything, pump water, shower, sleep, work, get online, cool down and breathe, all in two hours," said Ali, a 30-year-old journalist.

The power can come on in the middle of a workday, or late at night when everyone is sleeping.

During the current power crisis, Ali added, "cold water becomes a luxury, a wish, a dream, a desire. No power means no fridge, means no cold water."

Khaled, a father of three and a humanitarian worker, also complained about not being able to protect his family from the heat.

"My youngest child is eight months old. Last night, he couldn't sleep, so we just kept fanning him. We used a piece of paper to fan his face, and the minute we stopped, he would wake up," he said.

"My wife goes to do the household things at odd times. You find her up very early in the morning, turning on the washing machine because the power just came on. Her sleep schedule is entirely off."

The residents of Gaza have suffered electricity woes ever since the terrorist group Hamas wrested control of the territory from the Palestinian Authority in a coup in 2007.

Since then, and up until a few months ago, Gazans received power in eight-hour intervals - eight hours on and eight hours off. That was enough, they said, to sustain a semblance of normalcy and keep the Strip's infrastructure running.

Israel and Egypt maintain a blockade on the Strip, which Jerusalem says is needed to keep out weaponry and materials that could be used for terror activities or in fighting against Israel. The border authority allows in humanitarian goods and also gives some Gazans permits to enter Israel for medical care.

The current crisis began when the Strip's only power station shut down in April due to a lack of fuel. Hamas refused to buy more diesel from the PA, which is controlled by the rival Fatah faction, complaining taxes on the fuel were too high.

The crisis deepened when the PA, which has been footing the bill for a portion of Gaza's electricity that is provided by Israel, decided to cut the payments by 35 per cent - part of a series of measures meant to force Hamas to cede control of the Strip.

At the behest of the PA, Israel has been gradually reducing power to the Strip. As of last Sunday, Israel has cut its supply to Gaza from 120 megawatts to 80. It says it will ramp the flow back up as soon as someone pays the bill.

On June 21, Egypt stepped in and began exporting diesel fuel to Gaza. That allowed Gaza's power plant to start working again, providing an

output of 70 megawatts.

The Egyptian fuel, however, in addition to being only a temporary deal with Cairo, only serves to prevent all-out disaster. It doesn't do much to lift power-starved Gazans out of their private suffering.

Suhair Zakkout, who works for the Red Cross, said the crisis can "really make every minute a struggle".

On Monday, the United Nations gathered diplomats in its Jerusalem offices. The international agency made



Photo: AFP / Mahmud Hams

**A Palestinian boy cools off with water from a jerrycan held by a man during a heatwave at al-Shati refugee camp in Gaza City last Sunday.**

## At 102, Herman Wouk has a new book out

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

The Pulitzer Prize-winning Jewish author Herman Wouk has just published his latest book at the age of 102.

In discussing his life and work, Wouk said his "main task" was to "fix down in literature what happened in the Second World War and the Holocaust".

Wouk did precisely that in his mammoth novel "The Winds of War" and its equally weighty sequel "War and Remembrance". Both novels were adapted into successful television miniseries, the latter of which was notable for scenes shot at the site of the Auschwitz death camp.

Over a decade before "Schindler's List", it was one of the first explicit depictions of the camps on film.

When asked if he was deliberately teaching readers about history through his work, he replied: "Doggone right I am! That's the main task."

In an article marking Wouk's 100th birthday in 2015, The Atlantic wrote of the writer's two war novels: "Pull that paperback from off the cottage shelf, open the page - and suddenly there you are: walking a Polish country road as a Stuka buzzes overhead... in the wardroom of a warship tasting thin Navy coffee... shivering in the unpressurised cabin of a bomber above Germany... or waiting amid a roomful of desperate visa applicants for the stamp that will mean the difference between life and death."



Wouk also dealt extensively with Judaism and the Jewish state. In "This Is My G-d: The Jewish Way of Life," he explored his own Jewish faith and the nature of Judaism itself. He also wrote two novels, "The Hope" and "The Glory", that chronicled Israel's history from its founding to the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt.

Wouk was born in the Bronx to an Orthodox family and remains an observant Jew. He was educated at Columbia University and joined the US Navy following the attack on Pearl Harbour, serving as an officer on a minesweeper in the Pacific.

After the war, he landed an unlikely job as a "gag writer" for the popular radio comedian Fred Allen, but grew tired of the grind of churning out jokes and turned to more serious writing in which he "just reported the facts".

Aided by his wife, Sarah, who served as a sounding board for his ideas and eventually became his

literary agent, he fictionalised his war experiences into the bestselling novel "The Caine Mutiny", which won him the Pulitzer Prize and was made into a film starring legendary screen actor Humphrey Bogart.

Asked about his late wife's importance to his work, Wouk simply replied: "She was the key."

Wouk's latest book, "The Sailor and the Fiddler" is autobiographical, a summation of his long life as a literary man. Asked whether he is still writing, he responded, "I always keep my diary. Beyond that go find yourself another interview."

a plea for \$25.2 million "to stabilise the spiralling humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip" caused by the power crisis.

In a document presented in the meeting, the UN pinpointed three sectors that are quickly crumbling without electricity: water/sanitation, health and food.

The document said water reaches homes for a few hours just every three to five days. Desalination plants are functioning at only 15 per cent of their capacity and more than 108 million litres of untreated sewage is flowing every day into the Mediterranean.

Without access to clean water, the UN said, 1.45 million people in Gaza are at risk of contracting waterborne diseases due to the consumption of unsafe water.

Guislain Defurne, head of the delegation for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) told The Times of Israel that "Gaza is like a sinking ship".

"Water is reaching the neck of the passengers," he said. "They can breathe, but water is still entering the ship. The people of Gaza can only be resilient for so long."

The food industry is also being severely affected by the crisis.

Due to the scarcity of water, irrigation costs are increasing 60 to 75 per cent, Defurne said. Much food is also lost because refrigerating it is too expensive.

Supermarkets keep products fresh with the help of generators. But fuelling the machines is expensive, and vendors are forced to raise their prices.

As for who is responsible for the crisis, "most of the anger is directed at Hamas," said Sami, the medical intern. He said the electricity crisis finds its way into nearly all conversations and that he hears "people repeatedly hating Hamas for this particular reason."

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# At Tel Aviv's White Night party, asylum seekers look to connect

seeker status, but the state has recognised almost none of their claims since they began arriving in the mid-2000s.

Israel contends most of the migrants who are currently in Israel came seeking new economic opportunities, not because they were fleeing danger at home.

Kahn co-founded the Collective with South African artist Natasha Miller Gutman in 2011. Kahn is a clinical psychologist with a background in treating trauma. Many of the women experienced trauma before arriving in Israel, including the notorious "torture camps" in the Sinai where refugees were held for ransom and abused by Bedouin traffickers.

The Collective empowers the women financially, socially and psychologically, said Kahn, who manages the group with the Eritrean nun Sister Azezet Habtezechi Kidane, who Kahn calls the "spiritual mother of the refugee community."

"It all came out of a desire to help the women that were in a state of survival, that came from a culturally very different

milieu, where their understanding of what helps someone whose being in a bad situation, that is to say, Western therapy, was not something that was very obvious to them," Kahn said.

The group started with five women and a small grant from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Now, over 90 women are involved.

Selling the hand-woven baskets also generates income for the women, many of whom are struggling financially, Abadit said in Hebrew, while selling baskets at the event. She and her three children were once thrown out of their apartment when they could not come up with their rent money, she said.

