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south african Jewish Report

■ Volume 21 - Number 32 ■ September 8 2017 ■ 17 Elul 5777

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See page 9.

Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
17:40	18:30	Johannesburg
18:15	19:07	Cape Town
17:27	18:17	Durban
17:46	18:37	Bloemfontein
17:46	18:38	Port Elizabeth
17:37	18:29	East London

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It's back to Equality Court

NICOLA MILTZ

The Black First Land First (BLF) leader Andile Mngxitama, might find himself perusing the sombre halls of Johannesburg’s Holocaust and Genocide Centre or forking out a whopping fine if he loses a case of hate speech instituted against him this week.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) on Tuesday launched its case against Mngxitama after two repulsive anti-Semitic Holocaust tweets posted by him two weeks ago.

The Board’s national director, Wendy Kahn, says Mngxitama’s statements were hurtful, harmful, anti-Semitic, inciteful and derogatory and constitute hate speech. The Board wants Mngxitama’s hate speech to be dealt with and an appropriate, just and equitable remedy ordered by the court.

In papers before court, the SAJBD said it wanted the court to order Mngxitama to apologise on Twitter, remove the offending posts and participate in an educational sensitivity training course at a suitable institution. Failing this, they want him to be fined R150 000.

The SAJBD filed their complaint at the Johannesburg High Court, which also acts as an Equality Court.

In a statement issued this week, the Board said of the tweets: “In addition to the distress they have caused to the Jewish community, they have been greeted with widespread outrage throughout South African society.” The board said that the tweets “are clearly aimed at mocking the orchestrated murder of millions of Jews during the Holocaust”.

But worse, it said, they also “dehumanise Jewish people in general by depicting not only their deaths, but even the supposed desecration of their remains as an occasion for humour”.

The SAJBD has therefore decided to approach the Equality Court to vindicate the violation of the rights to dignity and to prevent comments such as these from being made in the future.

In a supporting affidavit, Kahn, said: “Mngxitama has engaged in conduct that amounts to hate speech against the South African Jewish community, and Jewish people in general, by posting via his Twitter account demeaning, hurtful and grossly offensive comments that qualify as hate speech.”

Such comments, she said, create an environment within which racist and hateful attitudes are allowed to

flourish, and a hostile and intimidating environment is created.

As a result of Mngxitama’s posts, his Twitter forum has become a platform and a discussion area for further anti-Semitic hate speech and the advocacy of hatred on the basis of religion or ethnicity, according to the Board. Mngxitama has approximately 75 000 Twitter followers.

Kahn said the BLF leader “has heavily criticised the SAJBD for not bringing cases against other forms of hate speech.”

In response to this, the papers say “the Jewish community’s right to dignity and equality is not conditional on its representative organisations first condemning human rights violations against other groups. It is an absolute right guaranteed to all citizens under the Constitution.”

The affidavit states that the right to freedom of expression does not include the right to propagate hate speech, that hate speech was not protected at all in the Bill of Rights or the Constitution.

Mngxitama’s statements were hurtful, harmful, anti-Semitic, inciteful and derogatory and constitute hate speech.

It also points out that Mngxitama’s Twitter profile “is more than just a personal series of exchanges with friends and family; it is a public arena in which hundreds and even thousands of people engage in discussions”.

Equally relevant, the Board points out, is the fact that Mngxitama has a public profile as a result of his leading position in the BLF movement, whose activities have been widely reported on in the mainstream media.

Furthermore, Mngxitama expressed no regret about what he had posted, but on the contrary justified it by saying that it had had the intended effect of drawing attention to certain controversial comments about colonialism made by (Western Cape Premier) Helen Zille, who he apparently believes is Jewish.

Mngxitama’s tweets elicited numerous further overtly anti-Semitic comments in the social media, with several of these being sent directly to Jewish community members, said the court papers.

Kahn said: “All conduct targeting hatred at any and all group or persons, whether the target is for example foreigners, members of the LBGT community, the adherents of the Christian, Islamic and other faiths and religions, or racial groups in society, is condemned by the SAJBD in the strongest terms.”

Parshat Ki Tavo

Redeeming your miles

Three thousand two hundred and eighty-nine years ago, in this week’s Torah portion, the world’s longest droshah ended.

The whole book of D’varim (Deuteronomy) is a record of three speeches which Moshe gave over the last five weeks of his life; and the central and largest of the speeches ends in this week’s portion.



Rabbi Ramon Widmonte

So, after 41 years of leading Jews, 41 years of trying to get a stiff-necked bunch of individualists to walk the straight and narrow, how does Moshe sign off? He says:

“When you have finished taking all the tithes of your grain for the third year, which is the special tithe year, you must give them to the Levite, and to the foreigner, orphan and widow, so that they will eat their fill in your settlements.

“You must then make the following declaration before Hashem your G-d, ‘I have removed all the sacred portions from my house. I have given the appropriate ones to the Levite and to the orphan and widow, following all the commandments You prescribed to us... Look down from Your holy habitation in heaven, and bless Your people Israel, and the land that You have given us, the land flowing with milk and honey that You swore to our fathers’.”

At the end of every third and sixth year in a seven-year cycle, the Jewish people must set aside a 10th of their crop not for their own consumption, but for the landless, the vulnerable and the convert.

And then a Jew must appear at the Temple and declare that every scrap of G-d’s blessing has been used in the right way – some of it has been used in the service of G-d at the Temple and to the Levi’im and Kohanim; and some of it has been used for those less fortunate.

It is an exquisite example of the Torah’s moral code in several ways.

Firstly, the Torah is not satisfied with people who are “good people” only, but requires both a relationship with G-d and a broad ethical concern. It is not an either-or but a “both”.

Secondly, the Torah creates a clear and measured structure for philanthropy. One might feel that this is an artificial imposition and a recipe for fake care. But this is not the case; in this structure is true genius.

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The Torah is this practical – Hashem knows us better than ourselves (and better than the folks at Vitality – sorry guys). If there is no structure, no metric, then spirituality too can become a vague, imagined gesture.

May we all be blessed with a wonderful, measurable, hands-on new year.

South African Jewish Report

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UCT’s Max Price in a catch-22 situation over boycott

NICOLA MILTZ

Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town (UCT), Dr Max Price, is facing a monumental ethical dilemma as his campus campaigns – for the second time in three years – for an academic boycott of Israel. If imposed, this would be one of the first major academic institutions in a democratic country to do so.

The internationally highly-rated university, which has for decades consistently attracted Jewish students, is facing the possibility of a full-scale academic boycott of Israel. During the past several days there has been an active campaign on campus to sever all ties with the Jewish state.

Posters have appeared on campus advertising a “festival of talks”, hosted by Israel Academic Boycott, which is a programme of UCT’s Palestinian Solidarity Forum (PSF).

This pressing issue is shortly to be pronounced upon by UCT’s Academic Freedom Committee (AFC) – an organisation which aims to protect and promote free speech on campus – of which Dr Price is a member.

