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Disclosing the 'schlepped' funds

HILARY JOFFE

Were you one of those readers who were either impressed, with or criticised the South African Revenue Services (SARS) for advertising their Special Voluntary Disclosure Programme (SVDP) in the SA Jewish Report on August 11 and 18?

Do you recall those ads that had a man boasting of his new luxury boat in Mauritius and his offshore mansion whose existence he failed to disclose to the revenue or exchange control authorities?

They are part of a last-minute effort by SARS to persuade taxpayers with undisclosed foreign assets to regularise these in terms of the SVDP, which expires on August 31.

The programme, which the minister of finance announced last year, was intended to give people who “schlepped” funds abroad, the chance to come forward, ahead of a new international agreement between tax authorities that comes into effect on September 1.

The agreement will see the authorities of different countries sharing information on the bank accounts and other assets of individuals and trusts under the new Common Reporting Standards mechanism.

There was also a hope that government could use the SVDP to rake in some much needed extra revenue, at a time when the economy is weak, tax collections are falling behind budget and South Africa is at risk of a downgrade to junk status.

The chairman of the Davis Tax Committee, Judge Dennis Davis, had estimated that the SVDP could bring in as much as R10 billion to R15 billion in extra revenue for government.

As the SVDP deadline looms, tax experts report a flurry of last minute interest from individuals wanting to apply in terms of the programme, but it's as yet unclear how successful it will be from government's point

of view.

SARS told Business Day newspaper on Wednesday that almost 600 people have so far applied for the SVDP, which has uncovered about R6,4bn to date of previously undisclosed foreign assets.

This is believed to be far short of the approximately R40bn which government had been hoping for under the programme, and well below the numbers who took advantage of previous amnesties.

The pressure for taxpayers to come forward and disclose, is that if they don't, they risk that the taxman will find out from other tax authorities about their undisclosed offshore assets, which will be hit with full taxation, full interest, and no relief from penalties or even potential criminal prosecution.

However, the problem, say tax experts, is that applying for the SVDP is not cheap, nor is it simple. Says Andrew Wellsted, head of tax at law firm Norton Rose Fulbright: “It is a little more expensive than we are used to for these types of programme, and less user-friendly.”

Those who apply have to pay tax of 16 per cent of the value of their foreign assets plus an exchange control levy of 5 per cent of the value of the assets, if they opt to bring these back to South Africa, or 10 per cent assuming they leave the assets abroad.

Even on the most basic calculation, that's 26 per cent, which notes Wellsted is “quite a lot”. They also have to provide full disclosure – there has been an insistence from the authorities on quite detailed information of the circumstances in which the funds were externalised, he says. That often involves implicating other people who were involved, which many don't want to do.

However, the net is closing in, not only because of the new Common Reporting Standard, but also, Wellsted points out, because increasingly foreign banks are not allowed to bank you unless they know where the money came from – and that it is legitimate.

People have been watching and waiting, it seems, and one of the reasons they may have delayed applying, is they have been getting different advice from different experts.

Many have in the end gone to tax lawyers, rather than tax accountants, because consultations with lawyers have the advantage of legal privilege – so confidentiality for those with foreign assets in the event that they choose, for whatever reason, not to apply for the SVDP.

Within the next few days, however, many will have to decide which way they go.

Shabbat times this week		
Starts	Ends	
17:34	18:24	Johannesburg
18:05	18:58	Cape Town
17:19	18.10	Durban
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17:37	18:29	Port Elizabeth
17:28	18:21	East London

South African
Jewish Report

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Parshat Shoftim

Here comes the judge

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Rabbi Yossy
Goldman,
Sydenham Shul



This week's parshah, Shoftim (Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9), begins with the biblical command for judges to be appointed in every city and town to adjudicate and maintain a just, ordered, civil society.

Interestingly, it occurs in the first week of Elul, the month in which we are to prepare in earnest for the Days of Judgment ahead, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

There are, however, some significant differences between earthly judges of flesh and blood and the heavenly judge. In the earthly court, if after a fair trial a defendant is found guilty, then there's really not much room for clemency on the part of the judge.

The law is the law and must take its course. The accused may shed rivers of tears, but no human judge can be certain if his remorse is genuine. His feelings of regret are touching, but of limited legal consequence. After all, a human judge may only make a decision based on “what the eye can see”.

The misdeed was seen to have been committed. The remorse, who knows? Perhaps he's a good actor and is only acting contrite. The Supreme Judge, however, does know whether the accused genuinely regrets his actions or is merely putting on an act. Therefore, He alone is able to forgive. That is why in heavenly judgments, teshuvah (repentance) is effective.

The Maharal of Prague gave another reason. Only G-d is able to judge the whole person. Every one of us has good and bad to some extent. Even those who have sinned may have many other good deeds that outweigh the bad ones.

Perhaps even one good deed was of such major significance that it alone could serve as a weighty counterbalance. The point is, only G-d knows. Only He can judge the individual in the context of his whole life and all his deeds, good and bad.

Our goal is to emulate the heavenly court. We should try to look at the totality of the person. You think he is bad, but is he all bad? Does he have no redeeming virtues? Surely, he must have some good in him as well. Look at the whole person.

A teacher once conducted an experiment. He held up a white plate and showed it to the class. In the centre of the plate was a small black spot. He then asked the class to describe what they saw.

One student said he saw a black spot. Another said it must be a target for shooting practice. A third suggested that the plate was dirty or damaged. Whereupon the teacher asked: “Doesn't anyone see a white plate?”

There may have been a small black spot, but essentially it was a white plate. Why do we only see the dirt? Let us learn to find the good in others. Nobody is perfect, not even ourselves. Let's not be so judgmental and critical. Let's try to see the good in others.

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Leaders going through the mill to ensure a better future

NICOLA MILTZ

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) – one of the most crucial community-funded organisations promoting the safety and welfare of SA Jewry – has been told to clean up its act.

An internal commission of inquiry into “murky” areas of financial maladministration, alleged tax irregularities and a dearth of corporate governance, has been conducted by highly respected retired Judge Meyer Joffe.

This “clean up” was initially called for by some of the Board’s outgoing leadership. Spearheading it were Board Chairman Jeff Katz and Treasurer Raymond Goss and one or two others who shared their sentiments. They were disgruntled by the way things were being run.

They were instrumental in driving the internal commission of inquiry after they discovered what they called “irregularities” that needed to be ironed out in the interest of good governance, transparency, honesty and integrity. Their aim was to streamline the organisation’s financial and structural management.



Shaun Zagnoev

The findings were clear: There was no theft of communal funds discovered, however the report revealed weaknesses in areas pertaining to corporate governance and administration.

Sorting out the Board was essential, because it serves a vital representative function in the community, standing up against anti-Semitism and racism, helping to promote good relations and understanding between Jews and all people of South Africa.

The report, which was released two weeks ago, has been kept under wraps, but was made available to the SA Jewish Report this week.

The commission of inquiry headed up by Judge Joffe, newly-elected Chairman Shaun Zagnoev, newly-elected Treasurer Eric Marx and Jeremy Droyman, received written and oral submissions and, from this, their findings were presented to the National Executive Committee of the Board a fortnight ago.

The inquiry found irregularities and ineptitude in the administration of a number of trusts set up to either fight anti-Semitism or to look after country communities such as those in places like Potchefstroom, Nelspruit, Parys and Uitenhage.

The report also found a tax irregularity which resulted in Beyachad – the umbrella body encompassing the Community Security Organisation, the Zionist Federation and the SAJBD – applying to SARS under the voluntary tax disclosure programme (VDP).

Now that the report is out, Katz, Goss and former vice-chairman, Doron Joffe, have opted not to continue working on the Board, choosing to decline any further positions at the SAJBD’s national conference on Sunday. Among their reasons was the need for “fresh new leadership”.

However, Goss, said that when trying to probe the financial mechanisms and workings of the Board, he was often met with hostility. “It became impossible to do my job. I thought for the sanity of the Board, which is so critical for this country and which does such an amazing job, it was best to remove myself,” he told the SA Jewish Report this week.

Goss and Katz believe their “vision to clean up the Board” has been fulfilled and they feel confident that the way has been paved for the new leadership.

Katz, who has served 15 years at the Board, two as chairman, declined to stand for honorary president, a position traditionally taken up by the outgoing chairman. He said that if you don’t have a fresh crop of leaders, you encourage “institutionalised (I wouldn’t say bad) behaviour but I’d say behaviour that isn’t vetted”.

In recent months, the Board has been plagued by a series of unpleasant internal squabbling and infighting among some of its most senior directors. This has led to a power struggle between certain members, all of whom are unpaid professionals who spend hours volunteering their time for the welfare of the community.

Goss regretted that things became ugly when he and Katz started digging into the irregularities, which arose several years prior to his tenure. They found that all the parties were not “aligned” on how to address these issues.

This leadership friction reached fever pitch with him and several others who welcomed the commission.

Through this process he felt at times “sidelined and ostracised” and that there was underhand lobbying behind the scenes.



Jeff Katz

The role of the treasurer, he said, was to make sure the Board had the “financial muscle” to do its job and it had whatever resources it needed to achieve those objectives.

“The reality is that times are tough, resources

Continued on page 4>>

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Thuli tells SAJBD conference ‘we all have a role to play’

ANT KATZ

Former Public Protector Thuli Madonsela, delivered a scathing attack on the government when she spoke at the SA Jewish Board of Deputies’ (SAJBD) National Conference on Sunday.

“We have a Constitution which gives equality to all,” Madonsela said, but this can only apply under a regime of good governance. “If we want peace, we have to build a society where there is hope for all.”

She said that “in our emerging democracy, we have forgotten about the people. We left a lot of things to government and state institutions.”

“Today,” she told the packed audience of around 400, “we live in a democracy where people feel excluded from having a say.” Some “believe people go to (join) ISIS because they don’t believe that there is justice and equality” in South Africa.

But “tomorrow could be better. Each of us have a role in creating the functional democracy we want.” This, she said, “includes (ensuring that) those who govern us are the most competent, least selfish and the most trustworthy”.

Our government should be “ethically sound and do the right thing because it is the right thing to do”, she said. They need to be “people who govern with purpose”, she added.

In terms of governing the SAJBD, there were few but significant changes in the election of the National Executive Committee (NEC). Chairman Jeff Katz stood down and was replaced by Gauteng Council

Chairman Shaun Zagnoev. Mary Kluk was re-elected unopposed as national president, with Zev Krengel as vice-president.

Eric Marx, who completed his term as chairman of the Board’s Cape Council last month, was elected as national treasurer, replacing Raymond Goss. The rest of the NEC remains as is, with the three national vice-chairmen being Karen Milner, Jeremy Droyman and Rael Kaimowitz.

Katz said: “Anyone who reads the SA Jewish Report, has Facebook, Twitter or listens to ChaiFM, will be aware of the high-level work we are involved with.”

These included rescheduling exams for observant Jewish students at universities around the country when exams fall on Shabbat or chagim.

Also on the university front, said Katz, the Board rendered assistance to students “during the one-week annual hate festival: ‘Israel Apartheid Week’.” He also mentioned the close co-operation between the SAJBD, the CSO and State Security and other policing agencies at the time the Thulsie (suspected ISIS bombers who were targeting Jewish installations) threat emerged.

National Director of the Board, Wendy Kahn, said the organisation’s work “is largely about dialogue... within our community as we saw in finding resolution to the Yom Hashoah issue... dialogue we use in building up relationships with our government, political parties, media and international Jewry”.

Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa Lior Keinan, agreed, saying that the



success that had been achieved by the visiting delegation of MKs “proves that dialogue is key in increasing understanding of the challenges and opportunities between our great nations”.

SAJBD Associate Director David Saks, gave an update on anti-Semitism in South Africa, and how the Board’s zero tolerance policy had kept the scourge at bay, relative to the problems other countries faced.

Presenting awards, Krengel gave the Eric Samson Mendel Kaplan Communal Service Award for a lay leader to John Moshal for a lifetime of philanthropy.

Joffe presented the Eric Samson Mendel Kaplan Communal Service Award for a professional to Shirley Beagle for her dedicated and loyal

service to the Board.

Zagnoev then presented the Rabbi Cyril and Ann Harris Human Rights Award to Molly Smith and Lesley Rosenberg, founders of the Mitzvah School, for their work in educating disadvantaged youth from Alexandra.

Unlike the Mitzvah School children, Madonsela said she believe that “the majority of South Africans do not believe there is hope for them today”.

She made clear that she believed South Africa’s political leadership “has lost its moral compass.”

“One of the injustices of the past was the unequal distribution of wealth – and that is still there,” she said. It is just in a different form.

“Each of us have a role in creating the functional democracy we want.”

But there are huge challenges, such as issues of governance of the State. “We made the mistake of thinking we had a great Constitution and our leadership had been made up of former freedom fighters.” But “we have forgotten about the people – we left a lot of things to government and state institutions.” That had been wrong.

Her ideals and future vision for South Africa were very similar to those of the Jewish community – and she looked forward to a continued side-by-side engagement against injustice. South African Jewry as a whole, and the Board specifically, must continue their important role of standing up against injustice for all South Africans, she said.

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Leaders going through the mill...

>> Continued from page 3

are dwindling and there are shortfalls,” he said.

The community was hard-pressed to step up efforts to combat rising anti-Semitism and BDS and this required more funding and resources. Currently the Board is running at a R2m shortfall this past financial year.

The United Communal Fund raises money for Beyachad, which in turn apportions budgets to the various organisations, including the Board. The Board’s shortfalls had to be met either by additional fundraising from an already cash-strapped local community, or off shore, which wasn’t ideal.

In trying to decipher a governance trail with regards to certain cash withdrawals from the country community trusts, Goss and Katz were met with a measure of resistance. A certain “murkiness” arose between the Board, the UCF and Beyachad, which they both felt needed to be addressed.

The inquiry looked at the country community trusts in detail to see exactly how these are run, managed and structured. It checked who ran the trusts, whether they were audited and who had signing power over them. The report found poor governance in this area.

There were two withdrawals from a particular trust. In the first, a withdrawal was loaned to the CSO to help fund additional security measures during Yomtov – it

fell within the mandate of the trust in fighting anti-Semitism.

The second was to fund a “cash flow crisis”. It was noted that these funds were repaid shortly after they were withdrawn.

Goss noticed that when the trusts were frozen at his insistence, it put considerable strain on the Board’s budget, and this he found concerning.

The inquiry brought to light the need for a radical improvement in “record keeping and filing systems” of the country community trusts, and the need for “a complete tightening up of governance and lines of communication, and financial reporting,” said Marx.

According to Marx “there are many lessons to be learnt in the way the country community trusts are managed.

“Everyone has acted in good faith; there has been no theft and no misappropriation of funds,” insisted Zagnoev.

Zagnoev and Marx were very positive and hopeful that the newly-elected Board would usher in a new chapter and that the findings of the report were a step in the right direction.

A committee has been set up to investigate all issues of corporate governance and to put measures in place to rectify all shortcomings, they said.

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Chicken prices all kosher, says Brozin

ANT KATZ

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein appointed Robbie Brozin, founder of the Nando’s chicken franchise chain, to head a special task team three-and-a-half years ago, to find a solution to the high price of kosher chickens in Johannesburg. The report is now complete.