"There are people from Africa, they have problems, they have kids. Not everyone can work,"

said Abadit, who declined to give her last name out of privacy concerns and who said she earns about 500 to 600 NIS (\$145 - 175) a month selling baskets. "It's not enough, but there's nothing we can do," she said.

The Israeli government also recently instituted a tax on asylum seekers and their employers. The state deducts 20 per cent of the

workers' salaries, and 16 per cent from their employers. The workers can collect the money only if they leave the country. As an employer, the law applies to the Collective, putting them in a desperate financial situation, Kahn said.

Last week Thursday night's events, with crowds of Israelis thronging the streets, provided an opportunity to make up for the lost income. White Night, a play on the Hebrew expression "laila lavan", meaning a night with no sleep, and Tel Aviv's epithet, the White City, is a night-long celebration across the city featuring events organised by the municipality, which invited the Collective to participate and provided funding.

It was part of a larger effort organised by south Tel Avivians, called Outlets, to connect the centre of the city to their area, with a trail of music performances, food, videos and light installations leading from Rothschild Boulevard to the derelict area surrounding the Central Bus Station.

Kuchinate Collective members set up their table, stools and coffee pot on Betzalel Yafe Street, just off of luxurious Rothschild Boulevard, between the city centre and the working class south Tel Aviv neighbourhoods where the women live.

The group served Ethiopian coffee in small ceramic cups and sold baskets to passersby. The Yatana Band, Eritreans from the nearby neighbourhood of Neve Shaanan, played music next to the coffee circle.

Events like White Night and visits to the group's offices on Har Zion Street in south Tel Aviv, can help change the public perception of asylum seekers in Israel, Kahn said.

"It's making these people who are very often invisible in Israeli society, visible and not just visible, but elevated in a kind of way, dignified," she said.



Photo: Luke Tress/Times of Israel

A member of the Kuchinate Collective, prepares Ethiopian coffee during Tel Aviv's White Night celebrations, last Thursday.

## Is Jay Z's 'positive' Jewish stereotype anti-Semitic?

YAAKOV SCHWARTZ  
NEW YORK

Since Jay Z released his 14th album last Friday, Jewish music lovers are focused on a track entitled "The Story of OJ" that contains lyrics portraying Jewish stereotypes.

Discussing a propensity to squander money unnecessarily, the song advises audiences: "You wanna know what's more important than throwin' money away at a strip club? Credit. You ever wonder why Jewish people own all the property in America? This is how they did it."

Conforming to a less provocative stereotype, Jewish social media users have expressed an array of opinions regarding the expressed trope, which is particularly endemic to New York City - Jay Z's hometown - where there is a perceived abundance of Jewish landowners.

Israeli-born talent manager, writer and businessman Guy Oseary, who has Madonna and U2 among his clients, says that Jay Z's lyrics are being taken out of context.

"If you listen to the song in its entirety, you will hear that the whole of the song is based on exaggerated stereotypes to make a point," he writes on Instagram. "Hes [sic] attempting to use the Jewish people in an exaggerated way to showcase a community of people that are thought to have made wise business decisions."

It can be noted that the reverse apologism is not a one-way street. In Judd Apatow's 2009 movie "Funny People", rapper RZA refers to a racist outburst live onstage by not-technically-Jewish comedian Michael Richards with the line: "Kramer gets a pass from me, cuz he's my n\*\*\*a."

Jay Z's history certainly does not paint him as an anti-Semite - at the inauguration of Brooklyn's Barclays Centre, in which he was an investor,

Jay Z lit a menorah, a symbol which represents the re-dedication of the Second Temple after it was ransacked by the Syrian Greeks.

He also appeared in a video decrying all forms of racism, and anti-Semitism specifically, alongside music producer Russell Simmons.

Still, the lyrics in "The Story of OJ" appear within a context of similar stereotypes less generous to Jews. Last month, a Democratic City Council candidate running for election in upper Manhattan released a YouTube video outlining his campaign platform, which involved combating the problem of "greedy Jewish landlords".

In 2015, Shaquille O'Neal benignly described hiring a "beautiful little Jewish man" as a financial adviser, again playing into the "positive" Jewish stereotype.

And a shocking video compilation of references to Jewish lawyers in hip-hop, both positive and negative, racked up nearly 128 000 views on YouTube.

It appears that, like Jay Z's music itself, the net beauty - or ugliness - in these generalities lies in the eye of the beholder.



Photo: CC SA/Wikamote

Rapper Jay Z.



# Finding the right type of youth leaders

MOIRA SCHNEIDER  
CAPE TOWN

When Mikaila Sher introduced a water project at her school, she displayed a key characteristic required of Diller Teen Fellows - the ability to have a vision and the capacity to implement it.

The King David Victory Park learner was initially not too keen on the Diller programme, but is now part of a group of 38 grade 11 Johannesburgers and Capetonians who have just left to participate in a three-week seminar in Israel. They will be joined by Fellows from around the world for the culmination of their year-long leadership training.

Sher was hooked into the programme “just by meeting different people (through the interview process) and engaging with different ideologies within Judaism, like left-wing, right-wing”.

The water project showed Sher she was capable of having an impact on society, with Diller Johannesburg co-ordinator Gilad Spiltanik “smoothing out the rough edges”.

Spiltanik says: “I’m very interested in people, I want to take what I learn about how to interact with humanity and try and leave a legacy. I want to be that person who makes a difference somehow in the world.”

An admirable goal indeed. But what is it that makes a leader and how are the Fellows selected?

“One of the most important things about being a leader is that you’ve got to care about whatever it is that you’re involved in - generally it is people,” says Spiltanik. “There needs to be integrity - leading is generally done by example, not by word.”

“A leader is not necessarily a head of a country, a community, or an organisation, but someone who has a responsibility to other people,” he posits.

Another important characteristic, he says, is that leaders at certain times have to follow, to be able to step back and allow someone who has more knowledge in a particular area, to play a role.

The process of selecting the Teens is not through a standard interview, rather a workshop simulation lasting four hours, being

very interactive with experiential-based learning.

“We give them an experience where they have to work together to achieve a certain outcome, with both group and individual targets. It’s what happens in between that counts,” he says, underlining the essential ability to work with others.

In trying to find the right people who will make Diller leaders, he says: “I’m looking for somebody who wants to make a difference in their community and is interested in learning.” He warns: “In the first hour the masks are down!”

It is not necessarily high-achieving academics or school leaders who get on to the programme, he adds. It all boils down to the question: “Which of you are willing to make that commitment to



Mikaila Sher



Hannah-Rose Fleishman

make a difference in your life and your communities - that’s what we are looking for.”

There are 32 communities on the programme worldwide, constituting a global network, with each having its own modus operandi in terms of training. Johannesburg, for instance, has four-hourly workshops bi-monthly throughout the year, plus three Shabbatons, two full-day seminars and two overnight workshops. Cape Town’s programme is similar.

Johannesburg has a partnership with a Diller region in Beth Shemesh Matei Yehudah, while Cape Town twins with one in Shoham, outside Tel Aviv. Those groups come to their partner cities here for 10 days to experience a Jewish community outside of Israel.

The Israel visit is not about touring, but rather “looking at Israel through the Diller lens,” says Spiltanik. “We engage with

Israeli culture and life; for example, we had a session on Masada and the question was: ‘Are they heroes or cowards?’”

All the international Diller groups meet up at a Shabbaton there and examine issues such as: “What does it mean to be a Jew in the Diaspora today?” and “What does it mean to be a Jewish leader in the Diaspora?”

Once the Fellows return home, they implement a programme of change with their new skills, known as an Impact Project, not necessarily in the Jewish community.

