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Jewish Report

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South African chess star Jacob Berman beats
Jewish Agency boss Natan Sharansky in
Maccabi chess friendly.
See page 5.

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Just say sorry, Kahn says to Masuku and Cosatu

ANT KATZ

Bongani Masuku is still refusing to say sorry for his hate speech about Jews, despite being ordered by law to do so twice... over a period of eight years.

The Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) has announced its intention to appeal last week's Equality Court ruling that their international relations secretary, Bongani Masuku, must apologise to South African Jewry for anti-Semitic statements he made in early 2009.

The Equality Court ordered Masuku to make "an unconditional apology". It recognised that: "even if... such apology will plainly not erase the contents of the impugned statements, it should, most importantly, recognise the fact that the statements are found to be hurtful and hate speech".

Wendy Kahn, national director of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, told Jewish Report this week that the Board "condemns all forms of hate in our country and would hope that Masuku would end this eight-year litigation process by just acknowledging the hurt caused to fellow South Africans".

Masuku originally made extremely inflammatory remarks, most of them at a public talk at Wits University, in which he openly threatened and incited violence against the country's Jewish community, in the wake of Operation Cast Lead, the penultimate Israeli incursion into Gaza, to stop Gazans from firing rockets on Israeli civilians.

In a statement, Cosatu said after the outcome of the Equality Court case, that it "shall be appealing the case to affirm the importance of our constitutionally guaranteed rights and defend the cause of justice and equality, particularly in a country with such a horrific history of racial dehumanisation, subjugation and discrimination of inferior races by the

master race, using all institutions



Bongani Masuku

It recognised that: "even if... such apology will plainly not erase the contents of the impugned statements, it should, most importantly, recognise the fact that the statements are found to be hurtful and hate speech".

and means at its disposal to perpetuate inequalities in the name of fighting for equality".

It added: "Given the importance of the many legal principles at stake, we are of the view that this judgment, if left unchallenged, will have a negative effect on freedom of speech, particularly as it concerns freedom of speech of contentious political issues."

Kahn said, however, that "while we

note comments made by Cosatu in a press statement issued earlier this week, we have had no formal notification of the appeal.

"We would have hoped that Bongani Masuku would have recognised the hurt that he caused through his threat to our community and would have apologised as instructed by the judge."

Cosatu, however, says it fears that if it apologises for threatening to harm and extradite South African Jews, "it may result in the effective erosion of the rights and democratic gains by workers".

Shabbat Times this week

Starts	Ends	
17:14	18:07	Johannesburg
17:37	18:32	Cape Town
16:55	17:49	Durban
17:16	18:09	Bloemfontein
17:08	18:03	Port Elizabeth
17:01	17:55	East London

Parshat Pinchas

Destiny beckons

How did an unknown youngster suddenly rise to prominence?

Pinchas, the hero of this week's parsha, was previously unheard of. Though, as a grandson of Aaron, he belonged to the "royal family", he was an unseeded young man, who, with a single act of bravery was catapulted to stardom.

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 82a) tells the behind-the-scenes story. Zimri, a prince of the tribe of Shimon, publicly flaunts his intimate relationship with a heathen Midianite princess. Moses is momentarily stymied.

Pinchas respectfully reminds Moses that he himself taught the principle that one who behaves as Zimri did, may be executed by the zealous.

Moses responds that since Pinchas remembered this, he, Pinchas, should be the one to carry it out. Pinchas duly does just that and the terrible plague that had taken the lives of thousands is stilled. G-d blesses Pinchas with His Covenant of Peace and he goes down in history as a hero who saved the day.

But why did Moses forget what he himself had taught? Apparently, Divine

Providence saw fit that the great prophet should suffer a temporary memory lapse in order that young Pinchas assume his destined status.

Now Pinchas could have made a simple calculation. Here stand Moses and Aaron, other prominent elders and leaders, and they are all silent. In the face of such brazen moral travesty all these great men stand back.

Who, then, am I to step forward? How can I, little old me, a new kid on the block, stand up and say what I believe in their august presence? Surely, I must keep quiet and hold my peace.

But Pinchas did not say that. And thank G-d he didn't. Had he kept his silence, the plague might not have been averted and Pinchas would have remained a nonentity.

This, says the Lubavitcher Rebbe, serves a powerful lesson to all of us. If you witness a situation where you feel that you can make a difference, then you must. And the fact that greater people than you seem paralysed, should not necessarily mean that you too should remain idle.

Rabbi Yossy Goldman
Sydenham Highlands
North Shul



Perhaps this is your unique chance to do something historic. Perhaps you are earmarked for greatness and G-d is opening your window of opportunity. Deny yourself this moment and you deny destiny.

Sometimes the moment is yours. Sometimes greater people may vacillate and the responsibility and opportunity rest with you and you alone. Each of us has so much unlocked potential. Rare and precious are those crossroads of life when the chance to unleash that inner calling, presents itself. This is your baby, your moment of glory, your own personal calling and you dare not desist from it.

Such was the case with Pinchas and such may be the scenario that every one of us may find ourselves playing out one day.

Pinchas reminds us that when opportunity knocks, we should open the door quickly. Do not hesitate. Destiny may be beckoning.

Search for family of Ethiopian Jew killed in car crash

TALI FEINBERG

He walked from Ethiopia to Israel and back again, was arrested on his return to that country, rescued and airlifted to Israel as part of Operation Moses. Then he found his way to South Africa, where he worked at Aquila Private Game Reserve for 20 years, was about to act in a film about Ethiopian Jews, and was tragically killed in a car crash at the beginning of July.

Now, community members and friends are searching desperately for the family of an Ethiopian Jewish man known as Tamrat Tazita (not his full name) - whose life was as dramatic as his death - killed when his car went off a misty mountain pass in Ceres.

“He sent money to his family in Israel every month,” says labour lawyer Michael Bagraim, who had written his letter of appointment when he began working at Aquila Private Game Reserve in the Western Cape.

“He was very proud of his Jewish identity,” explains Derman, who describes Tazita as wearing a large silver Magen Dovid, and reading books from the Gitlin, multiple times.

“Now they don’t know what happened to him,” continues Bagraim. The Israeli Embassy and other avenues have not turned out any information about the names or whereabouts of his family, presumed to be in Israel.

“We have private investigators trying to find them,” says Searl Derman, owner of Aquila Private Game Reserve, who employed Tazita for over 20 years. “We’re also looking into his bank records and Facebook contacts.”

The two were as close as siblings, but Derman explains that Tazita never spoke of his family in Israel, especially because he saw the Dermans as his family. “I’ve lost a brother,” says Derman, who adds that Tazita was extremely close to his mother, caring for her and living with her until her death. The two saw each other as mother and son, and Tazita also looked after Derman’s children.

Buried at Pinelands Jewish Cemetery in Cape Town, the large turnout at Tazita’s funeral - mainly Aquila staff members - was testament to his loyalty, popularity and amazing life story.

Cape Jewish Board Deputy Director Gwynne Robins, who was very fond of Tazita, says: “Some years ago I met an Ethiopian Jew who used to work for the Community Security Organisation (CSO) and was a useful bodyguard for the Israeli ambassador, as no one thought

this black man following him could be Jewish,” she says.

“I invited him to be one of the speakers at our Freedom Seder and at Herzlia School, and he was in tears as he told how he walked from Ethiopia and made his way to Israel, returning some years later to bring across his mother and sisters - only to be arrested for leaving Ethiopia and being thrown into jail, then being rescued as part of the massive Ethiopian airlift to Israel.”

Tazita went on to work at Aquila and would visit the Gitlin Library whenever he was in town. He even arranged a free day pass for the Gitlin Librarian and Robins to visit the game reserve.

Then, “a few months ago I got a call from an American film team who were producing a film about Operation Moses, and they wanted an Ethiopian Jew to act in it,” says Robins.

“I put them in touch with Tamrat, who they met, and they were thrilled with him because he had been part of that airlift and was so presentable. He arranged leave from Aquila to take part in the film, which was to be shot in August.”

At the beginning of this month, the film crew casting coordinator Candice Maree called Robins to say that Tamrat had been killed in a horrific car crash in thick mist in the Ceres Mountains. His cell phone and records were all smashed and they had no personal details to contact his family, says Robins.

How Tazita came to work at Aquila Private Game Reserve is another turn of fate in his fascinating life story. He came to Cape Town, as he could not find work in Israel. On the day he arrived he was taken to the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies’ office, who contacted Searl Derman, asking if he knew anyone who could give him a job.

Searl owned a security company at the time, and as he was in the area, he picked up Tamrat from the Cape Board, found him a place to stay and trained him within a week, giving him his first job.

From then on, the two were inseparable. “He always had my back, he was always in my corner,” says Derman. Tazita was by his side as he developed the game reserve, “and we always klibed nachas from his achievements, as he was there from the beginning”.

A lifelong learner, Tamrat trained in computers and hospitality and went on to essentially run the hospitality side of Aquila, managing about 100 staff members as well as the restaurant and banqueting for corporate guests.

He was in many ways the front of house, and Bagraim says he was always the first person he asked to see when he visited the reserve.



Tamrat Tazita with Patsy Bagraim at Aquila Private Game Reserve

A pallbearer at the funeral, Bagraim said it was one of the more unusual funerals he has attended, with just over a minyan of Jewish mourners and many more Aquila staff members, who joined arms in mourning. “He was buried according to Orthodox Jewish rites,” says Rabbi Ruben Suiza, who officiated at the funeral.

“He was very proud of his Jewish identity,” explains Derman, who describes Tazita as wearing a large silver Magen Dovid, and reading books from the Gitlin, multiple times.

He was well-respected by religious leaders, and asked Jewish guests at the reserve to speak Hebrew to him.

“We found his tallis in his room after his death, and were able to get that to the Chevrah Kadisha,” adds Derman.

Rabbi Suiza says: “He was very loyal... not just to the people he met, but also to his Jewish

faith, Jewish history, and Zionism.”

Says Maree: “I was very honoured and lucky to meet Tamrat. He was a wonderful man, very well-spoken and polite, and he had one hell of a background.

“And the story we are telling was his struggle in reality. That’s why it was so important for me... I struggled for months to find the right person for this role, and when I met Tamrat I knew that he was the exact person for the role.

“Our story was his journey, and no one else could have done it better than he could. So, it’s going to be very hard to replace him, and he is and will be missed dearly for a very long time to come.”

Tazita was so looking forward to being part of the film, and Derman says that an employee reports talking to him about recently it for three hours. “He seemed very much at peace with his life,” adds Derman. Indeed, in a Facebook post, Tazita wrote:

“The things you do for yourself are gone when you (are) gone. but the things you do for others remain as your legacy.”

Derman feels that he and Tamrat meeting, was fateful in many ways, and he describes his friend as loyal, supportive, with a “bulletproof self-esteem” and a gentle soul.

“The only time I saw him fight was when it was for me,” remembers Derman. “He was always helping me live my dream. A peaceful man who fought my battles for me.

“He will be remembered for his loyalty, commitment, honesty and trustworthiness.” Although he feels that Tamrat did much more for him than he did in return, he admits that “we took care of each other”.



Tamrat Tazita

JAWITZ

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SA rabbi unfairly maligned by ‘blacklist’

NICOLA MILTZ

A well-known South African rabbi’s name appears on a “blacklist” of rabbis who Israel’s Chief Rabbinate apparently does not trust to confirm the Jewish identities of immigrants. He is the highly respected Rabbi Pesach Fishman of the Northcliff Hebrew Congregation, who this week said his name “appears quite mysteriously on this list”, and he had no idea why.

However, before the ink was totally dry on the blacklist, an official apology from the office of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel was on its way to the Beth Din, according to Rabbi Fishman and Rabbi Gidon Fox, chairman of the South African Rabbinical Association.

This so-called blacklist has caused major distress for some leading rabbis around the world. Last weekend, however, reports of this list - containing some 160 rabbis whose efforts to confirm the Jewish identities of immigrants - were rejected by Israel’s Haredi Orthodox-dominated Chief Rabbinate.

In order to get married in Israel, immigrants must provide the rabbinate with proof of their Jewish identity, which is often done in the form of a letter from a rabbi in their home community.

Rabbis from 24 countries, including the United States and Canada, are on the list. In addition to Reform and Conservative rabbis, the list includes several Orthodox leaders.

When Rabbi Fishman heard that his name was on the so-called “blacklist”, he described it as “an unfortunate incident” which was “troubling”.

According to reports this week, this damning list from the Rabbinate, landed in the hands of

Itim, The Jewish Advocacy Centre, a non-profit that guides Israelis through the country’s religious bureaucracy.

In 2015, Itim filed a freedom-of-information request in a Jerusalem municipal court demanding a list of approved foreign rabbis, and received this list as part of that case.

Rabbi Fox, who is also the rabbi of the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation, said: “The list itself is somewhat of a mystery. The answer as to how Rabbi Fishman’s name appeared, has still not been clarified. I wrote and called Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag of the Beth Din, expressing my dismay.

“Rabbi Fishman is well known within our community. He is a G-d-fearing man, a scholar of note and his presence on that list was totally unbecoming. The appearance of anybody’s name surely should have been preceded by rudimentary homework of contacting the Chief Rabbi or my organisation to inquire about the calibre of the person who was going to feature on the list. This was not done.”

At the time of going to press, Rabbi Fox and Rabbi Fishman had

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein said: “This is clearly a terrible mistake. Rabbi Fishman is known to me and all of his colleagues as a man of complete integrity, honesty and decency.”

not yet read the letter of apology which had been sent to the Beth Din.

“I have not read it yet, but should the wording not be sufficient to absolutely and unequivocally



Rabbi Pesach Fishman

exonerate the character of Rabbi Fishman, we will not settle for anything that is ambiguous in any shape or form,” said Rabbi Fox.

Rabbi Fishman had written letters for two people emigrating to Israel. He said: “I wrote those letters more than a year ago. These people have encountered no problems in making aliyah. Their immigration has been smooth sailing; in fact there will be a marriage next week under the auspices of the Rabbinate.

“I’m pleased that the misunderstanding is in the process of being clarified and put into perspective and that an apology has been issued,” Rabbi Fishman said.

Rabbi Fox was not as accepting. “I am dumbfounded that his name should appear on such a list,” he said. “It is tremendously disappointing that an office with

the stature of the Chief Rabbi of Israel, with or without the consent of the Chief Rabbi, could somehow disseminate a list that so impugns the integrity of any individual, in this case a rabbi is extremely distressing.

“The list came out on the cusp of the Three Weeks when we should be emphasising love for Israel and our fellow man, rather than experiencing character assassinations.”

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein said: “This is clearly a terrible mistake. Rabbi Fishman is known to me and all of his colleagues as a man of complete integrity, honesty and decency who would never do anything to justify his inclusion on such a list.”

In an attempt to put out this international fire, the Israeli

Chief Rabbinate explained the bureaucratic bungling by claiming the list of foreign rabbis had been “misconstrued”. It claimed that the list did not imply that those rabbis cannot be trusted to vouch for the Jewish identities of their followers.

The director-general of the rabbinate, Moshe Dagan, said in a letter to the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America that the proof-of-Judaism letters were rejected for a range of reasons, and that the list questioned the documentation, not the individual rabbis. Dagan added that these rejections were sometimes temporary.

The list that was publicised, is not a “list of unrecognised/unauthorised rabbis”, Dagan wrote, rather it is a list of rabbis whose letters regarding marriage were not recognised by the personal status and conversion division of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel “for whatever reason”.

Even though the list contained only the names of rabbis, Dagan wrote in bold type that “it is the documents that were presented which are unrecognised, not the rabbis.”

He added: “I am pained by the anguish caused to the respected rabbis who appear on the list, and will do everything I can to minimise the damage as much as possible and to take care that errors of this kind will not be repeated.”

Itim director, Rabbi Seth Farber, who received the list in an e-mail correspondence with the Chief Rabbinate, queried why the list was of rabbis’ names, not problems with documentation.

The list comprises rabbis whose letters the rabbinate rejected during 2016. Of 66 US rabbis included on the list, at least one-fifth are Orthodox, while almost all of the rest are Reform or Conservative. - (Additional reporting by JTA)

Opinion and Analysis

Rabbi challenges Israel’s Chief Rabbinate over the “blacklist”

RABBI SETH FARBER
JERUSALEM

International Jewish media this week reported on a “blacklist of rabbis” maintained by Israel’s Chief Rabbinate. The list contains the names of rabbis whom the rabbinate does not trust to confirm the Jewish identity of immigrants to Israel.

The list, obtained by Itim (The Jewish Advocacy Centre) from the rabbinate after a protracted legal battle, has sparked an uproar in Israel and around the Jewish world. I have been contacted by rabbis, politicians, Israeli and American consuls general and ambassadors, asking one question: Who is responsible for this mess?

If one asks Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi David Lau what happened, his argument - articulated in a letter his chief of staff sent to his CEO - is that a clerk went AWOL. According to Lau, Rabbi Itamar Tubul, director of certifications and personal status at the rabbinate, issued a list without consulting anyone.

The chief rabbi has asked the CEO to censure Tubul, thus, from his perspective, bringing an end to the travesty of the blacklist.

But Rabbi Tubul didn’t cause the blacklist

to be created. In fact, he is a manifestation of a systemic failure of the rabbinate, and in fact of Israel, to address the significance of the Jewish part of the Jewish State for the Jewish world.

“The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles,” Israel’s Declaration of Independence reads. “[I]t will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion...”

But today, rather than support its historic role as a homeland for Jews around the world, Israel’s government - through the rabbinate which it empowers - chooses to delegitimise hundreds of communities and rabbis throughout the Diaspora.

Rather than embracing the diversity of the Jewish world and enabling Jews not born in Israel to make their home here, Israel pushes them away - purportedly in the name of halacha, or Jewish law.

As an Orthodox rabbi I want to state categorically that rejecting people’s Jewishness is anti-halachic. The halacha is clear: Jews are to be believed if they say they are Jewish. The rabbinate is undermining the

very Judaism it wishes to sustain.