A delegation of UCT’s South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) made a presentation to the AFC last week calling on the university to scrap any plans to entertain a boycott. They called instead for the university to “build bridges towards engagement, not boycott”.

SAUJS Cape chairperson, Jordan Seligmann said: “If UCT endorsed the academic boycott, it would potentially result in serious harm to the university’s reputation in the international academic community.”

He and colleagues, Jesse Soicher, Tamir Shklaz and Yakov Schleider, cited a number of reasons against the support of a boycott.

“Refusing to work with Israeli institutions would be to pass by great potential to solve



problems facing South Africa currently. One such example is the drought happening in the Western Cape.

“Israel is a leader in water management and desalination technology, and it would greatly benefit South Africa if our universities collaborate with their Israeli counterparts on water research,” they told the AFC.

In a written submission to the AFC, SAUJS explained that a boycott would “punish the most progressive voices in Israeli society, block dialogue and exchanges between Israelis, Palestinians and others which would make peace less likely.

“Boycotts trample the academic freedom that universities stand for and deprive students of their right to international viewpoints. Many South African universities engage with Israeli institutions. Even Nelson Mandela has an honorary doctorate from an Israeli university,” continued SAUJS.

In a haunting case of déjà vu, Dr Price faced this exact predicament in 2014 when calls for an academic boycott were first made in response to the Gaza conflict.

At the time, he announced: “While there are many in our community who may support BDS and other boycotts, UCT (through its Academic Freedom Committee) takes the view that academic boycotts are in a category of their own and should almost never be supported by universities.

“The day we ban people from speaking on our campus because we do not agree with

their politics, is the day we sacrifice our commitment to academic freedom and the ability to protect different, unpopular, and dissident views...

“While UCT as an institution is unable to support the call to take a stand on the specific issues condemning Israel, we uphold the rights of individual academics and students to do so and will facilitate the promotion of all views and serious debate,” according to his statement in 2014.

Addressing a capacity crowd at Limmud Johannesburg on August 6, Price emphatically stated he was against academic boycotts. He said he could understand trade and cultural boycotts, but academic boycotts were counterproductive and highly damaging in terms of future advancement in all areas of life and thought.

Continued on page 10>>

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‘ISIS pamphlets in Glenhazel’ – a hoax

When people on the streets of the suburb of Glenhazel in Johannesburg last Sunday morning picked up pamphlets that were being distributed there, they were shocked.

“Today be human and help free Palestine,” they read. “The enemy should prepare coffins because we will respond quickly and decisively in the depths of the Zionist entity.” The wording on the pamphlets implied they had been written by ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria).

The CSO immediately investigated the matter and dispelled any concerns over the veracity of the pamphlets.

“We believe that the people who disseminated

these pamphlets possibly have a vendetta against an individual, whose name appeared at the bottom of the pamphlets,” said a CSO spokesman. “In addition to this, we believe that their intentions were to create fear and panic in the community.

“Although we are aware that a real threat exists in our community, and Jewish communities around the world, we do not believe that this matter is in any way terror related.”

The CSO reiterated the importance of remaining vigilant at all times and reporting anything suspicious or concerning to them immediately on 0861-800-018.

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Directions: Along Viljoen.

Joel Harris 082 926 0287 | Marco 082 048 2644



ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

Orchards – Inviting buyers from R2.499 Million

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Directions: The Avenue into African Street.

Joel Harris 082 926 0287 | Marco 082 048 2644

Anti-Israel posters jeopardise Herzlia’s outreach project

ANT KATZ

Herzlia High School pupils in Cape Town were stunned when they arrived at Vista High School in the Bo-Kaap on Monday to begin upgrading the library and developing the playground – one of their outreach projects – to be faced with anti-Israel posters.

Vista Deputy Principal Ishmail Esau and some of his colleagues had placed four offensive posters on the inside of Esau’s classroom windows – facing onto the playground, where the Jewish children were sure to see them. Two of the posters read: “Yes to Judaism, no to Zionism” and “Israel is a terrorist state guilty of ethnic cleansing in Palestine”.

This act of defiance by BDS-supporting Esau may well scupper the largesse that has been built up over years between Vista and Herzlia.

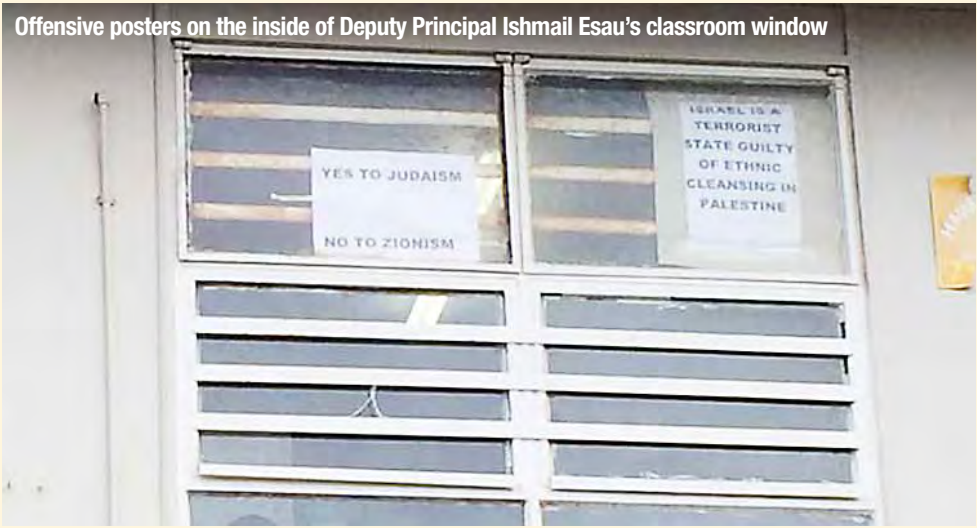
Herzlia has had an ongoing outreach programme with Vista, in which Herzlia High School pupils tutor Vista pupils on a weekly basis. This took place at the Vista campus in 2016, and at Herzlia this year.

As an extension of this programme, Herzlia grade 11 pupils and teachers, invested much time and effort in organising this ambitious project to enhance Vista School, that included planning and fundraising.

This was the pupils’ way of trying to “enhance the existing relationship”, explains Herzlia’s director of education, Geoff Cohen.

This helped Herzlia pupils, says Cohen, in that “it epitomised the values that we espouse. They have shown the true essence of tikkun olam.”

Once the pupils and staff – between 30 and 40 of them – arrived and were faced with the posters,



they were unnerved and upset, but did not make a scene.

Cohen arrived a short time later and was briefed by the teachers. The posters, he says, were “clearly designed to offend, resulting in our pupils and staff feeling extremely uncomfortable.” However, “to the enormous credit of our pupils and teachers, they got on with the job”, said Cohen.

“I demanded to see the school principal, Mrs Charline Little, to get an explanation.”