Hannah-Rose Fleishman is an alumnus of the programme who now assists Cape Town co-ordinator Lee Lobel as a madrich. The Herzlia matriculant credits the “incredibly meaningful” Fellow experience with facilitating her engagement with others and particularly enabling her to accept and embrace a diversity of views.

“You learn so much from other people,” she reflects. “Moving from a Fellow to a madrich is like learning how to be a role model and have people look up to you and understanding all those responsibilities,” she adds.

“Also, it’s largely the same content, so a lot of the ideas that were brought up in our discussions last year, we can bring up this year and facilitate the conversation. It’s very beautiful to see the Fellows of this year going through some of the same processes that we went through last year.”

“I think it’s really incredible how the course caters for and accepts everyone and enlightens everyone in some sort of way,” she says.

“We’re not looking for these perfect teenagers,” Lobel confirms, “because we want this to be a learning experience for the Teen. Over the year we look for things like whether they take initiative and meet deadlines, how they treat the people in the group and the staff,” highlighting the role of self-management in the training.”

Its success is evidenced by “very, very positive feedback” from parents and schools, comments Aviad Sela, director of the Israel Centre under whose auspices the Johannesburg programme operates. “Many of the Fellows have taken leadership positions in schools, in the city and in youth leadership outside the community as well.”

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# Designing the Johannesburg skyline

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Driving through the built-up areas of upmarket Johannesburg must be invigorating for Anthony Orelowitz, considering just how many of the new and innovative buildings he passes, are those he and his company Paragon Group, designed.

Orelowitz and Paragon took home four out of seven awards at the South African Property Owners' Association (SAPOA) Awards of Excellence in Innovative Property Development, last month.

The Paragon Group is not at the cutting edge of architectural development in South Africa, they are the cutting edge.

And for Orelowitz, co-founder and owner of the group, a childhood passion for construction laid the foundation for building this legacy.

A breathtaking addition to the increasingly impressive Sandton skyline, the Sasol Corporate Campus on Katherine Street, designed in the shape of an "S", is a shining example of the architectural excellence for which the Paragon Group is known.

The building ensured that the group won three of their four SAPOA awards, including one for Best Overall Winner.

They also won Best Innovation Project for the General Electric (GE) Innovation Centre in Glenhove Road, Houghton. They are also known for the striking Norton Rose Fulbright offices on Alice Lane.

expanded his knowledge base.

He also loved entrepreneurship. "A King David education teaches you how to be entrepreneurial; it drives the idea of being master of your own destiny. I never thought of anything but going into my own practice and I think that comes from this culture they fostered."

Yet, in his final year of architecture at Wits, Orelowitz began losing his eyesight, casting his future plans into doubt. The doctors weren't sure of the cause and of whether the vision loss would be degenerative, so they needed to monitor it over five years.

"After I finished my year apprenticeship, I got my MBA," he says. "I then worked in Standard Bank in property finance for three years, until they were certain that my eyes were stable. Combining the MBA with architecture was such a gift. My work in property finance also steered me to commercial practice.

The experience around my eyes focused me, providing the understanding that time is precious and you need to make the most of it."

While the initial growth of Paragon was slow, expansion over the last five years has been rapid, with their staff complement almost doubling. Sustaining the company culture and maintaining quality control have therefore been challenges the company has had to



Paragon is an internationally active African design company, which started operations in 1997 with just founding directors Orelowitz and his business partner Henning Rasmuss. Today they oversee a staff of 110.

For Orelowitz, the business was the realisation of a long-held dream he once feared would never be realised.

A King David alumnus, Orelowitz had early architectural ambitions. "My earliest memories, even in nursery school, are of building things," he says. "My parents built a house when I was about seven and I found the process fascinating.

"The architect, Mike Challis, was very inclusive and largely due to him I decided that I wanted to be an architect." Going on to do art and then sculpture at the Bill Ainslie Art Foundation as a teenager, Orelowitz

tackle.

"You never stop learning. I thought I'd learned everything by the time I reached 35 and at 52 I'm discovering that the journey of growth and learning is just an ongoing process."

With every project, client needs are central. "Aside from practical considerations like the way the building faces and what materials are used, the drivers of the design of our buildings are less about form and more about the quality of the user experience - enhancing people's lives when they occupy these buildings, bringing in light and fresh air, providing a sense of volume and creating an evocative space that makes you want to go to work," says Orelowitz.

"The building represents the people who occupy it. Our

buildings are superefficient in their relationship to the environment and in terms of how people occupy them - they should enhance quality of life."

In staying ahead of design trends, Paragon looks at global best practice and innovates against that, trying to make each of its buildings better than the last. "We continuously re-evaluate and reinvent both in our designs and as a business. Paragon is driven by its people; it's not about an individual, but a collective of

talent."

For the last 10 years Orelowitz has also run property development business, Alchemy with CEO Greg Sacks and co-directors David Frankel and Steffen Schneier. "Architecture is a part of my life and property development with Alchemy is another. It's been a great journey."

Orelowitz is married to fellow King David alumnus, clinical psychologist Zahava Aarons. They have two sons of 12 and 16.

Maintaining a balance between

work and family has been hard, he says, especially in an intense industry that often demands long hours. While it's got easier as the practice has grown, there are still sometimes all-nighters.

"You can only do that with the support of your family," he says. "It's been a collective effort, with my wife supporting my commitment to the practice."

He has no plans to slow down. "It's a passion, it's not a job. I'm lucky, I wake up every morning and do what I love."

## Hatzolah's aim is that it should end well



ANT KATZ

When you think of Hatzolah, you imagine ambulances, accidents, sick people - you don't equate it with a fun YouTube game that is going to inspire you not to text and drive at the same time.

But that is what these innovative medical saviours have come up with.

Last week, after eight months of planning, strategising and development, Hatzolah began the rollout of their campaign called "It won't end well!", which is to stop people texting while driving.

If their first volley - a YouTube game they launched last week Friday and had been played 500 times by Tuesday - is anything to go by, this is something viral in the making.

A staggering 25 per cent of all motor-vehicle accidents globally involve cell phone usage, and Hatzolah says there is no reason to believe these statistics differ for the Johannesburg Jewish community they primarily serve.

And the figures for texting and surfing the web, are much higher. Texting while driving, takes the average driver's eyes off the road for five seconds.

Other frightening statistics Hatzolah cites include: Talking on a phone while driving reduces your reaction time by half; texting while driving kills 11 teens a day; a whopping 20 per cent of drivers admit to surfing the web while driving; and using a phone while driving, increases your chances of crashing by 300 per cent!

"The high volume of callouts to motor-vehicle accidents on a regular basis, required that we did something proactive to address this situation..." says Darren Sevitz, executive general manager of Hatzolah, "...and not simply react when it occurs."

Sevitz told Jewish Report this week that the YouTube gaming video was the brainchild of a Hatzolah volunteer, Warren Bome, whose Insignia Advertising did all the organisation's branding and marketing.

"One of our aims is to educate proactively," says Sevitz. This is borne out by a booklet, "Preventative

Health Guidelines" they published recently in which all the articles are written by Jewish medical specialists who are leaders in their fields.

Many road accidents result from texting, says Sevitz. "It's a (statistical) reality," he says, "and if you can count it, it's real!"

Research indicates that 10 per cent of drivers who text, veer out of their lanes. Furthermore, 50 per cent of all drivers admit to answering their phones while driving and, worse still, 50 per cent of young drivers admit to reading and replying to texts while driving!