But of course, the present controversy isn’t only about halacha. It’s about power and accountability. The rabbinate has been allowed for too long to operate without any oversight, without any accountability, without any sense of its responsibility. This is not Rabbi Tubul’s problem, or the chief rabbi’s problem. It is the government’s problem.

If the State of Israel is to remain a life force for the Jewish people, it must restructure the power of the rabbinate, such that Jewish communities around the world will be welcomed and validated, not dismissed and disparaged.

If we are to create a new model of Jewish peoplehood, one that balanced what was once referred to as Babylon and Jerusalem, then the suspicion of the Diaspora by the religious authorities in Israel, must be supplanted by a spirit of tolerance and acceptance.

Ultimately, times of crisis are also times of opportunity. The fractured relationship between Israel and the Jewish world can be healed and from these dark moments, we can emerge stronger. But the government of Israel must be willing to act boldly, and rethink if its behaviour today is truly serving the interests of the Zionist enterprise.

I’m convinced things can be better. But, to

paraphrase the motto of the special forces unit in which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu served: “One wins only if one dares.”

• *Rabbi Seth [Shaul] Farber is the director of Itim: The Jewish Advocacy Centre (www.itim.org.il), an organisation that helps people navigate the religious authorities’ bureaucracy in Israel.*



Rabbi Seth Farber

Photo: Itit Wagner

Golden start for Team South Africa

JACK MILNER

Even before any of the countries had put a foot into the Teddy Stadium for the opening ceremony of the 20th Maccabiah, Team SA had already notched up their first Gold medal.

There are a few disciplines that have matches prior to the opening ceremony and with Rugby 7s one of the newer sports in the Maccabiah, they - literally and figuratively - got the ball rolling.

The Rugby 7s set the tone for Team SA when they scored a hard-fought 19-12 victory over Israel in the final.

“If they could do, so could we,” said other members of the team at the Opening Ceremony. Since then, there have been four more gold medals, three in cycling and another in the 10km road race. There have also been a couple of silver medals - one for golf and another for Masters’ squash

Six countries participated in the Rugby 7s event - Argentina, Australia, France, Israel, South Africa and the US. The countries were divided into two groups and the “Yiddisher Blitzbokke”



The SA rugby 7s team celebrating their victory.

The final Gold medal at the time of writing, went to athlete Adam Lipschitz who won the 10km road race on Monday.

The first Silver medal went to Moshe Duek in the Masters golf tournament. He finished second in the Nett of the Grand Masters with a score of 219 after three rounds.

The 50+ men’s Masters squash team added another Silver to the tally on Monday.

The second Bronze medal went to the men’s trips Bowls team of Jonty Alexander, Mares Stein and Dennis Phillips.

Meanwhile there are a number of teams which are heading for

medals. The junior cricketers have lost just one match but they are heading towards the final. They started off with a win over Israel, who they bowled out for just 87 and then went on to reach the tally with ease, putting 90 on for four wickets.

Their one defeat was a narrow two-run loss to Australia who scored 158 for eight in reply to South Africa’s 156 for seven wickets. They then took on Great Britain who they bowled out for a mere 91 and once again scored the runs easily, putting on 92 for four wickets.

“They are doing very well,” said coach Joanne Tankel. “They will play Great Britain in the playoffs on Thursday and if they win, the final will be played on Friday.”

The open cricketers did not start that well, scoring 186 for eight in their allotted overs and the Australians went on to score 192 for nine in a nail-biting finish.

However, from that point it they have not put a foot wrong. They scored a five-wicket win over Great Britain, bowling them for 101 and then scoring 104 for five wickets.

The South Africans managed a facile win over India. They opened the batting and put on 200 for six wickets and then bowled out the Indians for 124. At this point they are lying second on the log behind unbeaten Australia.

The open soccer team are out of contention for a medal but they have not been disgraced.

They went down 2-1 to France and then lost 3-2 to Germany with Aaron Witz and Greg Segal scoring a goal apiece. They lost 2-0 to Argentina but then beat Australia 3-0.

However, the revelation of the South African delegation has been the junior soccer team who are sitting second on the log with just one match to play before the knockout stage.

They began with a 6-1 drubbing of Germany, with Michael Mayer scoring three goals and one each from Gabriel Milne, Jess Rom and Michail Ribeiro.

Unfortunately, in their second match they were thumped 5-0 by Israel but the home team are at the top of the log. After that it has been all South Africa. They beat Venezuela 4-1, with a brace from Doron Swartz and one each from Michael Mayer and Yosef Zail, and then scored a 2-0 win over Great Britain with goals from Rom and another from Mayer.

SA still have to play Spain who are fifth on the log. Israel currently top the log with 10 points, South Africa are second on nine, followed by Great Britain on seven, and Germany, Spain and Venezuela on three each.

However, the revelation of the South African delegation has been the junior soccer team who are sitting second on the log with just one match to play before the knockout stage.

began the competition by ruining Independence Day celebrations for the Americans.

They caused them to mourn on the 4th of July by hammering them 24-10. The South Africans followed that up with a 39-0 victory over Australia.

That was good enough to get them into the semi-finals where they once again met Argentina and that proved to be a tougher match, but the South Africans prevailed 15-5. In the other semi-final Israel played Australia who they beat 29-0.

There was also a bronze medal for the SA Junior 7s team.

After the opening ceremony, the cyclists took the road in the ITT 21km race. Issy Zimmerman won Gold in the men’s over-50 category in a time of 30.18 minutes, Jared Poulton won the Elite 19+ race in 29,24 minutes while Jodi Zulberg claimed the title in the 30-49 women’s age group, completing the event in 34,03 minutes.

SA’s Jacob Berman beat Sharansky at the Maccabiah

ILAN HERMANN

A young South African, Jacob Berman, held Natan Sharansky in a chess match at the Maccabi Games last week for three and a half hours before beating him. The Jewish Agency head, Sharansky, is no stranger to the chess board, having beaten world grandmaster Garry Kasparov in 1996.

Maccabi chess medal contender, Berman (18), is playing on behalf of South Africa - although he also holds American citizenship - and is deeply patriotic to both countries.

Sharansky spent nine years in prison in Russia as a refusenik and says he retained his sanity during this time by playing chess in his head, as he had no chess board on which to play.

As part of the Maccabiah, Sharansky was invited to play a simultaneous match against 20 players last Wednesday.

“Tonight I had the opportunity to play chess against 20 people simultaneously as part of the Maccabiah. I played against some extremely formidable opponents, including several youngsters who no doubt have bright futures ahead of them.”

One of those “formidable opponents” was Berman. While all the other players fell to Sharansky’s prowess at the board, Berman kept him going. Eventually a large audience had gathered watching as the game went to three and a half hours on the clock. It finally ended in a draw.

Berman commented afterwards: “It was an absolute privilege to have played Soviet refusenik Natan Sharansky to a three and a half hour draw in a chess match tonight. While in solitary confinement in a Gulag-type prison, Natan played thousands of games of chess in his head to stay sane. A true inspiration!”

Berman started the tournament with a superb result, beating the number one seed at the Maccabiah Open, Russia’s Igor Golberg , in a three-hour duel.

With only five minutes on the clock while Golberg had over an hour left, Berman pulled a “Houdini” move that forced Golberg to resign. At the time of going to press on Wednesday, Berman had four wins and two losses and was about to play number two seed in the tournament, Israeli Daniel Moskovich.

Berman had little time to prepare for the Maccabiah because of his intense academic schedule. He is at Princeton University and serves on a whole range of committees. He is the only white person on the board of the “African Committee” at Princeton which caters to the needs of the African students who are there.

He is also the vice president of the Republican committee. At 18 years old, this is huge achievement for a freshman.

Berman has represented South Africa at chess, travelling to Dubai, China, India, Hungary and other countries with the SA National youth squad.

Berman’s father David, originally from Durban, founded “Chess For Change”, which has been established as part of the curriculum in many South African schools. It has been introduced as a tool to sharpen the mind and to enable assertive, creative, strategic thinking to be enhanced.

It impacts some 300 000 students across South Africa’s disadvantaged schools. Berman’s recently appointment of Howard Goldberg, former SA leading chess player, at the helm of the “Chess For Change”, will no doubt see this number exponentially grow.

Said Sharansky after playing the match: “As I told the group tonight, playing chess in my head enabled me to maintain my sanity when I was in prison, and I still consider chess to be the most Jewish game of them all.

“I wish all 10 000 athletes participating in the Maccabiah success and I look forward to welcoming them back to Jerusalem!”

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south african

Jewish Report

Sorry seems to be the hardest word

How hard is it to apologise? I keep asking myself why Cosatu’s Bongani Masuku won’t just say he is sorry for the anti-Semitic vitriol he spewed out over Jewish students on Wits campus more than eight years ago? What he said was so ugly, I don’t believe anyone could really be surprised that he has been ordered to apologise by a court of law.

He threatened to mobilise Cosatu on campus to make the “Zionists” life there “hell”. He also threatened violence against families whose children had made aliyah and were serving in the Israeli Defence Forces. He went on to threaten to harm people in Orange Grove - where he believes many Jewish people lived - who disagreed with him about Israel.

The Human Rights Commission in 2009 - the same year this happened - ordered Masuku, Cosatu’s international relations spokesman, to apologise. He didn’t. He is still refusing after Judge Dimpheletse Moshidi, on behalf of the Equality Court, ordered him to apologise this week.

All he has to do is say sorry. He doesn’t have to prostrate himself. He doesn’t have to sit in prison. He doesn’t have to have lessons in the Holocaust or do community service, like cleaning Great Park Shul.

He doesn’t have to do anything difficult at all - just say sorry.

He doesn’t even have to mean it. There is nothing stopping him continuing to have his views on Israel and Jewish people. That is his choice.

He already has to pay costs for both sides in the Equality Court case, which included the cost of bringing at least one expensive expert out from England. That wasn’t cheap.

But no, instead of apologising - which he was supposed to do by today (Friday) - he and Cosatu are threatening to appeal the judgment. I guess they don’t mind spending more of their hard-earned members’ money to avoid apologising to us.

It wasn’t a Jewish tribunal who tried him - it was a judge who found according to our Constitution that what he uttered was racist and anti-Semitic hate speech - nothing less.

So, by refusing to apologise, he is not defying us, he is defying our very Constitution. Is it really worth it? To prove what?

On the issue of resolutely refusing to apologise, I cannot ignore the issue of Rabbi Sa’ar Shaked who we wrote about last week after he stood up and called Israel intolerant of religions at the opening of the ANC Policy Conference.

I imagined that once he saw how what he said had impacted on the community - particularly the Progressive Jews in South Africa - he would have simply apologised for speaking out of context and to that particular audience.

However, I understand that Rabbi Shaked was and still is resolute and unapologetic. In fact, on social media, he has been lambasting and badmouthing other Progressive Jewish leaders who didn’t approve of what he did. We have had an unprecedented influx of letters for and against his actions.

It appears to me that, sometimes, it is better to apologise and not cause divisions and further unnecessary ructions. And if apologies are too difficult, not exacerbating this issue, would be preferable.

As in the Elton John song back in the 1970s: “It’s sad, so sad, it’s a sad sad situation and it is getting more and more absurd... Sorry seems to be the hardest word.”

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor



PAULA SLIER

The first time I visited Hebron it was late at night and tempers were flaring. A group of Jewish settlers had barricaded themselves inside Palestinian shops and were refusing to move.

The army was off to one side from where soldiers were watching the scene with guarded indifference. Some were standing stone-faced while others were sitting inside their tanks. A religious Jewish woman in her thirties was rocking an infant on her lap inside one of the stoned shops that had been converted into modest living quarters: a rug covered most of the floor where children, their tzitzit peeping out from under their shirts, were playing with plastic toys; a small kerosene stove stood on a broken table in the corner and a bed seemed to be groaning under piles of crumpled blankets and clothes. There wasn’t a Palestinian around.

Only in the coming months and years did I meet the Palestinian residents of Hebron. And for every heartfelt story a Jewish resident of the city shared with me, there was an equally heartfelt one from the Palestinian side.

Tempers are now running high again after the United Nations cultural agency, Unesco, ruled last week that the Old City of Hebron was a Palestinian world heritage site. In a secret ballot, 12 countries voted in favour, three voted against and six abstained. The ruling also puts Hebron on Unesco’s “in danger” list.

The largest city in the West Bank, Hebron is home to more than 150 000 Palestinians. Around 700 settlers live in its Old City, a place that has special significance for both Jews and Muslims.

It is Judaism’s second holiest site and the tombs of the Patriarchs and their wives (Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Leah) are here. But it is also the third-holiest site to Muslims after Mecca and Medina, as Abraham and his son Ishmael are revered prophets of Islam.

Every time I tour the burial site, I am struck by Hebrew being spoken around me while at the other far side of the room, one hears Arabic. To enter from the Jewish side, you need to climb a flight of stairs manned by Israeli soldiers; to enter the same tomb from the Palestinian side, you enter through a completely different Israeli checkpoint in the Muslim quarter. You cannot cross from one side to the other.

This resolution was a long time coming. Six years ago, Unesco became the first UN agency to grant Palestinians full membership. While largely symbolic, this and other moves no doubt help Palestinians in their push for statehood.

Hebron is the third Palestinian city to be listed as a World Heritage site after Bethlehem and the farming village of Battir. Seventeen more are in the pipeline.

It points to a growing global recognition of Palestinian heritage and history that in turn deepens the Palestinian claim to self-determination. No surprise then that Palestinians see this Unesco ruling as a victory, while Israelis are slamming it as

Dateline: Middle East

Hebron: microcosm of conflict, distrust

shameful and offensive.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has questioned how the Jewish connection to the city can be doubted; he’s planning to cut \$1 million from the membership fees Jerusalem pays the world body.

Israelis are not known for their fondness of the United Nations and its institutions. Ask most Israelis what they think and they’ll say this move was to be expected - the UN is, and always has, been biased against them, they insist.

There’s a popular expression in Israel, “oom-shmoom” - “Oom” meaning “UN” in Hebrew; “shmoom” meaning “zero” - so in other words, the world body is zero or meaningless.

Former Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion coined the term when questioned over whether or not the UN had established the State of Israel.

He said at the time: “No, no, no. Only the daring of the Jews created the state, and not any oom-shmoom resolution.”

I meet Palestinian, Haj Abu Jousef Aisha, walking slowly and carefully over the ancient cobbled stones aided by his walking stick. His home is the only Arab house remaining in the Tel Rumeida neighbourhood of Hebron’s Old City.

He lives on one side of the street; across him are settlers who he watches closely through four security cameras booming video into his living room. His family is afraid to visit him, he says, because the settlers throw stones and eggs at them. No Palestinian vehicles are allowed to drive down the road in front of his house.

“The Israelis say they closed the road because they are afraid that somebody will drive here with bombs,” he says to me with a wistful smile. “I ask them how am I supposed to get to my home if not by car. They say I can buy a donkey. I told them that people have gone to the moon and you want me to buy a donkey!”

Although the Jewish quarter is on the other side of the street, I have to leave Palestinian Hebron and re-enter from the Jewish side to arrive back in Abu Aishi’s street - just on the other side.

“This site was off limits for Jews and Christians for 700 years,” David Wilder, the spokesperson for the Hebron Jewish community tells me. “Only after we came back can everybody who wants access to this holy site, go and worship here.”

He introduces me to an American-born woman whose father was killed in his home in the city. A nearby museum pays tribute to 67 Jews murdered in 1929 by incensed Arabs. Scores were seriously wounded or maimed.

I meet two families who share the same wall - in the Palestinian home it’s part of the staircase; in the Jewish home it’s part of the outside garden - and yet, although neighbours, they’ve never met each other, or particularly want to.

The Unesco resolution won’t change the reality of life in Hebron. The city is a microcosm of the conflict and the distrust of two people living in the same land. If Ben-Gurion was alive today, he’d surely be saying “oom-shmoom”.

• 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.



A Palestinian Boy Plays Soccer in the Streets of Hebron

The world according to the ANC

STEVEN GRUZD

One of the nine discussion documents published in advance of the ANC’s 5th Policy Conference last week, deals with international relations. It provides a revealing view on how South Africa’s ruling party sees the world in the 21st century.

Or, often, the 19th and 20th centuries, with its anachronistic rhetorical riffs on imperialism, “progressive internationalism” and the machinations of the global North against the developing South.



The ANC remains likely to win the 2019 national elections, despite its embattled president, ground lost in the 2016 local government polls, and deepening indications of corruption and state capture. Therefore, what the ANC says about foreign policy, matters.

While it nobly attempts to grapple with geopolitical shifts, populism and trade protectionism, this discussion document ultimately provides an ideologically loaded, shallow analysis of today’s dynamic, rapidly changing world.

Analysts Chris Landsberg, Mzukisi Qobo and Francis Kornegay, wrote that the ANC’s “perspectives on power dynamics in the world have travelled back in time... frozen in a world that no longer exists”.

The most vitriol is, unsurprisingly, heaped on Israel. Predictably, the document reinforces the ANC’s long-held solidarity with the Palestinians

Just a few paragraphs acknowledge key relations with Europe and the US. Otherwise, it oozes with outdated Marxist terminology, conspiracy theories and perceived perfidy by the West.

One gem calls for the ANC to “condemn our colonisers for sponsoring factionalism among liberation movements, including the use of some NGOs and media outlets”.

Elsewhere it denounces “the unjust nature of global capitalism” and how “global power is used to advance the narrow interests of the powerful states”.

It says “paradigms of violence and the global world manifest in militarisation of international relations, global racism and patriarchy, neocolonialism and other ills”. It contends that “the imperialist vision for

international relations is gathering steam” as conservatism rises in the North.

Conversely, it praises China’s economic potential and Russia’s role in Syria. These allies can do little wrong, where the West can do little right.