Little made it clear to him that she, her staff and pupil body, were fully supportive and appreciative of the Herzlia/Vista project. She told him that the anti-Zionist poster protest was initiated “entirely against school policy” by her deputy principal and two of his colleagues.

Cohen found out that Little instructed her deputy to remove the “offensive and thus illegal” posters, but that he had “summarily ignored this

instruction”.

The Vista principal said she was devastated by this. She told her deputy how important the relationship with Herzlia was, but he refused direct orders to remove the posters. He first said it was part of the Middle East syllabus he was teaching, which was not true, and then said he was a member of BDS and other political groups.

Little took the matter to Vanessa Minnaar, the circuit manager of the Metro Central Education District, which oversees both schools. Minnaar addressed the matter with Marna Knoetze, manager of labour relations at the Western Cape Department of Education, who is investigating the matter.

Among the possible infringements are hate speech, pollical activity at schools, gross insubordination and others.

“At no time did we feel there was any physical

danger to our pupils or teachers and on this basis, I made a decision to let them finish the work planned for the day,” says Cohen.

On Monday night, Cohen received numerous phone calls and messages from grade 11 parents and stakeholders concerned about the situation.

“They questioned our involvement with Vista High,” says Cohen, who told parents that he wanted “to state that Herzlia is a proudly and unashamedly Zionist school and that we do not tolerate malicious and mischievous anti-Zionist rhetoric”.

This hateful ideology is “absolutely not reflective of the position of the Vista School principal, staff, pupils or the Department of Education”, he said.

Cohen called a grade 11 assembly on Tuesday morning and gave all pupils a chance to air their views and to “mutually agree on a way forward”.

As a result of this meeting, Cohen said, there was agreement in that the Vista High School grade 8s would still visit Herzlia (on Tuesday) for their day of learning enrichment. However, Herzlia pupils would not go to Vista to complete the building project until the following actions have been taken:

- Herzlia receives an unreserved written apology from the Vista principal.
- The offensive posters are removed by the deputy principal.
- Herzlia receives a letter from the Vista principal affirming the complete endorsement of this project by her pupil body and staff.

“I have made it clear to the principal, Mrs Little, that if these three steps are not taken, we will have to abort the project,” Cohen said. He was adamant that unless the matter is resolved, it could put the entire Herzlia/Vista programme in jeopardy.

New Cape Board tackles its problems head on

NICOLA MILTZ

The Cape Council of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies has appointed an independent investigation into alleged election irregularities during its recent election of new Board members.

Following allegations of “election rigging” from disgruntled members of the community, the new Board has appointed an independent panel, made up of three highly respected members of the Cape community – Milton Seligson SC, Hilton Saven and Sally Frankenthal.

The Board has acknowledged there are members of the community who are unhappy with the election results, specifically that two prominent women, the one a vice-chairperson and the other a former chairperson of the Cape Board, were voted off. The Board is taking the allegations very seriously, according to Board Chairperson Rael Kaimowitz.

“The Cape Committee undertakes to implement and abide by the panel’s findings,” he said.

“We are committed to moving forward with purpose and the full support of our community in fulfilling our important mandate and objectives of representing the entire Jewish community in the Western Cape.”

The panel will investigate two separate matters, including the

outcome and lead-up to the August 6 Board elections and the issue of gender equality within the community.

A group of Cape Town women wrote an open letter in the SA Jewish Report last week in which they expressed their “distress” at the Cape Board event hosted on August 30, “Women with a Voice – Advancing Leadership: Women Within the Community”.

“Our distress emanates from the recent Cape Board elections, where the only two people voted off the Board, were women... the women voted off were the standing vice-chairperson, Bev May, and former chairperson of the Cape Board, Li Boiskin – two senior women leaders, in a community where we have so few women in roles of such senior leadership.”

The current Board of 18 members now has only four women representatives.

“It seems particularly shocking to host an event titled “Women with a Voice”, when two of the most audible women’s voices in elected leadership have effectively been silenced,” the letter said.

The Board said, however, it had planned this event in June with the intention of ending Women’s Month (August) with an event to celebrate extraordinary women within the community and was planned with the Board’s support.

In a letter to its constituents, the Board explained that “following the outcome of the elections at the conference, various allegations have been made relating to possible improprieties in

both the lead-up to the election and during the election itself.

“As a result, at short notice, the Board conducted an internal investigation and also consulted senior counsel on the issues raised.”

The outcome of its investigation, “confirmed by advice obtained from senior counsel” is that the election was “valid”.

However, the Cape Board has decided, due to the nature and seriousness of the allegations, that the claims will be investigated by an independent three-person review body, chaired by Milton Seligson SC.

In a statement, the Board said it had “voluntarily undertaken an independent inquiry to ensure the integrity of the process”.

Tensions have been running high at the Board and within the broader Jewish community, ever since the protracted issue of women being allowed to sing at Jewish communal events, particularly at Yom Hashoah memorial services.

The controversial issue was somewhat resolved after the Equality Court reached a settlement agreement stipulating that a memorial service was to be held in two parts with women singing solo in the first.

Member of the community, Gilad Stern said: “There is widespread opinion that there is a direct line between this current crisis at the Board and the manner in which the Board dealt with the ban on women singing at Yom Hashoa last year.”

ZCC welcomes Ambassador Keinan

ANT KATZ

Newly-appointed Israeli Ambassador to South Africa Lior Keinan, received a warm African welcome from a crowd of over three million Zionist Christian Church (ZCC) followers last Sunday. The ambassador and Zionist Federation deputy chairman Mark Hyman, were among the 67 dignitaries who shared in welcoming in the New Year by ZCC leader Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane.

“Happy to be among friends of Israel and join in on the celebrations,” posted Keinan on Facebook. The celebration was held at Zion City in Moria, 30 km from Polokwane.

Lekganyane, whose church has over 10 million members, even provided kosher food for Hyman and the ambassador,, who he seated in the front row among the likes of four traditional kings, business elite such as Patrice Motsope and Dr Irvin Khoza, Judge Presidents and top academics.

“It was, without doubt, the most awesome experience I have experienced in all my 67 years,” Hyman told



SA Jewish Report. The three million pilgrims were gathered into language groups, he says, and there was “such discipline, you could hear a pin drop”.

As the Bishop spoke, at each paragraph, he paused to allow translators to deliver his message in five different languages, says Hyman. “He spoke like a king.”



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Jewish writers defend Holocaust horror tweet

TALI FEINBERG

Two South African Jewish women this week came out against South African Jews’ condemnation of Black First Land First leader Andile Mngxitama’s recent anti-Semitic hate speech tweets on “the benefits of the Holocaust”.

Media and political commentator Kim Heller and academic and historian Dr Rebecca Hodes, voiced their controversial opinions in the media since the Mngxitama tweet: “For those claiming the legacy of the holocaust is ONLY negative think about the lampshades and Jewish soap.”

He later followed up with: “The aroma of the burning flesh from the furnace of the holocaust may wet (sic) the appetite of the SA cannibals.”