Sevitz says Hatzolah had elected not to use traditional marketing channels for the "It won't end well!" campaign and that there are more games to follow. He promises that a further "creative and fun element will follow shortly, but would not yet say what they were.

The accolades are pouring in for the game. "I played the game. I got to speed, escaped the cops and overtook people on their blind side!" says local online guru Alon Berman.

"In response to our campaign, I received a tremendous amount of rabbinic support, since using a phone while driving, in their opinion, is halachically forbidden as it could kill," says Sevitz.

A psychologist and a psychiatrist who assist Hatzolah in counselling people who have been victims of road accidents gave the project their thumbs-up too. "If we can prevent accidents, it's great," says Sevitz, whose organisation respond to an average of 200 calls (many of them road accidents) a month.

Another preventive campaign Hatzolah recently launched, is their "Schools First-Aid Project". Learners are selected from all Johannesburg Jewish day schools to be trained by Hatzolah - at their state-of-the-art facilities - in level-one first aid.

They are then issued kit and equipment and become the first-aid team at their schools.

Sevitz says Hatzolah decided to name the project for the recently-deceased Hugo Paluch, "in his memory and merit." Like all other Hatzolah projects, this one too, was funded by community donors.

• Readers can see and play the game on [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)





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# A Horse Walks into a Booker Prize

STEVEN KRAWITZ

David Grossman, one of Israel's most celebrated writers, won the International Man Booker prize for his latest novel, *A Horse Walks Into A Bar*. On June 14, he became the first Israeli writer to ever win this prestigious award.

The book, one of Grossman's least political novels, is a short, emotionally demanding masterpiece, set in a Netanya basement comedy club, over the course of one night.

The outline of the story is simple. A cross-section of Israelis come to be entertained by a well-known but long-

away with it.

During the course of the evening, Dovaleh keeps directing his show away from his well-practiced comedy shtick to the most personal stories of his family and life, upsetting many in the audience. Many people leave, which precipitates his tragic unravelling on the stage.

Grossman has the power to create a despicable protagonist whose very presence on the page fills the reader with at best, indifference and antipathy, but more realistically loathing. He then peels away his layers of aggression and crudeness to reveal a traumatised and damaged

person we cannot help but sympathise with.

During the course of the night Dovaleh is able to present his case to the judge he invited, and subject himself to a very strange but redemptive form of justice.

In an interview earlier this year, Grossman told the Jewish American author Nicole Krauss (author of *The History of Love*) that he had been working on the idea for this book for 24 years.

*A Horse Walks Into A Bar* started from the image of a young Israeli teen who is attending a youth army camp in the far south of Israel. He is

called by a commander and told he has to attend a funeral, his first, in Jerusalem, but is not who told whose.

In the suffocating ride north, he suffers a trauma that gives definition to his life. Over the years, Grossman revisited this image but was not ready to write the novel until he thought of the least likely audience to hear the now middle-aged person's pleas to be understood: an audience at a comedy club.

This short book is not an easy read. However, Grossman, a master of economy, manages to pack the novel with enough concentrated

emotional charges that the reader is increasingly too emotionally invested in Dovaleh to put the book aside and leave him deserted on the stage, like so many in the audience do.

Instead we, together with Avishai the judge and Azulai the midget, are drawn in like voyeurs watching a man in self-destruct mode.

The comedy club setting is in truth a stroke of genius, allowing for a stark contrast between the flippant and the serious, using comedy, an art form that makes light of the serious, to shed light on a lifetime of pain.

Grossman creates a cringe-inducing crumbling of Dovaleh's façade, allowing his authentic self to break through. He sets the judge up, ironically, as a sympathetic witness, whose very act of listening and allowing for Dovaleh's stories to be told, brings about the comedian's redemption.

A famous critic of the Netanyahu government, Grossman withdrew his name from the candidacy list of the Israel Prize for Literature, after Prime Minister Netanyahu tried to remove two judges from the judging panel, as he claimed they were anti-Zionist.

When reading *A Horse Walks Into A Bar*, it is difficult to separate the character Dovaleh from the author David Grossman. Just as the comedian exposes himself to his

audience, the author exposes himself to his readers.

Grossman believes that as a writer he needs to do this. Through his work, he subjects himself and his writing to all possible criticism in a process that can be painful, but is ultimately creative and socially constructive. He calls this pain the tax he has to pay for the benefits of sharing his writing.

Grossman also believes that societies and nations can bury their true selves beneath mistakes and national narratives. A famous critic of the Netanyahu government, Grossman withdrew his name from the candidacy list of the Israel Prize for Literature, after Prime Minister Netanyahu tried to remove two judges from the judging panel, as he claimed they were anti-Zionist.

Grossman is the author of *Yellow Wind*, an influential collection of essays on the conditions Palestinians live under, which was published in 1987. He is feted by Israeli's liberal, left-leaning cultural elite and in similar circles abroad.

Right-wing Israeli nationalists,

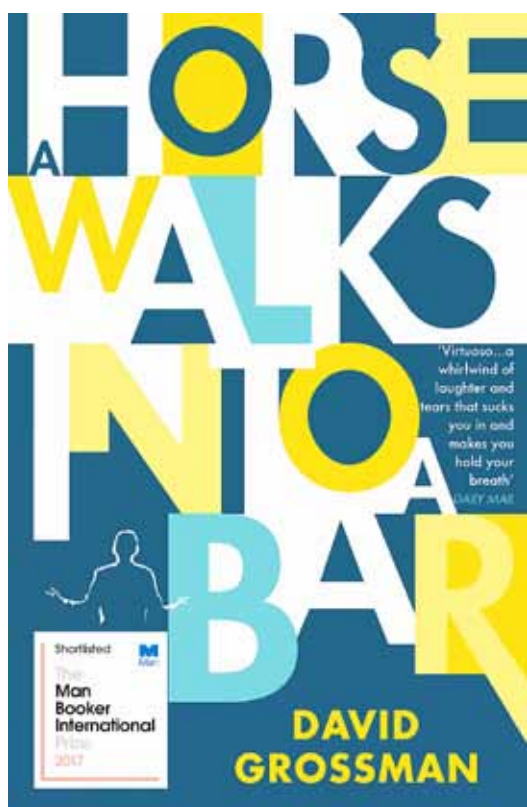
however disown Grossman and fellow author Amos Oz, who was also short-listed for the International Man Booker for his recent novel, *Judas*.

Netanyahu himself took almost 24 hours to issue a terse mazaltov to Grossman, inspiring a headline in the local media: *A Horse Walks Into a Controversy*.

Grossman lives with his wife, child psychologist Michal Grossman in Mevasseret Zion on the outskirts of Jerusalem. His son Uri, a tank commander, was killed in the 2006 war in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah. Grossman's book *Falling Out of Time*, a modern Israeli classic, was inspired by this personal tragedy.

He also began dealing more directly with the Israeli Palestinian conflict in his novels, resulting in his masterpiece *To the End of the Land*.

Independent of one's political stance, *A Horse Walks Into A Bar* is a worthy winner of the Man Booker International Prize, and in its own right a book that shows with compassion how a broken man can claw his way back to an ultimate redemption.



past-his-prime comic, the self-styled Dovaleh G. In the audience, invited by Dovaleh, is a retired judge, Avishai Lazar, who does not know why he has been invited.

Also present is Azulai Pinz, a midget who coincidentally lived in the same neighbourhood as Dovaleh, Mamilla in Jerusalem, when they were children. Dovaleh is a comedian of the most vulgar type; he is aggressive and his biting comedy takes shots at every taboo topic, from the Holocaust to the Palestinians.

Only a Jew could tell the Dr Mengele jokes he does and get



David Grossman.