It also ascribes the rise of Islamic State to Western interventions in Iraq, Libya and Syria. Not unfairly, it decries the Trump Administration’s abandonment of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and its reversal of rapprochement with Cuba.

Familiar themes include closeness with former liberation movements

and “progressive” political parties, a determination to make ossified global governance institutions more equitable, and the centrality of Africa in South Africa’s foreign policy, claiming that bad governance invites foreign interference.

The document myopically blames the sluggish global economy for South Africa’s poor growth, ducking responsibility for ruinous policies, corruption scandals and shattered investor confidence. It also fails to clearly articulate South African national interests.

The ANC reiterates its determination to pull the country out of the International Criminal Court, despite legal rulings forcing the parliamentary process to begin afresh.

On specific countries, discussions at the conference focused on the lack of democracy in Swaziland, a cause long championed by ANC alliance partners Cosatu and the SACP.

Solidarity was pledged for the Kurds, Cubans and Sahrawi. The latter have declared a state in Western Sahara, in territory claimed and mostly controlled by Morocco. South Africa, a staunch historical ally of the Sahrawi, will need to recalibrate how it deals with Morocco, which has now joined the African Union after a 32-year boycott over the issue. Pretoria’s relations remain frosty with Rabat.

The most vitriol is, unsurprisingly, heaped on Israel. Predictably, the document reinforces the ANC’s long-held solidarity with the Palestinians, condemning what it sees as Israeli intransigence in the peace process, ongoing settlement construction and continued violation of Palestinian rights. Yet, somehow, it still endorses a two-state solution.

Last week’s lead story in the SA Jewish Report detailed the debate at the policy conference on possibly downgrading or closing the South African embassy in Israel, to symbolise the ANC’s displeasure with Israeli policies.

Consensus was not reached, with a decision deferred until the ANC’s December

National Conference. Is this merely a stay of execution, or another case where radical ANC policy gets tempered by more moderate government policy?

No doubt the South African Jewish community will fight fiercely to prevent the dilution or destruction of diplomatic ties.

The document and discussions, called for a response to Israel’s recent high-profile diplomatic overtures to Africa (Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has visited the continent twice recently and plans to hold an Israel-Africa Summit in Togo in October). Expect fireworks later in the year.

In a somewhat paranoid vein, the discussions attribute diminished ANC and South African global influence, to the “competing forces on the [African] continent such as Israel and Morocco”, supported by France and (unnamed) Middle East states.

Agree with them or not, it is important to understand the perspectives behind the ANC’s policy priorities. A revised discussion document will be tabled for decisions in December.

• Steven Gruzd is an analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs

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The fragile freedom of kids today

Do we want to raise free-range kids or fraidy cat kids? Perhaps somewhere in the middle, writes NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR

‘You treat me like a baby!’

Sound familiar?

If you have a teen or pre-teen living under your roof, chances are it’s practically a mantra in your home. And while usually, as parents, our first response is: “Well, then don’t behave like a baby,” perhaps, in a moment of honesty, we may admit they’re onto something.

Because if you were a child in the 60s or 70s or even 80s, you’ll remember walking to your friends’ house or taking a bus to the movies in town. How about swimming alone - with no adult supervision?

Belinda Hollander remembers: “We used to ride around without seatbelts. My mother let me walk to friends. But it was a different time then.”

Now a mother herself, Belinda is a self-confessed anxious mom to her two girls, aged 13 and nine. “Times have changed. We are more aware. I don’t allow them to walk to friends or go to the park without a parent present. I worry about strangers, about traffic, diseases and crime...”

Does it affect them? “They’ve never known differently,” she says. “I know, though, they love it when we visit my sister in Sydney and I allow them to walk to the shops or get on a bus.”

What’s changed in just one generation? And what are the implications for our children?

Waverley-based child psychologist Sheryl Cohen says it’s part of a new mindset. “We are more aware of the importance of childhood - that children should be protected, stimulated and treated with respect.

“We are also more aware of the long-lasting negative consequences when children’s emotional needs are not met, but unfortunately, this has created a generation of overanxious parents.”

Clinical psychologist Judith Ancer puts it down to the advent of global media like CNN and talk radio in the last 25 years - and more recently, social media. “It feeds a hysteria. If a child goes missing in the US or Portugal, like in the case of Madeleine McCann, we hear about it immediately in our homes, and it’s like it’s happening to us.

“It’s led to anxious, controlling and over-protective parents who hover like helicopters.

“We are making the world a very frightening place for kids – ‘don’t use the scissors, that jungle gym is too high...’ and, as a result, seeing a huge increase in the prevalence and diagnosis of anxiety disorders in children today.”

And this protection we’re offering is an illusion anyway, she says. “Children will always do dangerous things.”

It’s not a localised phenomenon.

In the United States, a movement called Free-Range Kids, based on a book written in 2010 by Lenore Skenazy, still sets parenting forums alight.

Skenazy caused a furore by allowing her nine-year-old son to find his way home alone riding the subway in NYC. Yes, he was fine. But many parents reading about his adventure, were not.

As Skenazy told media: “A lot of parents today see no difference between letting their kids walk to school and letting them walk through a firing range.

“We have vaccines and we have airbags and we have car seats and we have cribs with the right spacing between the bars. Everything is so safe that we figure we can keep everything terrible at bay.”

“But,” says Ancer, “by being overprotective, we’re not giving our kids the necessary skills to learn to cope on their own.

It involves love, but not disempowerment.

It’s about allowing our children the freedom to burn their fingers, but making sure they are not third-degree burns.

“Obviously you are not going to let a six-year-old cross Louis Botha Avenue, but you can say: ‘We’re going to cross the road now. Let’s do it together.’ In that way, we’re helping a child learn to face danger.

“Teach them what to do if a fire gets out of control. Give them the skills to walk into a shop and buy something. It’s about giving them graded experiences of autonomy.”

Furthermore, adds Ancer, this stranger danger idea is unrealistic. “Studies have shown kids are more



at risk from people they know.”

The first thing we need to do, she says, is try and establish whether our fears are fantasies or based in reality - because what’s really at stake here is not allowing them to find their way in the world.

“You are sterilising life for them, creating a small world. We make the ‘other’ - anyone who is not us - feel dangerous. And, very important, we deprive our children of a sense of accomplishment, of feeling their own potency.”

As Cohen says: “If we want our children to see themselves as capable and competent, we must see them that way. If you’ve put all the safety features in place for your child to explore the new jungle gym, then believe in her to do so.”

But there is another freedom, clinical psychologist, Dorianne Weil “Dr D”, is concerned with: An internal freedom.

“This is a necessary, essential freedom which relies on parental encouragement and courage to embark on a journey towards

contributing, compassionate, confident menschen.

“This journey is a minefield,” says Weil, “A veritable obstacle course with disguised, compelling, alluring signs and detours, that actually read substance abuse, peer group pressure, social media, hormonal chaos and crime.”

But, she says, to establish a personal identity, which in the end will mostly encompass values learnt and behaviour experienced, this journey has to be navigated.

“There are no short cuts. It involves assistance, but not over-rescue. It involves love, but not disempowerment. It’s about allowing our children the freedom to burn their fingers, but making sure they are not third-degree burns.

“It’s freedom within safe boundaries, and it’s a tough call,” she says. “Parents need to be resolute and strong, they should lead by example by being the person they want their kids to be, then pull back.

“Letting them experience their own bumps and bruises, learning to navigate pain, emotional

disappointments, rejections and celebrations, ups and downs, all encourage the development of an independent identity.”

In this way, they will emerge with bruises, but with a sense of confidence that they can not only survive, but thrive, says Weil. “The external parent - you - has become their own internal moral compass, which guides them in life’s journey.”

Cohen firmly believes in choices. “Our job as parents is to give children the skills to build an independent sense of self. They need to make their own choices and they can only do that if they know ‘who I am’ and ‘who I am not’.

When your son chooses chess over tennis, he is making a choice which helps him to define who he is.”

“Be conscious about exposing them to skills,” says Ancer. Encourage them to go to camps and make friends. “We want to raise kids who find their own rhythm, children who are brave.”

As Weil puts it: “We want to nurture menschen. People with integrity, compassion, empathy, tenacity, resilience and true grit.”

Heart attacks on the rise among adolescents

ANT KATZ

Johannesburg’s Hatzolah Medical Rescue is currently carrying out a campaign of screening pupils at Jewish day schools for the risk of “Sudden Cardiac Death in Adolescents” (SCDA) syndrome, which, while rare, kills as many as 300 000 young people annually in the US. Hatzolah have yet to identify any cases in their screenings.

The disease affects people from their teens up to the age of 25 and, although no statistics exist for South Africa, just last Friday an 18-year-old South African girl survived a heart attack in Israel. While this is not known to be linked to SCDA, it does underscore the importance of preventive health.

“We have no expectations,” says Hatzolah’s executive general manager, Darren Sevit. “This is simply screening.” If they find and save the life of one person, he says, it would have been worth it. “If we find none, even better.”

The condition is rare but cannot be diagnosed unless one specifically looks for it. There is “no need to panic” says Sevit, explaining that there have been no known cases in South Africa.

Hatzolah raised sponsorship for what

they call “The ECG Project” whereby they apply a proven technique using a 12-lead electrocardiogram to establish if the schoolkids have a predisposition to the disease.

By so doing, anyone who is identified, can be treated medically and counselled on lifestyle choices (like avoiding heavy-duty sporting activity). The potentially deadly disease is akin to the better-known SIDS, or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

“SCDA is not a germ; one is either born with it, or not.”

The service is provided at no charge to the school, learner or their medical aid. The idea for the ECG Project was first mooted by Hatzolah’s medical director, trauma surgeon Reuven Jacks, at a Hatzolah board meeting.

“We want to perform this test at all Johannesburg Jewish day schools,” explains Sevit. Hatzolah started with the smaller schools before the holidays, and will move on to the larger ones when they open.

“We have the equipment and the skills,” says Sevit. When Hatzolah “put out the call to our volunteer-base, we received many more respondents than we needed,” he says.

Participating schools send pupils home with

an authorisation form for their parents to sign. The project is being medically overseen by a leading cardiologist. Testing complies with ethical, religious, confidentiality, and modesty requirements and all tests are done in private. Boys are screened by male practitioners, and girls by female practitioners.

Still, some schools have chosen not to participate.

Hatzolah has no statistics of the incidences of heart attacks in the community as a whole, as they only keep records of what the initial callout was for, not the diagnosis. The number of heart attacks are thus hidden among calls that came in for, say, chest pain, respiratory distress, abdominal pain, even nausea, says Sevit.

A well-published author on the subject of SCDA is Dr Stefanie Ellison, who writes that the term “sudden” is “generally defined as death that occurs within one hour of the onset of symptoms, but can also occur within minutes for adolescents and children”.

The true incidence of SCDA is unknown, says Ellison. However, it “is definitely on the rise”. Research shows that as many to 25 per cent of these deaths occur during the playing of sport, she says.

New regulations dealing with religious leaders

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein is studying the proposed recommendations dealing with the regulation and registration of religious leaders to see if and how they will impact on the Jewish community.

The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL), which investigated religious practices in South Africa, released a report this week with numerous recommendations. One of these is that every religious practitioner must be registered and fall under umbrella organisations.

The CRL Rights Commission has recommended that umbrella bodies, made up of credible religious leaders, should oversee what happens in places of worship. It wants all religious leaders registered and it tabled a report following an investigation into unsavoury religious practices.

This follows numerous cases where religious leaders have fed congregants snakes and grass and paraffin to drink.

All religious leaders will now be forced to become part of a peer-review system. CRL Chairman Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva said there seemed to be a high number of deaths of worshippers who were using faith products such as holy water and powders and defaulting on their chronic

medication.

The commission released its findings this week after a lengthy probe.

She said the investigation found there was no comprehensive database of religious leaders and a high number of unregistered institutions. It also found there were “cult-like” religious organisations that engaged congregants in controversial practices.

She said the aim of the investigation was to “protect vulnerable congregants”.

The commission recommended that every religious practitioner must be registered and have a location where he or she conducts religious ceremonies, be they in churches, homes, mosques, temples, mountains, fields or tents.

The commission presented its report to parliament last week.

According to the recommendations, each worship centre should form an umbrella organisation and this must be registered and known to the peer-review committee.

These committee would each be responsible for a particular religion, the commission said.

The committees would ensure there is religious self-regulation and accountability and the peer-review committee would be the mediator of disputes within religions.

“We are convinced that the majority of reasonable religious leaders will agree with us,” said Mkhwanazi-Xaluva.

Thulsie trial set to proceed this month

ANT KATZ

The trial of the so-called ISIS terror twins, Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee Thulsie, who allegedly planned to attack Jewish installations, was scheduled to begin this week - but it was again postponed. The Thulsies have been in prison on remand for over a year since their arrest on July 9, 2016.

Following numerous postponements, the State was set to proceed in the Johannesburg Magistrates’ Court on July 5. However, defence counsel, Anneline van den Heever, told Magistrate Simon Radasi that her team were unable to open some pages of the docket provided to them by the State, as it required special software. The docket is believed to contain 22 000 pages.

The defence requested a postponement in the matter in order to obtain the special software or to get hard copies.

Advocate Adele Barnard, for the State, said she only received an e-mail from the defence informing her

that they could not open the docket on the morning of the court appearance. The case was postponed to July 11.

The terror trialists again appeared briefly this week, this time before Magistrate Pieter du Plessis and State Prosecutor Chris MacAdam. The latter told the court the NPA was waiting for a 12th charge, of fraud, allegedly committed in the magisterial district of Ficksburg in the Free State, to be centralised. The matter was now postponed to July 27.

The indictment suggests that as far back as August 2015, Tony-Lee Thulsie interacted with an ISIS network, Abu Fidaa. During a series of chats, Thulsie was instructed to attack the best targets involving “US/Brit/French interest in SA” as well as to kill (Jewish cartoonist) Zapiro.

When the twins were arrested, they had a list of targets which included “Jewish installations”, the only one of which the State has disclosed, was King David Linksfield.



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Fidget spinners: The jury is out

TALI FEINBERG

Parenting expert Nikki Bush praised fidget spinners: “This is an object of fascination that intrigues children because they can make it do stuff for them...”

Fidget spinners are the latest craze and every child wants one or five of them. They are said to help children focus, but some schools, like Crossroads Remedial School, have banned them.

On her website, Bush writes that the fidget spinner is THE toy that is distracting children from screens and giving them a very different brain-body play experience “...and they are intriguing gadgets that beg to be mastered. It is great for stimulating the tips of the fingers which few toys do.

“It requires concentration and fine-motor co-ordination. You can sit and play with it, or get really athletic as can be seen in some of the YouTube tips and tricks videos.”

She says some of the benefits are that they are challenging, creative, collectable, reasonably-priced and low-tech fun that can keep individuals and groups entertained. They are physical and “wake up the brain”, release endorphins (happiness hormones) and encourage perseverance.

Bush adds that they have been touted as having therapeutic benefits, such as distracting children from their anxiety, helping them to concentrate on the task at hand. However, “a whole classroom full of children spinning gadgets, is unlikely to be a productive one, so let’s leave them for playground use”, she advises.

Occupational therapist Nicole Katzenellenbogen says: “There are concerns around the visual impact of such toys. We live in a very visually stimulating world with TV, iPads, posters on every street corner and fast-paced

video games.

“In our practice, we are seeing more and more children who are so visually distracted, or visually over-focused, that they struggle to integrate the other sensory systems such as auditory input. This affects their following instructions and even language and communication.

“Fidget spinners in these cases would create more harm than good, as it is yet another visually stimulating object that takes away their ability to focus on auditory or other sensory input in their environment,” she says.

She recommends “more functional and productive ways” to gain the same input in a less obvious and distracting way, such as stress balls; key chains with soft toys to be kept in the pocket or lap of a child; a weighted lap bag with different textures; a fidget cube, as there is less visual input; and movement breaks for children when they lose their focus.

Some remedial schools have banned the toys, even though their learners are supposedly their target market. Crossroads principal, Val Witt, explains: “We found that the children became so engrossed in the spinners, they become a distraction to the owner and to those around the child using them.

“It was impossible for the child to focus on work and it heightened the child’s inability to focus on what was important within the classroom.”

In a discussion on a Jewish mothers’ Facebook page, many mothers said they “hated” fidget spinners, but some said they have seen their children benefit. One mother, Terri Sklar Frankental, wrote: “My kids are more interested right now in perfecting tricks, rather than playing on their iPads. I’m sure there are benefits as they are using different muscles in their hands.”

Director of the Herzlia Foundation,

Amanda Borkum Zar, commented in her personal capacity that “as a mother with an ADHD child, I truly see the benefits. While I appreciate that it’s a craze for some, for my one son it provides his sensory-seeking needs and he self-regulates accordingly.”

Elana Gordon, a remedial and extra-lessons teacher in Johannesburg, says: “As a teacher I find them to be a

the kids when ‘fidgeting’, is if we see it helping, it stays, if we see it distracting, it goes.”

Cape Town Torah High has a similar approach: There is no school policy, and teachers decide how to respond on a case-by-case basis. “Our learners often work independently at work stations and if it helps them focus there, then by all means they can use them,” says

children can be involved in making the rules.”

She adds that fidget spinners can also be used as an educational tool if the teacher is creative.

Jos Horwitz, director of Early Childhood Development at United Herzlia Schools and the principal of Herzlia Constantia, wrote to parents: “The latest craze that has hit the market are ‘fidget toys’ that



huge distraction to a child that is easily distracted; they are not a useful item for a classroom. I even find that the spinners are a distraction in a one-on-one situation.”

How are Jewish day schools dealing with it?

“Fidget spinners have taken the students by storm at Sinai Academy, as I’m sure in all schools,” says Zeesy Deren, principal of Sinai Academy on the Cape’s West Coast.

“No policy has been made, and we’re sort of letting the phase and craze dissipate naturally. Our approach to

Principal Rabbi Avi Shlomo. “However, during classroom time, teachers may ask learners to put them away if they are distracting.”