Heller wrote in “Condemn all holocausts” on the New Age Online website: “The Jewish community in South Africa is especially bad at self-reflection. The fate, fortunes, and fortitude of South African Jews have on the whole been erected on an exclusive fortress of protectionism and group solidarity, and it is an insular and inward-focused community which does not look kindly on critique from outsiders...”

“I have great respect for him as a politician,” said Heller to the SA Jewish Report, referring to Mngxitama.

While it invoked strong emotions and condemnation, a close reading of Hodes’ piece demonstrates that she was trying to unpack and explore how such a statement could have been made, which is what “any good historian should do”, she said.

And in an e-mail to the SA Jewish Report, Hodes wrote that “of course I think Andile is dangerously loony, and that the tweets were abhorrent”.

She adds: “It’s peculiar to me how some of the more angry reactions have focused on me, rather than what I’ve written. There are two broad categories of the nastier reactions: 1. You’re too clever; 2. You’re not clever at all,” said Hodes to the SA Jewish Report.

“In the first, there’s an allegation



Kim Heller

He added that Heller’s “blanket condemnation of an entire community” and “sweeping negative generalisations” would be regarded as “racist if levelled against any other racial, ethnic or religious group”.

Heller’s article came hot on the heels of another opinion piece in the Daily Maverick by Hodes, who chose the angle of agreeing to “herald Mngxitama’s call” to look at the benefits of the Holocaust.

“I have great respect for him as a politician,” said Heller to the SA Jewish Report, referring to Mngxitama.

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“In the first, there’s an allegation

that academic language is exclusive and irrelevant, with little to offer by way of insight on public affairs. In the second, there’s an allegation that I’m an illegitimate scholar, that I don’t have the right professional credentials to write about history.

The “Holocaust gave us a contemporary archive of how easily forms of hatred – racism, homophobia, xenophobia and anti-Semitism – can be combined in the service of tyranny, and in the hands of articulate fascists.

“If anything, let Mngxitama’s recourse to history be a reminder of this.”

After reading Heller’s article, Hodes said: “I don’t think it’s the responsibility of elected Jewish leadership or of other formations in the Jewish community, to condemn all anythings (sic). I don’t think we should require Jews to be more morally culpable or socially responsive than others: this is another side of Jewish exceptionalism.”

Heller said she would welcome an opportunity to engage with the Jewish community, “to reflect on ‘other holocausts’ with the same compassion as our own”.

She said that “all whites are guilty of apartheid complicity” and that the Jewish community should sit down with Mngxitama instead of taking him to court.

When pressed on the graphic, shocking nature of his tweet, she again said that “it has been criticised out of context” and that she cannot respond to it in isolation. In response to both Hodes’ and Heller’s articles, Saks said that “the right of the Jewish community to dignity and equality, is an absolute one. This is in no way conditional on what Jews and/or its representative organisation choose to say or do.”

Saks pointed out that “it is palpably untrue that the SAJBD only speaks out when Jewish rights are violated. Anyone who takes the trouble to check its record, will find that it regularly condemns bigoted behaviour against other groups (including the Muslim community and foreign nationals)”.

He concluded: “Strongly

implied throughout Heller’s intemperate attack is the notion that as a group that benefited under apartheid and colonialism, Jews in South Africa have no right to protest when their own rights to dignity are infringed, and indeed are guilty of hypocrisy for doing so.

“That historically speaking, Jews, as part of the ‘white’ population, did indeed benefit under those unjust systems, is common cause. However, this in no way provides a licence for people like Mngxitama to make racially demeaning and hurtful comments about them.”

On Tuesday the SAJBD launched an Equality Court case against Mngxitama. In its court papers it said it wanted the court to impose a fine of R150 000, order Mngxitama



Dr Rebecca Hodes

to apologise on Twitter, remove the offending posts and participate in an education programme at the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre.

(See page 9 for critique on Dr Rebecca Hodes’ article).

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Do we have a rising neo-Nazi problem?

I am not coming to you this week with any solutions or smart comments, but rather questions. These are questions that I have been mulling over, but they have come to a head this week.

It is about anti-Semitism in South Africa and whether we have a rising problem.

Back in March, we were shocked by Edenvale High School pupils who used Nazi taunts to ridicule King David Victory Park performers at a school play festival. While it was upsetting, the numerous online comments and social media responses to this incident that reiterated the anti-Semitic sentiments were more horrifying.

Thanks to the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), the Edenvale scholars were enlightened by the Holocaust education they received from the Holocaust and Genocide Centre.

Then there was a hiatus, but in the last few weeks, we have had two incidents of anti-Semitism. The first was Black First Land First (BLF) leader Andile Mngxitama and his horrific tweets.

In this case, while what he tweeted was revolting, it was once again the social media responses that concerned me. It showed a widespread ugly anti-Semitic sentiment.

So, while the SAJBD will relentlessly pursue a fair punishment for Mngxitama to ensure he understands that what he said was unacceptable, what of all those others who responded?

Then, at the University of Pretoria last week, there was someone or a group of people, who wrote “Gas all Jews” and put swastikas on the noticeboards on campus.

The SAJBD contacted the university’s vice chancellor to express its concern about the “graffiti”. The university immediately condemned this and any form of discrimination and hate speech, saying it would not hesitate to act against anyone found guilty of this type of behaviour.

“When the University became aware of a notice board that was vandalised with anti-Semitic graffiti on its Hatfield campus, we immediately removed it and notified campus security to investigate the incident,” according to a statement from the university.

They did the right thing, but who was behind it? Why did they feel the need to do this?

I totally understand that these are not the first, nor will they be the last anti-Semitic incidents that the SAJBD deals with. And perhaps the aggressive anti-Semitic sentiment on social media is a sign of what is going down on social media. Perhaps it isn’t something to worry about.

But, if we take a look abroad, we see a real upsurge of anti-Semitism, a so-called neo-Nazi uprising. It is happening in many parts of Europe, but perhaps France is taking the brunt of it. The increase in aliya figures from France, bear testimony to this.

Most recently, we saw it in Charlottesville, where white supremacists went berserk in their racist anger and Jews bore some of the brunt.

While it was not specifically aimed at Jews, but rather black people, they took racism out on us too. My colleague from JTA, Ron Kampeas, wrote about his experience there: “I’ve been hated directly for many things (try being a journalist, anywhere), but it had been a while... since I’d faced visceral hatred just for, well, looking Jewish.”

People there were wearing signs like “Goyim know!” and “Jews are satan’s children” and the ugliness went on. However, in Charlottesville, it was clearly white supremacy and neo-Nazis.

What is this that we are experiencing? Am I just seeing this because I am now editing this newspaper and it has been the same for many years? Perhaps. Maybe it has improved substantially and I wasn’t that aware of it before. That is possible. Should we be concerned? I don’t know.

Is there anything we can do about it? Well, other than the hard work that the SAJBD is already doing to counter any anti-Semitism wherever it rears its ugly head, I don’t think so.