Goldstein, Brozin and former McKinsey consultant Luizet Ruzow, who did the research, say their findings prove there is no way to reduce the current production cost of chicken. Instead, they point out, retail prices vary considerably from one outlet to another, and that kosher consumers could save by shopping around.

Regarding the delay in publishing the long-awaited report, Brozin said the blame should be laid squarely at his door. “I wanted to be clear of where we are going as a kosher community.”

He felt he needed to “gain a deeper understanding” into the kosher market in general, which took time. And, Brozin adds, he and Rabbi Goldstein had expanded the investigation far wider than the original brief.

The trio will be continuing their research into the realm of kosher products in general, and asking the question of how to get more people to eat more kosher, more often.

In early 2014, Rabbi Goldstein told the community he had asked Brozin, “to use his extensive network and knowledge of the industry, to find an innovative way to bring down the chicken price for the kosher consumer.”

Brozin says that “there is no simple quick-fix, or link, in the supply chain that will bring down the price of kosher chicken. We brought in an independent, ex-McKinsey consultant, Luizet Ruzow, who came with much experience and a shared passion for making kosher more accessible,” Brozin said.

Ruzow, who conducted the research at the abattoir, had worked on a restructuring project for the UOS several years ago.

The seven main factors that increase costs on a kosher versus treif production line in the report, are:

- In order for the bird to be koshered, only a “premium chicken” can be

used. “Any wound or blemish can render an animal treif,” says Ruzow, as birds have to pass rigorous checks and inspections after shechting. So, the rate of rejecting birds is high.

Rabbi Goldstein explains that any bird that doesn’t make the grade will be considered waste and sold to the treif market at a considerable discount.

Brozin said, however, that by using higher quality birds, the abattoir had managed to reduce waste from the 12 to 13 per cent of the recent past, to the eight per cent it stands at today.

- To ensure that the halachic method of slaughter is used “every bird is hand-slaughtered by a qualified expert”, says Ruzow. By contrast, a non-kosher production line has birds slaughtered mechanically, which is “a much faster and cheaper process”, she says. This adds to the cost.
- The “slow post-slaughter process” that requires “rigorous checking of

every bird to make sure that it is healthy, takes time and needs to be performed by a qualified bodek”. They also need to be koshered by soaking in water and then salt, to remove the blood, she says. These steps add to the cost.

- Plucking of treif poultry is expedited by the birds being scalded to ease and speed up the process. But with kosher chickens, Ruzow says, scalding before kashering is not halachically acceptable. Therefore, more people are required “which (further) adds to the cost”, according to Ruzow.
- Additional personnel are needed in the shechita (slaughtering) process as well as a dayan (Beth Din judge) to conduct regular inspections at the abattoir, to ensure the highest standards of kashrut are maintained.
- The economies of scale are low, says Ruzow. “Chicken for sale in major retailers in South Africa are slaughtered and processed in abattoirs designed to move hundreds of thousands of birds a day.” The kosher market is relatively small, she says, resulting in increased costs per unit.

This last point is further exacerbated by the fact that the number of kosher birds slaughtered annually, has dropped by almost half, from almost 900 000 in 2001, to the current figure of under 500 000.

The report does not specify exact costs in the process. When asked what the shechting, kashering, checking costs are per bird, Ruzow said she couldn’t provide that because it was “private” and talks to people’s salaries and privately-owned businesses.

Another subject the report is silent on, is the profit made at the only kosher chicken abattoir in the country. They are “not profiteering – they are making a living,” proffers Brozin. Ruzow says one can’t expect a private company to divulge information about its business to the public.

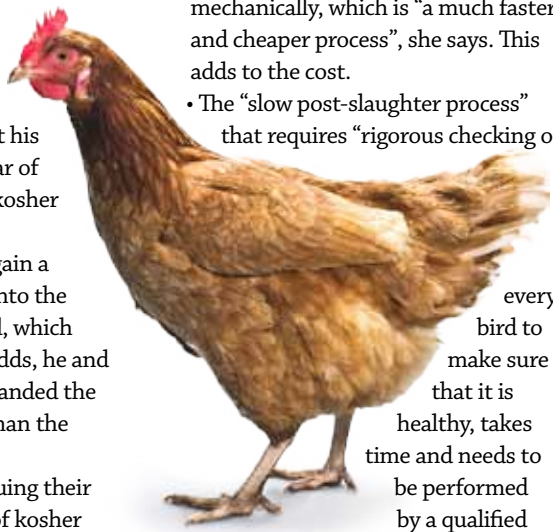
Regarding the cost of the dayan’s fees, the Chief Rabbi says the UOS “allocates one day per week per dayan to cover all of their schechita services.” That means that 20 per cent of the salaries of the dayanim are allocated to schechita and thus borne by kosher consumers. This is done on a pro-rata basis “and there is no cross-subsidisation”, says Rabbi Goldstein.

The 2010 “Kingston Report” into the cost of kosher chicken, also commissioned by the UOS, showed that the UOS fees per chicken slaughtered were R3,06/bird (approximately R1,84/kg).

Between the 2010 and 2017 UOS reports, the cost of kosher chicken at Checkers increased by 60 per cent, from R35/kg to R58/kg.

The 2010 report had shown retail variances on gross profit of poultry ranging between 35 and 42 per cent. It detailed the UOS fees per kg and per bird, and it does not report on the eight recommendations the Kingston Report had listed as its summary of “possible remedies to bring the costs of (production) into line, as far as possible, with industry standards.

The new report offers four tables to illustrate that chicken prices are not lower in Cape Town, for example, and that they vary greatly from outlet to outlet across the country. In terms of retail pricing of kosher versus kosher in Johannesburg retailers, the report found a variance in chicken schnitzel of 29 per cent between the highest and lowest priced – and in frozen chickens just 12 per cent.





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Upholding communal responsibility

I admire people who volunteer their services with communal organisations. I am always struck by their selfless desire to give back and help others.

I am amazed at just how many Jewish people give of their time, expertise, passion and sometimes even their own money, to help others.

And some go on to take up communal leadership roles, which comes with the stresses and strains of responsibility, governance and ensuring everything is done by the book. Taking on the-buck-stops-here roles in communal organisations, is never easy because you take the hiding if something goes wrong and they so easily do, even if it is not of your doing.

Four years ago, Raymond Goss took on the role of treasurer for the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD). Two years later, Jeff Katz stepped up to the plate as chairperson. They had both been involved for many years, but it was now their time to hold office in an organisation that, through the years, we have all looked up to for communal leadership.

This organisation represents us to the wider society, promoting our safety and welfare, representing us politically and creating bridges of understanding between us and the broader population. When the community is under threat, the SAJBD are the people we turn to for help, guidance and assistance.

During their time in these positions, they stumbled onto a few discrepancies that didn’t sit comfortably with them.

Now, you must understand, the issues they found were never issues of people enriching themselves through communal funds, nor were they problems that went against the community’s interests. In every instance, what happened was always with the community’s interests at the core. In no way did this involve corruption.

It was more about a lack of clear governance and structure in the organisation and sometimes money that was meant for one thing was used for another – but always for the community. This never harmed anyone.

Katz and Goss, however, were unhappy with the lack of governance and not knowing who was meant to be in charge of what.

So, they pushed for an inquiry led by a highly respected retired judge. Judge Meyer Joffe – yes, the same one who announced his retirement after sending the former police commissioner Jackie Selebi to prison for 15 years – took on this commission.

This investigation, which took a few months, was at the tail end of Katz and Goss’ tenure. They were determined that they were not going to leave an unhealthy legacy behind them at the Board. They were determined to leave it to their successors – who we now know are chairperson Shaun Zagnoev and treasurer Eric Marx – in a way that they could be proud.

It sounds easy, but in truth there was a lot of conflict and people trying to stop them. There were certain people who were happy with the status quo and didn’t want the change – for their own reasons.

Goss and Katz claim they were sidelined and harassed. But in the end, the investigation was done, findings were made that will lead the new duo-in-charge into a healthier and hopefully better run organisation at our helm.

As a newspaper, we too could not turn away from this, although there were people who certainly didn’t want us to stick our proverbial noses into this matter.

It was rumoured that certain people were saying we were “at war with the community”. Nothing could be further from the truth. We were told that Board matters must stay within the Board.

But SAJBD represents every one of us. What happens in the Board is important to every one of us. It goes without saying that we need our leadership on the Board to be exemplary and run the organisation in the most transparent, ethical, moral and healthy way possible.

As the community’s newspaper, it is an integral part of our mandate to hold our leaders to account for the community. We are after all, a community newspaper that is for the community, in the interests of and about the community.

We also – as the leadership are hopefully realising – do our best to be responsible and ethical about the way we report on issues. We too are human and make mistakes, but we do our utmost to hold ourselves to the highest account – just like we hold our communal leaders to account.

I honour Katz and Goss for not just walking away, but against tough odds, doing what needed to be done to sort things out at the Board before leaving.

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor



Dateline: Middle East

Barcelona IS attacks: Signs have been there a long time

PAULA SLIER

For those who knew where to look, the warning signs of last week’s Barcelona attacks were there.

Two years ago, maps appeared in Spanish tabloids showing Spain and Portugal in black, indicating territory controlled by the Islamic State (IS) jihadi terror group, with the threat: “We will take Spain back – by 2020”.

About the same time, the first almost perfect Hebrew IS video went viral – threatening the “annihilation of the Jews” as “the first enemy of the Muslims”.

In the video IS promised Israelis that its fighters were “advancing towards you everywhere, from the north and the south, from Sinai to Damascus. From all over the world we will come to wipe you out.”

Fast-forward to today. Islamic State claims it is behind the horrific truck ramming in Barcelona and while many terror organisations are quick to take credit for such incidents, IS is a group that rarely makes false declarations of culpability.

It is clear the group is making good on past threats if you consider its claims of responsibility in June after a pair of co-ordinated shootings and stabbings by three Palestinians in and around Jerusalem’s Old City, leaving a 23-year-old Israeli policewoman, Hadas Malka, dead.

But how much of a danger is Islamic State today? And just how concerned should Israelis be?

After Malka was killed, Jerusalem was quick to refute reports that IS was responsible, but many international experts think otherwise.

At the same time, the seemingly unstoppable advance by the jihadists in Syria and Iraq in 2014 has been stalled. The group has been unable to capture new ground and is fast losing the strongholds it once held. Still, observers warn it could be too early to rule out a comeback.

Some of the socio-political scenarios that gave rise to the jihadists in the first place, still exist. In Iraq, for example – where the collapse of the Iraqi army and the dissatisfaction of minority Sunnis with the Shia government helped IS first rise to power – there exists the problem of what happens “the day after”.

Mosul, the country’s second largest city from where, three years ago, IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi proclaimed a caliphate – Islamic state – is back in government hands. However, nearly half of its citizens are displaced, 700 000 are homeless and relief agencies are warning of a humanitarian disaster.

Across the border in Syria, the “day after” scenario is just as ominous. Deadly battles between Syrian soldiers, rebel forces and IS fighters, continue. Although here too IS is expected to be driven out by the end of the year, the country looks like it could implode into a number of smaller states.

In such a scenario, each state would be controlled by a weak government, be hampered by economic problems and suffer from massive public dissatisfaction. These are the perfect ingredients for fundamentalists to again captivate a desperate population.

IS leaders have been preparing their followers for this reality for months, admitting they’re losing territories but insisting it won’t affect their caliphate. This could be partly true, as the group has already shifted into a kind of “virtual caliphate” where terrorists are recruited and directed online. The reach of IS is truly global.

Every so often one reads about an Israeli Arab who has been arrested by Israeli authorities for joining IS. I travelled to the Israeli Arab town of Jaljulye, near Kfar Saba, where two young men had reportedly left for Syria to fight with the group.



The last time the two spoke was via Skype when Muhammad asked his father to send money to help him escape. Sai’d says his son had grown disillusioned with IS and wanted to return to Israel.

“Muhammad told me there were activists from Daesh in Tel Aviv. I told him not to talk about it to anyone,” Sai’d said.

When IS claimed responsibility for killing the Israeli policewoman Malka in June, Hamas rejected the claim, saying it was aimed at sowing confusion. Instead Hamas insisted one of the attackers acted on its behalf.

To Israel’s advantage, the goals of IS and the Palestinians are counter-productive, largely because the caliphate as prophesised by al-Baghdadi, has no borders while the Palestinian dream is for a country very much defined by borders.

Palestinian observers I’ve spoken with say that the Palestinian environment also does not tolerate IS’s ideology. Most Palestinians who believe in such an ideology have already left for Iraq, Syria and Sinai, although the ongoing frustration felt by many Palestinians, especially Gazans, is making such extremist ideology more palatable, especially among the youth.

The real concern, though, is less about IS and Israel and the fact that IS might be on the back foot. What’s most alarming, is that jihadism as a movement is thriving. Experts agree that there are hundreds of thousands of jihadists across the Arab world with cells throughout Europe, Africa, Asia and elsewhere.

As is already happening, many fighters are returning to their home countries perfectly poised to carry out attacks. There are also lone wolves who act in their own name and fall between the cracks, undetected for years. Unfortunately, it’s not a question of if there will be another Barcelona-like incident; but when.

• 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 Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.

Knesset members snubbed by SA government

PETA KROST MAUNDER

The ANC government refused point blank to see a visiting delegation of Knesset members from various political parties. In fact, the delegation – in South Africa to give their support to the Jewish community and to promote dialogue, understanding and co-operation between Israel and South Africa – stood outside parliament, but were not invited in by the ministers.

“What I find distressing is the way the ANC government claims to strive for peace in our region, but they would happily host Hamas and not members of the Knesset,” Likud MP Amir Ohana told the SA Jewish Report on Monday, just hours before the delegations of five returned to Israel.

“They welcome people like Khaled Mashal – who is the terrorist leader – from an organisation whose covenant stipulates that it strives to kill all Jews, but they refuse to see us,” said Ohana, who was one of two Likud MPs on the week-long trip.

“The ANC government says it wants to build bridges, but instead it is trying to burn bridges.”

Zouheir Bahloul, who is an Israeli Arab MP, says: “I was very disappointed as I really hoped that South Africa could play a bridging role between Israel and the Palestinians. This country has the ability to

convince the Israeli government to create a new way of solving conflict. But, that can’t happen if they refuse to have anything to do with us.”

Nachman Shai, Labour Party MP, who led the delegation, explained that there were attempts by the ANC to try and stop them even coming to South Africa. “We learnt a lot about South Africa and I am very optimistic about relations between the countries,” Shai said.

As for being rejected by the government, he said: “I couldn’t care less about that. What is the point? Why refuse to talk? We talk to everyone – to maintain dialogue, to understand each other – even our enemies and South Africa is not an enemy.

“We are trying to urge the Palestinians to come and talk to us. Boycott is not a way of living – boycott is just a big mistake.”

Although the delegation could not meet with the incumbent government, they did meet with influential politicians.

They sat down with presidential candidate Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and former President Kgalema Motlanthe. “We had polite and



The Knesset delegation: Amir Ohana, Nurit Koren, Michal Biran, Nachman Shai and Zouheir Bahloul

interesting meetings with them both,” said Shai. “We agreed and disagreed on various issues, but our meetings were in good spirit.”