## Hell's Zaidas riding to the Karoo

Three prominent members of the Cape Jewish community, Michael Bagraim, Alvin Kushner and David Janks, braved the winter weather and embarked on a motorbike tour from Cape Town to the Karoo after Shabbos last weekend.

The bikers' first stop was the famous Lord Milner Hotel in Matjiesfontein. Bagraim is a DA member of parliament, a top labour lawyer, a past chairman and president of the national South African Jewish Board of Deputies and the Shadow Minister of Labour. Kushner is the immediate-past chairman of the SA Union for Progressive Judaism and National Chairman of the South African Jewish Maritime League and Janks is an attorney.





# Celebrating 100 – looking back to a different time



Denzil Levy flanked by his two daughters Fanelle and Marilyn and Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft.

## ISAAC REZNIK

Denzil Levy - the doyen of the Port Elizabeth community - celebrated his 100th birthday last Wednesday. His already wonderful milestone birthday was improved when a courier arrived with a birthday card from Queen Elizabeth.

He had written to her and sent a photograph of his late father, Reverend Abraham Levy, who had entertained King George VI, his wife, Princess Margaret and the present queen on their visit to South Africa in 1947.

Denzil was an architect, having obtained his degree from Wits University and had a private practice in Port Elizabeth. From the outset of his career, he contributed selflessly to various organisations that promoted culture, religion and the arts.

His involvement in Jewish religious life in Port Elizabeth, stems from his background. His father rendered distinguished service to Port Elizabeth Hebrew Congregation over many years. The communal centre in the city, which housed the main shul, was named after him.

Denzil has played an extremely active role in various aspects of Port Elizabeth community life - also among non-Jews - but his greatest contribution has been to the fine arts. He was a founder member of the King George VI Art Gallery Association in 1972, serving as vice-chairman for 15 years and chairman for another 16 years.

However, Denzil will never forget being a 17-year-old in 1934 when his father was first confronted by the libellous, trumped-up charges against him and Port Elizabeth's Jewish community by the notorious anti-Semitic organisation, the Greyshirts.

Reverend Levy, with the support of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, instituted the libel action against Johannes von Moltke, at the time leader of the South African Gentile National Socialist Movement, David Hermanus Olivier, editor of Die Rapport, the official organ of the South African Gentile National Socialist Movement and Harry Victor Inch, the Eastern Cape leader of the Greyshirts.

The three eventually faced trial at

Grahamstown for having defamed the Jewish people and Rev Levy in particular, by the publication of libellous statements against them.

Von Moltke maintained he had "incontrovertible proof" of the existence of a secret Jewish plot to destroy the Christian religion and overthrow the existing order. At a public meeting in the Market Square of Aberdeen on March 27, 1934, Von Moltke and his cronies announced that the proof was contained in a secret document allegedly stolen from the Western Road Synagogue

No such document had in fact ever existed in the synagogue and it was clear some Greyshirts had deliberately concocted the false document.

in Port Elizabeth and signed by the synagogue's Rabbi Avraham Levy - father of Denzil.

Von Moltke repeated his allegations at a public meeting a few days later in the Feather Market Centre in Port Elizabeth.

The so-called "secret document", was a clumsy and illiterate concoction, purported to be a copy of "lectures". The contents of these so-called "lectures" were obviously inspired by the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and included scurrilous caricatures of the English, Dutch, and black inhabitants of South Africa, the Jews' plans for world domination and revenge and for the victory of communism.

This led to the sensational Greyshirts' libel trial which ended in the obvious vindication of the Jewish community and Rev Levy.

The so-called "stolen" document followed closely the highly discredited Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a pamphlet of some 70 pages purporting to be the actual minutes of 24 speeches made by Jewish leaders during the First Zionist Congress in 1897.

The pamphlet detailed, inter alia, a satanic plot by Jewish/Zionist

conspirators to conquer the world.

The libel trial took place in Grahamstown before Judge-President Sir Thomas Graham and Justice Gutche.

The Greyshirts numbered at its peak some 2 000 members. The core of its ideology was racist anti-Semitism. Following the German Nazi model, the Greyshirts claimed that, inter alia, Jews were an Asiatic, anti-Christian and inassimilable race who were inherently antisocial and parasitic. Moreover, they were organised internationally in a world conspiracy that aimed at global domination.

On August 24, 1934, Judge President Graham, with Mr Justice Gutche concurring, delivered a lengthy judgment. The court unequivocally accepted the evidence of Reverend Levy and his witnesses, and denounced the documents as a forgery.

No such document had in fact ever existed in the synagogue and it was clear some Greyshirts had deliberately concocted the false document. An amount of £1 000 damages was awarded against Inch, £750 against Von Moltke and £250 against Olivier, with costs in each case.

Following the evidence which he had given in the case, Inch was subsequently criminally indicted and was found guilty of compiling a forged document,

making false statements in affidavits and of perjury. He was sentenced to several years' imprisonment.

Members of the Greyshirts movement, later known as the Brown shirts, which evolved into the Ossewa-Brandwag, were Nazi sympathisers, such as Robey Leibbrandt, John Vorster (who later became prime minister) and "Lang Hendrik" van den Berghe

(who later became head of the Bureau for State Security, more commonly known as BOSS) They were among those arrested by the government of General Jannie Smuts and convicted on treason charges, which carried the death penalty.

They were pardoned when the National Party came into power in 1948.

During the 14 years his father was dealing with this, Denzil finished school at Grey High School in Port Elizabeth. He then joined the South African Airforce in February 1941, serving in East Africa for a time and then in Egypt, until September 1943. He was discharged in 1945 when the war ended.

As a known

philanthropist, he has served the community of Port Elizabeth for some 60 years through his involvement in no less than 39 public committees and trusts devoted to the promotion of a wide range of social, religious and cultural pursuits vital to the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality.



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# J'accuse! - No-one can say we did not know



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

A famous example of a journalist bravely speaking truth to power, regardless of personal consequences, comes from Jewish history in 1898, when French writer Emile Zola (a non-Jew), published a front page open letter in the paper L'Aurore to the French President headlined "J'accuse...!" [In English: "I accuse...! Letter to the President of the Republic"].

It was about the notorious Dreyfus affair and became a benchmark for journalistic daring towards people in high office.

A Jewish officer in the French army, Alfred Dreyfus was accused of selling military secrets to the Germans, convicted of treason and jailed, though there was no direct evidence.

Zola risked his career by accusing the army of obstruction of justice and anti-Semitism. He wanted a libel case to be opened against him so evidence disproving Dreyfus' guilt would be made public. The case divided France bitterly between the army and Catholic Church, and liberal society.

Zola was tried and convicted for criminal libel. He fled to England, saying: "The truth is on the march, and nothing shall stop it." In 1906, the Supreme Court exonerated Dreyfus. Zola's 1898 article marked a significant journalistic victory.

In South Africa today, the thousands of leaked Gupta-family e-mails incriminating public officials in self-enriching sleaze, are a foundation for the "J'accuse" of this country. It comes amidst growing intimidation of journalists.

Last week Suna Venter (32), an SABC journalist fired for resisting censorship at the public broadcaster, died. She had been harassed, shot with a pellet gun, threatened by phone and assaulted.

Her car's tyres were slashed and brake cables cut, and her flat broken into. She was diagnosed with "Broken Heart Syndrome", a cardiac condition from stress which weakens heart muscles.