What I can say really doesn’t help is when Jewish people write opinion pieces (see page five) in support of anti-Semitic behaviour.

Perhaps they think that in this democracy, their opinions that ultimately denigrate their own community, is free speech. Perhaps it is, but in times like these, it can only fuel a fire.

What I do know is that in these time, the community should be setting aside our differences and working together to ensure we are “a light unto the nations”. Just saying...



Dateline: Middle East

A menacing reminder of what led to war in 2007

PAULA SLIER

A young Hezbollah fighter once told me something I’ve never forgotten. “We missed out on being able to fight for Israel like our parents and grandparents, but now with the war in Syria, we are learning as much as we can and when the war there is over, we will turn our attention back to Israel – better trained and more experienced,” he said.

The last time Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite militant organisation, went to war with Israel was in 2006. The 34-day conflict was sparked by the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser. The latter had celebrated his barmitzvah in South Africa and his parents, Miki and Shlomo, were told of his kidnapping while vacationing in Durban where they’d been thinking to retire.

For months, every time I visited their home in the northern Israeli town of Nahariya, Miki would be sitting at her kitchen table, writing thank you letters to the thousands of schoolchildren who’d sent prayers for her son’s safe return.

It was only when his remains were handed over two years later in a coffin, that she finally gave up all hope of ever seeing him alive again.

For journalists, that war was the last time we were given unfettered access by the IDF to Israeli soldiers on their way to battle. I remember being surprised that I was allowed to film and interview them, their faces camouflaged green, as they walked through an opening in the fence that separated the northern Israeli border town of Metula from southern Lebanon. Many looked afraid.

Days later, I found myself on the Lebanese side of that fence, talking with Hezbollah families who’d lost their homes to Israeli airstrikes. They spoke with pride and admiration that the militant organisation had managed, as they repeatedly told me, to fend off the IDF and by doing so give the Arab world back its pride.

The Second Lebanon War, as it came to be known, resulted in Hezbollah pummelling northern Israeli towns with thousands of rockets, ultimately leaving 165 Israelis dead, 44 of them civilians. Over 1 100 Lebanese, including Hezbollah fighters and civilians, were also killed in that war.

Each side claimed to be the winner, although it didn’t take long for Israeli intelligence to suggest that the full arsenal of rockets the IDF had destroyed, had been replaced.

A decade on and the Shiite group is today even stronger than it was then. Israeli officials now believe it has amassed around 150 000 rockets, including a number of long-range Iranian-made missiles capable of striking Israeli cities from the north to the south of the country.

This is a 50 per cent increase in Hezbollah’s weapons stockpiles since May. The group’s firepower eclipses that of most states in the world and experts agree it looks like they’re ramping up efforts to acquire weapons with the

purpose of attacking Israel.

What’s more, since 2012, thousands of Hezbollah forces have been in Syria, fighting alongside President Bashar al-Assad, assisted by Russia and Iran. The conflict has given them training and experience and while hundreds have been killed, rather than destroying the group, it has emboldened it.

And yet, despite all this, most people in Israel believe that Hezbollah is not interested in a confrontation or war right now because the Israeli response would be unforgiving, and in all likelihood, turn Christian Lebanese against them.

Still, Hezbollah is being urged on by Iran who would rather Hezbollah, as her proxy, take on Israel instead of her doing it directly. Iran might be geographically and population-wise larger than Israel, but her military capacity is inferior.

And so, she has been pumping arms and millions of dollars to the militant group, via Syria, something that was made much easier after Tehran re-entered the global community with the signing of the nuclear deal in 2015. She’s not even pretending not to.

Iran’s new defence minister says he’s prioritising boosting the country’s missile programme and exporting weapons to neighbouring allies. The commander of the Revolutionary Guard Corps has warned: “Today, the grounds for the annihilation and collapse of the Zionist regime are [present] more than ever.” It was precisely this scenario that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned would happen.

And so, while Israel has always maintained neutrality in the Syrian war, she is widely believed to have been behind a number of airstrikes aimed at stopping the transfer of weapons from Iran to Hezbollah in Syria. It’s why Netanyahu jumped on a plane recently to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin whose forces control the skies over Damascus.

Netanyahu’s message in that meeting was simple: Israel will act militarily if Iran begins to entrench itself in Syria.

Jerusalem wants Tehran far from her borders, but a new agreement between the United States and Russia will soon see Iranian militia stationed only eight kilometres, and no longer 40-50 kilometres, from Israel.

While it’s part of the latest attempt by Washington and Moscow to establish a ceasefire in southern Syria, it’s hugely worrying for Jerusalem. It is also a menacing reminder of the last time the two sides went to war in 2006.

“My worst nightmare came true,” Miki Goldwasser told me after her son’s death was confirmed. Israelis are praying that nightmare isn’t about to repeat itself.

• Paula Slier is the Middle East Bureau Chief of RT, the founder and CEO of NewshoundMedia and the inaugural winner of the Europcar Woman in Leadership Award of the South African Absa Jewish Achievers.



Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser

Togo or not to go?

**STEVEN GRUZD AND
CARMEL RAWHANI**

With a planned Heads of State Summit in Togo in October, burgeoning ties between Israel and African countries are rattling the Jewish State’s detractors. Over half of Africa’s 55 countries are expected to send high-level delegations to the Togolese capital Lomé – a remarkable turnaround in Afro-Israeli diplomatic and economic relations, in tatters after the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Last Wednesday, a seminar in Pretoria entitled “Africa-Israel Summit: Benefit or Burden?” hosted by the Afro-Middle East Centre (AMEC), explored this issue.

Mass protests in Lomé to oppose or derail the summit look unlikely, and Togolese President Faure Gnassingbé has rebuffed attempts (including by Morocco through Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas) to cancel the event.

According to research by AMEC’s Matshidiso Motsoeneng, the only “definite no’s” to Lomé would be Botswana, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, South Africa (vocally pro-Palestinian and apparently actively supporting a boycott of Togo) and Tunisia.

Likely attendees hail mostly from East and West Africa, sub-regions visited by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Motsoeneng said 18.5 per cent were “definitely yes”, another 45 per cent were “predicted yes”, 22 per cent were “definitely no” and 11 per cent were “predicted no”, with the DRC, Republic of Congo and Madagascar “unknown”.

She said: “the Israeli offensive into Africa is gaining momentum”, including support for observer status at the African Union (reputedly being blocked by South Africa), and increased votes in international fora.

Charles Nyuykonge from the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) asserted that Israel offers practical solutions to many African problems.

But Palestinian activist Razan Akram Zuayer said that “Palestinians think this summit is deplorable”, labelling Israel “an apartheid state”

that unlawfully exploits the Palestinian land, water, agriculture and food sectors – the very sectors it pledges to bolster in Africa.

Her menu to “prevent Israel’s poisonous influence” included a campaign for African leaders and firms to boycott Lomé, exposing “unethical Israeli investment in Africa” and “Israeli atrocities”, plus increased Arab aid to Africa.