They talked about the Israel-Palestinian conflict, South Africa’s relations with Israel and this country’s fight for freedom and transition to a democracy.

They also had really constructive friendly discussions with DA leader Mmusi Maimane and Johannesburg Mayor Herman Mashaba.

While in South Africa, they were taken to Langa township in Cape Town, which distressed the group. “I could not believe that people live like

that,” said Nurit Koren, a Likud MP. Michal Biran, from the left-wing Zionist Camp, agreed, saying her strongest impression from South Africa was the image of people living in those conditions, which upset her so much.

“I was relieved to find out when we went out with Helen Lieberman [who runs a social services organisation] that the amazing work she does to uplift the lives of so many, she does because she is Jewish,” says Biran.

Koren says that comparing the way Palestinians live to the way people live in townships like Langa, is wrong. “It made me so upset – not even in the worst parts of Gaza do people live like that,” she says.

“People speak of apartheid in Israel, but it simply isn’t true. We certainly have our problems, but nobody lives like this there,” says Koren.

She says she is astounded that the hatred for Israel in these communities is so severe that when Israel offers help for nothing, they would rather suffer than accept it.

Shai says: We have a lot to offer South Africa and we have our problems, but we certainly are not an

apartheid state. This belittles what we have in Israel.

“I know we have a lot to correct, but it is so frustrating when Israel could play a constructive role in South Africa as we have so much to give – free of charge – but we can’t.”

Bahloul says that while the Palestinians have a lot, what they don’t have is freedom. “We cannot exist like this forever. Israel needs to deal with this and soon. However, despite this serious issue, we still do not have anything like apartheid in our country.”

Biran agreed: “There is nothing more important than freedom – this is something we truly understand.

“For us, we want to accomplish the Jewish dream of living in peace within our borders and enabling Palestinians to have their own sovereignty.”

The delegation said they were inspired by the strength of ties between the community and Israel. “The Jewish youth here – unlike in many other countries – are so passionate about their Judaism and Israel. It is wonderful for us to see,” said Shai.

“We leave saddened that we were not able to engage with the government as such, but we leave the message that Israel is open to talk,” said Koren.

• This was a joint delegation of the Knesset and Jewish Agency.

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Japanese ‘Schindler’ remembered by the children of those he saved

NICOLA MILTZ

Against strict orders from his government, Consul General Chiune “Sempo” Sugihara risked his life to save Jewish refugees by issuing 6 000 life-saving transit visas during the Second World War.

It is estimated that his acts of defiance led to a conservatively estimated worldwide network of 30 000 “Sugihara survivors”.

The memory of this compassionate Japanese diplomat was brought to life last week in Johannesburg as descendants of those he saved told of his heroism and courage.

“Every breath we take is thanks to him,” said Rabbi Moshe Goldberg, whose Polish grandfather was spared certain death at the hands of the Nazis.

Hosted by the Japanese Embassy, these children of Sugihara survivors got together to pay tribute to him, under the auspices of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre at Beyachad.

“He followed his conscience and did what G-d wanted him to do – he created a world,” said Goldberg.

Japanese Ambassador to South Africa Shigeki Hiroki, explained how Sugihara grew up among the paddy fields and that his father had wanted him to become a doctor, but instead he chose to become a diplomat, becoming fluent in several languages including English, French, German and Russian.

The Sugihara saga is a richly woven historical tapestry, literally of epic proportions, which spanned only a couple of months during 1939 and 1940. It was during his time as Japanese Consul General stationed in Kaunas, Lithuania, that he became aware of the desperate plight of Jews trying to flee Lithuania and the spread of German invasion.

Together with his adoring wife they wrote thousands of Japanese transit visas, allowing Jews to travel by train to Moscow, and then by Trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok, continuing from there to Kobe, Japan and then onto Shanghai, China.

Thousands of Polish Jews with Sugihara visas, survived in safety in Shanghai until after the war – all the while continuing their Torah studies.

Sugihara and his wife sat for hours on end writing visas by hand – issuing up to 300 a day – risking everything.

His story, was only revealed many years after the war. It has since been widely documented and has been the inspiration for movies and plays, and shows the far-reaching impact one man’s actions can have on the world.

Sugihara was deeply moved by a little Jewish boy, Solly Ganor, who had invited him and his family to celebrate Chanukah with them in 1939. This led to an unlikely friendship between the families, which many believe helped steer the miracle of the transit visas.

Among those saved from death camps by Sugihara, were students of the Mir Yeshiva who were able to relocate to Shanghai. Five of those present at the intimate dinner last week, were Johannesburg-based descendants of those survivors, including Rabbi Yossy Goldman, Levy Wineberg, Rabbi Goldberg and Rebbetzins Chaya Sternstein and Rochel Ehrman.

In a moving address, Rabbi Goldman expressed his heartfelt gratitude. “My father never had the opportunity to thank Mr Sugihara personally. He (my father) died 10 months ago aged 91. He was the sole survivor of his entire family.

“He rebuilt a family and every grandchild was seen as his revenge against Hitler. When he passed away he had 100 blood descendants including 80 great-grandchildren. This is thanks to Sugihara. To be able to say thank you... may we all be inspired by such a man.”

Rabbi Goldberg agreed, saying that the



have to disobey my government, but if I don’t I would be disobeying G-d.”

In his message of welcome, chairman of the Holocaust Centre’s board of trustees, Professor Michael Katz, said: “Such a hero of the Holocaust deserves recognition and his life should be celebrated. That is why the work of the Holocaust Foundation is so important because it honours the memories of the victims and it celebrates the people who helped them.”

He said that when Sugihara was asked why he risked his life his response was: “I saw desperate people. Women threw themselves against me, kissed my shoes. I could not, not help.”

Newly-elected chairman of the SAJBD, Shaun Zagnoev said: “Sugihara elected to rise above the evil and express humanity, showing that humanity has no borders. He was a diplomat who used the power he had to save thousands of lives.

“He was not commemorated in his lifetime, so it becomes incumbent upon us to perpetuate his memory. We shouldn’t be talking about heroes, we should be acting like heroes ourselves – do

our best to reduce hatred and assist humanity.”

In a heartfelt address, director of the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre, Tali Nates, told how she too was a descendant of a righteous among the nations.

“My father and my uncle were saved by Oscar Schindler. Oscar was a perpetrator at first... but he chose to go against the grain. Like Sugihara, he shifted his path and became a rescuer. I always think about the choices these men made and try to teach our children to make those choices... to become upstanders not bystanders, to stand up to what is right.”

An emotional Rochel Ehrman said: “All my joy, I owe to him. He saved my father’s life. I am overwhelmed when I think of all the yeshiva boys who were saved, so many of them were teachers, my father was a teacher, they kept the Torah alive from Shanghai right till now.

“My father went on to have five children; how many lives did Sugihara save from his unbelievable courage, it’s so humbling.”

Rabbi Wineberg said his father was provided with a Sugihara visa and was the only member of his family to survive. He relates this story to his family on the first night of Chanukah every year. “Sugihara teaches us the value of an individual and how one individual’s actions matter.”

Coincidentally he explained how the Chanukah dreidel bears all the letters in Chiune Sugihara’s name, alluding to the “great miracle” that happened with reference to the miracle of Chanukah and the miracle of the Jews being rescued by Sugihara’s life-affirming visas.

It was only in 1985, the year before he died, that Chiune Sugihara, and his wife Yukiko, were honoured as Righteous Among the Nations.

After the war, Sugihara was dismissed from diplomatic service and paid a heavy price for his disobedience. Today, though, Japan sees him as a hero and a source of national pride. For many years Sugihara had no idea what happened to the thousands he saved.

Trees have been planted, roads have been named after him, movies made and plays performed, Sugihara’s legacy continues and so it should.

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Parents: wake up to the risks of social media

EMMA SADLEIR AND SARAH HOFFMAN

Living in a constantly connected era really makes life a lot more convenient. Our kids can WhatsApp us if netball is cancelled; if they are feeling sick and need to be collected from school; or if they need a bean sprout for their science project tomorrow.

However, equipping our children with unprecedented levels of connectivity comes along with unprecedented levels of risk – from a legal, reputational, psychological and health perspective. As parents, it is of crucial importance that we understand what these risks are, and how to mitigate them.

UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS

Cyberbullying: Whereas bullying was traditionally restricted to the playground during school hours, living in a digital age means it can happen anywhere. For bullies, it is far easier to say something behind a screen (sometimes anonymously) than to someone’s face. The content is public and permanent. Cyberbullying an unescapable 24/7 epidemic – one which we – as digital lawyers – deal with daily.

Sexting: This is loosely defined as the sending of private or sexually explicit messages, photos and videos to someone else. The most common reaction we receive from parents whose children have been involved in sexting is, “My child would never do that.” However, for teenagers in this day and age, “nudes” as they are referred to, are unfortunately a social currency.

We deal with underage sexting and nudes landing up in the wrong hands every single day. And to the nicest, most well-educated, well brought-up children. If your child is under 18 and has created content that is deemed to be sexually explicit, he or she could be found guilty of the criminal offence of creation of child pornography. Perhaps more importantly, if someone just *asks* your child for a nude, that person is guilty of the crime of soliciting child pornography.

Stranger Danger: In a culture of oversharing online, it is often difficult to actually know



who we are sharing content with, and who we are talking to. Two things are important to understand: 1) It takes just seconds to create a fake social media profile (anyone can pretend to be anyone) and 2) for our kids (and many adults), social media is one big popularity contest with the number of “friends” being a direct (but totally false) indication of your social status. What this means is that it is very easy for unsavoury characters and paedophiles in particular, to lurk behind a social media façade of a very innocent looking 14-year-old girl.

Take a minute to ask your kids if they actually know all the people who follow them on Instagram or Live.ly or and all the people they’re friends with on Facebook and Snapchat? Usually the answer is: “We have mutual friends” or “He looks legit” or “She doesn’t look dodgy”.

This is just not good enough! If your kids are on live-streaming apps like Musical.ly and Live.ly (which, if they are between the ages of 10 and 14, they almost certainly are, they are undoubtedly sharing live videos and interacting with people they do not know). If your children have hundreds (even thousands) of followers on Instagram, strangers have access to them.

Health risks: The blue-light emitted from cell phones robs your children of the melatonin needed for sleep, and is proven to have a damaging effect on sleep patterns at night. Your children need to sleep. Please take away all screen time for two hours before bed and *don’t let your children sleep with their phones in their room*. We’re begging you.

Addiction: Studies show that people experience a similar dopamine hit from a social media “like” or “share”, as that experienced from chemical substance intake. Conversely, when phones are taken away, the withdrawal symptoms are similar to those experienced by substance abusers.

Long-term reputational damage: The Internet doesn’t forget. Even if content is deleted shortly after it is posted, a screenshot means that someone could have a permanent record of it. Before posting anything, your kids need to consider: “What would my school think of this?” “What would a prospective university or scholarship provider or employer think of this?” Unfortunately, the five seconds that someone takes to post or share something defamatory, derogatory, hurtful or harmful,

SOME TIPS FOR PARENTS

Now, before you go and toss your kids’ cell phones in the river, there is some (blue) light at the end of the tunnel. We aren’t saying that social media is all bad news. In fact, if used wisely, it can be of enormous value. So, what can you as parents do to make sure your kids make the best possible use of their mobile devices. The best possible advice we can give parents is:

Educate yourselves, get on the apps: As parents it is essential that you familiarise yourselves with the apps your kids are on. Understand what they are doing online. Follow them on the platforms, see what they’re posting, see who their friends are. You will certainly feel out of your comfort zone, but it is the only way you will be empowered to follow our second and most important piece of advice.

Have the conversations: Talk to your children about what they are doing on social media. You want to create a safe space for your kids to talk to you in the event of them getting into some kind of trouble online. Educate them on the risks, and make them comfortable talking to you about them. If your children have a cell phone, they WILL be exposed to pornography. When they tell you they’ve seen inappropriate material, don’t get angry (because they just won’t tell you next time). Have the conversation. It’s crucial.

Set boundaries: Insist on cell phone free times (meal times, after a certain hour etc). Your children should not sleep with their cell phones next to their beds. If they’ve got them, they’re on them – listening to music, playing games and chatting to friends.

Privacy settings: Insist that your children use maximum privacy settings on their social media accounts; that they are very careful about who follows them on social media; and that they do not speak to people they don’t know online – even if they look like a nice 14-year-old boy from a nearby school.

Emma Sadleir is a social media law expert, speaker, and author of Don’t Film Yourself Having Sex and other Legal Advice for the Age of Social Media, and founder of the Digital Law Company, boutique legal consultancy specialising in all aspects of social media and the law. She is currently working on a social media survival guide for teenagers which will be published this October.

Sarah Hoffman is a lawyer and communication specialist and Business Development Manager at the Digital Law Company.

They both give talks at schools around the country on: The Legal, Reputational and Disciplinary Risks of Social Media.

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THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Netanyahu meets Putin to share secret intelligence on Iran threat

ALEXANDER FULBRIGHT

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu travelled to Russia on Wednesday to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin and give him top-secret intelligence on Iran’s military expansion in the region.

“Iran is making an accelerated effort to entrench itself militarily in Syria. This poses a danger to Israel, the Middle East and in my opinion the world itself,” the prime minister said, with Putin at his side, ahead of their talks at the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

Netanyahu told Putin that while Israel welcomed the ongoing military operations against the Islamic State, Iran is filling the void in Syria created by the terror group’s defeat.

“All of us are winning in the tremendous international effort against Daesh, which is a praiseworthy thing, but what is not praiseworthy is that Iran enters the places that Daesh leaves,” Netanyahu said, using the Arabic acronym for IS.

“We don’t for a second forget that Iran continues to threaten Israel’s destruction on a daily basis,” the prime minister said. “It arms terrorist organisations and initiates terror itself. It is developing intercontinental ballistic missiles with the intention to equip them with nuclear warheads.

“For all of these reasons, Israel opposes Iran’s continued entrenchment in Syria. We will make sure we defend ourselves using every means against this threat.”

Addressing Iran’s military expansion in the region, Netanyahu said: “Iran is already in the advanced stages of taking over Iraq and Yemen, and, in effect, already controls Lebanon.”

Netanyahu was joined on his trip to the Black Sea resort of Sochi

by Mossad chief Yossi Cohen, who was reportedly providing Putin with “sensitive, credible and very disturbing detailed intelligence” on Iran’s military presence in Syria, the Yedioth Ahronoth daily’s intelligence correspondent reported.

The visit comes after a senior Israeli delegation reportedly shared the same evidence with the Americans last week. Israel is striving to limit Iran’s expansion into the region.

Israel has been pushing the US, and now Russia, not to support a peace deal in Syria that allows Iran and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah terror group to keep boots on the ground.

Officials in the Prime Minister’s Office said on Wednesday that Israel has updated the US on the upcoming meeting with Putin, the Walla news site reported.

Perhaps reflecting the seriousness of the issue, Netanyahu received a rare display of support from his political foes for his mission to Putin.

“The Iranian effort to establish a continuous territorial arch from Tehran to the Mediterranean Sea is a danger to security. It is good that Netanyahu is trying to block the intolerable front of threats against Israel,” former Defence Minister Moshe Ya’alon tweeted. Ya’alon has been one of Netanyahu’s most vocal foes in recent months since he was fired from his position.