And also last week, the group Black First Land First (BLF) - a mob of black fascists parading as "activists" with reported links to the Gupta family - harassed respected journalist Peter Bruce outside his home, and published a list of white journalists they would target, including the country's finest: Peter Bruce, Sam Sole, Adriaan Basson, Stephen Grootes, Max du Preez, Barry Bateman and Alec Hogg.

All were critical of the Zuma government and links to the Guptas. BLF also said "black" journalists such as Ferial Haffajee, Karima Brown and Eusebius McKaiser, who mimic these "white agents of white monopoly capital... must repent, ask for forgiveness from black people for being used by white monopoly capital".

South Africa has a short tradition of democracy. Its young plant of freedom could still be uprooted. One does not need a long memory to recall apartheid, when journalists took extreme personal risks to write truthfully about the goings-on. One well-known example was Ruth First - wife of underground activist Joe Slovo - who was murdered in exile by apartheid forces in 1982 by means of a parcel bomb.

Fortunately, the freedom struggle is sufficiently recent, so many who fought it are still around. They will not go quietly into the night. And younger journalists are coming up unafraid to tell the truth, at personal risk.

ANC bigwigs say "irresponsible" journalists badmouth people in authority unjustly. In Jewish terminology, they accuse the media of lashon hara - malicious gossip-mongering.

A Yiddish parable likens gossip to taking a feather mattress up a mountain and cutting it open: the feathers, like loose talk, fly in the wind and cannot be pulled back. This is doubly apt in the Twitter age.

In our current political context, the concept must be inverted. The feathers from the leaked Gupta e-mails being released, are grains of truth. Bluster and arrogance from the ANC cannot pull them back.

In South Africa today, we can no longer say we did not know about the corruption and lies. The question is: what will we do about it?

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

## Community Column

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# Masuko Equality Court outcome shows system is working

As has been more fully reported on elsewhere in this issue, the Equality Court last week upheld a ruling by the SA Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) that Cosatu International Relations spokesman, Bongani Masuku, had been guilty of making anti-Semitic and threatening statements against the Jewish community and directing him to apologise unconditionally for this.

The court found Masuku's statements to be "hurtful, harmful, [to] incite harm, and propagate hatred, and amount to hate speech".

The case had its origins in a formal complaint lodged by the SAJBD against Masuku in March 2009. This followed a series of abusive, as well as threatening, comments made by Masuku, in written communications and on a public speaking platform at Wits University.

In its ruling, issued in December 2009, the SAHRC upheld the Board's complaint, observing that the impugned statements were "of an extreme nature that advocate and imply that the Jewish and Israeli community are to be despised, scorned, ridiculed and therefore subjecting them to ill-treatment on the basis of their religious affiliation".

Had Masuku complied with the ruling that he apologise for his remarks that would have been the end of the matter. Instead, Masuku, with his organisation's backing, refused to do so, with the result that the SAHRC eventually decided to approach the Equality Court to get its ruling enforced.

The case was heard in the Johannesburg High Court, acting in this matter as an Equality Court, with the SAJBD providing whatever assistance it could to the SAHRC's legal team as and when required.

From the Board's point of view, the

outcome has vindicated our decision to take up this matter and do whatever was necessary to follow it through. In addition to bringing this particular case to a satisfactory resolution, what the whole

experience has demonstrated is that the system put in place to protect citizens from hate speech and threats (including by political leaders) is working.

The process may often take time, but sooner or later, those guilty of infringing our community's rights, will be made to answer for it. The SAHRC has dealt with this particular matter in an exemplary manner throughout, doing everything necessary to follow through despite the other side's delaying tactics and general unwillingness to co-operate or respect its decisions.

In its press statement, the Board observed that what emerged from the judgement was that threats and insults against Jews who support

Israel, cannot be justified on the alleged basis that such attacks were aimed not at Jews but at "Zionists".

The broader implications for South African law is that it is unacceptable to incite hatred and/or harm against a particular group, whether defined by ethnicity, religion, nationality or other such grounds, by using different terminology to refer to them when a reasonable person would understand who in reality was being targeted.

The case has further confirmed our community's right to identify with and where desired to speak out on behalf of Israel without being subjected to threats and intimidation. It is hoped that Masuku will comply with the court's decision that he apologise, thereby bringing this matter to finality and allowing all the parties to move on.

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



Above Board

Jeff Katz

National Chairman

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

## Letters

### DISAGREEING WITH SOME OF HOWARD FELDMAN'S REMARKS

I refer to Howard Feldman's column in last week's paper, concerning minyanim. I am a little surprised by his remarks concerning picking "bits of bacon from salads", "removing bread from cheeseburgers", Yom Kippur dances, the implication of skimpy dress for formal occasions practised by "Traditional" Jews 40 years ago.

By that he implies Jewish Johannesburg behaviour in the mid-1970s. I find that a little exaggerated, to say the least:

1. Yom Kippur dances came to a halt in the later 1950s.
2. I grew up on the East Rand and one never experienced women arriving for shul services skimpily dressed. In fact, most dressed pretty modestly; I have a pretty good memory. Further, the fashion was to wear fancy hats rather than sheitels, which were not freely available!
3. Jewish day schools were started, if I recall, in the 1960s, the old age home (Meishefs' Keinmim) already existed in Doornfontein from the 1930s or earlier. Our Parents Home

was built in the late 1940s, The Zionist Record and Jewish Chronicle and regular journals, were already being published from before the Second World War. I remember two yeshivot in the Doornfontein district from the 1930s.

It took the arrival of the Lubavitch Foundation, and Ohr Somayach shlichim to "switch on" almost the whole of South African Jewry to become more observant than before this. This has had an enormous influence on most Jews, both in South Africa and in fact worldwide.

Coming to shul by car is another issue entirely. Would you require disabled, or aged persons, to walk sometimes three to four kilometres to get to shul? That would not be on. Would that there were more shtieblach near to those persons!

I thus request Mr Feldman to correct some of his remarks.

Maurice Skikne  
Johannesburg

### ANTI-JEWISH LETTER AMMUNITION FOR STEPHEN GOODSON ILK

Last week's Jewish Report contained three articles denouncing the anti-Jewish action by the Public Protector. The paper unfortunately contained an anti-Jewish letter by Lionel Marcus, which provides ammunition for Holocaust denier Stephen Goodson and others like him to substantiate their rhetoric against Jews.

The letter starts by stating: "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".

The latter general statement and the rest of the letter support the following phrases by Stephen Goodson:

"The unsound business practices of Jews"

"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..."

Many other phrases.

The above phrases are taken from the article by Nicola Miltz, on page 3 of last week's Jewish Report.

The Beth Din in South Africa is available for Jews to settle any malpractice between Jews. The letter by Lionel Marcus in which he paints all Jews with the same brush, does not belong in a Jewish newspaper. Say no to lashon hara.

Louis Mielke  
Johannesburg



# Making a young boy's dreams come true...

Every little boy wants to be a fireman when he grows up, doesn't he? In the "old" days there seemed to be aspirations for boys to become doctors, lawyers or chartered accountants. Today it's probably more about being in IT or having your own high-tech business?

Our 10-year-old has wanted to be a paramedic - and a chazzan - for as long he can remember. Both choices that have admittedly taken the rest of us by surprise, but the passion he has for both are inspiring. (He is in "charge" of the emergency medical kits at home and on any holiday, and last year in South Africa he asked his primary school headmaster to allow all the children in his grade to attend first aid courses with Hatzolah Medical Rescue team in Johannesburg.)

This year, as new olim, our young "resident paramedic-in-waiting", asked if he could spend his birthday visiting the headquarters of United Hatzalah of Israel, in Jerusalem. We'd joked that he was more excited about this pending trip, than most boys would be to visit Disneyland or watch a Premier League soccer game.