ANC International Relations Subcommittee member Sisa Njikelana, called for renewed African solidarity with the Palestinians, citing “evidence of Israeli plundering and unfair trade” and condemned Jerusalem’s “militarised diplomacy” on the continent.

Njikelana called Israel’s Africa outreach “a counter-offensive by a pariah state” and slated its tactics of disrespectfully “bypassing the AU” by arranging this summit bilaterally with African leaders.

He urged them to boycott Lomé due to the stalemate around Palestinian independence. He suggested setting up a competing summit on the same dates, and that South Africa could offer the same technology and expertise with which Israel is wooing Africa.

Earlier, Wits Sociology Professor Ran Greenstein, outlined four basic imperatives of Israeli foreign policy: diplomatic recognition (due to its controversial origins and oft-questioned legitimacy); trade (especially finding markets for military hardware and technology); forming strategic alliances (targeting non-Muslim and non-Arab states beyond its immediate neighbourhood); and connecting with Jewish communities (as sources of support and potential immigration to Israel).

Greenstein noted Israel’s desire to break its regional isolation in the 1950s and 1960s, forging “an alliance of the periphery” with Ethiopia, Iran and Turkey, to counter strident

anti-Zionism and Arab nationalism led by Egypt’s Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Greenstein noted how the strong initial relations between Israel and post-independence African countries in the 1950s and 1960s were destroyed by the Yom Kippur War and their ensuing closeness with the Arab world, with ties severed by over 30 African countries except apartheid South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi.

These relations were slowly restored, especially after peace with Egypt in 1979 and the end of the Cold War. Greenstein observed that many African countries see Israel as a bridge to the US, and pointed to increased military, security and anti-terrorism ties with

African states, usually through private Israeli companies.

A fiery representative from the Palestinian Embassy in Pretoria said: “Israel wants to break up our close relationship with Africa... Now Africa must pay us back. You got your freedom because of the international community. You must now stand with the Palestinian cause.”

AMEC Executive Director Naeem Jeenah said: “African political elites aren’t interested in solidarity and these arguments won’t yield many results... countries definitely see benefits in getting into bed with Israel. We’ll see this in about six weeks.”

He dispelled the myth that all African leaders support the Palestinian cause, and deplored the side-lining of the AU. He said: “Israel wants to export both its technology and its ideology”, and would undermine African states in the way it undermines its closest allies in the EU and the US.

The South African Department of International Relations and Co-operation declined an invitation to present, and Dirco representatives made no formal comments.

• Steven Gruzd and Carmel Rawhani are analysts at the South African Institute of International Affairs.



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Ensuring the legacy of the ‘Der Blinde Chazzan’ lives on

TALI FEINBERG

He had memorised the entire Torah and its musical notes by the time he became a young man. He remembered everyone by name and could tell in an instant what a person’s barmitzvah portion was, no matter how many years had passed since he had taught them. He was able to tell the day of the week on which a person was born just moments after being supplied with their birth date. And he did all of this, as a blind person.

Cantor Abraham Immerman, known as Abie, “Der Blinde Chazzan” or “The Man with the Computer Brain”, passed away 15 years ago at the age of 96. During his lifetime, he had an impact on thousands of lives in and around Cape Town over 60 years. He taught Hebrew music at Herzlia, was the chazzan at various shuls, and taught hundreds of boys their barmitzvah portions.

Over 400 people came to the Gardens Shul in Cape Town last week to pay tribute to him and watch the launch of a film about him. Called Legacy of Light, it celebrates the life and times of this remarkable man.

The event was hosted by film director Lisa Chait, United Herzlia Schools and the South African Jewish Museum.

Says Chait: “I did a video interview with Cantor Immerman 20 years ago when he was at Highlands House, which is the only filmed interview ever done with him. I found the old betacam tapes in my cupboard while I was spring cleaning in December 2016, and came up with a plan to create a movie.”

Chait wondered how to keep Immerman’s legacy alive. She asked: “How can we capture and pass on the values that he modelled, such as determination, dedication, humility and a deep commitment to education and Jewish spiritual life?”

She then approached the United

Herzlia Schools to partner with her and they immediately saw the potential of the project. Herzlia’s director of education, Geoff Cohen told those at the event: “In a world of instant gratification, the unsung heroes often go unacknowledged, and we hope to

Over 400 people came to the Gardens Shul in Cape Town last week to pay tribute to him and watch the launch of a film about him.

preserve what Cantor Immerman brought to the world. That’s why we have called this film Legacy of Light.”

The film – directed and produced by Chait, tells how Abie was born blind or lost his sight as a baby. Both of his parents died by the time he was five and he was brought up by his step-parents and family in Zastron, a small town in what was then the Orange Free State.

Despite his challenges, he was determined from an early age to become a cantor, showing raw talent and love for learning Torah at cheder. He memorised the entire Torah by heart, including its musical notes known as trop, and went on to lead many congregations around the country.

He settled in Oudtshoorn for 15 years and then moved to Cape Town where he taught hundreds, if not thousands, of barmitzvah boys and pupils for over 50 years. His first barmitzvah pupil in Cape Town, Solly Alpert, is in his 80s today and still remembers his portion word for word.

In the film, Alpert and others share their most powerful memories of Immerman, from his sense of humour to his uncanny memory. Labour lawyer and politician Michael Bagraim, quips that as a mischievous barmitzvah boy, Immerman could “see right through him”.

Rabbi Ruben Suiza marvelled at Immerman’s ability to learn. He explains that learning the Five Books of Moses and the Siddur by heart, is a mammoth task, while the musical notes are the most difficult, even for someone who can see.

The film clearly shows how the cantor rose above his disability and how it may have even been the fuel behind the fire of his remarkable talents. If one cannot see, one has to listen closer, remember more, and be in tune with the world around them.

And Cantor Immerman clearly took on these tasks. He led shul services with confidence and taught his lessons with determination and patience, yet never once had he seen the letters or words of a Torah scroll, never once a prayer book, a calendar, or the faces of the countless people whose lives he took such an interest in. And while he taught the barmitzvah boys their portions, he also showed them how to respect and learn from those who are different.

A proud man who was married and widowed twice, and had no children, Cantor Immerman was instantly recognisable on the streets of Cape Town in his smart black suit and walking with his white cane, independently navigating the roads of Vredehoek and the CBD.

“Legacy of Light is about preserving memory and heritage, and it is vital that our children are engaged in capturing the legacies of their families.”

In addition to his extraordinary talents, he is fondly remembered for his character, his strength, and his ability to bring out the best in everyone. “He saw what was shining from us and reflected it back to us. He led us, he loved us and he should never be forgotten,” says Chait.



Lisa Chait (director of the film Legacy of Light) and Geoff Cohen (director of education at Herzlia)

With this in mind, the film was designed to be shared and used in various formats. Because it is short, it is ideal to be posted on social media, shared on Facebook, shown in a classroom or used as a resource for a school project. Anyone visiting the website can add comments, memories and photographs – “it is a living memory”, says Chait.