Ahead of the meeting with Putin, Netanyahu held consultations with his top security officials on Tuesday.

“I will discuss with (Putin) Iran’s accelerated attempt to establish a military presence in Syria,” Netanyahu said in a statement.

“This attests, of course, to Iran’s aggression which has not lessened in the wake of the nuclear agreement,” Netanyahu said.



Russian President Vladimir Putin greets Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ahead of their meeting in Sochi on Wednesday.

BILLY JOEL WEARS YELLOW STAR OF DAVID DURING NEW YORK CONCERT



Billy Joel wears a jacket with the Star of David during the encore of his 43rd sold-out show at Madison Square Garden on Monday in New York City.

Photo: Myrna M Suarez/Getty Images via JTA

Palestinian Authority says 24 years of peace talks have achieved nothing

DOV LIEBER
RAMALLAH

Palestinian Authority Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki on Tuesday said that over two decades of peace negotiations with Israelis have produced “nothing” and called on the international community to unilaterally establish a state of Palestine.

“We convinced the international community that the best way to reach a state is through negotiations. But after 24 years of negotiations, we have not got anything,” said Maliki, in a meeting with British Secretary of State for the Middle East and North Africa Alistair Burt in Ramallah.

In the face of stalled peace talks, Maliki called for “active intervention” by the international community and the “imposition of peace” through the establishment of a Palestinian state, according to the official Palestinian Authority news site Wafa.

Alluding to the Balfour Declaration of 1917, a document that helped pave the way for the revived Jewish state, Maliki called on British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson to promise the Palestinians a state through a “Johnson declaration”.

Signed on November 2, 1917 by the UK’s then foreign secretary, Arthur James Balfour, the declaration announced his government’s intention to establish “a national home for the Jewish people” in the Land of Israel.

It was seen as giving the Zionist movement official recognition and backing on the part of a major power, on the eve of the British

conquest of the then-Ottoman territory of Palestine.

Formed as part of the Oslo peace talks with Israel in the early 1990s, the Palestinian Authority was supposed to act as a temporary government for the Palestinians until a state was established at the conclusion of the peace process.

However, the process collapsed with the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000 and efforts to revive it over the years, have proved largely fruitless.

Israel has rejected unilateral Palestinian efforts to establish a state, saying it can only come about after core issues are resolved through negotiations.

According to the Wafa report on Tuesday, the meeting dealt with the latest American efforts to renew peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians ahead of the arrival of a US delegation to Israel later this week.

Burt declared during his remarks that Britain remains committed to negotiations and a two-state solution.

“Britain affirms its long-term commitment to achieving a two-state solution through negotiations and affirms its continued support for the establishment of a Palestinian state by supporting the Palestinian government by providing health, education and other services,” the British official said.

Despite pressure from Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas for the UK to apologise for the Balfour Declaration, London has declined to do so.

Photo: AFP Photo/Sputnik/Alexey Nikolsky



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ALEXANDER FULBRIGHT

Guards at the entrance to the Western Wall complex in Jerusalem “strip searched” four female rabbinical students on Wednesday ahead of the Women of the Wall’s monthly prayer service at the holy site, liberal Jewish groups said.

The Israel Religious Action Centre, which serves as the legal arm of the Reform Movement in Israel, said the four students of Hebrew Union College, were delayed and questioned by guards, then were asked to lift up their shirts and skirts.

“Four female rabbinical students (were) strip searched while trying to enter the Western Wall Complex,” it declared in a press release.

The director of the IRAC said the searches were “a new low” for the Western Wall rabbinate, which is strongly opposed to the Women of the Wall.

“This is a new low for the Rabbi of the Kotel trying to intimidate, humiliate, and exclude liberal women trying to pray at the Western Wall. Despite today’s events, these four brave Jewish leaders will continue to love Israel, the Wall, and justice,” Rabbi Noa Sattath said in a statement.

Outcry as women said to be ‘strip searched’ at entrance to Kotel



Members of Women of the Wall hold up a Torah scroll during a prayer service marking the first day of the Jewish month of Elul at the Western Wall.

“Today we are submitting formal letters of complaint to the Attorney General and the Prime Minister’s Office demanding they act to address the events of this morning,” she added.

Women of the Wall said the search of the four women was illegal.

“These searches go against [Supreme Court] Judge Rubinstein’s decision which states that body searches on Women of the Wall are illegal without a serious security threat. A few of these students, who were visiting the Kotel for the first time, were shocked by the incident and the difficult experience imposed on them,” the group said in a statement.

Religious media outlets said the women were smuggling Torah scrolls on their persons, which Western Wall Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch called a “desecration”.

“Today, the first of the [Jewish] month of Elul, all the red lines were crossed. They smuggled holy Torah schools wrapped around their bodies, they hid whistles in their private parts, and for what? For the “sanctity” of the civil war at the Western Wall,” he said

in a statement. At the prayer service, women read from a Torah scroll and blew 15 shofars, activities that are vehemently opposed by ultra-Orthodox Jews, who hold that only men may do these things.

“We sounded the shofar today in order to knock down the walls of apathy, exclusion, silencing and discrimination...We look to the Supreme Court, that has proven itself as the ‘responsible adult’ in the State, to lead to a just solution to our basic demand for equal rights for women at the Wall,” Women of the Wall head Anat Hoffman said.

The High Court of Justice is set to hear a petition on the pluralistic prayer section at the Western Wall, which was brought by the Women of the Wall after the Cabinet voted to freeze the deal in June.

The decision to freeze the agreement coincided with a High Court deadline for the State to respond to petitions on its failure to implement the agreement and construct the mixed-gender plaza near Robinson’s Arch.

Australian ‘how-to guide’ against vehicle attacks

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
SYDNEY

Australia on Sunday released a strategy to prevent vehicle terror attacks carried out in crowded public places, following deadly assaults in Barcelona, Nice and London.

The report – commissioned after 86 people were killed in the Nice truck attack last year – gives venue operators a “toolkit” to work from when addressing terrorism concerns.

“As we have seen from tragic events in Paris, London, Berlin and Barcelona, terrorists continue to target crowded places,” Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said in a statement. “The strategy will assist owners and operators to increase the safety, protection and resilience of crowded places across Australia.”

The strategy offers businesses and local governments a



Pedestrians walk past concrete security bollards near the Lindt Cafe, scene of the 2014 Sydney cafe siege.

guide to assessing how vulnerable their sites are to attacks, including from vehicles, and how to make them safer.

Suggested steps include deterrent options like fencing and closed circuit cameras, delaying approaches such as trees and statues to slow down vehicles, and quick response staff.

Similar methods were implemented in Israel following a spate of car-ramming attacks in 2014.

“You can obviously have bollards, you can have seating... you can have works of art, you can have steps, planter boxes,” Turnbull added to reporters in Sydney. “At the design stage, it can be done very unobtrusively.”

The report acknowledged that even the best plans might not stop attacks on crowded locations, but said the measures could reduce the likelihood of such assaults and their consequences.

“It is a constant battle for us. It is a tragic reflection of our times that we need to be taking these sorts of measures,” Transport Minister Darren Chester told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

“I think inevitably there will be restrictions that may affect people as they go about their daily lives, but it is a balancing act, I guess.”

The attacks in Barcelona and the nearby seaside town of Cambrils, left 14 people dead and hundreds injured.

Three Australians were injured in Barcelona, while a young boy, a British-Australian dual national, reportedly remains missing after the attack.

Australia is no stranger to vehicle-style attacks, with six people killed in January after a car mowed down shoppers in the heart of its second-largest city, Melbourne.



News and views from the Fed Knesset delegation received with open arms

NICCI RAZ, NATIONAL DIRECTOR SAZF

Last week we had the privilege of welcoming and hosting the newly-appointed Israeli Ambassador Lior Keinan and a delegation of Israeli Members of Parliament (Knesset).

The delegation headed by Dr Nachman Shai, consisted of Amir Ohana, Zouheir Bahloul, Michal Biran and Nurit Koren, which represented various political parties and portfolios. The secretary general of the Jewish Agency, Josh Schwarcz, also accompanied the delegation.

Their trip included a number of community-related events, political meetings and media engagements.

Their first official event was hosted by the SAZF. Community leaders were invited to engage the delegates on our local challenges as a community. It was a fruitful discussion with the main theme of building stronger connections between the South African Jewish community and Israel.

A vital part of that connection is represented by the work of the SAZF and the Jewish Agency for Israel (Israel Centre). Facilitating aliya is a core responsibility of the Jewish Agency.

The delegates had the opportunity to spend an evening with families that will be making aliya early next year. The get-together was spent conversing with each other in a relaxed atmosphere, where guests spoke candidly about their reasons for making the move to Israel.

On Tuesday, August 15, the South African Friends of Israel hosted a very successful luncheon at the Women’s Jail at Constitution Hill. Over 125 Christian leaders, including, Pastor Masindi Norman Mwbengwa (Unity Fellowship Church), Serge Tshibangu (DRC – Congo for Peace without Borders) and Apostle Victor Mokgotholoa (Grace Tabernacle Church), were among the many who travelled far and wide to meet with the Knesset members.

The attendees had the opportunity to engage with the Knesset members during the Q&A session, addressing questions around how Israel could partner or assist their communities with various challenges such as agriculture and health. Ambassador Keinan replied simply: “We can contribute to South Africa with agriculture, water, hi-tech, cyber, health and education” and “we have an open door”.

The delegation’s visit to Cape Town included meetings with influencers across the South African political spectrum, including the ANC, DA, COPE, ACDP, IFP and FF+. The spirit of these meetings was open and honest about the challenges faced on both sides and how Israel can play a bigger role by sharing expertise in agriculture, water, hi-tech, cyber-security, health and education, which South Africa so desperately needs.

The MKs in turn, were inspired by South Africa’s ability to overcome its past challenges and understood the vital role South Africa can play in the Middle East peace process by facilitating dialogue.

Their visit has been widely covered in the media, across mainstream platforms of radio, TV, print and social media-debunking the false claims that many doors had been closed to them.

After a productive week, the delegation has been inspired and enriched by what they have seen and learned in South Africa.

They have committed themselves to taking our message back to Israel and finding more ways to connect our countries for a better future.

Representing the overwhelming majority of South African Jewry, the SAZF has long maintained that the relationship between South Africa and Israel is to the benefit of both countries. We look forward to working with the new ambassador to build this connection.



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1 in 3 UK Jews considered emigrating over anti-Semitism

JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC
AGENCY

In interviews with thousands of British Jews, almost a third of them said they have considered leaving the United Kingdom over the past two years due to anti-Semitism.

The findings are part of a report published on Sunday by the Campaign Against Anti-Semitism watchdog group which, together with the YouGov market research company, conducted interviews with more than 10 000 British Jews since 2015.

In interviews conducted in 2016 and 2017 with a combined sample population of 7 156 respondents, 37 per cent of them said they

have been concealing public signs that would indicate that they are Jewish.

Since 2015, only 59 per cent of the respondents said they feel welcome in the United Kingdom and 17 per cent said they feel unwelcome.

Only 39 per cent of respondents from 2015 onward said they trust justice authorities to prosecute perpetrators of anti-Semitic hate crimes.

Three-quarters of the people interviewed said they



A scene from Manchester's Say No to Anti-Semitism rally in 2014

but Jewish groups in the United Kingdom and beyond have accused him of whitewashing anti-Semitism and allowing it to grow among the many thousands of supporters who joined Labour in support of his policies.

Former London mayor Ken Livingstone repeatedly said last year that Adolf Hitler was a Zionist.

The respondents said they considered Islamist anti-Semitism “to be the threat that concerned them the most, and rapidly rising hate crime targeting Jews was not being tackled by the authorities.”

The Jewish community of the United Kingdom recorded 767 anti-Semitic attacks in the first half of 2017 – the highest figure recorded within six months since monitoring began in 1984.

Palestinians flock to Bethlehem Shepherds Beer Festival to celebrate newest brewery



The bar at the Shepherds Beer Festival in Bethlehem, last Sunday.

DOV LIEBER

Four years ago, when 29-year-old Alaa Sayej was setting up a brewery in his hometown of Birzeit, north of Ramallah, he encountered a problem he didn't foresee: Palestinian authorities insisted his logo looked too much like Jesus.

After convincing the Palestinian authorities the figure was not Jesus, his biggest challenge actually came from the Israeli border control, that held up imports of machinery and supplies from Europe, he said.

The brewery began selling beer in 2015. Sayej's beer is sold across the Palestinian territories, in Israel, Italy and Chile.

Between last Saturday and Sunday, some 7 000 to 8 000 Palestinians and tourists, showed their love for the beer by travelling to the edge of a little village at the far eastern end of Bethlehem, called Beit Sahour, for the second annual Shepherds Beer Festival.

Thousands of mostly Palestinian youth who paid NIS 30 (R105) to get into the venue, stood shoulder to shoulder, pumped their fists, sang along with music, and hoisted their beer mugs into the air upon demand.

First to take the stage was the band Hawa Dafi.

Arwa Salameh, 26, said she was “surprised by the very nice music” of Hawa Dafi.

“This type of party is becoming more popular in Palestine. It's nice,” she added.

Mid-interview, Charlie Asfur, 22, answered his phone.

“Come to Shepherds, it's poppin'; I swear to Allah.”

Asfur, a Chicago native who moved to Ramallah when he was 14 and back to the Windy City eight months ago, said: “Palestine is the chilliest country you'll ever find. Everyone drinks and everyone smokes hash,” he said, referring to hashish.

“Palestine is the freest country,” he said. Except that one must be very careful what one says in public about politics or religion, he added.

Shepherds Beer comes in three flavours: an amber ale, a stout, and a blonde. There is also a seasonal flavour and the Birzeit Brewery, which produces the Shepherds Beer line, is also working on a non-alcoholic ale called Dahab, meaning “gold” in Arabic.

Chris Zaknoun, 40, who consults for international organisations in the West Bank, said he thought Shepherds Beer was at an “international standard”.

Zaknoun was glad the beer was tasty, but more excited that young Palestinians had a chance to party.

Sayej's brewery was supported financially by his father, and his siblings are all key players in the business. His brother Khaled is the master brewer.

This family-owned brewery model has precedent in the West Bank.

In October, the Taybeh Brewery, named after the village where it is located, will be hosting its 12th annual Taybeh Octoberfest.

The Taybeh Brewery is run by the Khoury family.

feel that recent political events have resulted in increased hostility towards Jews. Since 2015, 80 per cent of respondents said they believe that the Labour Party is harbouring anti-Semites in its ranks.

In 2015, Jeremy Corbyn, a far-left politician who in 2009 called Hezbollah and Hamas his “friends”, was elected to lead Labour. Corbyn said last year that he regrets calling the terrorists his friends

Jerusalem-Tel Aviv express train makes its first test run

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

The long-awaited Jerusalem-Tel Aviv express train made its first test run last Sunday, with the line's journey time expected to last a brisk 28 minutes.

The official opening of the new high-speed train line is six months away, in April 2018, but a deliberately weighted-down train inaugurated the track, Channel 2 reported.

The purpose of this first trip, with a freight train loaded up so that it weighed a total of 1 200 tons, was twofold: to test the bridges and rails, and to strengthen and stabilise the concrete and tracks.