For him, it was a dream come true. But we had no idea the impact this birthday visit would have...

We were met at the offices in a bustling part of Jerusalem

## Aliyah – the good, the bad and the meshuga

### Benita Levin

by the enigmatic and energetic Shai Jaskoll, who took us into a boardroom to show us presentations about the emergency rescue organisation.

Shai explained how United

As we left the operations centre, there he was. Shai introduced us to the humble and affable Eli Beer, who seemed visibly moved when he heard about his young fan.

Hatzalah began, and our (now) young wide-eyed 11-year-old, began finishing his sentences. Unbeknown to us, he had already watched all the organisation's online YouTube videos and was

surprisingly very well-versed in the remarkable story of its founder, Eli Beer.

So, you can only imagine, what it would have been like for him then to hear that his hero was in fact, in the building. We were taken to the operations centre, filled with volunteers who monitor highways on screens in front of them, take in emergency calls and assign direct rescue teams to emergency scenes.

The technology involved might make many feel like they were on a James Bond movie set.

We were told paramedics usually arrive at the scene on their bikes before ambulances can get through traffic. The planned time it takes to respond to an emergency call? Ninety seconds. The pressure these controllers work under is remarkable. A whole

room full of calm, highly-trained volunteer lifesavers, helping anyone - of any religion - in an emergency.

As we left the operations centre, there he was. Shai introduced us to the humble and affable Eli Beer, who seemed visibly moved when he heard about his young fan. He held his head in his two hands and kissed him on the forehead.

And just when the birthday experience couldn't get any better, by sheer coincidence American singer Benny Friedman was also on a tour of the premises. (Our son had been to hear him sing during his last concert in South Africa and now Benny Friedman was singing happy birthday to him in Jerusalem!) The birthday experience? Unforgettable.

As we went to look at the array of rescue bikes outside, we were

introduced to identical twins Shlomo and Eliezer Brandmark, from the rescue team. Two unassuming, animated-looking men, in black pants, white shirts and black yarmulkes, who between them are on call every day, 365 days a year, including Shabbat and chaggim.

Their faces light up as they speak about the most fulfilling part of their work - when you walk past a person in the street and recognise them as a patient you've attended to at an accident scene. "When they have no idea that you have helped save their life, that is the best feeling."

This unforgettable "birthday visit" has inspired an already keen future paramedic to follow in the footsteps of these unsung heroes. Now that is a true gift...

**Word of the week** - "Chabibi" - slang for "my friend".

**New phrase of the week** - "Loh Echat Li" - It does not worry me, (usually said while shrugging one's shoulders).

**Smile of the week** - Meeting a woman who made aliyah from India, 20 years ago. She advised me to not only eat in Israeli restaurants, assuring me that the Indian cuisine here is even better than in Durban!

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1939 = R10 000 Up to R30 000



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1931 = R10 000 Up to R50 000



# Collecting shoes for Africa

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Sophie Hodes and Jade Robinson from King David Linksfield Junior School - both nine years old and in grade 3 - were determined to collect shoes for people less fortunate than themselves.

School Principal Ruth Isaacson suggested they collect for Boikanyo the Dion Herson Foundation, a non-profit organisation working with indigent children and their caregivers in impoverished township communities within Gauteng.

Tsogo Sun's Gold Reef City sponsored amazing prizes that the girls used to encourage their fellow learners to donate shoes. The prizes included tickets to see Puss in Boots at the Lyric Theatre, theme park tickets, as well as meal vouchers and ten pin bowling tickets for Gold Reef City.

The girls sold raffle tickets at school for R5 a ticket or five tickets per pair of shoes donated.

The raffle was held for two weeks and the girls collected an amazing 300 pairs of shoes and R500 for Boikanyo.



Jade Robinson and Sophie Hodes from King David Linksfield Junior School, being interviewed on their "shoe initiative".

## Handing over tuck money for needy in Knysna

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Eleven-year-old Jewish Johannesburg schoolboy, Ethan Ferreira, was so moved by the devastating fires which consumed hundreds of homes in Knysna and Plettenberg Bay recently, he felt he had to do something.

Ethan, who goes to King Edward VII Preparatory School, heard individuals and companies being challenged to contribute to the disaster fund on radio station 947 one Thursday.

Ethan e-mailed the station, asking to go on air, so that he could challenge other schoolchildren to contribute to the disaster fund. Alas, he got no reply. Undeterred, he took the idea to school, where he challenged the boys to either donate their tuck money for two weeks or to donate a portion of their pocket money.

So was born his own Knysna Pay it Forward Challenge. Ethan was able to raise R2 429,30.

As he is a passionate animal lover, he is donating the money raised, to the Campaign for Knysna Animals, which is run by the Knysna Animal Welfare Society (KAWS). KAWS engages in rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming animals, where possible.



## Celebrating his barmy for the third time



OWN CORRESPONDENT

Ninety-six-year-old Maish Cohen celebrated his third bar mitzvah at Rabbi Gavin Michal's Bal Shem Tov Shul in Orange Grove, last Shabbos.

According to Tehillim we should live three score and 10. That's 70 years. Thirteen years after 70 he had his second bar mitzvah at 83 and time for the third one came around.

Maish was born on June 27, 1921, in what was then called the Transkei.

He is known as "an amazing gentleman" with "a gentle touch for humanity". His mind is amazingly sharp and he still remembers almost every person's telephone number. He will add a column of figures without using a calculator. His passion is watching sport. He makes a note at the beginning of the week of each rugby or cricket game and watches all of them.

In 2015, he wanted to visit his daughter in Australia. He underwent all the required medicals and passed with flying colours. The Australian authorities would not accept this, so they sent him to their appointed doctors in South Africa.

Maish passed with flying colours, but still the powers-that-be would not accept these results. So, they sent him to more specialists for more tests - and again he passed with flying colours. December arrived and finally the approval for the visit came through. Maish then decided that on his terms, because they don't want him, he was not going to go!

Now, although he is physically quite frail, he is in great health and loved celebrating his barmy.

Friday (July 7)

- UZLC hosts Charisse Zeifert on "Speaking on ChaiFM". Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45-14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.



experiences at various international exhibitions "Letters and Other Fascinating Stories - Philately Will Get You Everywhere". Venue: HOD. Time: 19:30. Cost: R25 (incl tea and refreshments). RSVP: Hannah (011) 485-2188 or igssa16@gmail.com

Sunday (July 9)

- Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets at Beit Emanuel Slome Auditorium in Parktown. This programme is compiled by Don Albert. He will be playing some of the music of Dave Pell, the tenor saxophonist with Les Brown. After interval a DVD of Duke Ellington. Time: 14:15 sharp. Enquiries: Marilyn 072-243-7436 or Jack 082-450-7622.
- Jewish Genealogical Society of SA hosts Dr Les Glassman, renowned Israeli stamp expert, who will discuss family stories associated with his

- Second Innings hosts Ray Pogir, curator of the SA Pharmacy Museum, on "Mortars, Microscopes and Microchips". Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: Tea at 10:00. Meeting starts promptly at 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Information: Linda Fleishman (011)-532-9701.

## Venter to hold the flag

Cricketer Colin Venter will be the flag bearer for Team Maccabi SA at the opening ceremony of the 20th Maccabiah, taking place on July 6 at the Teddy Kolek Stadium in Israel.

This 28-year-old has never let his hearing disability impede his sporting prowess in any way. He was a member of the gold medal-winning team at the 2013 Games and has, over the years, amassed an impressive list of achievements.