Principal Sheva Messias of King David Pre-Primary and Grade R School Linksfield, says the school also doesn’t have a policy regarding fidget spinners.

“It’s at the discretion of each teacher as to how and when they allow the children to use them or not. There are children who are sensory-seeking and the fidget spinners are helpful for them.”

“There does need to be rules about when they can be used or not and the

have been so cleverly marketed and are so appealing for our children.

“The purpose of these gadgets is to allow children to participate in learning in the class in a manner that allows them to keep their hands busy and not get distracted.

“As a teaching team, we are well aware of providing children with the environment that suits them best to learn successfully and allow these gadgets if they serve the child best. We believe fully in catering for the needs of each individual child’s learning and plan the classroom with this knowledge in mind.”

Getting a Jewish helping hand to a PhD

CHARISSE ZEIFERT

Jameson Maluleke always dreamed of studying further, but when he received his PhD in Hebrew studies a few weeks ago, it was the culmination of overcoming a lifetime of obstacles in his way.

Maluleke was born in 1956 in Pfukani, a small village in the northern part of Limpopo. Later, he was forcibly removed to Mphambo - another small village in the province - under the apartheid regime.

To this day, there is no running water, WiFi or much infrastructure at all in Mphambo. The nearest recognisable towns (with the closest post office) are Giyani and Malumelele.

The majority of the village’s youth leave home for bigger cities in search of a job after they have completed matric. While it has a vibrant community, the inhabitants who remain, do the best with what they have.

Educational aspirations are generally put aside for a chance of work and earning some money.

Maluleke was different. He started his career as an assistant at the University of South Africa (Unisa). He then became a journalist at the South African Council of Churches, before taking a job on The Citizen in 1998.

In the same year, he started his bachelor of arts degree. While employed at this daily

newspaper, he went on to do an honours and masters degree.

It was while at the Citizen that he came in contact with the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, who he would frequently call for comment on stories.

Maluleke wanted to improve his already impressive academic education. So, in 2011, he enrolled for his PhD at the Hebrew department at the University of the Free State, where he wanted to do a dissertation entitled, “The Role of Bible Translations in Enhancing Xitsonga Cultural Identity”.

For him, the study was not about money or earning a big salary. Rather his aim was, he says, “to contribute to the Xitsonga language and to proclaim our people’s cultural identity to the whole world”.

He applied for bursaries to help make this possible. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) gave him one. David Saks, who oversees the various bursaries administered by the SAJBD, gave him a small bursary because he knew Maluleke was committed to his studies and was deserving.

The SAJBD bursary committee assists South African students of all races in their studies, based on the twin criteria of academic merit and financial need. Saks was delighted to hear about Maluleke’s success, adding how gratifying it was to know that the Board had been able to play a small part in it.

He had told the Board he also wanted to “inspire the young generation in Vutsong to carry on with the scientific research of our people as well as their culture”. In addition to this, he “wanted to make a contribution, however small, to the large body of Bible translation studies”.

Maluleke’s research investigates the ways in which Bible translation has enhanced Xitsonga cultural identity. The focus is on the 1929 and the 1989 editions of the Xitsonga Bible, with the aim of understanding the role that the Xitsonga Bible translations recreate,



Jameson Maluleke receives PhD from the Hebrew Department at the University of Free State

rearrange and reshape Vatsonga cultural identity.

According to his university supervisor, Professor Jacobus Naudé, his research contributes to the history of Bible translation by providing the first thorough socio-historical description of the Xitsonga Bible translations.

Naudé explains that Maluleke’s treasury of information enhances the understanding of language development for future Bible translation projects in Africa. His thesis will now be turned into a book, written in Xitsonga, so that “his people can know about their history and the power of their language.

“In this way, he will give back to the community the knowledge that he gained about Vatsonga and their language so that they also can benefit from knowing their history.”

For his part, Maluleke has acknowledged the role the SAJBD played in his research: “I would like to share my research with the whole Jewish community in the Republic. From this community I learnt many things, but the most important of them all, generosity - without its open hands, I would have remained mediocre - not have been able to be called a man of letters today.”

Maluleke has five daughters, each of whom he is putting through university. He has also published three novels in Xitsonga and, together with Prof NCP Golele, translated Alan Paton’s Cry, the Beloved Country into his language. He has also established the Chivirika Community Project for preserving Xitsonga heritage.



THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Sub affair: Ex-navy chief placed under house arrest

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

Police on Tuesday placed the former commander of the Israeli Navy under house arrest, after questioning him for hours on suspicion of receiving bribes in the multi-million dollar purchase of naval vessels from Germany.

Maj-Gen (res) Eliezer Marom is the most senior military figure ever to have been arrested in Israel’s history, Channel 2 reported. He will remain confined to his home until Thursday.

Marom was questioned at the Lahav 433 serious crimes unit in Lod for many hours during the day, according to police.

According to Hebrew media reports, police suspect Marom controlled a bank account in Cyprus used to transfer bribe money from officials in German shipbuilder ThyssenKrupp to Israeli officials. He is also suspected of pushing the German company to replace their former Israeli representative, Yishaya Barkat, with another suspect in the case, Miki Ganor.

According to the Ynet news website, police possess an accounting document summarising ThyssenKrupp’s financial dealing with various Israeli officials.

Investigators suspect one payment clause labelled “Useful Expenses” was a cover for bribe money paid to Marom through Ganor.

“There is substantial evidence that the suspects will need to answer for,” a senior police official said. “Some of the money paid to the suspects was actual fees for their work, but we suspect that another part is bribe money.”

The development came a day after six suspects were brought in for questioning

as part of an ongoing investigation into the so-called “Case 3000”, or the “submarine affair”. They are suspected of attempting to sway multi-million dollar ship deals in favour of ThyssenKrupp.

Police initially withheld the names of the suspects. However, later on Monday it was revealed that two of the suspects are former deputy head of the National Security Council Avriel Bar-Yosef and ThyssenKrupp’s Israeli agent Ganor.

An unnamed lawyer with close ties to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was grilled on Monday and again on Tuesday morning. The suspects were questioned under caution for more than 12 hours on suspicions of fraud, bribery, tax evasion and money laundering, the Israel Police and the Tax Authority said in a joint statement.

“At the time of the events under question, some of the suspects were public servants and some worked in the private sector,” the statement said.

Following the interrogations, three of the suspects were brought to the Rishon Lezion Magistrate’s Court, which acceded to the police request to hold Bar-Yosef and Ganor for a further four days and keep the lawyer under house arrest for three days.

Netanyahu is not a suspect in the case. However, police are planning to summon him to testify on what he knows about the issue and specifically as to whether he knew of the corruption allegations against Bar-Yosef when he sought to appoint him head of the National Security Council in 2016, Channel 2 news reported.

Bar-Yosef’s candidacy was later withdrawn when it emerged that he was suspected of accepting bribes in

Maj-Gen. (res) Eli Marom, former commander of the Israeli Navy.



Photo: Moshe Shai/Flash90

exchange for promoting the interests of German businessmen involved in the development of Israel’s offshore gas fields.

The Israeli-German deals came under intense scrutiny late last year, after it was revealed by Channel 10 news that Netanyahu’s lawyer David Shimron had also served in an advisory capacity for ThyssenKrupp, which was awarded the contracts for building Israel’s submarines and naval attack boats.

Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit ordered the Israel Police to formally look into the submarine affair in November 2016, after accusations surfaced that Netanyahu may have been swayed to purchase vessels by Shimron.

In December, officers from the Lahav 433 serious crimes unit entered the office of legal adviser Ahaz Ben-Ari at

the Defence Ministry building in Tel Aviv and removed information from computers there. The data concerned the cancellation of an international tender to build four new warships to protect Israel’s offshore natural gas rigs in the Mediterranean Sea.

The contract was awarded instead to ThyssenKrupp. Under the 2015 deal, worth \$480 million, ThyssenKrupp is to supply Israel with four “Sa’ar 6 corvette” ships over a period of five years.

The purchase was opposed by parts of the defence establishment, including then-defence minister, Moshe Ya’alon, who has since threatened to “tell all” on Netanyahu’s involvement if the prime minister is not indicted as part of the probe.

• Raoul Wootliff contributed to this report.

RWANDA'S KAGAME VISITING AS ISRAEL LOOKS TO BOOST AFRICA TIES

SUE SURKES

Rwandan President Paul Kagame began a two-day visit to Israel on Monday for talks focused on boosting co-operation for the future, but also touching on the two nations’ common experience in the past overcoming the horrors of genocide.

“We are two nations who understand the horror of genocide, and we must show what humanity can achieve with co-operation and understanding,” President Reuven Rivlin told Kagame at the presidential residence in Jerusalem.

“We know that Rwanda is now going to be a member of the UN Human Rights Council. This is a body which is always against Israel, so we welcome

all those who are prepared to speak for us,” Rivlin said

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who was also present, praised Rwanda for its stance on Israel.

“We see how you stand up for Israel in international forums, and you already expressed a simple principle that we did which is that bilateral relationships should be reflected in multilateral forums. There is a dissonance between us and a few other nations still,” Netanyahu said.

Rivlin and Netanyahu were referring to a slew of anti-Israel resolutions in recent months, the newest of which, last Friday, saw Unesco declaring Hebron’s Tomb of the Patriarchs a part of endangered Palestinian

heritage.

Kagame, who visited Israel in 2008, noted a blossoming relationship between Israel and Rwanda in the areas of technology, agriculture, energy and security.

“Rwanda is open for business and we look forward

to welcoming private sector delegations from Israel even more frequently in the future,” he said.

Rivlin congratulated Kagame on the speech he made in March as the first African leader to address the annual policy conference of the



American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

There, he hailed the Jewish State as an inspiration for his own country’s rebirth after genocide.

Kagame, of the Tutsi tribe, was commander of the rebel force that put an end to the 1994 slaughter of Rwandan Tutsis by Hutu extremists and has led the country since 2000, as it recovers from the conflict and becomes a regional economic success story.

Rwanda’s President Paul Kagame (centre) shakes hands with President Reuven Rivlin and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, during their meeting at the President’s Residence in Jerusalem on Monday. AFP PHOTO / THOMAS COEX

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SOUTH
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MARISSA NEWMAN AND RAOUL WOOLLIFF

Newly-elected Labour Party chairman, Avi Gabbay on Tuesday kicked off his election campaign to unseat Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from power, pledging to double membership in the one-time powerhouse and win 30 Knesset seats in the next election.

Gabbay, (50), a former non-MK minister for the Kulanu party, was elected on Monday as the new chairman of Labour, beating veteran lawmaker and former faction leader Amir Peretz in a dramatic turn of events for the long-embattled party.

“The State of Israel is headed to elections, we just don’t know the date,” he told activists and journalists in Tel Aviv.

Barring the dissolution of the government, elections are currently scheduled for November 2019.

The party “needs at least 100 000 members by the next election”, he added, nearly twice its current number of over 52 000.

In a direct challenge to Netanyahu’s Likud, Gabbay said: “We will replace him. We will bring in the 30 [Knesset] seats necessary to replace him. The campaign to replace Netanyahu begins today.”

The Likud party currently has 30 seats in the Knesset, while the Zionist Union - comprising the Labour and Hatnua parties - holds 24. Polls conducted last week, before the second-round vote, indicated neither Peretz nor Gabbay would receive more than 15 - 18 seats in the next election as leader of the Labour Party.

In an interview with the Ynet news website on Tuesday, Gabbay

New Labour leader sets his sights on ousting Netanyahu



Photo: Miriam Alster/Flash90

Avi Gabbay at a press conference on Tuesday.

pledged his support to the two-state solution and said he opposed dividing Jerusalem.

“My positions are the positions of the Labour Party - two states for two peoples, clear social economic and social democratic policies and protecting the High Court of Justice,” he said.

“Jerusalem will remain unified in every scenario. There can be no negotiations about it. When I talk about relinquishing Arab villages, I’m talking about every Arab village that is called Jerusalem but is not really Jerusalem, isolated areas and villages that can’t be returned [to Israeli sovereignty] without harming security.

“Abu Mazen [PA President Mahmoud Abbas] is certainly a [peace] partner,” he said.

The former businessman, who headed telecommunications giant Bezeq, also told the news site that a “welfare state is not a bad word”.

He added: “We must create sources of income for the weak segments of the population and improve the public system that gives services to citizens,”

Taking 52,4 per cent of the vote compared to Peretz’s 47,6, Gabbay came from a near-2 000 vote deficit in the first round of the primary that was held last week to win, getting 16 080 votes compared to 14 734 for Peretz.

In last Tuesday’s first round vote, which saw incumbent Labour head Isaac Herzog removed from

the running, Peretz finished in the lead with 32 per cent (10 141 votes), followed by newcomer Gabbay with 27 per cent (8 395), and an overall voter turnout of 59 per cent of Labour Party members.

“You put your hope in a new leader and here I am before you,” Gabbay said in his victory speech.

“My only concern is the good of the people, the good of the country,” said Gabbay, calling for unity among Israelis and urging all party supporters to back him.

Gabbay, seen as the dark horse in the race, brings fresh blood and a right-wing political history to the traditionally dovish party. He claims to have brought thousands of new members to the Labour Party, a fact that may explain his surprise victory.

A former minister in Netanyahu’s government, Gabbay quit in May last year, after coalition talks brought the Yisrael Beytenu party into the government, with a dramatic tirade accusing the coalition of leading Israel on a path to destruction.

That breakout moment for Gabbay, a relatively unknown minister who was not elected to Knesset but rather appointed as an external candidate by party leader Moshe Kahlon, was followed by his crossing the political aisle and joining the fight for the Labour leadership.

• AFP contributed to this report.



News and views from the Fed A day in the Negev

JEUNESSE PARK
FOUNDER OF FOOD & TREES FOR AFRICA

Imagine pineapples, vineyards and a forest of millions of trees, growing in the desert. And a million litres of water, purified from a town’s effluent and factories, irrigating the crops of the future? These are a few of the wonders I saw in the Negev.

Deep concern about climate change and the current water crisis in the Western Cape, drove me to arrange a day tour of the Negev to explore a few examples of Israel’s achievements in water, agriculture and forestry a few weeks ago. It was mind-blowing.

In a country where land, water, arable soil and fossil fuels are scarce, foresight and clever technology, based on sound research, have created models of sustainability that other countries strive for - enough resources to sustain healthy lifestyles and economies, and, in some instances, abundance.

I last visited Israel 26 years ago as Food & Trees for Africa (FTFA) began, an organisation started from a vision of a healthier, greener, more food secure and climate resilient South Africa.

The Jewish National Fund of SA was the first to show interest. They arranged a two-week study tour for our founding board members to meet scientists, academics, farmers and foresters, experts in trees and forestry, water management, agriculture and soil.

The solutions-driven innovation and implementation, astounded us. We returned, inspired to apply lessons learned from the unique Israeli experience of managing water, trees, food and energy, in South Africa. Today this experience and knowledge could prove vital.

Israel now leads the world with 80 per cent water reuse. Runners-up Spain, reuse 20 per cent. Water is successfully produced and harvested through desalination, biofilters and remarkably efficient management of wastewater.

Quality water is delivered to all residents, farmers, industry and business, and excess provided to Jordan and the Palestinian Authorities.

The Sderot reservoir, built, under missile fire, from a pragmatic vision to address drought in the southern Negev, now purifies all effluent from the town, factories and farms, for reuse on local agriculture.

Besor Research and Development Centre’s work with local farmers, is resulting in better crops for export, and local use, in healthier soils, using minimal, even saline water.

Charts around the old tower over the forest of Yatir, show recorded rainfall rising annually, from the start of the plantings in the 1960s and as more trees were planted and grew. An inspiration to FTFA’s initial greening and climate change work, today the view of this green forest of over four million trees, planted to combat desertification, is spectacular.

Be-er Sheva, a model city, shows how nature should be embraced in urban development. It is an example of pioneering urban planning that integrates natural capital. Landscaping for aesthetics and resource management, enhance attractive, well-designed suburbs.

Trees line the streets, providing much needed shade and recreation areas. They help to slow and clean water run-off, as well as cleaning the air and absorbing greenhouse gas carbon dioxide.

We have much to learn from Israel’s green tech and innovation and they are willing to share.

Replicating projects like these few I was privileged to see, could positively alter South African lives.

The Western Cape, in drought and predicted to be facing a seriously dry future, would benefit greatly from these world water leaders. We should have started to learn and implement decades ago, but now is the next best time.

Irish FM defends Dublin’s Mideast policies after Netanyahu rebuke

JERUSALEM - Visiting Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney, defended his government’s Mideast policies, a day after Netanyahu rebuked him for Ireland’s traditional support of Palestinians.

In a meeting with President Reuven Rivlin, Coveney says his country’s own troubled history drives Dublin’s foreign policy, saying Ireland “wants to be helpful” in solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“I know there is an impression here that Ireland takes a different position to Israel. Can I say that in essence, though, we are yearning for the same thing that I think the vast majority of Israelis are, which is a peaceful future,” Coveney said after holding a working meeting with Rivlin.

“We have experienced a lot of violence on our own island, and we are still working on a peace process,” he said, adding: “The reason that Irish people are so interested in the Israeli-Palestinian relationship and conflict, is because we have had a violent past ourselves, and we see this as one of the great conflicts and divisions in the world.

“My reason for being here - the first visit I have made as foreign minister outside Europe - is despite what people may sometimes feel about Ireland, we do care about this region and want to be helpful,” Coveney concluded.

On Tuesday Netanyahu expressed “his dissatisfaction over Ireland’s traditional stance”, telling Coveney that “his country does not condemn Palestinians for incitement and for glorifying those who commit terrorist attacks”.



Photo: GPO

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney meets Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem, on Tuesday.



SOUTH
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Cannons found off Israeli coast may have been used to fight pirates

AMANDA BORSCHEL-DAN
JERUSALEM

Three bronze cannons found off the coast of Megadim in northern Israel, shed light on how the Venetian weapons industry innovated tools to help merchants fight off pirates hundreds of years ago.