The train will continue to go back and forth between the two cities over the next few weeks. If all goes smoothly, the line will open for passengers in April next year.

Transport Minister Yisrael Katz spoke of the impact and benefit of the new train line.

“This is a fast train which will take 28 minutes to get from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,” he said. “This will ensure Jerusalem's status and will give people the ability to live in it, to set up businesses and will completely change the connection between Jerusalem and the rest of the State of Israel.”

The Tel Aviv-Jerusalem rail project, which is projected to cost an estimated NIS 7 billion (R23 billion) and has been in the works since 2001, will cut travel time down significantly from the 78-minute ride on the old line built during the days of the Ottoman Empire.

The trains will reach speeds of up to 160 kph. When fully operational, they will depart every 15 minutes in each direction, carrying up to 1 000 passengers each.

The massive public works project has faced many hurdles since planning started 15 years ago.

The high-speed rail line crosses the Green Line twice, once near Latrun and once near Mevasseret Zion.

The longest tunnel in the Fast Lane project is 11,6 km long, making it the longest tunnel in Israel.



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Jon Stewart intimates Donald Trump is anti-Semitic

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF NEW YORK

Former “Daily Show” host Jon Stewart blasted Donald Trump during an appearance in New York, appearing to intimate the US president is an anti-Semite.

Reacting to Trump’s comments on the August 11 white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, in which the president likened

the president picked with him on Twitter in April 2013, in which Trump denigrated the Jewish comedian and brought up his birth-name, Jonathan Leibowitz.

“So he tweeted, ‘if Jon Leibowitz is so above it all, why did he change his name?’ Basically saying to people, ‘just so you know, he’s a Jew’,” Stewart said to a laughing crowd.

“So basically it goes back to an old white supremacist trope, which is, ‘Jews among us’,” Stewart added. “And one of them has a show on Comedy Central. How about that?”

The New York native, who frequently raises his heritage in TV appearances, explained that the name change had to do with “some issues” he had with his father.

Stewart then told the crowd what he eventually tweeted in response: “Did you know Donald Trump’s real name is Fuckface Von Clownstick?”

In the original Twitter feud, the future commander and chief called Stewart a “pussy”.

“The point is, people keep saying to me... How did we elect Donald Trump president of the United States?” Stewart continued. “And my feeling is, have you met us?”

Stewart had also made clear in February that he isn’t sure Trump loves the Jews.

Visiting Stephen Colbert’s “Late Show” from his “farm”, he called Trump out for lying about the murder rate and the size of his electoral college victory.

But Stewart’s “favourite” Trump falsehood came when the president shut down a Jewish reporter’s question about anti-Semitism. At a press conference earlier that month, Ami magazine’s Jake Turx had asked Trump a question about a perceived rise in anti-Semitic acts, whereupon Trump interrupted him, accused him of lying



Jon Stewart on The Late Show with Stephen Colbert

and told him to sit down. Trump then said: “I am the least anti-Semitic person that you’ve ever seen in your entire life.”

Stewart’s response? “I don’t think that’s true,” he said in an old-world Yiddish accent, after staring uneasily at the camera and scratching his neck.

“He said that to a guy wearing a yarmulke,” Stewart continued. “Donald, you’re not even the least anti-Semitic person in the clip we showed.”

• JTA contributed to this report.

Jewish funnyman Jerry Lewis, 91, has died

JORDAN HOFFMAN
LOS ANGELES

Jewish-American actor, comedian, director, inventor, philanthropist and one of the last links to vaudeville, Jerry Lewis, has died at the age of 91. The world just got a little less funny.

Lewis, born Joseph Levitch in Newark, New Jersey, grew up in a show business family. His father, Daniel Levitch, was a vaudeville entertainer and his mother, Rae, was a pianist who worked for the (still existent) WOR Radio.

At the age of five, so the legend goes, he made his stage debut singing “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” and accidentally kicked out one of the footlights. His surprised reaction got the audience to laugh, and this set him on his path toward comedy.

By age 15 he had dropped out of high school and was honing his stage act.

He worked the Jewish “Borscht Belt” in the Catskills Mountains (Brown’s Hotel in Lake Sheldrake was a big break) and, in 1945, at the age of 19, he hooked up with Dean Martin.

The handsome Italian-American singer (born Dino Crocetti) was the perfect straight man to Lewis’ zany, anarchic man-child persona. Their stage show was built on improvisation in which Lewis would bring mayhem to an otherwise smooth Martin vocal performance.

Martin and Lewis quickly became successful as a nightclub act, on radio, the early days of television and eventually in Hollywood in feature films.

They made 15 films during the 1950s and were one of the most profitable acts in Hollywood. They even had a DC comic book based on them.

But Lewis’ antics were so upstaging



Dean Martin that it became inevitable that the pair would split. Before the partnership ended in June 1956, they made “Artists and Models”, and “Hollywood or Bust”, and that’s where Jerry Lewis met his second great collaborator, Frank Tashlin.

Tashlin was a former Looney Tunes animator and fellow New Jersey transplant to Hollywood. Lewis and Tashlin devised the elaborate, highly choreographed Technicolor movies that were far more stylised than the usual studio comedies of the time.

After a number of films with Tashlin, though still working with him from time to time, Lewis began directing his own movies. His first was “The Bellboy”.

During the days he shot this essentially plot-free collection of skits in which his character (a goofy bellboy) had virtually no dialogue.

After “The Bellboy” came Lewis’ first masterpiece: “The Ladies Man”. Shot in big, bright colours, Lewis’ infantile persona is set against a rooming house

filled with young women. (It isn’t too prurient; Lewis maintains an “eww, gross, girls!” attitude, by and large.)

In 1963 came Lewis’ biggest hit of all, “The Nutty Professor”. This Jekyll-and-Hyde tale was notable because, in addition to playing the spaced-out, klutzy scientist, he transforms into the debonair Buddy Love, proving that Lewis could actually act.

Throughout the 1960s Lewis constantly appeared on television chat shows and hosted the Muscular Dystrophy Association telethon. This became a Labour Day weekend tradition from 1966 all the way through 2010.

Lewis completed 13 films as a director.

He first visited Israel in 1981, though claimed he had bought a plane ticket in 1967 but the Six Day War had broken out. His work was rarely explicitly Jewish but, like the Marx Brothers, is easily read that way.

He is survived by his wife SanDee and their daughter Danielle and five sons.

Austrian soccer fan gets 18 months for Nazi salute

AFP AND TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF
VIENNA

An Austrian soccer fan has been given an 18-month prison sentence for a Hitler salute during a match, falling foul of the country’s tough laws against Nazi glorification.

The unemployed 39-year-old from top-flight Rapid Vienna’s “ultra” wing of hardline fans, was spotted performing the banned gesture during a match in August 2016 and sentenced in Vienna on Monday.

“I didn’t really give it much thought. But it clearly wasn’t a good idea,” the skinhead told the court, saying he had had “a few beers and spritzers” before the game.

Similar convictions are relatively common but usually the sentences are suspended. In this case, however, the man had a previous conviction for wishing Hitler happy birthday on Facebook in 2013.

Rapid Vienna is Austria’s most successful club with 32 league titles, but its hardcore “ultra” supporters have a reputation for hooliganism and anti-Semitism.

Earlier this year, the team launched an internal probe into its fans who had chanted anti-Semitic slogans at a friendly game in May.

“Anyone who is found to have joined in these insults will be immediately banned from SK Rapid events,” the club said in a statement sent to AFP.

Sydenham Shul celebrating many milestones

STANLEY SEEFF

Back in 1943, the Second World War was raging across Europe, and Jews were being murdered in their millions. It never ceases to inspire me that during that terrible time for our people, down here in the bottom of Africa, a new congregation was being formed in Johannesburg to serve the growing Jewish community, then migrating north from Doornfontein and surrounds.

Our forbears were nothing less than visionaries when they formed the Sydenham Highlands North Hebrew Congregation and helped rebuild Jewish life. Today, thank G-d, the Sydenham Shul continues to be viable and vibrant, successful and spiritual, and is also attracting the new generation.

Indeed, we have been hailed by none other than Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks as “one of the great synagogues of the English-speaking world”.

As we celebrate our Diamond Jubilee – 75 years of dedicated and inspired community leadership in our own community and well beyond, we also honour three decades of dedication and spiritual leadership by our senior rabbinic couple, Rabbi Yossy and



Stanley and Ingrid Seeff are given a presentation in recognition of their service to the Shul

Rochel Goldman, a decade of innovation in reaching out to the next generation by Rabbi Yehuda and Estee Stern, and the barmitzvah year of our world-class Chazan Yudi Cohen.

Our spiritual leader, Rabbi Goldman, is one of this country’s leading rabbis and is respected around the world. He is an author and radio personality, the president of the

South African Rabbinical Association and a past member of the Religious Broadcasting Panel of the SABC.

His wife Rochel is a social activist in her own right – a dedicated rebbetzin and a respected role model to many hundreds of women throughout our Jewish community.

In the 10 years they have been with us,

Rabbi Yehuda and Estee Stern, besides consolidating and growing the Shtibl-SpiritShul, have developed a thriving, dynamic young adult community around our Sydenham Shul campus. Their Young Jewish Joburg dinners, events and learning programmes, are attracting hundreds of young people from across the spectrum and hold the promise of an exciting and bright future. Rabbi Stern also oversees the youth division of the community.

Chazan Yudi has rightfully earned all the accolades bestowed upon him for his beautiful davening, his ability to mix traditional chazonus with contemporary Jewish music, and the passion he puts into prayer. Yudi, Dina and their children are an integral part of our shul family.

Sydenham Shul has been an integral part of my family’s life for over six decades. This journey has taken me from a pupil in the nursery school, to serving as a gabai for the past 18 years. Ingrid has worked on the campus for 45 years, and when we walk into the Shul, it feels like we are home.

• Stanley Seeff is the chairman of Sydenham Shul.

SydShul young adults have Shabbos with Mayor Mashaba

Johannesburg Mayor Herman Mashaba joined “Young Jewish Johannesburg” at Sydenham Shul last Friday evening to celebrate a decade of dynamic programmes and activities for the congregation’s younger generation.

“I am enraged that one-by-one our state institutions are being hijacked and spectacularly ransacked, but I am not content to be an armchair critic, and that is why I joined the DA and made myself available to lead the City of Johannesburg,” Mashaba told the 200 young participants at the dinner.

“Out of all the jobs I’ve ever had, I have to say, that this is the most difficult one,” he added.

The Young Adult division is celebrating its 10th anniversary since its inception in July 2007 upon the arrival of Rabbi Yehuda and Estee Stern.

Catering for students and young professionals between the ages of 19 and 39, its trademark events are delicious catered Shabbat dinners, called “Dinner on Main”, where they have hosted top South African celebrities as their guest speakers.

Over the last 10 years they have hosted the likes of Gareth Cliff, Johnny Clegg, Helen Zille, Jeremy Mansfield, Irvin Khoza, Redi Thlabi, Thuli Madonsela, Derek Watts, Ali Bacher, Rabbi Akiva Tatz, DA leader Mmusi Maimane and former Springbok captain Jean de Villiers.

immediately upon taking office, to help expose corruption and to ensure that those found guilty face the full might of the law.

So far, the City has been able to effect 43 arrests and 109 suspensions of officials suspected of fraud and corruption.

“This is only the tip of the iceberg. There are many suspensions and arrests yet to follow.”

During question time, he was asked: “All this is great for the City of Johannesburg, but what about the greater South Africa?”

Mashaba replied: “I strongly believe that our job is to get the economic heartbeat of Johannesburg working. If we get Johannesburg working, we can make South Africa work.”



Stanley Seeff, Herman Mashaba and Rabbi Yehuda Stern



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Jack’s Wife Freda takes New York by storm

NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR

Jack’s Wife Freda was a baleboste [mistress of her house] of note. She was a larger-than-life character who graciously entertained family, friends and sometimes strangers, whipped up chopped herring and fried fish balls at the drop of a hat – or a drop of a wig.

Freda liked wigs. She was, as her grandson Dean Jankelowitz describes her, both “extra loving and impossible at the same time”.

Jack’s Wife Freda is not only the inspiration but also the name of two of Dean’s popular eateries in New York – in Soho and the West Village. These are two distinct areas for two lively all-day bistros.

“One is cute, one is more mature”, though both are infused with the same ingredients: warmth,



hospitality, playfulness and good, homey-with-a-twist, reasonably-priced food.

Okay, but why the quirky name?

Just as Jack and Freda were immigrants to South Africa from Lithuania, Dean and his wife Maya were immigrants to the United States. Dean is from South Africa and Maya from Israel. They met while working at iconic New York brasserie Balthazar.

After each shift, they’d share a smoke over a fire hydrant until the flames of love blew in and they married.

After their two sons Noam and Benjamin were born, they dreamed of starting their own place. And in 2011, after, as Dean says, “good fortune brought along a lease on Lafayette Street”, they sat to work out a menu, a vibe, and a name. The name eluded them. They slept on it.

When Dean woke up and said, “Jack’s Wife Freda”, they both laughed. But it stuck.

“Freda, with her funny little hair, her mountains of soul and warm hospitality, was the perfect inspiration for our Jewish-style gastro-like pub.”

The menu includes, “all the things we love to eat”, based on memories of both Dean and Maya’s childhoods. This includes eggs benny, two poached eggs over potato latkes, smoked salmon and beet hollandaise (based on Dean’s great-grandfather, Benny, who used to make and sell potato latkes on the streets of Johannesburg), chicken prego rolls and peri-peri chicken – Dean’s favourite.

You’ll also find fish balls, matzo ball soup and Madame Freda – Freda at her most fancy – a pressed sandwich with duck prosciutto, cheddar béchamel, gruyere and a sunny-side-up egg.

Maya’s Israeli childhood influences bring Kefta kebab – Persian meatballs with tahini and pine nuts – and spiced rack of lamb with herbed Israeli couscous to the table.

But the good food is only a part of Jack’s Wife Freda’s success.

“We have a wedding photo of Freda and Jack on the wall. People can relate to them. Everyone either knows a Freda or a Jack or is a Freda



and Jack. It’s all about family... the fact that Jack put up with Freda being the first act to his second act. You can almost reach out and touch the humour, the warmth and good energy.”

Jack and Freda moved from Hillbrow to Houghton to Killarney – “a flat filled with Côte d’Or elephant chocolates, fluffy, decorative things on the couches and polystyrene heads for all her wigs. They built a good life together for 40 years.”

Dean says Maya is the “embodiment” of Freda. “She has the warmth, the character, grace and elegance.”

Dean and Maya check in between the two restaurants and now the

boys, 10 and six, pop in after school with their friends. “We are developing a sense of community,” says Dean.

The South African community pop in too. “South Africans who live around the world, visit and we all play Jewish geography.” Dean loved Nando’s as a child and is thrilled co-founder Robbie Brozin of Nando’s visits regularly when in New York.

“We’re front of house people. We didn’t know much at first, except that we enjoyed restaurants, food and people, and that breaking bread, drinking, laughing – that’s the centre of life.”

• *The Jack’s Wife Freda cookbook, full of inventive Jewish comfort food, is now available on Amazon.*

International CEO of the Year is South African

TALI FEINBERG

Stanley Bergman – who grew up in Port Elizabeth and studied in Israel – was recently chosen as CEO of the Year by the international Chief Executive Magazine.