Legacy of Light is the inspiration behind a new assignment for Herzlia grade 8 pupils, where they have explored their own roots in an artwork competition, with the winner, Mia Flax, going to Israel with her work to be displayed at Beit Hatfutsoth.

“Legacy of Light is about preserving memory and heritage, and it is vital that our children are engaged in capturing the legacies of their families. The light of connection is one that Cantor Immerman passed on to all his pupils,” says Rebbetzin Debra Suiza (head of Jewish Life and Learning at Herzlia).

The film includes extracts of the original interview that Chait

found, and the website allows one to watch a full 53-minute edited version of that interview. There is also a version of the film with Hebrew subtitles, which will be sent to Israel.

The evening included anecdotes from family members and friends. One person told how Abie met with President Bill Clinton’s aide, Arthur E Green, who was captivated by him; and how when he visited Israel at the age of 80 for the first time, he knew all the names of the 300 people who came to see him.

Cantor Immerman was apparently fond of saying he was born “on the fourth on the fourth of the fourth”. He was named after his late father, Abraham Ben Abraham and passed away shortly after his third barmitzvah in Cape Town. His legacy now lives on in this film.

• Visit www.lifestories.co.za and click on ‘Watch Interviews’ to see the film ‘Legacy of Light’ and the original interview with Cantor Abraham Immerman.

Opinion

Is a sweet year always good?

RABBI PINCHAS ZEKRY

The well-known Rosh Hashanah greeting “Wishing you a good sweet year”, suggests a happy and joyful year ahead, as symbolised by the apple and honey. However, taking this literally, do “sweet” and “good” necessarily go together?

At this receptive time of the year, the focus is on the spiritual level. However, in accordance with Judaism’s philosophy, Maimonides stresses the interaction between the body and soul. This is the basis of the Rambam’s philosophy of health and medicine.

His approach to this subject is: The body is the home of the soul and the soul guides the body. That means the body and the soul are one unit, which follows the Torah instruction Venishmartem meod lenafshotechem – Take great care unto yourselves.

Thus, as we approach the Yamim Noraim (Days of Awe), our introspections to improve ourselves,

have to take into consideration both the soul and the body. They cannot be separated.

Some so-called “sweet” items are actually illnesses of society, critically affecting the body and consequently the soul. Take for example, drugs that are becoming socially acceptable and the damage it causes to the individual and the family.

As much as we love our children, how often do we unintentionally expose them to health risks arising from indulgence in sweet and junk foods?

Recently, Israel’s health ministry launched a healthy eating revolution at schools. Only healthy nutrition is allowed into the school and the sale of junk food, sugary snacks and fizzy drinks in the tuck shop, is banned.

Consider too, the widespread consumption of sweet confectionery at birthday parties. In an average class, it’s almost a weekly occurrence.

In addition, how many birthday gifts end up as waste? May I suggest that these gifts be replaced

by vouchers of nominal amounts and the child be encouraged by the parents to use them wisely, or donate these to charitable organisations that care for the underprivileged.

When it comes to care for our children, there is also the question of sweet quality time. One psychologist asked the children to draw a picture of the family. One child drew a profile of his parents each with a cell phone on their ear.

Recently, an Israeli, Moriah Shapira, a career woman with five children, started a group called “Mothers Unavailable” in which members undertake to switch off their cell phones for two hours in the evening during which time there would be full dedication to the children.



This initiative spread rapidly, so much so, that this organisation was renamed “Mothers and Fathers Unavailable”.

Following on the well-known verse “Ki Mitzion Teitzei Torah – Out of Zion shall go forth the law”.

Perhaps the example from the land of Zion set by the Israeli Health Ministry and Shapira should be adopted here in South Africa in our home and schools.

I should conclude with a passage from the liturgy of the Yamim Noraim. “Haneshamah lach vehaguf paolach chusa al amalach” – The soul is yours and the body is your handiwork take pity on your labour.

Thus, as we enter the year 5778 with a commitment to improve the combination of the soul and the body, may the prayer be indeed acceptable and fulfilled.

Holocaust and Dr Rebecca Hodes

TESSA CHELOUCHE, MD

It all started with an outrageous tweet by an outrageous individual. How much more outrageous can it get than the leader of the Black First Land First (BLF) Andile Mngxitama tweeting? “For those claiming the legacy of the holocaust is ONLY negative, think about the lampshades and Jewish soap.”

Wow! I do not care that Mngxitama’s obnoxious tweet was “an apparent attempt to position himself back in the media spotlight” as suggested in the media or “was possibly a reference to Western Cape Premier Helen Zille’s controversial tweets earlier in the year when she said the legacy of colonialism was not all negative.”

Who cares? Both suppositions are irrelevant and hardly a prophylactic against global opprobrium for what was an affront to Jews.

Mngxitama’s tweet needs to be judged on its own merits – in this case demerits – and the only conclusion any rational, reasonable, and moral human being can come to, is that this political leader is beyond the pale.

That was until I read Dr Rebecca Hodes’s response in the Daily Maverick of August 25. (<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2017-08-25-the-value-of-mngxitamas-holocaust-tweet/#.WaaYtSgjGUL>)

She takes “beyond the pale” to another dimension.



I furnish my background because I am most concerned that young minds today, notably students at universities, understand that the horrors of the Holocaust were perpetrated not by the uncultured and uneducated. On the contrary, those horrors were first theorised and endorsed by the highly cultured and educated – which makes Mngxitama’s tweet and Hodes’ “academic” understanding more horrifying.

It is precisely as a result of these dangers of academic facades, so prevalent among the Nazis, that I lecture and warn against in my field of bioethics.

The collective behaviour of Mngxitama and Hodes exposes how the world arrived at Auschwitz where Jews were turned into “soap” and “lampshades”, and where decades later, some like Mngxitama can joke about it, while others like Hodes will rationalise why it’s okay to joke about it, and should not be “fixated”.

Well, it is not funny and it is not okay and we are not “fixated”! What we are is that we never want such mass murder to ever occur again.

To that I proudly confess a fixation.

In all my years of Holocaust study, I have never come across such writings as “positive aspects of the Holocaust” or “benefits of the Holocaust” as penned by Hodes. This is a perverse use of words. She should be ashamed as a Jew and embarrassed as a “historian”.

Just read what she writes and then re-read it to make sure you were not imagining her choice of words:

“Those claiming the legacy of the Holocaust is ‘ONLY negative’ are fixated on the most perverse acts of the Nazi genocide, such as stretching the skin of a death camp inmate to make a lampshade, or using the human by-products of industrial killing to produce soap. Their absorption in these atrocities obscures their recognition of the Holocaust’s benefits.”

To suggest that people who think, write, or teach about the Holocaust to ensure that such mass murder never occurs again are “fixated”, is in it itself offensive. The most important aspect of the Holocaust today is to remember and to learn from the lessons, so that it does not reoccur.