On learning of his selection, Venter commented: "It is with great pride and honour that I accept the immense responsibility of bearing the South African flag at such a prestigious Jewish event. Having been the captain of the SA Deaf Cricket Team, I am humbled by the opportunity to once again lead a group of exceptionally talented sportsmen and women.

"May the gold in our flag be a reminder of what we as South Africans are capable of achieving and may it remind us of the spirit of ubuntu. Let's bring home the gold!

"One of the fundamental principles of South Africa is that of diversity and acceptance of this diversity. I feel honoured to personify this belief as I am a deaf athlete who has been privileged to represent my country in various events."

Colin made his debut for the SA Deaf Cricket Team in 2011 and was appointed captain in 2016. He has also captained the Gauteng Deaf Cricket Team since 2011, winning numerous championships. He has twice won Cricket SA's Deaf Cricketer of the Year award and also won multiple interprovincial player awards.

"Colin is a talented cricketer who has represented his country with distinction both on and off the field. He has all the qualities we seek, including sporting success, leadership skills, sportsmanship and importantly is a very proud South African," said Clifford Garrun, chairman of Maccabi SA. "He is an exemplary role model for our juniors and we are honoured to have him as our flag bearer."





# KDVP kids share in nachas



Photo supplied

**KDVP learners attend the theatre production, Cinderella at the People's Theatre, to support fellow pupils Demi Cohen and Rio Immerman.**

## LEEAT CONFAIT

The King David Victory Park campus has always prided itself on its small, intimate classes with individual attention and being a school that is part of a special community. When one experiences nachas, they all celebrate together as a family.

Grade Rs from the nursery school, as well as the grade 1-3s from the primary school, gathered last Thursday to share in the nachas of past nursery and current primary school learners Demi Cohen and Rio Immerman, as they performed in the production of Cinderella at the People's Theatre.

What an amazing show it was!



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Photo: Shelley Poznanski

**Jenna Hodes and Shanti Daitz (grade 3).**

# Sandton Sinai's 'Sci-bono on steroids'

## AMY JAFFE

Sandton Sinai hosted a "Science Expo" for all primary school families. On display were amazing pieces of work presented by learners from grade R through to grade 4.

The expo highlighted the integration of material across curricula, as well as the collaborative learning which takes places between learners, teachers and parents.

One of the parents aptly described

the evening as "Sci-bono on steroids".

As parents walked through the classrooms, they were privileged to engage with learners as they conducted their experiments. Presentations ranged from space, to experiments with food; from skeletons, to Israel's contribution to science.

Parents were amazed by the amazing projects and classwork which was also on display.



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# Sydenham Pre-Primary offers oodles of holiday fun

## MARILYN SEREBRO

Holiday school at Sydenham Pre-Primary is the place to be this July! It started with a bang on Monday, with a carnival.

The kids had an absolute blast playing pass the parcel, skittles, throwing bean bags, going full throttle on the jumping castle and searching for treasure on an enthralling treasure hunt.

The holiday school runs the whole week, with each day centred on a theme: Tuesday - a scavenger hunt; Wednesday - whacky scientist day; Thursday - a rock n roll party; and Friday - a Chinese cook-out. What fun!



**Sharna Licht with Sammy and Aurelie, at the scavenger hunt.**

# Cross-country running across the schools

## OWN CORRESPONDENT

Torah Academy Primary School fared well in the inter-Jewish day schools cross country, held at King David Primary School, Sandton last week. Many children came in the top 10 of their division.

Pictured are the under-9 boys: Ari Levin; Tzvi Bronstein; Ofir Elmaleh; and Pinni Ash.



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# Diego Schwartzman - the best Jewish tennis player on earth

**GABE FRIEDMAN  
LONDON**

Twenty-four-year-old Diego Schwartzman of Argentina was the great Jewish hopeful when Wimbledon started this week, with no other Jewish player being seeded higher for this tournament.

Seeded 37th, Schwartzman got unstuck in his first round match against Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria. Dimitrov beat Schwartzman 7-6 in a tie-break, before cruising through the other two sets 6-2, 6-2.

"It was a tough match for both of

us; neither of us played good tennis," Schwartzman said after the game. "The conditions were tough, but at the end of the day he played a bit better than me."

Believing his opponent's experience contributed to the loss, he said: "The difference with the surface here and at the practice courts was a big one. He's also played more matches on this surface and I think he won because he knows the surface a bit better than me - these conditions aren't really suitable for my game."

This is his third appearance at the Championships - and third straight defeat - he does, though, say he enjoys playing on

grass.

"I really enjoy it", he said. "I had a match point to reach the second round in Eastbourne, and today I think in the first set I played some good tennis. I had the chance to close the first set, but it was really tough. When he ups the pace slightly, it's hard to play against players like him."

But tennis fundis still foresee a bright future for this scrappy lad from Buenos Aires, who had an impressive five-set duel with perennial star Novak Djokovic at the French Open last month.

Schwartzman, who was raised in a Jewish family in Buenos Aires, has steadily risen in the rankings since turning pro at 17. Between 2010 and 2012, he won nine tournaments in the International Tennis Federation — the sport's minor leagues. He won his first ATP Tour title at the Istanbul Open last year, then upsetting the highly ranked Dimitrov.

Schwartzman plays best on clay (a thick surface, used at the French Open, that deadens the ball), which has the opposite properties of a grass court (a swift surface used at Wimbledon).

Here are some fun (and Jewish) facts about the up-and-coming Argentine.

He is a celebrity among the Jews back home Schwartzman says he is always recognized on the streets by the Jews in his home country.

"I am Jewish and in Argentina, we have many Jewish [people] there, and all the people there know me," he said. Passers-by tell him, "Enjoy! Good luck this season. Come on, keep going!"

Schwartzman did not attend Hebrew school in Buenos Aires, but he said he tries to observe Jewish holidays on the pro tennis tour -- acknowledging it can be difficult.

He's only 5-foot-7.

No, this isn't basketball. But shorter tennis players are at a disadvantage — making his success even more surprising. Schwartzman must work harder to make sure his shots pack enough punch to hang with taller players (Dimitrov, for example, is 6-3). His size and playing style is

reminiscent of David Ferrer, a 5-9

Spaniard who once was ranked No. 3 in the world and reached the French Open final in 2013.

He has Israeli tennis friends.

Schwartzman told JTA that he is close friends with Dudi Sela and Jonathan Erlich. Sela, who used to be ranked in the top 30, is now 81 in the world. Erlich, a Buenos Aires native who grew up in Israel, was once a highly ranked doubles player, winning the 2008 Australian Open with another Israeli, Andy Ram.

"We ... always speak about everything," he said of Sela and Erlich.

Schwartzman plays best on clay (a thick surface, used at the French Open, that deadens the ball), which has the opposite properties of a grass court (a swift surface used at Wimbledon).

He's the third best player from South America.

Being one of the best players in South America, a region known for producing top tennis talent, is no easy feat. The only players currently ranked higher than Schwartzman from his continent are Pablo Cuevas of Uruguay, ranked 24th, and fellow Argentine Juan Martin del Potro, No. 32, who won the U.S. Open title in 2009 (and at 6-6 is nearly a foot taller than his countryman).

His favourite pastime is ... watching soccer!

Schwartzman may play tennis almost daily, but that doesn't mean he loves watching it. He told JTA that his fondest memories outside of the tennis court come from watching his favourite soccer team, the Boca Juniors, at the famous Bombonera Stadium in Buenos Aires. Not surprisingly, he's a big fan of Lionel Messi the star of Barcelona.

(Additional reporting: Wire Services)



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