“Being recognised as CEO of the Year, an honour I accepted on behalf of our 21 000 team Schein members around the world, has been one of the most humbling experiences of my life,” said Bergman.

This honour is bestowed upon outstanding corporate leaders who are nominated and selected by peer CEOs.

He won this for his work as Henry Schein Inc CEO and chairman of the board since 1989. This company is the world’s largest provider of healthcare products and services to office-based dental, animal health and medical practitioners. It is represented in 33 countries and employs more than 21 000 people, and has headquarters in Melville, New York. It had a record \$11,6 billion in sales in 2016.

Bergman now joins a list of illustrious prior CEOs of the Year, that include the likes of Microsoft’s Bill Gates; former General Electric CEO Jack Welch; Michael Dell, a pioneer of personal computing, AG Lafley of Procter and Gamble John Chambers, Xerox’s Anne Mulcahy, Intel’s Andy Grove and Herb Kelleher of SouthWest Airlines.

“I am filled with gratitude, as this award is certainly not in recognition of individual achievement. Every great success requires a team, and at Henry Schein we have an exceptional

team,” he says.

This PE-born leader, was an active member of Habonim and went to Grey Junior and High Schools before studying at Wits University and Tel Aviv University. He is married to Marion, and they have two sons and four grandchildren. Based in New York, the family have maintained strong ties to South Africa and uphold their Jewish identity.

“It is remarkable to see a new, young, path-breaking generation of leaders who have found a new way for Jews to contribute to the life of a fascinating and complex new South Africa.”

Speaking to the SA Jewish Report from New York, Bergman says his parents fled Nazi Germany in February 1936 for South Africa, and settled in the community of South End in Port Elizabeth, where his parents’ business was a key part of the fabric of the suburb.

“South End was one of the few remaining racially integrated communities during the waning years of apartheid,” says Bergman. “Growing up in this wonderful and vibrant place, and later witnessing how apartheid destroyed the dynamic harmony of the community, influenced me deeply. Of the many lessons I learned from the South End, one stands out: the richness

of diversity and the strength of pluralism.

“These lessons were amplified by the values of Judaism that were so central in my wife’s and my own family when we were growing up. My parents instilled the concept of tikkun olam (healing the world) in me, and Marion’s parents did the same for her. In turn, we have worked hard to instil this value in our



children.

“Participating in Habonim from an early age reinforced these values, while at the same time providing an excellent leadership development platform.

“I always remind our young managers that those who are good at ‘running a summer camp’ make excellent future leaders in business,

or, in fact, any walk of life. A great camp counsellor knows how to get the entire team engaged in the mission!”

Bergman says it has been amazing to see how the South African Jewish community has evolved over the years. “It is remarkable to see a new, young, path-breaking generation of leaders who have found a new way for Jews to contribute to the life of a

fascinating and complex new South Africa.

“They are taking their place in a political culture that has embraced pluralism and equality as cardinal principles, engaging in an unapologetic give-and-take, as South Africans and as Jews.”

Bergman says the success of the global economy is closely linked to

growth and development in the “new Africa”, and the continent’s promise is truly extraordinary.

“Business leaders in South Africa are ideally positioned to be at the forefront of unlocking Africa’s phenomenal potential, while working to create a better world more broadly.

“Creating a better world requires business leaders to fully embrace a responsibility to be engaged in the shaping of society. With all of the incredible advances and opportunities presented by the breath-taking technological advances of what many refer to as the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’, there are many in society who are being left behind,” he adds.

“If we disregard the importance of ensuring that all members of society benefit from these advances, we risk ever mounting disenfranchisement and civil dissent, which jeopardises global stability and all democratic societies. Business leaders have an obligation to civil society to do a better job expanding the benefits of emerging technologies to all.

“Creating a better world also requires leaders who embrace diversity. As business leaders, our organisations benefit greatly from the richness of diversity, and we have the opportunity to promote a civil dialogue among people of every political, religious, economic and cultural background.

“This effort to build bridges starts within our own teams, and expands to our larger communities and beyond,” he said.



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Andrew Human is the chief executive officer of the Loeries, the Oscars for South African creatives, that took place between August 14 and 21. We asked him some questions on the eve of this year’s awards.

Always the unexpected

What does it mean to be the CEO of an annual event like the Loeries and what does your job entail?

I often get asked what I do for the rest of the year! Actually, the Loeries is a non-profit company and we have a year-round focus on promoting the value that creativity adds – building the economy of ideas.

I believe this is especially important in South Africa where we are challenged with so much unemployment. Every opportunity we can provide to youngsters for employment – to make use of their own potential – makes a difference to a whole community of people.

The Loeries are like the SA Oscars for the advertising industry. What are the challenges in running it and what are the highlights?

In an industry that values creative excellence above all else, we obviously have a tough crowd and have to ensure that we do everything to the highest standards and keep inspiring everyone to do great things. The highlight is being in a

creative environment – working with incredible people and having the opportunity to create new things all the time.

You are an engineer and scientist by training. How did you find your way into this industry and then to the Awards?

I finished my studies in the 90s and for me the most exciting thing at the time was the Internet which was in its infancy. I began building websites and then had to try and sell websites to people who had never had one, and didn’t know why they needed one.

I worked in New York for five years where I got involved in developing Internet-based management systems for awards shows – and then I was asked to come back and run the Loeries in 2005, at a time when it was in a bit of trouble.

What drew you to engineering first?

I’ve always believed in creativity and to me maths and science are areas of great stimulation and innovation. Our society pigeonholes everyone – creativity is “the arts” while maths is on the other end of the spectrum. We hold up Einstein as a creative genius – yet he was a theoretical physicist.



Your surname, Human, is not the most obvious sounding Jewish name. Tell us the story behind it.

My dad was an Afrikaner, and my mother’s family Russian Jews. My dad was actually born in Humansdorp in the Cape – the family town.

Being Jewish means a lot to you and you are a pivotal part of your shul community. Why? What does it mean to you?

I enjoy the constant learning. Judaism offers an enormous amount of wisdom, and I enjoy the ritual of separating from the day-to-day and having time to reflect on this. It is also a very important part of my relationship with my two sons.

Why is advertising important in SA and, particularly, for the community?

As I mentioned earlier, I believe the creative economy offers much to South Africa in terms of employment of our youth. Advertising is vital for a competitive and healthy economy, allowing successful brands and new

products to flourish.

What do you believe is particularly great advertising?

Great advertising is always the unexpected. Often it seems so obvious when you see it, and makes so much sense – but it wasn’t there before.

The advertising industry has had to reinvent itself along with the media. How has it changed since you started at the Loeries?

There have been huge changes in media platforms – we have things like social media which is massive today but didn’t exist only a few years ago. However, everything is still driven by the idea – without a great idea you have nothing.

How is it going to change?

The moving image – film, TV, video – is still king. It’s migrating onto different platforms but it’s still what works best with us humans (excuse the pun). I think virtual reality will make great advances over the next few years and this will take our experiences to the next level.

Letters

ATTEMPTS TO ALIENATE JEWS FROM STATE OF ISRAEL WILL NOT SUCCEED

I want to comment on the plans of the ANC regime in South Africa, together with BDS, their Jewish puppets in SA Jews for a Free Palestine, and SA Jews for a Just Peace, Cosatu et al, to try to pressure South African Jews to cut ties with our brothers and sisters in Israel.

Every day they come up with venomous and ruthless attacks on the Jewish State and its supporters, and are directing a campaign of ethnic hatred against Israel and its Jews.

We must not let them succeed; the Communist government of the old Soviet Union tried the same and did not succeed.

In his book The Jews of Silence, Elie Wiesel provided a classic testament to the brutal persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union during the dark days of Communist oppression.

With both poetic and potent eloquence, Wiesel described the atmosphere of fear and silence among Soviet Jewry during the 1960s, when this book was written; the attempts to force Jews to abandon their faith and identity, and to cut ties with their brothers and sisters in Israel, by the brutal Communist tyrants.

Then there was the daily disparagement of the State of Israel and the maligning of Zionism by the state media (something we see in many countries around the world today).

Indeed, even though Communist tyranny in Russia has collapsed, the crusade of hate by the left, formulated by Soviet propagandists, has only got more vicious in recent years.

But the Jews of the Soviet Union refused to forget who they were, or to give up their faith or their love for the State of Israel.

Referring to the violent anti-Israel propaganda in the Soviet Union, the author explains: “The purpose of such propaganda is to make Israel seem hateful to the general populace, but to the Jews as well, to undermine the esteem in which they hold the Jewish State, and to convince them finally to relinquish an idea which has failed, a vision of redemption which has somehow been made profane...”

But this form of psychological warfare, directed against the Jewish dream, and designed to divide Jews of the Diaspora from their own people in Israel, failed in Russia.

Jews all over the world need to reject it, wherever it raises its ugly head.

As Wiesel described it: “There are Jews who will under no circumstances let themselves be severed from their people.”

Gary Selikow
Johannesburg

FOR MIDEAST PEACE, PALESTINIANS MUST BE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE

The article in your newspaper of August 4, “South African Jews call on Israel to urgently secure peace”, refers.

I agree that the present situation in the West Bank is “untenable” and deplore Israel’s collective punishment and the demolition of houses of terrorists and their families. I am wholeheartedly for co-existence, for human rights and I endorse the “moderate, reasonable pro-peace” stance of the signatories of the letter.

However, I take issue with the label “occupied territories”. It cannot be unknown to such outstanding jurists as Mr Justice Dennis Davis and Professor David Bilchitz that this designation has been disproved by such legal luminaries as Professor Eugene Rostow, dean of Yale Law School, Eugene Kontorovich, Avi Bell and Edmund Levy (see five letters in the “International Jerusalem Post” of June 16, 2017).

A former assistant professor of history, Moshe Dann, explained the origin of the classification in an article some years ago in the same newspaper as follows:

Meeting secretly in the early 1970s in Geneva, the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) determined that Israel was in violation of the fourth Geneva Convention... All decisions and protocols of the ICRC in this matter are closed, even the identities of the people involved are secret... Without transparency or judicial ethics, ICRC rulings became “international law”.

As for negotiation, do the signatories know of any Palestinian negotiators willing to compromise for Israel’s security?

How many generous and genuine offers of peace have been made? Has the lesson of the total withdrawal from Gaza in 2005 not been learnt? Do the signatories not know Albert Einstein’s definition of insanity as “doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results”?

I look forward to reading Messrs Davis’s and Bilchitz’s reply.

Dr Bryna Lewis
Port Elizabeth

BANTUSTANS DON’T WORK, SO THREE-STATE SOLUTION STANDS

Before 1994 in South Africa, the autonomy of Transkei, Bophuthatswana Venda and Ciskei was not acceptable. These four Bantustans were seen as inferior.

In Israel in April 2003, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon decided to withdraw from Gaza for demographic reasons. He requested a UN mandate for Egypt to again control Gaza, as before the 1967 capture. Without Egyptian control, he predicted that the Gazans would fight for a Bantustan, like the apartheid South African model.

Will the Gazan and West Bank Bantustans be acceptable without fighting with Egypt or Israel?

The solution? Jordan agreed in 1997 to administer between 17 and 21 per cent of the West Bank, remaining the only Palestinian state; a United Nations mandate for Egypt to again control Gaza and Jordan to again control some West Bank. Control of land south of the Dead Sea could strategically strengthen the Red Sea-Dead Sea canal project.

Gerald Levin
Johannesburg

DROP OF RUINOUS PAINT ON MONA LISA CANVAS

Your editorial in a recent SA Jewish Report asks: “Does a blotch on a great picture, ruin it?”

Your conflation in the answer is obvious, but far too tinged with your closeness to the subject in this case.

Would a drop of paint on the canvas of the Mona Lisa, ruin it? Most certainly it would.

So, we are left with a defence of a person, and others, who probably found security in their association with a dreadful ideology, and (worse) gave financial support, with full knowledge of an unforgivable and similar, period for Jews in Europe.

It just does not wash.

Fred Levy
Cape Town

SHORT DISTANCE BETWEEN ANTI-SEMITISM AND RACISM BASED ON COLOUR

There are many aspects of the Charlottesville rally that one can discuss. One thing that struck me was the sight of the Confederate flag side by side with the Nazi flag. The KKK and neo-Nazis marching together. These groups demonise “the other”.

Jews and people of colour should realise that, when it comes to such closed-minded people, WE are in the same boat. The distance between anti-Semitism and racism based on colour is not far. We have both suffered greatly in our histories at the hands of those who hate us just because of what we are. Africans and Jews would do well to recognise this. We should work together to strengthen our ties... because we actually have a lot in common.

Michele Engelberg
Johannesburg

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SA Jewry dwindles; not for the usual reasons



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

When asked how many Jews remain in South Africa, Jewish leaders usually fudge the question, though they know the community’s size is falling. No-one wants to be a prophet of doom. The generally accepted figure is 60 000 to 70 000, roughly half of the community’s 1970s heyday.

Jews have always been on the move, everywhere. They came here in the late 1800s and early 1900s from Europe to escape anti-Semitism and seek a better life.

It is astonishing that after the terrible things that happened in Europe in the last century, including the Holocaust, Jews are in distress again and wanting to leave. History keeps replaying itself.

Three countries serve as examples: In Spain, Barcelona’s Chief Rabbi Meir Bar-Hen warned last week after terrorist attacks in which 14

On Sunday, the Board held its 49th biennial national conference, where we took the opportunity of reporting back to our constituency on our work over the past two years as well as honouring community members adjudged to have made an especially outstanding contribution to South African Jewry and the country as a whole.

Afterwards, the new executive committee was confirmed. I am honoured to have been entrusted with the position of National Chairman of the Board. Together with my fellow executive members – National President Mary Kluk, National Vice-Presidents Rael Kaimowitz and Jeremy Droyman (the third National Vice-President will be confirmed shortly) and National Treasurer Eric Marx.

I look forward to meeting the challenges and seizing the opportunities that will undoubtedly arise during our term of office, and building on all that the Board has done to ensure the continued safety and well-being of our community.

It is always uplifting to be able to recognise Jewish community members who have played a particularly noteworthy role in building our society. On Sunday, we celebrated the multiple philanthropic achievements of John Moshal, who received the Eric Samson Mendel Kaplan Communal Service Award for a lay leader, and of Leslie Rosenberg and Molly Smith, recipients of the Rabbi Cyril and Ann Harris Human Rights Award for their founding and heading up of the Mitzvah School.

Their example should inspire us to continue to find ways in which we can contribute to the upliftment of those who have not enjoyed the kind of privileges that most South African Jews have largely taken for granted.

The presentation of the second Eric

victims and five suspected terrorists died in Barcelona and Cambrils: “Jews are not here permanently.” The attacks were not aimed specifically at Jews.

“I tell my congregants: Don’t think we’re here for good... Better [get out] early than late.” He calls Spain a “hub of Islamist terror for all of Europe”.

In France last year, Paris’ Synagogue de la Victoire Rabbi Moshe Sebbag claimed every French Jew is considering leaving because of anti-Semitism. French Jews number between 500 000 to 600 000. Many will not do so, because they fear the upheaval in their lives.