As reported in an article in the

and surveyed during 1972-1973. Cannons A and B were lifted with air bags, transported ashore and retrieved for study then.

In 2013, Cannon C, the removable chambers and the rigging elements, were also retrieved. A and B were classified as “sakers” - circa 3,5 m long, and C is a “falcon” 2,8 m long.

It was an era of Barbary corsairs.

Hayreddin Barbarossa.

Since the 1470s, the Venetian navy had begun employing cannons as anti-ship weaponry. Likewise, merchants, forced into preparation for warfare by sea, helped fund an arms race that fuelled innovations in maritime munitions, especially in the super-industrial zone of the Venetian Arsenal.

used by the Venetian navy - a well-known foe of the Ottoman Empire, which ruled the Holy Land.

Rather, “it has been suggested that they were a private shipowner’s property,” according to the multidisciplinary research team, headed by Dr Dana Ashkenazi from Tel Aviv University’s School of Mechanical Engineering.

Ashkenazi’s research is the first chemical analysis study of Venetian bronze cannons from the period. Therefore, the findings presented in the Journal of Archaeological Science serves as a database for future investigations of similar cannons.

The cannons are predominantly composed of bronze.

As befits Venetian craftsmanship, the cannons are works of art as well as utility.

Cannon A, weighing 1 260 kg, is decorated with a “vegetal motif”, according to the report. Other decor includes a coat of arms, an oval shield containing two seashells, and three six-pointed stars. In a feature unique to this cannon, a pair of dolphin-shaped lifting handles is on the reinforcement’s front end.

At 1 145 kg, Cannon B features rows of acanthus leaves (commonly imitated in Corinthian capitals), which alternate with rosettes around the circumference.

A row of serpentine flames

decorate the weapon, as well as “a decorative shield edged by vegetal motifs, containing an emblem representing two hands holding what appears to be a scroll”.

The smallest of the three cannons at a mere 575 kg, Cannon C also bears a vegetal motif with scrolled ribbons. Formed by a pointed shield with two lion heads depicted at its sides, a blank coat-of-arms, according to the team, is a characteristic mark of this foundry.

In addition to the metal analysis, the few scant wood remains and other wrought-iron artefacts were also studied. There were three types of trees represented in the wood remains, which points to the nationality of the ship.

“Although all taxa are native to southern Europe, two extend within the Mediterranean zone reaching as far as Israel (Italian cypress and Sicilian sumac).”



The bronze cannons as found at sea and decorative elements of Cannon C after cleaning.

August edition of the Journal of Archaeological Science, the three cannons were likely part of the arsenal of a sailing merchantman, whose ship was wrecked off the shore of Haifa in the last quarter of the 16th or early 17th century, during the first half of the “Age of the Sail” (1571-1862).

The three long-barrelled bronze cannons were first discovered

Enmity with the Ottoman Empire was ever-present for Christian European traders. Adding to these existential maritime threats were a few well-known Jewish pirates who were bent on retribution after the Spanish Expulsion.

Foremost among them was Sinan the Jew, who sailed under the notorious Ottoman admiral

The Venetian Arsenal was an amazingly advanced centre of manufacturing for its time. it used assembly-line techniques and had a huge store of standardised prefabricated replacement parts, which made for quick ship and weaponry building and a robust navy.

The three Venetian cannons found at Megadim, were not

West Bank settlement keeps it light and bubbly with their beer

JACOB MAGID
TEKOA

It was perhaps no coincidence that most of the brews on display at the Tekoa Beer Festival were light and fruity.

Some believe they reflect the nature of the West Bank settlement, just south of Jerusalem, known for its eclectic mix of religious and secular residents.

“Sure, they do,” said Eitan Baum, 35. “You can’t find a more free-spirited place than Tekoa,” said Baum of the family-run Yanshuf (owl) brewery. His father Michael, 64, is something of a mentor to many of the community’s 15 beer makers.

Beer festivals have sprouted up from Haifa to Eilat over the years, but Tekoa’s, held Thursday, is unique for its family atmosphere and for the fact that there are almost no commercially available beers on offer.

This is the third year the festival is being held, an initiative of the settlement’s brewers who refer to themselves as the “Parliament”. It has nearly doubled in size each year, with 1 500 guests attending this year.

The NIS 40 (\$11) entry fee let visitors taste a diverse range of beers (with the first cold one on the house), accompanied by a live musical performance from the up-and-coming Israeli rock band, Jamaya.

“The beers have been improving each year,” said the elder Baum, who boasted mentoring nine of Tekoa’s brewers, his son included.

Some of the whimsy of the place can be seen in the names of the beers. The Baum’s Yanshuf was named for an owl that landed on their roof one Saturday morning while they were trying to think of how to brand their new beverage.

Several booths away, a pair of younger brewers displayed a beer that evoked the settlement’s



Photo: Jacob Magid/Times of Israel

Mickey Birnbaum and his father Eli, selling their BeerNbaum beer at the Tekoa Beer Festival, last Thursday.

reputation for outreach to their Palestinian neighbours, most famously as home to the late Rabbi Menachem Froman, known internationally for his outreach - at times controversial - to Arab leaders in the name of making peace.

They named it “Samer” after a Palestinian contractor whom they have worked with and befriended over the years, explained Yair Maimon, the founder.

Not every name for the breweries required as much careful thinking, however. For Eli Birnbaum, 67, a retired psychologist, the BeerNbaum was a no-brainer.

And while all the brewers are very serious about their craft, for most it is a passion and not their primary occupation.

“These are doctors, teachers and lawyers. This is not their profession. They brew because it’s their hobby and their passion,” said Reut Erlich, chairman of Tekoa’s cultural committee and one of the event’s organisers. She said the festival was an effort to “share good vibes” with

Tekoa locals, area residents and visitors from around the country.

In a thick Brooklyn accent, Birnbaum proudly described being among the first families to move to Tekoa in 1979 after arriving in Israel a year prior. “We heard about the place from Ariel Sharon,” he explained.

Then agriculture minister, Sharon was approached by Birnbaum along with a group of American immigrants looking to start a new community in Israel. The former prime minister recommended they team up with a band of Russian immigrants to establish a mixed secular-religious settlement overlooking the desert. Tekoa now counts over 900 families as members.

The manner in which Birnbaum began brewing, was another story proudly recounted by the father of five. He explained that he had tried to do something special with each of his children when they finished the army.

“When my third son was discharged, I asked him if he wanted to travel, and he said ‘No, I want to make beer’.” They took a three-month course in Jerusalem and have been brewing for over two decades since.

“We have more musicians and artists here per capita than any other city in Israel. People here are so creative, but are also so willing to share.”

While many of the beer booths offered pretzels or popcorn for guests to nosh on with their beers, the Baums had a more traditional Jewish pairing of herring and kugel.

Visitors came from far and wide. For some the beer provided a rare excuse to visit a West Bank settlement.

“My parents were a little worried when I told them I was going to Tekoa, but it’s worth it for the beer,” said Adam Mayerson, 20, who was visiting Israel from New Jersey.

Yonit Melachi, 31, from the nearby settlement of Efrat said that the settlements needed more light-hearted events.



SOUTH
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Surprise wedding at Maccabiah opening

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

An on-stage proposal and immediate wedding thrilled thousands of attendees - and surprised the bride - at the Maccabiah opening ceremony in Jerusalem last Thursday evening.

It also underlined Jewish openness to those who convert to the faith, said the rabbi who performed the ceremony, at a time when the Israeli government has

been considering legislation that would cement an ultra-Orthodox monopoly on conversions in Israel. Some 10 000 athletes, their families and other visitors from 80 countries gathered at Teddy Stadium in the capital to launch the 20th Games, that will see them compete over the next two weeks in over 40 sport categories.

During the ceremony, Canadian hockey player Avi Steinberg, was called to the stage by Israeli actress Noa Tishby, who was MC of the event.

“I’m very excited to be here,” said Steinberg. “What makes this even more special for me is that my girlfriend, Rachel Dixon, the love of my life, who just completed her conversion to Judaism, today for the first time landed in Israel.”

“She’s here? She’s here!” asked Tishby, evidently well-aware of the surprise and playing along, as Dixon’s face appeared on the big screen, before inviting the soon-to-be bride on stage.

“I feel honoured to be here,” said Dixon, wearing a long white dress.

Tishby then turned the floor over to Dixon, telling her: “So, Avi has a little something for you, okay?”

Steinberg, wearing shorts and a shirt, told his girlfriend: “I want you to know that with the benefit of time and experience, I’ve come to appreciate how precious and what a gift life is. There’s nothing I want more [than] to spend the rest of my life with you.”

With the crowd cheering, Steinberg got down on one knee and proposed. “Will you marry me?”

Dixon said a delighted yes, the two hugged, and then Tishby took Dixon aside and asked (a number of times) if she was sure she wanted to get married - “Was that a yes?... Are you really serious about that?” - seemingly stalling as final preparations were made for what was to come next.

After a few more awkward minutes, in which it was revealed that Steinberg and Dixon have been together four years, that Dixon was not jet-lagged and that she was indeed very serious about getting married, Tishby asked her to close her eyes as an assistant carrying a wedding dress and a veil appeared onstage.

Tishby asked Dixon to open her eyes (“Oh my G-d!) and told her it would be “our honour if you guys would actually get married right here, right now. Will you do it?”

Dixon, who appeared very surprised but thoroughly delighted, accepted, and she and her soon-to-be-husband went backstage to get ready for the chuppah ceremony, which the couple’s rabbi, Avi Poupko, from Canada, was on hand to officiate.

“She didn’t know about any of this,” Tishby assured the audience. “This is real. What a sport,” she said of Dixon.

One of the musical acts of the night, Israeli singer Avraham Tal, then began his performance as a chuppah was set up on stage, complete with flowers, flower girls and a white carpet.

Four friends from the Canadian delegation held up the posts of the chuppah and the ceremony began.

Led by Rabbi Poupko, Steinberg, now wearing a blue suit and tie, and Dixon, in a wedding dress and veil, exchanged rings, Steinberg broke the glass with his right foot, and voila!

To the sounds of a jubilant crowd, the two were whisked off the stage as another musician began a performance.

The whole event was recorded and posted on YouTube by a woman who said she is Dixon’s aunt and appeared to confirm that her niece did not expect to get married on the spot.



Canadian hockey player Avi Steinberg and his girlfriend of four years, and recent convert to Judaism, Rachel Dixon, get married at the opening ceremony of the Maccabiah 20th Games in Jerusalem.

“Rachel thought they would only be re-enacting their engagement, but the event planners surprised her with a surprise wedding on international television!” she wrote.

According to Poupko, Rachel had expected to be married in Israel - but next week.

“We had originally planned a small intimate ceremony at [Jerusalem’s] Haas Promenade on Sunday evening, but when the producers of the opening ceremony heard about the couple, they came up with this crazy idea of making it part of the ceremony and surprising Rachel,” Poupko, who himself now lives in Israel, told The Times of Israel.

“Given the Israeli government’s recent decisions

concerning the conversion law, it was a beautiful and reassuring sight to see a new convert be so embraced by tens of thousands of Jews from all across the world,” said Poupko, who is an Orthodox rabbi.

Dixon had prepared for a year-and-a-half for her conversion, the crowd was told. (A contentious conversion bill, which would have made the ultra-Orthodox Israeli chief rabbinate the sole authority on conversion in the country, was shelved for six months last week.)

“I think that [this ceremony] expresses the true Jewish spirit as far as how we are to relate to individuals who have chosen to tie their fates with the Jewish people,” said Poupko.

Guns N’ Roses set for Israel’s biggest ever concert

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF TEL AVIV

The Guns N’ Roses concert in Tel Aviv later this month, will be the largest ever concert in the country, the promoter claimed last week Wednesday, warning the public to be wary of fake tickets for the sold-out performance.

The hard rock band, which formed in 1985, sold 61 900 tickets, more for an Israel show than any other band, said promoter, Guy Beser, of Bluestone Entertainment. Britney Spears had 55 000 fans at her show last Sunday night at the same venue, Tel Aviv’s Yarkon Park.

But Beser cautioned anyone still trying to get a ticket, and said there were reports of fake tickets being sold. Only tickets that were bought from Ticketmaster will get people into the show, Beser told Channel 2. “Don’t buy from any of the international sites,” he said, adding that Facebook tickets were also no good.

Guns N’ Roses has sold over 100 million records, making it one of the best-selling bands of all time.

The Tel Aviv show is the final concert of the European leg of the band’s “Not in This Lifetime” tour, a reunion for vocalist Axl Rose, guitarist Slash and bassist Duff McKagan, who haven’t played together for the last 23 years.

The band, which was founded in 1985, with its first studio album, 1987’s “Appetite for Destruction”, featuring the number-one single “Sweet Child O’ Mine”, was known for a new brand of hard rock and for hedonism reminiscent of the early Rolling Stones.

Their May 1993 concert in Tel Aviv was part of a major, two-year world tour following their 1991 twin albums, “Use Your Illusion I” and “Use Your Illusion II”, which sold a combined 35 million copies worldwide.

It was that tour which led to tremendous tensions in the band, following significant drug and alcohol abuse by members of the group. The band was last in Israel during the 1993 tour, although Axl Rose performed in Israel in 2012 with a different mix of band members.

The only original band members that time around were Rose and keyboardist Dizzy Reed, who had been a member of the line-up since 1990.

For this concert, guitarist Slash told Aerosmith drummer Joey Kramer’s radio show in Boston, as reported in Rolling Stone Magazine: “Everybody’s getting along, everybody’s playing great. We were all pretty positive that that would never happen, so it’s still sort of blowing our minds,” the guitarist added. “It seems so surreal to me, but everybody’s really getting along great and I think everybody’s come a long way and it’s all cool.”

Gates open at 18:30. Tyler Bryant & The Shakedown, from Nashville, Tennessee, will open for the band. Guns N’ Roses will take the stage at 20:30 and, according to Beser, the show will last more than two hours.



Axl Rose, lead singer, and Slash, guitarist of the US rock band Guns N’ Roses, perform during a concert at the Friends Arena in Stockholm, Sweden.

Photo: AFP Photo/TT News Agency/Wilhelm Stokstad

Tisha B’Av and baseless hatred

SAMUEL LEBENS

On August 1, the Jewish world will observe the fast of Tisha B’Av.

Refraining from wearing comfortable footwear, sitting on hard surfaces, reading the searing words of Lamentations, we will remember the destruction of two Temples in Jerusalem; we will remember our exile; but, more broadly speaking, we will remember, despite the relative opulence and the comfort that may define our daily lives, that the world we live in is still host to grave pain and suffering.

To be Jewish is, in part, to recognise that the world we live in is not yet saved. The world we live in is not yet redeemed. There is work to do.

Famously, the rabbis taught that it was because of the baseless hatred that Jews had toward one another that G-d allowed the Temple to be destroyed (Tractate Yoma 9b). More recently, it has become popular to say that if the Temple was destroyed by baseless hatred - by people hating one another without cause - then it is time to love people without cause.

Baseless love is what will bring us into the Messianic age, and heal all of the scars of this wounded world.

Once upon a time, I was moved by that message. But now, I’m not so sure. Perhaps there are times during which it is appropriate to hate. I remember a lecture by my teacher, Rabbi Shmuel Nacham.

He presented an argument between Nachmanides and Ibn Ezra. According to his reading of the argument, Nachmanides held that hatred is always bad. Ibn Ezra, on the other hand, held that hatred is only bad when

it is baseless.

But, if you investigate, and find that you have been wronged, and if you give the offender an opportunity to make amends and he spurns you, then your hatred is no longer baseless. You can hate away. After all, the Bible teaches us that there is “A time to love and a time to hate” (Ecclesiastes 3:8).

But there’s another reason to reject the mantra of “baseless love”. The reason is this: You shouldn’t love people for no reason. You should love them for a good reason, and there are plenty of reasons!

Rabbi Yehuda Amital, of blessed memory, opposed the mantra of baseless love toward the irreligious - because it implied that the irreligious don’t really and inherently deserve our love. The mantra implies that we’ll love them even though they’re not worthy of it.

In Rabbi Amital’s words: “There are many dedicated members of our society... [who are non-religious and yet overwhelmingly worthy of our love]: members of the security services who vigilantly protect us, boys who give three years to the army, doctors who work for meagre wages rather than seek their fortunes overseas, and many others.

“If someone does not share our religious commitment, it does not mean he has no values, and it does not mean that he has no just claim to our love.”

If the world remains unredeemed because of baseless hatred, perhaps the real cure is twofold. We need to make sure that we reserve

our hatred only for things that are truly worthy of it: evil, suffering, poverty, disease, and the like.

Secondly, we need to open our hearts to all those around us (including ourselves), until we find in them (and in ourselves) those unique characteristics that make them (and us) loveable.

• Samuel Lebens is Senior Research Fellow, in the Philosophy Department, at the University of Haifa. He is founding-chairman of the Association for the Philosophy of Judaism, and is also an Orthodox rabbi. Lebens will be speaking at Limmud in Johannesburg (August 4-6), Cape Town (August 11-13) and Durban (August 9).



World News in Brief

200 French Jews arrive in Israel

JERUSALEM - Two hundred French Jews arrived in Israel on Monday on a special aliyah flight.

The flight, had among the new immigrants, 74 children and teens. The youngest immigrant is two and a half months old and the oldest, 92, is making aliyah with his daughter and her husband.

The olim were greeted by Chairman of the Executive of The Jewish Agency for Israel Natan Sharansky, Minister of Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption Sofa Landver, former Chief Rabbi of Israel and current Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem Shlomo Amar, and Chairman of Keren Hayesod-UIA Eliezer Sandberg.

The French Jewish community is the largest in Europe and the second-largest in the world outside of Israel, numbering nearly half a million Jews, according to the Jewish Agency.