A recent Human Rights First survey said anti-Semitic incidents in France had risen dramatically in the last few years; and some 82 per cent of Jews had experienced anti-Semitism, but not reported it.

One leader said Jews in Paris and elsewhere feel “they can’t safely wear a kippah outside their homes or send their children to public schools, where Muslim children bully Jewish children”.

In Britain, an anti-Semitism survey shows British Jews feeling directly threatened by BDS’

Samson Mendel Kaplan award, to Shirley Beagle, reminded us of the debt we all owe to those dedicated communal professionals who devote themselves so wholeheartedly, often going beyond the call of duty, to rendering the best possible service they can to South African Jewry.

Just prior to the conference, the Board was centrally involved in two very positive initiatives, the visit of a multi-party delegation comprising Members of the Israeli Knesset and the co-hosting, with the Japanese Embassy and Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre, of an evening in memory of the heroic Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara.

Despite the short notice, the Knesset visit was a resounding success. The Board was instrumental in setting up across the political spectrum, meetings for the delegation, as well as events for the Jewish community.

These included meetings with ANC members, the Democratic Alliance in Parliament, a luncheon for opposition parties and a luncheon for the Johannesburg and Cape Town Jewish leadership.

At the Chiune Sugihara memorial evening, we had the opportunity to meet and engage with descendants of some of those who survived through the life-saving exit visas that Sugihara, without his government’s authorisation, provided for them.

It is estimated that over 30 000 people are alive today because of Sugihara’s actions, a number of whom occupy important leadership roles in our own community. In my introductory remarks, I emphasised that through remembering the life and actions of this remarkable man, we were reminded that even in the darkest times, there are people who are able to raise themselves beyond their circumstances and perform deeds of selfless heroism on behalf of their fellow human beings.

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

anti-Israel activities; some 31 per cent had “considered” leaving the country. And some 37 per cent of respondents said they avoided “displaying outward signs of their Judaism in public”.

How does South Africa fit into this picture? The reasons Jews leave are starkly different from Europe. It is not anti-Semitism, which remains very low – indeed, displays of racism are generally confronted quickly and harshly by the media and government. Jews have little fear of identifying themselves publicly as Jews.

But there is increasing fear about the country’s future, as it teeters ominously under President Jacob Zuma’s corrupt and inept government. Uncertainty is rampant about future prospects, epitomised by the downgrading to “junk status” of its economy by respected international rating agencies.

Questions are asked about how minority groups – such as the white Jewish community, Afrikaners and others – will be treated in future.

Many younger Jews, when asked, will say they are emigrating not so much for themselves, but for their children’s future, as they witness the decline in the quality of schools and

universities, diminishing prospects for whites in finding jobs in the face of affirmative action policies, and other factors.

One local leader most familiar with the issue is Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, known as the “travelling rabbi”, who takes care of 220 Jewish cemeteries containing 30 000 graves, in rural areas and small towns where once flourishing Jewish communities no longer exist.

In his address to Sunday’s SAJBD conference in Johannesburg, he said one of the questions he is most often asked is how many South African Jews remain. The only answer he could give – rather glumly, as his expression revealed – is that “the numbers are down”.

The declining numbers cannot be denied. On a more positive note, the real challenge going forward is for South African Jewry to recalibrate itself as a smaller community, but staunchly part of this country and involved in all its affairs. The opportunity is there.

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

Community Columns

-----A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies-----

Looking back on a very successful biennial conference



Above Board
Shaun Zagnoev

-----A column of the Chevrah Kadisha-----

Simply not true



Partners in
Chesed
Michael Sieff

I have a perennial problem. It’s at this time of year – just a month away from Rosh Hashanah – that my inbox starts to fill up with appeals for funds from various sources to save destitute Jewish families in our city.

They claim that without their efforts a growing number of people will suffer deprivation.

I’m here to tell you that the claim is false. No Jewish person will starve, be homeless, or suffer without healthcare as long as the Chev is here. And this is not an empty promise, but one that has been fulfilled for close to 130 years, as long as the Chev has been in existence.

Those petitions are designed to send you on an extended guilt trip, the kind that Jewish people with generous hearts are too often hoodwinked into embarking on. But they are based upon the false premise that taking care of Jews in need is not already a dedicated, focused, lifelong responsibility of the Chev.

It’s what we do. It’s our mandate. And it’s the reason we don’t see Jewish beggars on our streets.

With our annual budget of R280 million, the community would be hard-pressed to identify any area of Jewish need that the Chev does not respond to, be it physical, clinical, educational or psychological. Furthermore, our care spans every age group – quite literally from the cradle to the grave.

I understand that these fundraising efforts may be well-intentioned, but the message is simply not true. My sense of justice rebels against the veiled dismissal of all that the Chev does, and is.

I’m not suggesting that we have the sole rights to chesed or that ours is the only worthy cause out there (although it’s definitely high up on any list). But when it comes to welfare, we are the one-stop address for any Jew in need of any kind of help. With your assistance we will continue to meet their requirements.

May our partnership continue to thrive!
feedback@thechev.org.za

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

World News in Brief

Youth Olympic Games to use Jewish group’s anti-racism in sports programme

BUENOS AIRES - The 2018 Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires will feature a Jewish group’s programme battling racism and xenophobia in sport.

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre’s Eleven Points Against Racism in Football programme works with sports authorities, athletes and referees to stop and prevent racial hatred in athletic events and to use sport as a bond between peoples.

It will be implemented with the support of the Organisation of American States during the Games, which will be held from October 6-18, next year.

On Tuesday, the Latin American representative of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, Dr Ariel Gelblung, confirmed to JTA the agreement with OAS.

“If we succeed in eradicating racism, xenophobia and discrimination in sport, we can generate a greater awareness in society,” OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro said in a letter to the Wiesenthal Centre.

“As Nelson Mandela has shown, sport is a powerful tool for changing unacceptable behaviours and promoting inclusive societies.”

Gelblung is planning an educational site inside the Olympic village in Buenos Aires.

The initiative was inspired by a similar programme, Football Against Racism in Europe, or FARE, to prevent violence at major sporting events.

In March 2012, the Wiesenthal Centre called on the Argentine Football Association to penalise the Chacarita Juniors soccer club over anti-Semitic chants from its fans against the Atlanta Athletic Club of Buenos Aires, a team associated with the Jewish community. One year later, the centre asked for sanctions against Atlanta for making racist chants against rival Chacarita.

Israel will be among 206 countries sending athletes aged 15 to 18 to the Games. The third edition of the global event has soccer star Lionel Messi as one of its main supporters. (JTA)

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

Pundits back Mayweather

HELEN GRANGE

All sport-loving eyes are on the upcoming boxing match between the undefeated “retired” boxer Floyd Mayweather and lightweight Ultimate Fighting Champion (UFC) Conor McGregor, being held this Saturday in Las Vegas.

Mayweather is the overwhelming favourite to win the fight by bookmakers and boxing pundits across the world. Mayweather boasts a flawless professional record of 49-0, while mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter McGregor has never been in a boxing match.

For most commentators, that in itself makes the fight farcical. “It’s a circus,” says Golden Gloves promoter Rodney Berman. “Mayweather is an all-time great and McGregor has never boxed. The fact that the fight was sanctioned is, in itself, questionable.

“If it is genuine, then McGregor can’t live with Mayweather and will look out of his depth as the fight progresses. As Mayweather is a defensive fighter, Mayweather will win on points, or a late stoppage.”

Well known MMA fighter Brendon Katz, having boxed against world champion boxers, and thus has a fairly unique insight into the difference between high level MMA and top level boxing, agrees it’s a mismatch of fighting skills.

“If you put a top triathlete in a

bicycle race against the greatest cyclist of our generation, it wouldn’t be competitive. If you put a top-class soccer team against the best rugby team of our generation in a rugby match, it wouldn’t be competitive.

“If you put Mayweather in an MMA fight against McGregor, it wouldn’t be competitive. Now an MMA fighter is getting into the ring with the greatest boxer of our generation,” he says.

McGregor would have a massive advantage in a no-rules or limited rules setting “because of the breadth of his game, including kicking, wrestling, knee and elbow strikes and submissions.

“In a boxing ring, however, where Mayweather is master of a much narrower game, McGregor’s chances are greatly reduced,” says Katz, adding: “There are only so many different ways to move the hands, feet and body, and Mayweather has seen it all. There is nothing McGregor can do that Mayweather isn’t prepared for.”

Age is also a factor in sport. Mayweather is 40 years old, against McGregor’s 27. But in this fight, it’s negligible, posits Katz.

“There’s an old adage that a fighter is only as old as his hardest fights, and Mayweather has never been a fighter who gets hit a lot. He doesn’t show the same effects of age that

difference in the games, according to Katz. “The prevailing wisdom is that McGregor has more power than Mayweather.

“In my own experience, the difference in power between high-level professional boxers and high-level MMA fighters, is the same as the difference between kids and adults. Boxers hit with unbelievable force comparatively, and this is backed up by what I could find on measurements on their punching power.”

Mayweather’s force was measured at around 700 pounds per square inch (psi) and McGregor’s about 750 psi. “To put that into perspective, the hardest hitting MMA fighter was a heavyweight who generated around 900 psi.

“Mayweather has fought opponents who generate over 1 000 psi. I don’t see McGregor’s power being enough to bother Mayweather,” says Katz.

Then there’s stamina. Mayweather has always been in tip-top condition, Katz points out, fighting 12 rounds often, including against world champions and legends like Sugar Shane Mosley and Manny Pacquiao.

“After the 12th round, Mayweather

looks like he could easily do 12 more. On the other hand, McGregor has mostly either won or lost quickly, and in fights that have gone past the second round, he’s shown a severe lack of stamina and an inability to sustain a constant pace,” says Katz.

There’s sure to be some good rounds before a clear winner emerges, because Mayweather tends to be cautious early, taking the time to figure out his opponents for the first two or three rounds, and then switching his game on and taking over.

“That indicates to me that McGregor will wilt as the fight goes on, with Mayweather becoming stronger. I see that to be the deciding factor, with McGregor eventually completely running out of steam and the ref stopping the fight around round six.

Rocky Wainstein, owner of Rocky’s Boxing Gym in Edenglen and trainer of some of South Africa’s biggest boxing champions including Pierre Coetzer, agrees that Mayweather is the likely winner. “But don’t take McGregor lightly. I don’t think it’ll be over quickly. I think it’ll go the distance,” he says.

Negotiations for the fight lasted longer than a year, with each man demanding upwards of US\$100 million and insisting that they were the main draw. The fight is expected to become the highest grossing event in the history of either sport.



Aaron socks the Achievers

ANT KATZ

When the Young Jewish Entrepreneur Award judge, Gil Oved, interviewed eight-year-old Aaron Greenblatt who is the youngest-ever Jewish Achiever nominee, he was blown away by the boy’s potential.

Oved immediately contacted an associate, Nic Haralambous, and the two put in motion a plan to help Aaron in his social entrepreneurial venture of collecting socks for the needy.

It would put him on the map with the likes of DA leader Mmusi Maimane and former Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan at the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.



Aaron Greenblatt and Pravin Gordhan

Young Aaron had been nominated for a Jewish Achiever Award in The Creative Counsel Young Jewish Entrepreneur Award category for his Rock your Sock project. He may not have won the title, but by the end of the evening he was probably better known and supported than the winner.

Oved, together with his partner Ran Neu-Ner, co-own The Creative Counsel and are former Achiever winners and sponsors of the award in the category in which Aaron was nominated.

Oved and Haralambous, who manufactures premium brand bamboo socks under the brand Nic Harry, decided to play a great prank on Aaron – aimed at furthering his cause – at the Jewish Achievers’ gala banquet on August 13. “I snuck in with Gil before the event and we put a pair of socks on every seat,” says Nic.

Guests were then invited to put their socks into a special bin on the night – unless they wanted to take them home. Of over 600 pairs of socks that Haralambous and Oved put on chairs, 485 were binned for Aaron to add to his fundraiser.

One guest, who obviously really, really wanted to have a pair of Nic’s socks, swapped what he was wearing with the premier bamboo version, and put his used pair in the bin.

Aaron, a grade 2 pupil at Montrose Primary, had set himself a target of collecting 15 000 pairs of socks by September 1. His mom, Lee, said this week that Aaron was so close she was sure he would reach that target, and more. “We are at 14 500 today and I am picking up a lot more,” she said.

Greenblatt says they have no shortage of charitable groups looking for socks, and Aaron is now picking up corporate donors as well. What they are short of, she says, is kids’ socks “since Harry has come onboard and he only makes adult sizes”.

As for Haralambous, he is thrilled to be giving away socks. “We didn’t really see it as a promotion,” he says. “I decided to get involved to help Aaron. If we can create enthusiasm like I see in Aaron at eight, just imagine what he will be producing when he is 28,” he says.

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KDL boys excel at Discovery Cup

STEVE BAINBRIDGE

Four teams from King David Linksfeld competed in the Discovery Cup Soccer Finals this year.

The under-9 side played first and shared the trophy with from Yeshiva College, after a 1-1 draw. Next up were the under-10s who also shared the cup, this time with with Sandton Crawford, after another exciting match that

ended in a draw.

The KDL under-11 side proved too strong for their opposition and beat Crawford Sandton, 3-1.

The main match of the tournament is always the under-13 clash, which this year featured KDL against King Edwards Primary School. Dubbed the Clash of Kings; King David Linksfeld proved far too strong for KEPS and ran out winners with 4-1.

When I grow up I want to be...



Torah Academy Nursery School recently held a dress-up morning for the pre-prep grade classes. The children were asked to dress up in costumes representing what they wanted to be when they grew up.

Five out of seven boys in one class aspired to be paramedics for Hatzolah, the emergency medical response organisation which services the Johannesburg Jewish community. They are Daniel Pels, Yisroel Youngworth, Gavriel Spiro, Yehuda Leib Kievman and Yehuda Simpson.

King David Victory Park greatly contributed to Maccabi success



Jason Mervis, Alexander Monty, Aryn Bloch, Joshua Modlin, Daniel Sitsakis, and Daniel Fleishman, who represented the under-18 South African Maccabi Team. The team won Silver.

CHLOE VALKIN AND JOSHUA NOSSEL

The first Maccabi Games took place with 390 athletes. This year, 10 000 athletes from 80 countries participated in 47 different sporting events.

While this year's Maccabi Games started on July 4, the journey began over a year ago as many of the high school pupils went through trials to be selected to represent South Africa in their respective sports.

King David High School Victory Park had six players in the junior rugby team who competed against Israel and Argentina, winning a bronze in the 7s and silver in the 15s.

They also made up a third of the cricket team who competed against Israel, Great Britain and Australia. The team's captain was from KDVP and the team once again took gold.

In the under-18 soccer team, KDVP was the most represented school with five players. The team became the first South African soccer team to ever make the semi-finals.

In the golf category, King David Victory Park made up two thirds of the team that won gold, in addition to achieving the Individual Gold Medal.

The school was also represented in the Futsal team that won bronze.



Ayden Dave, under-9 of King David Linksfeld

Alyssa dances her way to glory

Alyssa Smullen, a grade 11 learner at Crawford College Sandton, competed in the SA Body of Dance's Gauteng National Performing Arts Championships 2017 at the Linder Auditorium recently. She danced in three sections and won medals in all three.

In the 16-and-over Jazz Solo Section, Alyssa was the outright winner and gold-medallist. In the 16-and-over Modern Duo Section, Alyssa herself choreographed the dance that she and a friend performed and they won silver medals. In the final section of the event – the 16-and-over Championship Modern Formations – Alyssa was a member of the outstanding gold medal-winning team.

During the holidays, Alyssa also completed her AIDT (Association of International Dance Teachers) Intermediate Modern Dance exam. This is one level away from the Teachers' Exam. Alyssa achieved 88 per cent for this examination.

Alyssa began ballet lessons at the age of three and then started modern/contemporary/jazz dancing from the age of six, but her favourite style of dance is contemporary.

"I love to dance because it challenges me and while I'm dancing I am able to forget temporarily about all the stresses of high school!"



Alyssa Smullen

Science at Sydenham is fun

JENNY MILLER

For young learners, science is just an extension of their everyday world. We don't have to teach young children how to wonder, discover, and explore through play, because they do it naturally.

If presented in the right way, science will always be fun. Science at Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primary School is something the children look forward to every week.

The teachers present experiments in a lively and interactive manner and the children are encouraged to bring their parents to the school's science room to discuss the experiments.



Friday (August 25)

- UZLC hosts metro journalist Anna Cox on "The State of Johannesburg Under the DA". Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:30-14:00. Information: Gloria (011) 485-4851.

Sunday (August 27)

- Jewish Genealogical Society of SA hosts Joyce Levin who will

retrace her family history after visiting several towns in Lithuania, on "The Bitter and the Sweet – Lithuania Remembered". Venue: HOD. Time: 19:30. Cost: R25 (incl tea & refreshments). RSVP: Hannah (011) 485-2188 or jgssa16@gmail.com

- Ongoing Nechama – Growth From Grief Support Group. Venue: Jossel Card Room, Ground Floor, Golden Acres. No need

WHAT'S ON

to book. Time: Tea from 09:30 – group starts promptly at 10:00-11:30. All welcome. Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

- Second Innings hosts Tony Bentel, pianist, entertainer, on "You Made Me Love You and Other Golden Oldies". Time: Tea at 10:00. The meeting starts at 10:30. Venue: Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light

refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Monday (August 28)

- UJW hosts Dr Dean Allen, author, historian and lecturer, on "Empire, War & Cricket at the Cape. JD Logan & the Story of Matijesfontein". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 10:00. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office (011) 648-1053.

Golden Acres knitting for the Yeshiva College blanket drive



The Golden Acres knitting circle – who has a proud history of knitting for worthy causes – last week gave 20 blankets to Yeshiva College pupils for distribution to those in need.

Yeshiva pupils are collecting blankets in memory of their late friend, 14-year-old Hugo Paluch, who passed away in a tragic accident in June.

According to the Yeshiva pupils, the blanket drive reflects the warmth and generosity of Hugo’s personality. To date, they have collected 2 500 blankets that are being donated to dozens of institutions in need.

The Yeshiva kids, their teacher Ronit Janit and fundraiser Carol Rod, collected the blankets and joined the Golden Acres residents for tea and treats.

Tanya’s story of addiction has a positive ending



Tanya Joselowsky, Gertie Feinstein, Yvonne Jawitz and Serenne Kaplan

Businesswoman Tanya Joselowsky shared her harrowing personal struggle with addiction at a WIZO Forum function earlier this month.

She stressed that addiction is a disease, not simply a weakness, and that people from all backgrounds can become addicts. She mentioned how freely drugs are available in suburban neighbourhoods and not merely in dark alleys.

Yvonne Jawitz of WIZO Forum introduced clinical psychologist Serenne Kaplan, who spoke about the meaning of addiction. She spoke of how when the urge is too strong to control, even if you know that it is causing harm, how quickly it can take over a person’s life.

She then discussed the many kinds of addictions affecting society today, from screen addiction, to sex, to shopping, to alcohol and drugs, to clean eating and exercise, and many more.

Adrian Gore inspires ORT JET mentors

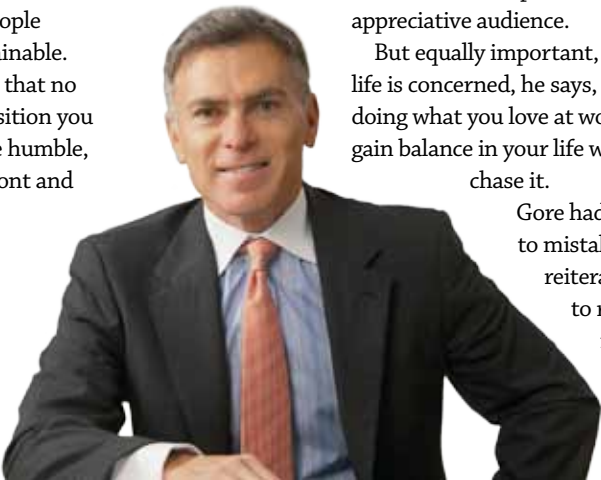
Business icon Adrian Gore, who founded Discovery in 1992, with the goal of “making people healthier”, had cogent advice for ORT JET mentors, when he addressed them recently.

Discovery has evolved into a diversified and multinational financial services group, expanding its reach to the United Kingdom, United States, China, Europe and Asia. The Group serves over seven million customers around the world.

ORT JET has as its mission to help make people financially sustainable.

Gore stressed that no matter what position you are in, always be humble, lead from the front and have respect for others.

Find a niche. Whenever possible, take the road less travelled. Don’t chase



money; let passion drive what you do.

He stressed a philosophy that has helped Discovery along its growth path: Aspire for perfection and avoid mediocrity. Make your decision slowly, but act quickly.

He added: Visualise what you want and what you’re passionate about. As a team player par excellence, he stressed. Surround yourself with a smart team and select your shareholders carefully. Positivity and optimism remain the most powerful fuel of all, he told his appreciative audience.

But equally important, as far as a balanced life is concerned, he says, once you spend time doing what you love at work and at home, you gain balance in your life without the need to chase it.

Gore had a refreshing response to mistakes he has made. He reiterated that it is up to us to redefine failures and make them part of the learning process and journey for a successful business.

Greenside Shul celebrating women

The women of Greenside Shul paid tribute to Jewish women, both in their lives, their history and in the Bible, to celebrate Women’s Month over a recent Shabbos.

While they had Ilana Stein of the Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning to talk about women in the Bible, the shul’s female members spoke about women they believed should be honoured.

Antoinette Hoy spoke about the poet Olga Kirsch, who was born and raised in a small Free State town to Jewish Lithuanian parents. She grew up speaking English and Yiddish at home and Afrikaans at school. She was the second Afrikaans woman poet to be published. She made aliya in 1948, but although she learned Hebrew, she only ever wrote poetry in Afrikaans.

Sharon Cort spoke about the nameless women who raise the children of South Africa. “She doesn’t have the status of hero. Through the dark years of oppression, she began her days before sunrise and got home after dark. She was a mother to the children of her white employers, to her own children, to her brothers’ and sisters’ children and to an entire community.”

Rebbetzin Aviva Rabinowitz humorously spoke about Estee Lauder who “gave a face-lift to the cosmetics industry”.

Karen Milner spoke about the strong, tenacious women working in South African Jewish organisations. Among them, she mentioned Tali Nates from the Holocaust and Genocide Centre and Wendy Kahn from the SA Jewish Board of Deputies.

Laura Dison spoke about her late sister, Debbie, a polio survivor, human rights lawyer and activist, who was tragically killed in a car accident at age 28.

Ethne Sachs spoke about Jewish activist Hannah Senesh and her untold bravery, and Lamyce Nafte spoke on “Our Golda (Meir)” who Ben-Gurion described as “the best man in my Cabinet”.

Nina Cohen spoke about the legendary Torah scholar and teacher, Nehama Leibowitz. “Although she refused to acknowledge that she was a revolutionary, ultimately her unique achievements changed Orthodox society’s perception of a woman’s capabilities.

JWBS’s message of hope and determination

The Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society has pledged to continue making a meaningful and substantial difference to those in the Jewish community who are unable to help themselves with the bare necessities – food, clothing, education, shelter and friendship.

At its 124th AGM held in Johannesburg last Thursday, JWBS chairperson Maureen Disler, said the JWBS will move forward into the future while making a difference that matters. They will continue to look after the well-being and ease the plight of so many in the community “who are so much less fortunate than ourselves”.

Making a difference is not a simple feat, she pointed out. It requires the commitment of tireless and dedicated volunteers and considerable funding.

JWBS President Natalie Koren, received her 60-year award for long service, while June Berger and Rosa Barnett each received their 50 year awards. The contribution these three ladies have made to the community has been significant, Disler said.

These three epitomise the commitment of JWBS volunteers, their kindness, care and compassion always evident.

Disler added that raising funds in today’s economic climate is not easy and the JWBS is ever grateful for the generosity of their magnanimous sponsors.

“They have enabled us to host a variety of, innovative, worthwhile and exciting fundraisers, including a breakfast with Paulo Santo, wonderful chef and restaurateur; a breakfast with (political



June Berger, Rosa Barnett and Maureen Disler

commentator and columnist) Justice Malala and a third poker evening held in October,” she said.

“These fundraisers have enabled us to meet our financial obligations. As stated by Michael Sieff, joint CEO of the Chevra Kadisha, ‘the Benevolent shares the care.’. Our goal is to continue doing so.”

Guest speaker for the morning, Bev Pokroy, social worker at Our Parents Home, spoke about “The Aged and Abuse of the Aged”, describing them as a marginalised community, vulnerable, yet full of wisdom.

She encouraged the audience to love older people and keep them active. She ended her talk with a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt: “Beautiful young people are accidents of nature, but beautiful old people are works of art.”

As the JWBS moves into its 125th year, it pledged its intent on “moving with the times, continuing to make a difference to the community in a way that is progressive, inspiring and vital”.

Youth movements interact with Knesset members and new Israeli ambassador

Monday was a special day for the South African Jewish youth movements, SAUJS and Masa alumni. They had the opportunity to interact with the newly-appointed Israeli Ambassador to South Africa Lior Keinan, and Knesset members, who have been in South Africa this past week.

The Israeli parliamentarians were Dr Nachman Shai, Amir Ohana, Zouheir Bahloul, Michal Biran and Nurit Koren. The secretary general of the Jewish Agency, Josh Schwarcz, also accompanied the delegation.

Aviad Sela (director, Jewish Agency-Israel Centre) shared how the Zionist youth movements and student unions are thriving. He explained how Masa financial grants have made it possible for many South African youngsters to study in Israel.

“We have a dedicated shaliach who will engage with students about opportunities in Israel. It’s crucial to make programmes affordable and accessible,” Ben Swartz, national chairman of the SAZF, said.

Each of the youth organisations presented its core pillars. They displayed their traditional movement uniforms (chultzot), and spoke about their ideologies and plans to enrich their Zionism, connection to Israel and their Jewish identity.

Masa alumni shared their experiences in Israel and what it’s like coming home. A recent school graduate shared his story about Naale Elite Academy, where pupils can complete their high school education for free.

Sexual assault scandal: Raisman says USA Gymnastics needs change

AP AND TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

Aly Raisman is ready to talk about “the elephant in the room”. And the six-time Olympic medal-winning gymnast thinks it’s time USA Gymnastics joins in a conversation she feels is long overdue.

The 23-year-old Jewish-American Olympian is calling for sweeping change in the organisation in the wake of dozens of allegations of sexual abuse by former national team doctor Larry Nassar, a scandal that has left one of the US Olympic movement’s marquee programmes scrambling and Raisman shaken.

Nassar spent nearly 30 years as an osteopath with the USA Gymnastics programme and is now in prison in Michigan after pleading guilty to possession of child pornography. He is awaiting trial on separate criminal sexual conduct charges, in addition to being sued by more than 125 women who claim he sexually assaulted them under the guise of treatment.

Nassar has pleaded not guilty to the assault charges, and the dozens of civil suits filed in Michigan are currently in mediation.

Raisman, who was around Nassar regularly at the team’s training facility in Texas and at

meetings around the globe, declined to talk about whether she was treated improperly by Nassar.

She did agree to speak more generally, calling Nassar “a monster” and blaming USA Gymnastics for failing to stop him and spending too much of the fallout attempting to “sweep it under the rug”.

“I feel like there’s a lot of articles about it, but nobody has said: ‘This is horrible, this is what we’re doing to change,’” Raisman said in a wide-ranging interview last Saturday shortly after she and other members of the “Final Five” that won team gold at the 2016 Olympics, were inducted into the USA Gymnastics Hall of Fame.

Raisman served as a captain for both the “Final Five” and the “Fierce Five” that won gold in London in 2012. While several alleged Nassar victims have come forward, including 2000 Olympic bronze medallist Jamie Dantzscher, Raisman is the highest profile athlete yet to publicly reprimand the organisation.

Raisman said she kept quiet waiting after the initial allegations surfaced last summer, waiting for USA Gymnastics to own up to its mistakes.

While it is taking steps towards creating a safer environment for its athletes, she doesn’t



Aly Raisman competing at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games

believe it is doing nearly enough, adding that she feels USA Gymnastics is trying to get on with business as usual.

“What people don’t realise is that this doctor was a doctor for 29 years,” Raisman says. “Whether or not he did it to a gymnast, they still knew him. Even if he didn’t do it to you, it’s still the trauma and the anxiety of wondering what could have happened. I think that needs to be addressed.

“These girls, they should be comfortable going to USA Gymnastics and saying: ‘I need help, I want therapy. I need this.’”

USA Gymnastics launched an independent review of its policies in the wake of the allegations against Nassar and reporting by the Indianapolis Star that highlighted chronic mishandling of abuse allegations against coaches and staff at some of its more than 3 500 clubs across the country.

In June, the federation immediately adopted 70 recommendations proffered by Deborah Daniels, a former federal prosecutor who oversaw the review. The new guidelines require member gyms to go to authorities immediately, with Daniels suggesting USA Gymnastics consider withholding membership from clubs that decline to do so.

The organisation also named Toby Stark, a child welfare advocate, as its director of SafeSport. Part of Stark’s mandate is educating members on rules, educational programmes,

reporting and adjudication services.

USA Gymnastics said in a statement late last Saturday it welcomes Raisman’s passion, adding it’s “appalled” by the accusations against Nassar.

“We are taking this issue head-on, and we want to work with Aly and all interested athletes to keep athletes safe,” USA Gymnastics said.

Daniels said repeatedly when her review was published, that she wasn’t hired to make judgements on past missteps, something that doesn’t fly with Raisman.

She pointed to the reported \$1 million severance package given to former president, Steve Penny, after he resigned under pressure in March as proof that the organisation just doesn’t get it.

“I thought: ‘Wow, why couldn’t they create a programme?’” Raisman said. “A million dollars is a lot of money. They could do a lot of things to create change.” Raisman stressed there’s a difference between her criticism of USA Gymnastics and the sport as a whole.

The sport is fine. She loves gymnastics. It’s the parent organisation that needs to undergo a transformation. A

“Everyone is important,” Raisman said. “It doesn’t matter if you’re the Olympic champion or you’re an eight-year-old that goes to gymnastics in Ohio, or wherever you are in the US. Every single kid is important and I want USA Gymnastics to do a better job with that.”

south african

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