French Jewish immigration to Israel has surged since 2012, breaking records for aliyah from France and from Western countries. Some 7 800 olim from France arrived in 2015, the most ever. Over 10 per cent of the French Jewish community has immigrated to Israel since the year 2000, half in the past five years alone, according to the Jewish Agency.

Immigration from France dropped in 2016 over difficulties faced by new immigrants in finding employment and having their credentials recognised. (JTA)

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1949 = R400 Up to R4000



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1931 = R500 Up to R3000
1939 = R10 000 Up to R30 000



3D
1923 to 1964 = R4
1931 = R10 000 Up to R50 000

Nelson Mandela and his relationship with SA Jews

DAVID SAKS

Few historical figures have been as universally revered as Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, South Africa’s greatest son. Among the innumerable tributes paid to him, one of the most striking came from the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama said he had often met with extraordinary people, including spiritual leaders, royalty, Nobel laureates and presidents, but he invariably found, on meeting them, that those people were not as large as their reputation. Only in Mandela’s case did he find the person larger than the reputation.

What did Mandela mean for South African Jews specifically? The question is a complex one, and in attempting an answer, it is important to reflect the nuances and ambiguities involved. On the one hand, during the apartheid era, Jews belonged to the privileged white ruling caste, and in a collective sense, never took a stand against that system until very late in the day.

On the other, no sector of the white population produced so high a proportion of individuals who fought against the apartheid system, many of them side by side with Mandela himself.

In looking back on Mandela’s relationship with South African Jewry, taking justified pride in and inspiration from these individuals must always be balanced by the recognition that during the apartheid years at least, the Jewish community as a whole was not part of that story.

Rather like Gandhi, who commenced his career in South Africa as a lawyer, but was gradually drawn more and more into the political arena in response to the injustices meted out to his community, Mandela first trained and worked as a lawyer before the anti-apartheid struggle took over his life.

Famously, it was Lazer Sidelsky who enabled him to go into that field by taking him on as an articled clerk in his law firm, at a time when engaging young blacks in that capacity was all but unheard of.

Mandela’s fellow clerk, Nat Bregman, became his first white friend in Johannesburg and, as a member of the Communist Party at the time, also played a part in his early political education.

Mandela went on to study law at Wits. There he established enduring friendships with such future anti-apartheid campaigners as Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Jules and Selma Browde and Harry Schwarz.

Jules Browde, later to become one of South Africa’s most respected senior counsels, was the first of many Jewish lawyers to represent Mandela. The case concerned an attempt to force the law firm established by Mandela and Oliver Tambo, to vacate its premises in the city centre under the Group Areas Act.

Appearing before the Land Tenure Advisory Board in Pretoria, Browde was able to obtain permission for them to stay where they were.



Jewish lawyers were prominently involved in defending Mandela in the various political trials in which he was involved, among them Isie Maisels (who successfully headed up the defence team during the Treason Trial), Arthur Chaskalson, Joel Joffe and Sidney Kentridge.

Ironically, Percy Yutar, the notoriously over-zealous state prosecutor in the Rivonia Trial in which Mandela and various others were sentenced to life imprisonment, was also a prominent Jewish community member.

As he moved increasingly into political activism, Mandela came more and more to be associated with Jewish-born anti-apartheid activists, mainly on the far-left of the political spectrum.

Thirteen of his fellow defendants in the 1956-1961 Treason Trial, for example, were Jews, among them such Struggle stalwarts as Lionel Bernstein, Ben Turok, Joe Slovo, Leon Levy and Ruth First.

Among the founders of the underground military wing of the African National Congress, Umkhonto we Sizwe, were Dennis Goldberg, Harold Wolpe and Arthur Goldreich (a volunteer in the War of Independence who later settled in Israel). A strikingly high proportion of those responsible for organising the 1955 Congress of the People and drafting of the famous Freedom Charter, were of Jewish origin.

Before his imprisonment, Mandela worked closely with the journalist Benjamin Pogrand, whose hard-hitting exposés of the injustices of the apartheid system made him the target for continual police harassment.

Forced to go underground during the early 1960s, he stayed at a number of “safe houses”, including the Berea flat of Wolfie Kodesh and the home of Cyril and Raie Jones in Cyrildene.

While on Robben Island, his cause

and that of his fellow prisoners was strenuously pursued by Helen Suzman, at the time the sole representative of the Progressive Party in Parliament.

Suzman was able to visit the prisoners and afterwards obtain certain improvements in their conditions. Numerous Jewish former activists who went into exile campaigned ceaseless for Mandela’s release, among them Norma Kitson in London.

After Mandela was released from prison in 1990, he and the mainstream Jewish leadership forged a cordial relationship and many leading Jewish businessmen and philanthropists, among them Eric Samson, Raymond Ackerman, Meyer Kahn and Bertie Lubner,

were brought on board to assist in addressing the legacy of poverty and inequality left by the apartheid system.

He became especially close to Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, a charismatic leader who wholeheartedly embraced the new democratic dispensation and encouraged the greater Jewish community to do likewise.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies met with Mandela regularly, and its leadership accompanied him on a visit to Israel after he had stepped down as president in 1999.

On the Israel-Palestine question, Mandela was deeply committed to the attainment of Palestinian statehood, but at the same time

recognised that this had to be accomplished through peaceful negotiations and steadfastly affirmed Israel’s right to exist within secure borders.

Few can doubt that had his example been followed by the Palestinian leadership, a peaceful, two-state solution to the conflict would have been achieved decades ago.

Next week marks the birth of Nelson Mandela, a true colossus on the stage of history. In remembering it, South African Jewry can take pride in how many of its members contributed to what he was able to achieve, for his own people and for humanity at large, and hopefully be inspired to continue building on his legacy.

World News in Brief

Soros compares Hungarian government campaign against him to Nazi propaganda

NEW YORK - Jewish American billionaire George Soros, said the current Hungarian government campaign against him evokes “Europe’s darkest hours”, referring to Nazi German propaganda. “I am distressed by the current Hungarian regime’s use of anti-Semitic imagery as part of its deliberate disinformation campaign,” Soros said in a statement issued in his name on Tuesday, according to reports.

The government of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has paid for a nationwide campaign vilifying Soros over his support for efforts to allow migrants to enter the country. Jewish leaders there say the campaign against Soros has stoked anti-Semitic sentiment in the country.

Billboards posted nationwide show a grinning Soros, who was born in Hungary, and the words “Let’s not allow Soros to have the last laugh”. Many of the billboards have been defaced with anti-Semitic graffiti.

Soros has said that the government is misrepresenting his views on immigration ahead of the 2018 elections. “As a survivor of the Holocaust who hid from the Nazis in Budapest and later was himself a refugee, Soros knows first-hand what it means to be in mortal peril,” said the statement issued on his behalf.

“He carries the memory of the international community’s rejection of Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis... It is from the crucible of those experiences that his empathy for refugees from war-torn Syria and elsewhere was born.

“Soros’ position is entirely consistent with mainstream European values. The claim that Soros is promoting a scheme to import a million illegal immigrants into Europe is Viktor Orbán’s fantasy,” the statement also said.

Hungarian Jews and Israeli lawmakers have called on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to cancel an official visit to Hungary scheduled for July 18, to protest the campaign against Soros and remarks by Orbán in praise of Hungary’s Second World War-era anti-Semitic leader Miklós Horthy.

It would be the first visit by an Israeli prime minister since Hungary disavowed Communism in 1989.

Israel’s ambassador to Hungary last Sunday issued a statement denouncing the Hungarian government’s campaign against Soros.

Israel’s Foreign Ministry later released a clarification saying that the statement was meant to address the resulting anti-Semitism, not defend Soros, who, it said, “continuously undermines Israel’s democratically elected governments by funding organisations that defame the Jewish state and seek to deny it the right to defend itself.”

Soros is frequently vilified by European right-wing politicians for his support of pro-democracy efforts through his Open Society Foundations, and by pro-Israel activists for his support of Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups consistently critical of Israeli policies. (JTA)

What you can do on Mandela Day

Mandela Day on Tuesday July 18, has a theme of Action Against Poverty. The Nelson Mandela Foundation wants this day to be dedicated to fighting poverty in order to stop the outbreak of protests in the country.

“We must declare that Mandela Day is not just on July 18. People must be reminded that it’s not just about doing 67 minutes of good and that we must bring about sustainable social change in the lives of our people,” says the foundation’s Selo Hatang.

So, if you are wondering how to do your bit, here are a number of options:

UNION OF JEWISH WOMEN

The UJW will be handing out “Bags for New Beginnings” to moms who give birth at government hospitals and clinics on Mandela Day. The bags contain brand new baby goods, including babygros, vests, booties, beanies, blankets, nappies and cotton wool, as well as sanitary pads for the moms. Donations for the bags would be greatly appreciated.

Johannesburg: Help is required with deliveries. Phone Tana or Cindy on (011) 648-1053, or Bev on 082-574-4770.

Pretoria: Bag deliveries to Femina Hospital and to Pretoria East Hospital. Phone Ciska on 083-272-7292.



UJW’s Pretoria Branch vice-chairman, Ciska Lewis, with dental hygienist, Hester Botha, at Sunnyside Primary School on Mandela Day 2016.

Port Elizabeth: Bag deliveries on Monday July 17, to Dora Nginza Hospital. Phone (041) 374-3461 or Elaine on 083-233-2064.

Cape Town: Bag packing on Mandela Day, deliveries to Somerset Hospital at a later date. Phone Shelley on (021) 434-9555.

Durban: 67 minutes are spent making sandwiches for distribution to various schools, feeding schemes, organisations and safe houses. Phone Evelyn (031) 335-4457 or Sue on 083-777-8035.

East London: running a dental health programme at Cranberry Primary School. Grade 0 and grade 1 learners will be given toothbrushes, toothpaste and a healthy snack. Phone Michelle 083-225-7444.

PAM GREEN - SECOND CHANCES

July 16, 14:00 - 16:30. BeYouTiful Dry Bar - 23 7th Ave, Parktown North.

On Sunday, July 16, Second Chances will be collecting donations of second-hand clothing, shoes, toys, household items, and furniture. The organisation will then spend 67 minutes sorting through the donations into sellable men’s, women’s, and children’s piles.

Help with the sorting of these items would be greatly appreciated. Items collected are handed over to unemployed people to sell in their communites, creating jobs for them.

Things to bring:

1. Second-hand clothing, shoes, toys, household items, and/or furniture.
2. R20 donation.

For more info on the project, visit: <http://secondchances.org.za/cause/twice-as-new/>

CAP/ANGEL NETWORK

Tuesday July 18, 09:00 - 16:00 at Norwood Mall.

CAP and the Angel Network and anyone who wants to help them, will be collecting non-perishable food items and packaging hampers for the less-fortunate.

IMPILO IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOVE TEDDY

Tuesday July 18, 08:00 – 16:00, 20 Leigh Avenue, Fairview Ext.

They will be making Love Teddy bracelets this Mandela Day. Anyone is welcome to join in. All proceeds will go directly to Impilo to help improve the lives of their children and families. People are invited to bring a bag of nappies, Nan 1, 2 or AR or refer to their wish list to see what is urgently required.

Examples from the wish list: Nappies, Nan 1, 2, AR, Nestum Cereal, Baby Aqueous Cream, Baby soap, Baby Panado, Creche Guard multivitamins, Washing powder, Fabric softner, Black bags.

Any donations are welcome in support of our monthly expenses.

Contact (011) 640-1343 for more information.

AFRIKA TIKKUN

Afrika Tikkun’s five Centres of Excellence in Johannesburg and Cape Town: Alexandra, Diepsloot, Orange Farm, inner-city Johannesburg and Mfuleni in the Cape, have special projects in which all people are welcome to participate.

Corporates and volunteers are doing different activities with children of all ages and stages of development - from storytelling, to quizzing or sporting, to job shadowing young adults.

Activities include: creative cooking in any of our kitchens, painting walls and inspirational murals, read-a-thons, spelling bees, building a jungle gym and play areas, vegetable gardening, giving motivational talks to job seekers (such as how to brand yourself); and job shadowing.

Those with a passion for persons with disability are joining in to paint houses purple as part of an advocacy campaign to raise awareness about disability.

Individuals and companies who feel they have something of worth to share with young people - from the youngest to those on the verge of adulthood - are invited to contact Taina at Afrika Tikkun at (011) 325-5914.

TRAVELSTART

Travelstart’s Mandela Day initiative is about filling 27 suitcases and sending them across South Africa to 27 charities in dire need of clothing, foodstuffs, toiletries and lots more.

Drop-off wish list: Warm clothing, blankets, pet food, non-perishable foods (rice, canned food etc...), toiletries (soap, sanitary pads etc...), reading books for children, stationery, baby supplies (nappies, baby powder, wet wipes), baby toys.

Travelstart office address (drop-off location): Travelstart South Africa, Longkloof Studios, Block B, Darters Road, Gardens, Cape Town, 8001.

Read more: <http://www.travelstart.co.za/blog/mandela-day-27-suitcases-2017/#ixzz4m3kt0OMS>

MANDELA DAY YOGA

Stretch, strengthen and relax, while supporting a great cause at the Mandela Day yoga session at Constitution Hill. Contact information: (072) 835-2525.

What is it? Yogis are invited to get together and work through 27 yoga poses to honour Nelson Mandela. The yoga session is R100 per person and you can choose to sponsor a local Lefika child for R50.

Should you wish to go on a guided tour of the venue (Walk with Madiba), it is an additional

R100. You can also make a donation by taking any clothes, toys, books, blankets, cans of food, etc. Proceeds of the event will be shared with Lefika la Phodiso: The Art Therapy Centre.

When is it? Saturday, July 15 09:30 - 11:30.

Where is it: Freedom Square at Constitution Hill, 11 Kotze Street, Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

Tickets available at Webticket.

For more information about the event, contact Steven on 072-835-2525 or visit www.yogaworks.co.za.

MENTAL HEALTH FUN WALK FOR MANDELA DAY

Tara Hospital and the community, will take part in a 6,7 km walk to commemorate the International Nelson Mandela Day. The money raised through the fun walk will be presented to a selected non-profit organisation. This is a great way to spend your 67 minutes.

When is it? Tuesday, July 18 from 08:00.

Where is it? The walk will commence from Tara Hospital gate on Argyle Avenue and will finish at the Tara main gate on Saxon Road, Sandhurst, Sandton, Johannesburg.

How much is it? Tickets cost R35 per person and are available at Webticket.



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Spreading love through loss with Sophia’s Cupcakes

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Sophia Bennett was a feisty, creative little girl who loved birthdays and baking cupcakes. She was just six years old and finishing grade R, when it was discovered she had developed a brain tumour and after eight months in ICU, she passed away in September 2015.

In celebrating her life, Sophia’s parents Adele and Rob Bennett, started Sophia’s Cupcakes, an initiative where people donate cupcakes to those less fortunate throughout July - Sophia’s birthday month.

“Sophia loved birthdays so much,” says Adele. “I used to bake her cakes and we’d always do cupcakes. So, Sophia’s Cupcakes is a way of celebrating her birthday in an uplifting way and expanding it to others who could benefit, even though they’ll never meet her.

“There are so many people who don’t have that much, and we had so much to give, so it’s our way of marking her special day even though she’s no longer with us.”

Participants are encouraged to give cupcakes to children or the elderly, who are ill, don’t have that much, or could do with something to brighten their day.

Sophia - a little girl who was full

of love, kindness and humour - always brought similar joy to those who knew her. She loved spending time with her parents and her little brother Nathan.

“Sophia could light up a room,” says Adele. “She was delightful and full of fun. Sometimes she liked to be quiet and loved to head out with mom for a special drink somewhere pretty.



“The pain is with us at all times, it hasn’t even been two years, but you have pain that coexists with a life force. You don’t realise how strong this life force is until you’re in the middle of something like this.”

“She loved to engage with adults and was always listening to what they were saying. She was a child, but she was always an ‘old soul’ - there was just something very wise about her even as a little girl.

Strong-willed, she couldn’t wait to grow up. One day I asked her what she wanted to be and she said, aged five or six: “I don’t want children, I want to do what I want to do when I want to do it. I want to

go out for lunch.” Another time, she said: “Boss of the world.”

Sophia was due to go to King David Victory Park Primary in 2015, but had brain surgery in January that year. She spent over eight months in ICU. “As it turned out, Sophia had more courage than any of us would have guessed.

“She fought so hard to stay with u; even the doctors couldn’t explain how she managed to survive strokes and many challenges in hospital,” says Adele. But at the end of September, the cancer had spread and she passed away.

“Before that, she was at Mina Lopato Nursery School where she was incredibly happy,” says Adele. Teachers at the school remember a quiet, happy child who loved art.

“She was lovely little girl, a beautiful child and wonderful to teach. I taught her the year before she died. She was so special to me, cute, and happy. When I visited her at home the day before her operation, she told me: “The doctor says I’ve got a brain tuber,” I’ll never forget that,” says Mina Lopato grade R teacher, Mandy Smerkovitz.

In moving forward, Adele and Rob have learned to take it one day at a time. “I don’t know how you really deal with it, you put one foot in front of the next,” says Adele. “It feels overwhelming, you don’t know



how you’re going to come out on the other side, you just continue because you don’t have an option.

“Also, we had our son Nathan. You have to be as solid and calm as possible for your little boy who’s going through unthinkable loss himself. You’ve got to keep things very simple and don’t demand too much of yourself. If you get through the day ok, you’re doing fine.”

“You have to have faith that at some point you’ll see the light again - things will get easier.

“The pain is with us at all times, it hasn’t even been two years, but you have pain that coexists with a life force. You don’t realise how strong this life force is until you’re in the middle of something like this.”

Finding strength through brightening the lives of others in Sophia’s memory, has also helped the family. Last year 2 480 cupcakes were shared with kids, mostly in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Sydney and Los Angeles, with donations also coming from London.

“The support from the community was always wonderful and it’s extended beyond that. I was always

amazed how people you don’t know, just take it on board and they run with it. It gives you a sense of a wider humanity.”

The Bennetts leave it to participants to decide where to donate cupcakes that they can either bake or buy. “Just go out and do your thing, find a place and let us know about it,” says Adele. “The wider the net the better.

“I feel that our girl was so special that I just want to leave something of her mark, because she won’t be able to. She was so full of so much potential in so many ways, that it’s just sad that others won’t be touched by her.”

Yet, through Sophia’s Cupcakes, more people than the Bennetts ever thought possible, are spreading doses of Sophia’s magic.

To take part in Sophia’s Cupcakes this month, visit www.facebook.com/SophiasCupcakesSA/.

If you can’t bake your own, visit www.raisingaidan.co.za where a mother - Melissa - bakes and sells cupcakes to raise money to treat her son Aidan who has a rare genetic disorder.

Stevie B gets down to business on LM Radio

PETER FELDMAN

Stevie B, one of South Africa’s radio financial gurus, is on the move and has taken up a new position at the revamped LM Radio.

In his matter-of-fact style, Stevie B (Steven Bacher) is already dispensing financial wisdom and interviewing key industry players in his slot on LM Radio on weekdays between 18:00 and 19:00.

The new LM Radio has been brought back to life and retains its old-style format of jingles, talk and music. It was first launched from Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) in Mozambique in the 1950s.

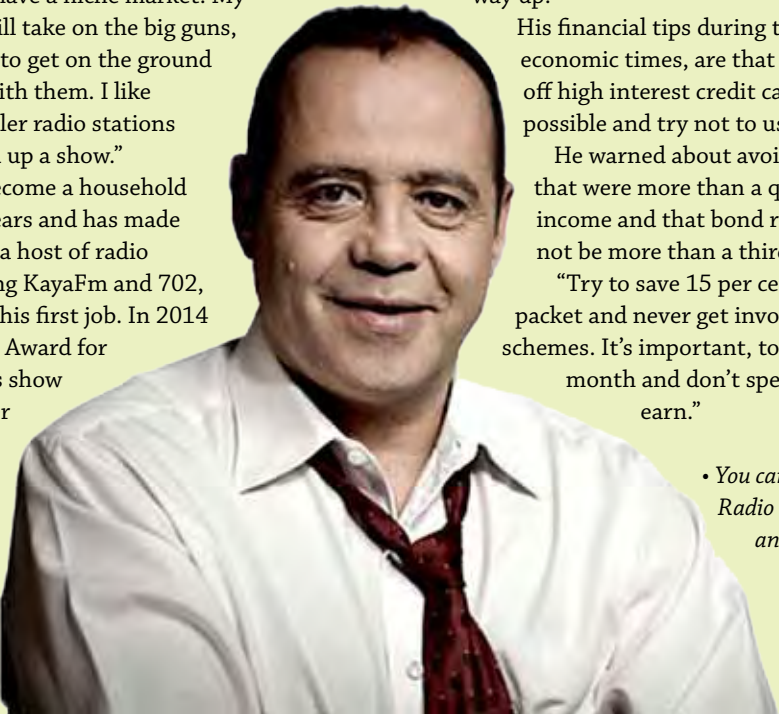
It went through many changes over the decades and in 2014 it was granted a licence to broadcast in Gauteng - but only started to broadcast in the province in April this year.

Said Stevie: “The music is old school and the jocks are well-known names such as David Blood. It is aimed at a 50-plus audience, but it also has an army of young listeners,” he said.

“It is going to have a niche market. My business show will take on the big guns, and I am excited to get on the ground floor and grow with them. I like working for smaller radio stations where I can build up a show.”

Stevie B has become a household name over the years and has made contributions to a host of radio stations, including KayaFm and 702, where he landed his first job. In 2014 he won the MTN Award for the best business show on radio - a career highlight - and he has served as “Brand Ambassador” for Discovery.

A fulltime stockbroker on the



Johannesburg Stock Exchange by trade, Stevie B always had a hankering for radio and approached 702 with an idea for a business show many years ago.

“Radio is a great medium to express yourself. It gives you the freedom to say what you want, within reason, of course, and it helps market you in other spheres, such as doing MC work and being a guest speaker at seminars.”

He feels he should have gone into radio earlier in his life, but has no regrets at the way his career is moving. “I loved working as a stockbroker and still miss it at times.”

When away from the studio, he enjoys riding his motorbike and can often be seen (especially in summer) pitching up at the studio in full leathers. “Riding a motorcycle,” he says, “allows me to relax.”

In his spare time, he enjoys writing poetry and his dream is to open his own radio station one day. “I still think it can happen in the future. I also believe there is a great future for Internet radio.”

His advice to budding broadcasters is to get a foot in the door, take whatever job they can, and work their way up.

His financial tips during these tough economic times, are that people should pay off high interest credit cards as soon as possible and try not to use them.

He warned about avoiding car repayments that were more than a quarter of one’s income and that bond repayments should not be more than a third of one’s income.

“Try to save 15 per cent of your pay packet and never get involved in pyramid schemes. It’s important, too, to budget every month and don’t spend more than you earn.”

• You can catch the new LM Radio on 702khz on AM and on DSTv channel 921.

World News in Brief

Vandal carves 30 swastikas into wet concrete in Brooklyn

New York - New York police are searching for a man who carved about 30 swastikas into wet concrete in Brooklyn.

The Midwood neighbourhood where the incident occurred early on Saturday morning, is predominantly Jewish, and home to at least nine large Orthodox synagogues, a branch of Touro College, and two historic non-Orthodox synagogues.

The vandal, believed to be a teenager, was captured on video carving the swastikas in the concrete over the course of 35 minutes. He also took photos of his handiwork. The graffiti

was discovered on Monday and reported to police, the New York Daily News reported.

The owners of the building reportedly are Jewish.

The incident is under investigation by the NYPD’s Hate Crimes Task Force.

The Anti-Defamation League condemned the violence. “This incident comes amid a concerning surge in reports of anti-Semitic vandalism across New York State. This act of hate is an affront to the Jewish community and to all New Yorkers,” said Evan R Bernstein, ADL New York regional director, in a statement. (JTA)

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TWO-STATE SOLUTION GOES AGAINST THE TORAH INSTRUCTION

On May 19, the editor wrote an editorial entitled “Do your research before making a stand”. She rightfully pointed out that the ANC and other prominent South Africans, have decided that Israel is the “bad guy” in the present conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

She wrote that top officials have made public accusations against Israel that are outrageous and not even vaguely true. Her main point was that “all these people have a right to their opinions, but opinions should only be borne out by knowing the facts”.

Would the editor not agree that this premise should apply equally to the various opinions regarding the Israel/ Palestinian conflict expressed by some of the paper’s own columnists and readers?

It is clear that the present government is openly antagonistic towards Israel and Zionism and that they are strong supporters of both the PLO and Hamas. Facts and reality only confuse their hatred of the Jewish State. They are extremely unlikely to change any time soon.

However, when it comes down to opinions on Israel in the Jewish community, I strongly believe that contrary to the commonly known “religion” of political correctness that everybody has the right to his or her opinion, is incorrect.

The Torah (written and oral), should be the basis for all discussion and opinions regarding the Jewish people and its state. Any opinion not based on reliable Torah sources, is invariably a distortion of the truth as it reflects only the fashionable

and “popular” sentiments of the time. As regards the most contentious issue of “land for peace” or a two-state solution, it is distressing to know that so many Jews in South Africa, including the Zionist Federation and most of the paper’s correspondents, are in favour of such a solution, in spite of such action being against our Torah.

Two-state advocates should clarify why they consider it morally acceptable to offer financial inducements to Jews in Judea and Samaria to evacuate their homes, schools, shuls, and places of livelihood in order to facilitate the establishment of a Palestinian state which is certain to become a bastion for Islamic terror.

And yet they consider it morally reprehensible to offer financial inducements to the Arabs in Judea and Samaria to evacuate their homes. The Torah explicitly commands such action. (Num 33:50-55).

There are many more issues debated and written about our only Jewish State. As editor of the only Jewish newspaper in South Africa and the fact that we are the “People of the Book” (Tanach), I would suggest any opinion or article regarding Israel appearing in Jewish Report that is not backed up by Torah sources, be carefully scrutinised.

The editorial - “Do your research before making a stand” - should be read over and over. Kol Ha’kavod.

Choni Davidowitz
Golden Acres,
Johannesburg

WARM TRIBUTE TO THE BRAVE JEWISH GO-GETTERS

I write in honour of a remarkable group of Orthodox Jewish women who assist divorced women whose former husbands refuse to free them from the grip of a failed marriage by refusing to give them a Jewish divorce (“get”).

Without this document, the woman is in Jewish law considered still married, or to use the halachic word, “aguna”, meaning “chained”. It is a sad but real fact that some men are so spiteful and vengeful as to take pleasure in being able to torment their former spouses, preventing them from beginning a new life, while a man is free to remarry if he so desires.

This is a regular problem which numerous women unfortunately face, aside from the practice of some former husbands to renege on their legal obligations to pay maintenance, medical aid and other commitments.

Recently, however, Orthodox Judaism here in South Africa and in Israel, has taken major revolutionary steps to resolve this tragic situation. Here, under the guidance of Av Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag, a ruling has been passed to the effect that any person who refuses to be human and give a get to his former wife and rejects the pleas of this former wife and the Beth Din to do so, will face the punishment of “cherem”.

This entails a loss of various Jewish privileges, including membership of a shul, being called to the Torah and worse of all, burial rights in a Jewish cemetery.

In Israel, the Knesset has gone so far as to rule such a failure on the husband’s part to be a legal offence, meaning a jail sentence. There is a case in Israel where the offender has

served five years in jail - and still refuses to give a get!

Our local women heroes have taken the apt name “Go-Getters”. They fear no one except Hashem. They at first make an effort to reach a peaceful settlement, but when that fails, as it usually does, they unleash a barrage, which I call “an intercontinental Torah missile”.

They contact the errant husband’s place of work and inform his boss and colleagues of his behaviour. By now, they make sure that his closest acquaintances are fully briefed, as are some women whom he associates with. They have gone so far as to demonstrate outside the “gentleman’s” home, placards and all!

Above all, these women have earned the respect and support of the Beth Din. Rabbi Boruch Rapoport, who heads the portfolio of “Gittin”, even tells women who approach him on this matter to immediately consult the Go-Getters.

My caregiver who has been divorced for four years without being able to achieve her right to be free, met, along with myself, with the ladies themselves, at the home of the chairman, Michelle Blumenau.

That meeting took place six weeks ago. Last week my caregiver received her get.

Remember the words of the Talmud, which applies to the Go-Getters and indeed to all Jewish women who fight for Torah and justice in general: “Because of righteous women, we were redeemed from Egypt.”

Rabbi Ben Isaacson
Johannesburg

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AS AN ISRAELI, RABBI SHAKED HAD EVERY RIGHT TO CRITICISE ISRAEL

Our thanks to Jewish Report for devoting two thirds of a page to our rabbi and his big mouth. He is inclined to shoot from the hip, but is much loved in our community for his warmth and spontaneity.

Last Friday night, Beit Emanuel shul was packed, including strangers who had come for the first time to listen to a rabbi who dares to speak his mind. His sermon was greeted with a round of applause and he continues to receive messages of support from world Jewry.

Rabbi Sa’ar Shaked is actually an Israeli who served with distinction in a combat unit of the IDF. He feels he has the same rights to engage in Israeli politics as Natan Sharansky, who was on the front page of your newspaper only the week before, saying exactly the same things.

Rabbi Shaked has just returned from Israel, where he attended the funeral of his brother, who died in tragic circumstances. Yet, Rabbi Shaked, who has conducted dozens of funerals in South Africa, has no right to conduct a funeral in the land of his birth. Or a wedding. Or a bris.

Israel is the only parliamentary democracy in the Western world in which Reform (and Conservative) rabbis have inferior religious rights.

The State recognises only Orthodox practices. Orthodox rabbis are subsidised. Orthodox shuls are subsidised. Reform and Conservative rabbis and shuls are not. Women who attempt to pray in the Conservative or Reform manner, have been stoned or arrested.

The issue is not whether Orthodox Jews agree with Reform practices; of course they do not. But the measure of religious freedom is

whether you tolerate others whose religious practices are not your own. Israel fails that test, and non-Orthodox Jews, who have kept silent for nearly seventy years, are no longer willing to be silent.

Your article notes that Rabbi Shaked was invited to speak at the ANC congress by the Kathrada faction of the ANC, describing Ahmed Kathrada as a “staunch supporter of BDS”.

Kathrada’s far more significant role was as the first senior ANC figure to speak up against Jacob Zuma and the Guptas.

The political symbolism that Jewish Report has missed, was a rabbi invited by the anti-Zuma faction, standing up in the centre of a fraught political conference, essentially saying: If I have the courage to speak out against the flaws of my own government, you ought to have the same courage to speak out against the flaws of yours.

Your paper showed courage the week before, in which you devoted several pages to making the same point as Rabbi Shaked, telling Benjamin Netanyahu to “get off his political high horse”.

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

We commend you for that.

Liebe Kellen
Chairman, Beit Emanuel Synagogue
Parktown

SA'AR SHAKED DOESN'T SPEAK IN NAME OF THIS PROGRESSIVE JEW

It is with a great deal of sadness that I write this letter to you. I am so enraged that I have to put pen to paper.

I am a proud Zionist and proud Progressive Jew living in Johannesburg. Watching the rabbi of Beit Emanuel Progressive Synagogue (Rabbi Sa’ar Shaked) stand on a political platform and deliver what should have been a prayer, at the recent ANC policy conference, made my blood boil.

He was asked to deliver a prayer, not offer a treatise on the status of religious freedom -

or lack of it - in Israel. I want to categorically state that Sa’ar Shaked does not speak in my name.

I distance myself from any Jew - Israeli or otherwise - who questions the legitimacy of the State of Israel, the status of Progressive Jews in Israel, or the withdrawal of the Israeli government from the Kotel agreement.

Madeleine Hicklin
Johannesburg

RABBI SHAKED TAKEN TO TASK FOR HIS ANC ‘MESSAGE’

I have read with dismay the utterances of Rabbi Sa’ar Shaked at the opening of the ANC Policy Conference at Nasrec, south of Johannesburg, last week.

When a rabbi is given the task of reading a prayer as a representative of the Jewish community, he should not use the forum as a platform for his own agenda.

Gail Scheuble
Johannesburg

TV PRODUCER JANE LIPMAN
SUPPORTS RABBI SHAKED

We support Rabbi Sa’ar Shaked in his statement on religious freedom (he made when offering a prayer) at the (opening of the) ANC Policy Conference at Nasrec last week and we believe, that as he stated, he was talking in his personal capacity as an Israeli citizen.

Jane Thandi Lipman - daughter of Alan and Beata Lipman
TV/Film Producer/Director/Journalist
Johannesburg

WHO NEED ENEMIES WHEN WE HAVE FRIENDS LIKE SHAKED?

I refer to Rabbi Sa’ar Shaked’s opening prayer at the ANC’s policy conference.

The ANC and all its top brass and lower echelons and even (Archbishop Emeritus Desmond) Tutu have Israel as a target of their prejudice.

(Cyril) Ramaphosa, too, displays his abysmal ignorance of the BDS movement, since he must be totally unaware of the fact that its main aim is not to set up a Palestinian state, but to destroy the Jewish State of Israel.

The ANC is also blind to the fact that the Arabs in Israel experience a higher living standard than Arabs in virtually any other Arab country They have all the rights and privileges of all citizens living in Israel.

You are doing a great job (the SAZF's) Ben Swartz, but... “airing our dirty laundry in public” is stretching it a bit.

Jack Miller
Johannesburg

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ISRAEL'S ENEMIES WILL BE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL TO RABBI SHAKED

When Rabbi Sa’ar Shaked accepted the invitation to offer a prayer at the start of the recent ANC conference, he must have surely understood that all that was expected of him was to do exactly that - offer a prayer from which the ruling party could surely benefit.

Why in Heaven’s name (forgive the pun) would he see fit to use a platform so inherently hostile to the State of Israel to highlight his personal frustrations with the age-old dispute surrounding the practise of Judaism within the Jewish State?

There is no need for rocket science to appreciate that the slightest understanding of the nuances surrounding this particular debate, will surely not exist on this particular platform.

The ANC cannot be further removed from the existing divisions between the ultra-Orthodox (who call the shots when it comes to the acceptable practise of the Jewish religion in Israel) and the Reform movement, who have been fighting for the accommodation of their viewpoint of Judaism, for decades.

When it comes to this debate, we’re stuck in centuries of dogma over which the ANC is probably the very last body on earth to exert any meaningful influence. Aren’t they

still battling to define the meaning of “white monopoly capital” which is far closer to home?

What was the esteemed rabbi thinking when he claimed to be only speaking for a “minority within a minority”?

Did he really believe that this would be sufficiently clear to his audience in order to remove him from his damaging assertions about Israel, which would inevitably be pounced upon by a gleeful ANC, eager to propagandise it in support of their own particular context?

The fact that the Chief Rabbi was not invited to deliver a prayer (or even attend) shows that the ANC knows where to turn when its bread needs buttering; and Rabbi Shaked did not disappoint.

Needless to say, when the ANC/BDS/JVJP, etc, need a suitable slogan with which to falsely accuse Israel of “universal religious intolerance”, one has been supplied and verified by no less than an Israeli rabbi.

You, Rabbi Shaked, may be an incredible rabbi but, sadly, a poor judge of politics. Israel’s enemies will be eternally grateful.

Victor Gordon
Pretoria

STRONG OUTSIDE FORCES PULLING MKHWEBANE'S STRINGS...

Besides the strident and ear-piercing outcry against the new Public Protector, Busisiwe Mkhwebane’s recommendation to Parliament for a Constitutional amendment to change the mandate of the Reserve Bank, the asininity of her action caused me to commit a Freudian slip by attributing her Parliamentary instruction to her predecessor, Thuli Madonsela.

Madonsela set high standards for successor Public Protectors to emulate. One cannot say the same for Mkhwebane, other than the fact that both she and Madonsela are disliked: Madonsela for the wrong reasons, and Mkhwebane for the right ones.

The new Public Protector said recently in a radio interview: “I think I know I won’t be pleasing everyone, and I’m just trying to do my job.”

Therein lies the problem: She’s not doing her job, because she appears to have no understanding of the duties and responsibilities of (what being) a public protector (entails). What is it that Mkhwebane does not comprehend? Or is it as a growing number of political analysts assert, that she knows what she’s doing by “playing to a well-rehearsed narrative” and in doing so, exposing her “allegiance” by giving her report to the clumsily-titled Black First Land First movement, the paid surrogates of the Gupta family... the “family’s convenient mouthpiece”.

Her probe of the Absa saga was simply a pretext to targeting the Reserve Bank, the last remaining independent state institution, for capture.

Whatever influence the Gupta family exercises over her decisions, she really demonstrated bad judgement in seeking out Stephen Goodson, a Holocaust denier and an ardent admirer of Hitler, to mentor her in connection with her probe.

According to Mkhwebane’s resumé, she graduated with an LLB from the University of the North. Even though rated somewhere near the bottom of the academic totem pole, it must have provided her with some iota of acumen to at least understand the limits of her office.

Nonetheless, she issued a bombshell report, violative of the Public Protector Act, littered with incoherent findings and sweeping overreach. The backlash was tellingly immediate to which she sheepishly claimed that her recommendations were merely “suggestions”.

Not so, according to the Constitutional Court. I can only conclude that her understanding of contract law, and/or interpretation of statutes, were not her strong points at law school.

There are those who contend that her actions are the product of incompetence - undoubtedly so - but also at play is the spectre of outside forces acting in concert and pulling her strings.

Errol Horwitz
Cape Town



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PE’s Union of Jewish Women help those who lost everything in the fires

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Port Elizabeth volunteers of the Union of Jewish Women put their all into helping those who lost their homes and belongings in the all-consuming carnage of the Garden Route fires. At the end of last month, they set to work packing kitchen and linen kits, as well as items such as cleaning materials, gas stoves, kettles and so much more.

UJW SA donated fire-protective gear for the firefighters who toiled courageously to bring the fires under control.



Adela Kapp; Elaine Racussen; Pam Leibowitz; Sandra Orwin; and Wendy Bethlehem.

Absa Jewish Achiever Awards

The secret’s out!

With a record number of people nominated to win an Absa Jewish Achievers Award when nominations closed last week, the focus of discussion is on who will be the headline act for the elite, annual black-tie fundraiser.

Well, the secret is out. In line with Jewish Report’s history of recruiting some of the top acts over the years, the 2017 master of ceremonies and headline performer will be none other than Kagiso Lediga, one of the country’s most talented actors and comedians.

Kagiso has been nominated for numerous Golden Horn awards for his work as an actor, writer and director.

He has performed at all the prestigious comedy events on the local scene, including the Cape Town International Comedy Festival, where he won the People’s Choice Award.

Other comedy events Lediga has performed at, include Laugh Out Loud, Comedy Blackout, King-size Heavyweight Comedy Jams, Blacks Only, Freshest Comedy Festival, Pure Monate



Comedy Jam and the Let Durban Laugh Festival.

He is also a regular in comedy venues like The Blues Room, The Armchair, The Underground Cool Runnings, Dachs, Comedy @ 88, Tanz Café, Carnival City, Horror Café, Cherelee’s, Morula Sun and Funny Bones.

Among his international performances he is most proud of are those at Caroline’s and The Laugh Lounge, two of New York’s top comedy clubs. He has also featured at the famous Yuk Yuks in Toronto, Canada.

Luckily Kagiso, who is also an accomplished producer, writer and TV personality, was able to make time in his heavily-booked schedule to host the Absa Jewish Achievers Awards to be held on Sunday August 13.

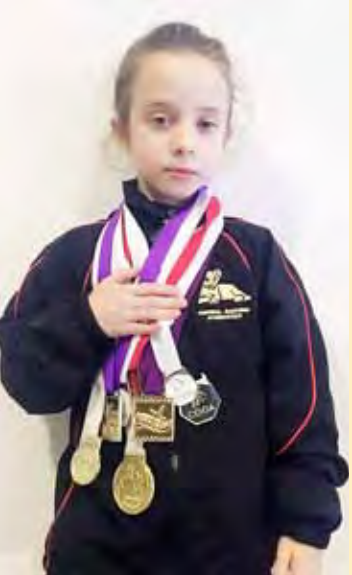
A Galaxy of Stars is the theme of the 2017 gala dinner. Readers who wish to reserve a seat or table at the event, can simply click on the graphic at the top right corner of any page of the Jewish Report website - but hurry, the event is always a sell-out!

Gymnastic champion in training

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Gia Lipschitz, a grade 3 learner at Bellavista School, was awarded full Junior Colours for Women’s Artistic Gymnastics (WAG) by the Central Gauteng Gymnastic Association, for level 3 – 8 years and under.

Gia was placed first overall at Gauteng provincials in May, being one of two Jewish entrants among more than 80 participants. She then went on to place first overall in mini nationals held in June this year.



Torah Academy honours its major Nursery School donors



Rabbi Mendel Lipskar presents a framed dollar to top donor Mark Stein.

SUZANNE BELLING

When Jews were panicking whether to stay or leave South Africa before the end of apartheid, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, the late Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, predicted all would be well for those staying in South Africa.

“When our community was shrinking, with diminishing resources, the Rebbe told us to build schools,” said Rabbi Mendel Lipskar, head of the Lubavitch Foundation of Southern Africa and a founding member of the Torah Academy Schools education committee.

He was speaking at a reception held before the end of term to honour the major donors who enabled the refurbishment and additions to the Torah Academy Nursery School building.

“The country has Divine resources and, materially and spiritually, we are building people and education.” The Torah Academy High Schools had recently been voted the top independent school in Gauteng,” Rabbi Lipskar said.

“We teach our children that the Torah will be there forever,” said Rabbi Shabsy Chaiton, administrator of Torah Academy. The education and learning of the children was a foundation of strength.

Rabbi Levi Lipskar, who heads up growth and development at the school, paid tribute to the pillars of the community - the donors who had made the Nursery School project possible.

The Rebbe, whose yahrzeit was last Tuesday (Gimmel Tammuz), used to stand for hours distributing dollars to thousands of people on Sundays and other occasions.

His intention was that the recipient should give the dollar to tzedakah. Usually, instead of giving the actual dollar bill to charity, the recipient would keep it and give away another dollar in its place.

Framed dollars from the Rebbe were presented to the top contributors to the Nursery School campaign, who attended the reception.

Sara Bronstein, principal of the Nursery School, told the donors: “I salute you for dreaming with us, believing in us and seeing this project through into something tangible... Our vision has always been guided by the teachings of the Rebbe.”

Friday (July 14)

- UZLC hosts Monica Solomon on “Some issues in the Community”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Sunday (July 16)

- Second Innings hosts Peter Delmar, journalist and author, on “A Potted Journey Through South Africa’s Crazy Past”. 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.

Tuesday (July 18)

- JWBS’ 55 Club, devoted to senior citizens, meets every Tuesday and Thursday for lunch and socialising. Arrive anytime in the morning to socialise, then lunch at 12:00 at Sandringham Gardens. Lifts can be organized. Become a member and enjoy the many benefits 55 Club have to offer. Call Heather (011) 485-1825 or 082-398-3745.

Wednesday (July 19)

- ORT SA hosts educational psychologist Dvori Blumenau on “Inner Peace in the Modern

World” - a practical guide to achieving inner peace. Part 1 today or Sunday (July 23) at 19:30. Part 2 (optional) takes place on Wednesday July 26 at 09:00 or Sunday July 30 at 19:30. Part 2 can be attended without part 1. It’s a ladies-only event. Venue: Kenilworth Street, Sydenham. Cost: R100 per session (incl light refreshments), Contact: Nadine nade@mweb.co.za or SMS 082-891-8252 or dvoriblum@gmail.com or www.jhbnorthpsychologist.co.za

- Second Innings hosts a guided tour of the Rand Historical Museum. Time: Bus departs from Golden Acres parking area at 09:00 sharp. Cost: R170 (incl bus and guided tour). Booking: Betty Kowal and Fanny Baumann (011) 532-9701.

Thursday (July 20)

- ORT SA hosts Natalie Knight’s book launch, “The Big Picture”. Time: 18:30. Venue: ORT, 44 Central Street, Houghton. Booking: E-mail nade@mweb.co.za or call Nelly at ORT on (011) 728-7154.

Sunday (July 23)

- Second Innings hosts Dr Dean Allen, academic, lecturer, historian and author, on “Empire, War & Cricket In South Africa”. 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.



Paid-for racism: SA democracy shows its teeth



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

While it seems incredible that in a racially charged society like ours, someone would purposely stoke black-white tensions, for enough money some people will do anything. The London-based public relations firm Bell

Pottinger (BP) has done that for a fee of about \$170 000 a month: it fashioned racially divisive slogans, speeches and activities for the mafia network of President Jacob Zuma and the Gupta family, to divert South Africans’ attention so they could continue looting state coffers behind the smokescreen. This perilous ethnic baiting, is familiar to Jewish ears. For centuries, when they were on good terms with their gentile neighbours, they suddenly heard someone say: “Jews are vermin

and Christ-killers.” The Holocaust is the most blatant example of the violence that followed, but there are others. It also happened in Rwanda in 1994 when Tutsis were called “cockroaches” as part of a campaign of delegitimation, and some 800 000 were slaughtered by their Hutu neighbours. It boggles the mind that so soon after Nelson Mandela’s rainbow-nation dream seemed within reach - South Africa’s black-white relations have improved, despite huge problems - someone should purposely undermine it by dredging up racist hatred from colonialism and apartheid. Hired by the Gupta family in 2016, BP has advised them and their associates about how to protect their image. Attacks on their pervasive corruption were blamed on “white monopoly capital” and other populist slogans which resonated with the angry masses. White journalists who criticised them, were called racists and threatened by groups such as Black First Land First, reportedly funded by the Guptas and tutored by BP. In the past, BP has helped shine the images of dictators such as Augusto Pinochet of Chile and oppressive regimes in Belarus, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Then it saw an opportunity in South Africa and grabbed it. It may seem inappropriate in this gloomy atmosphere to drink a toast to ourselves. But we should. Because although the war to rescue the country from the Guptas and Zumas and their henchmen, has not yet been fully won, there have been significant partial victories. After being exposed, BP has crawled on its knees and publicly apologised, admitting to unethical tactics and expressing “profound regret”.

Its apology is clearly insufficient and reflects only the tip of the iceberg. The saga should be used to expose other saboteurs of South Africa’s vision and force them to make amends. When foreigners come visiting, their local hosts tell them things look bleak. A corrupt president clings to power, a foreign family pulls government strings, the economy is plunging, violence is rising, whites feel like a threatened minority, and so on. The old question: “Should I stay or go?” hangs in the air. Many have left the country; more would leave if they had the resources. Yet, if the foreign visitor was Canadian and had read last Friday’s Globe and Mail newspaper in Toronto, he might have a more positive view. The paper described the “humbling” by the country of Bell Pottinger which had “met its match in the free-wheeling democracy of South Africa” with its “vibrant media and civil-society sector”. The positive angle has lots of truth in it. Widespread public outrage and action in civil society and some parts of government, are rising sharply as more evidence of the Zuma-Gupta contagion emerges. And although the scary spectre of the country sliding towards a Zimbabwe-style kleptocracy has seemed less outlandish recently than it once did, South Africans are not passive Zimbabweans and will not let it happen. Hopefully, one day, visitors from abroad will toast the success of this wonderful country with South Africans and celebrate the vanquishing of criminals such as the Zumas and Guptas and their enablers, BP. • Read Geoff Sifrin’s regular columns on his blog sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com

Community Column

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Future of the SA embassy in Israel

Largely buried in the flood of media reports generated by last week’s ANC policy conference, was a recommendation by the party’s International Relations Commission that the South African embassy in Tel Aviv, be downgraded as a result of Israel’s policies regarding the Palestinians. Some people in our community have erroneously concluded that this is not, or at least will inevitably in the future, become government policy. In fact, as things stand the proposal to downgrade diplomatic ties is just one of many policy recommendations that have come out of the conference. The next step will be for it to be further considered and debated, with input from a wide range of stakeholders, in order to assess the likely impact for South Africa downgrading the embassy. Minister Edna Molewa, who heads up the ANC National Executive Committee Subcommittee on International Relations, and was chairman of the International Relations Commission during the ANC National Policy Conference, assured our National President Mary Kluk, that the SAJBD would be fully consulted and be part of its investigations. Finally, the recommendation will be taken to the ANC’s National Elective Conference in December, where delegates will vote on whether or not to adopt it. The policy of the ANC and the South African government on the Israeli-Palestinian issue, remains today what it has always been, one of a two-state solution through a negotiated settlement between both parties. The SAJBD likewise supports the negotiation of a two-state solution between the parties. We will continue to engage with the ANC in endeavouring to work towards this goal while

strongly opposing attempts by radical lobbies driven not by a desire for peace, but a hatred for Israel and to weaken the South Africa-Israel relationship. The concerns raised must, however, be seen against continued progress that Israel is making in the global diplomatic field. Even as the ANC was discussing downgrading the South African embassy in Israel, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was paying the first-ever official state visit to Israel by an Indian head of state. Once hostile to Israel in the international arena, India and Israel today have extensive and rapidly growing trade and diplomatic ties, as well as an increasing co-operation in security and related matters. Prime Minister Modi’s visit was followed immediately afterwards by that of Rwanda’s President Paul Kagame, personifying the closer ties between Africa and Israel. There is even a strong likelihood of Israel obtaining observer status at the African Union. All in all, South Africa would be on the wrong side of history were it to decide to downgrade diplomatic relations with Israel, with such a move in effect being no more than an empty gesture, more likely to sideline South Africa as a credible international player, rather than isolating Israel. Given the current divisions and uncertainty within the ANC, it was predictable that hard-line anti-Israel factions would seize the opportunity to push their agenda, but we remain hopeful and confident that ultimately rationality will prevail and that the party will decide against upsetting the status quo.

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

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

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Ali Bacher – from sportsman to TV interviewer

JACK MILNER

Doctor, sportsman, administrator, author and a now a television interviewer - Ali Bacher is one of those people who has done it all.

In Conversation, which is aired on SuperSport, started almost by accident and has turned into a very well-watched programme. Over the last seven years, Bacher has interviewed 39 high-profile sporting personalities and has travelled all over the world to do so.

The programme came about as the result of an incident during a Test match between Pakistan and England in 2010. “There was a very ugly incident in which three Pakistani cricketers were

accused of being involved in spread betting,” explained Bacher.

“This was not a case of match fixing per se, but rather incidents where they would bowl a no-ball as the fourth ball of an over, for example. The British papers got hold of the story and they blew it up into a massive incident.

“I became very downhearted because I felt the last thing we needed was another scandal in world cricket.”

In trying to devise a plan to combat the negative press, Bacher thought that if he could find someone who was irreproachable to explain what had happened, he could defute the bad image.



Ali Bacher with SA soccer icon Kaizer Motaung, one of the people the former SA cricket administrator has interviewed on his programme, In Conversation.

“The person I thought of was Sachin Tendulkar. He and I are very close and he is a man with an impeccable reputation. So, I called him and told him that the world of cricket believes him and he needs to explain that cricket is in a healthy situation.

“He spoke to his manager who then contacted me and said Sachin supported what I had said and would do the interview.”

That was the first one and buoyed by the success, SuperSport has made it a regular programme. “We do about six or seven a year and I have loved every moment of it,” said Bacher.

Over the past seven years he has completed 39 interviews with some of the greatest sporting personalities. “Only 11 of them have been cricketers and they include Shane Warne, Steve Waugh, Ian Botham and Brian Lara.”

One of the early productions saw him interview Norman Gordon, who at the age of 100 was the world’s oldest living Test cricketer. The South African was the last living cricketer who played in the famous timeless Test in Durban in 1939 between South Africa and England, which ironically enough, ended in a draw.

“What’s important about the interview is that it needs to be spontaneous,” said Bacher. “I do a lot of studying and a lot of good people help me garner the necessary information, but every person has gone in without knowing the questions.

Only one person has asked me if he could have the questions, but when I explained that it needs to be unstructured, he was happy to do the programme without them.

“The other amazing fact is that not one person has asked to be paid for doing the interview.”

After the interview SuperSport producer

Richard Parker will edit the programme, inserting footage wherever necessary. “Before it is aired, he will show me the edited version and I’ll give my views.

“All the proposals about who we interview are mine and they have never turned me down. I do always try to find someone who will interest the public.”

Asked who he considered his best interview Bacher replied instantly. “Steve Waugh. After he retired he didn’t want to do it. Then we both ended up in London and we met up at Lord’s. Reluctantly he agreed to do the interview, but once we started it was amazing.

“We went on straight for 60 minutes but Parker told me not to stop because it was so fascinating.”

The former Australian captain spoke about how he faced West Indian bowler Curtly Ambrose on a bad wicket. He bowled him a bouncer that almost killed him, but Waugh was determined to stand his ground and went on to score 70.

“Naas Botha was amazing. We often have to stop during the recording but with Naas he went straight through. We never stopped once.”

Other memorable interviews were with the late John “Shoes” Moshoeu, the Bafana Bafana player who sadly died after a long battle with cancer in 2015 at the age of 49.

“Kaizer Motaung was very interesting and he has achieved great things in soccer in this country.”

Next on the list is Caster Semenya and that interview will air on July 21. “This was a breath-taking interview,” said Bacher. “She has a strong personality and is very strong-willed.”

The interview after that - and it will be No 40 - will be with Piere Strydom who is the only South African jockey - and among just a few in the world - who has ridden over 5 000 winners.

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