Does this ‘historian’ genuinely believe that we are doing a

disservice to academic study by not revealing the “benefits” of the Holocaust, whatever she and Mngxitama may believe are such benefits?

Rather than take issue with Mngxitama over his obnoxious anti-Semitic tweet, Hodes takes issue with the Jewish community’s response. She is outraged over their outrage.

How disrespectful to the murdered millions when Hodes writes: “It is the Holocaust fixaters who are doing the thinking, with too much of it



The way Hodes honours the dishonourable, defends the indefensible, and takes sides with the victimisers over the victims, she has the ethical standards of a lecturer at the University of Munich in 1938.

devoted to the repurposing of human remains, and not enough to the Holocaust’s positive consequences.”

Dismissing the main outcome of the Holocaust, namely the mass murder of millions, she suggests by “fixating” on “soap” and “lampshades” we are missing out on recognising the “positive consequences”.

So, what are the “positive consequences” that Rebecca Hodes

cites? She writes: “The Warsaw Ghetto uprising has its place in the pantheon of audacious resistance struggles. In the wake of revelations about Nazi atrocities, the first global mechanisms for protecting human rights were established.

“After the horrors of the Dachau cold experiments and Mengele’s medicine, the Nuremberg Code for the ethical conduct of research was formulated. These ‘positive consequences’ are not equal in value or meaning to the atrocities that preceded them, but recognising them does not equate them.”

What a diabolical misuse of language!

She is of course correct historically about the events that occurred – the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, codes for human rights and the Nuremberg Code. However, these are consequences and not “positive” results.

To see the heroic and superhuman resistance that the young, brave and courageous faced in the Warsaw Ghetto as “positive” is... (I cannot find the words) or to even think about the Nuremberg Code in terms of a “positive” reaction to the barbaric cruel inhuman actions of the Nazi medical establishment, is beyond belief.

Is Hodes even aware that there were ethical rules for

experimentation before Nuremberg and that the medical world certainly did not “need” the German medical establishment’s active involvement in the years before and during the Holocaust?

These deeds by Nazi doctors are the greatest stain on the history of our profession. For decades, the medical world was silent because it was so immensely difficult to come to terms with Nazi medical crimes of which the “Dachau cold experiments and Mengele’s medicine” are only the tip of the iceberg.

We can and should learn the lessons, but we certainly cannot consider these lessons as being a “positive” result of the past.

Of course, “historian” Hodes thinks differently and she really knows how to rub it in when she describes Jewish outrage to Mngxitama’s tweet at the “Shabbat dinner conversations, similar to the consumption of chopped liver on levels of haemoglobin”.

Hodes cannot escape the anti-Semitism inherent in her writing by saying “I’m Jewish”.

The way Hodes honours the dishonourable, defends the indefensible, and takes sides with the victimisers over the victims, she has the ethical standards of a lecturer at the University of Munich in 1938, rather than one at UCT in 2017!

• Courtesy of IsraelLink.co.za

Carrol Boyes creates pewter Acts of Random Kindness ARK



Cayleigh Andrew, event coordinator; Jean Joffe; Schane Venter, Corporate Social Investment Specialist for Cell C South Africa and Miss SA 2016 finalist; Tarryn Horton, Change Our World for Good Project Manager

Iconic designer Carrol Boyes partners with Chabad House Johannesburg to “change our world for good” in creating a magnificent pewter Acts of Random Kindness ARK.

“Carrol Boyes has used her distinctive style and talent to create the perfect fusion of art and kindness on our unique project,” says Rabbi David Masinter, founder and director of Miracle Drive annual charity drive and director of Chabad House in Johannesburg.

Masinter explains how the ARK general project was inspired by what the Lubavitcher Rebbe said to a CNN reporter: “Moshiach is ready to come, all that is needed is for us to increase in acts of goodness and kindness.”

Masinter continues to explain how it is the Rebbe’s instruction for a charity box to become a permanent fixture in every Jewish home and office. “In the Rebbe’s words: ‘A charity box in a home or office redefines the entire space. It is no longer just a home, just an office. It is a centre of kindness and caring.’”

“Carrol Boyes has lifted this to new heights.”

The numbered edition classic Carrol Boyes ARK for homes, is a beautiful pewter centrepiece to be placed next to the Shabbos candles as a reminder to put a coin in daily and a few before Shabbos, according to Masinter. “It gives one the opportunity to

instil in their loved ones that charity starts at home.

“The Carrol Boyes boardroom ARK gives one the opportunity to start every meeting on a kind note by having all attendees place a coin inside the ARK as the meeting commences,” he says.

Once the ARK is full, the money can be given to a charity of your choice, as stated on every insert that goes with the designer moneybox.

Proceeds from the sale of this piece will go towards Miracle Drive’s Grow Your Life Project, instilling literacy and entrepreneurial skills in our youth.



From Kindertransport to closure 73 years later

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

It took a long time and a lot of persuasion to get his father to go back to where his life began in Germany before he was rescued from Nazi Germany by the Kindertransport 73 years earlier.

American investigative journalist, author, and university professor, Jeff Kelly Lowenstein, persuaded his dad to return to Essen, Germany, in 2012 with him. This enabled the ever-curious Jeff to get remarkable insight into his history and for his father to put to bed some horrible ghosts.

Visiting South Africa recently, he shared his experience in a talk at the HOD Centre, organised by The Jewish Genealogical Society of South Africa and the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre.

Jeff’s father Edward Lowenstein and his uncle Ralph, were part of the Kindertransport, a British government-sponsored programme that, between 1938 and 1940, provided refuge to about 10 000 Jewish children from Central Europe in the aftermath of the Kristallnacht pogrom.

US-born Jeff described his fascination with his father’s past, discussed his journey towards family roots and the impact of the experience. He explained how he and his family have ultimately created something positive from a traumatic history.

“Growing up, my brother and I knew that my dad had left Germany,” said Kelly Lowenstein. “In the early 70s, we met the woman that he and my uncle stayed with after being saved by the Kindertransport. I didn’t completely understand the significance of who she was.

“The miniseries Holocaust that was shown in the US in 1978 was a big moment for public awareness and understanding of that history.

In his quest to learn more, Jeff visited elderly relatives who had clearer memories of the time and he began studying the history. “I still had a desire to do more. So, in 2004, I got a grant from the German government to go and see ‘new Jewish life’.

We started watching it and my dad instantly shut it off.

“We asked him about it and he brushed it off, but we knew something was wrong, so that kind of disjunction was among the things that made me hungry to understand more about what happened.

“As a young adult, when I’d ask my dad about it, he’d say he didn’t remember and I don’t think he did – he was less than five when he left.”

In his quest to learn more, Jeff visited elderly relatives who had clearer memories of the time and he began studying the history. “I still had a desire to do more. So, in 2004, I got a grant from the German government to go and see ‘new Jewish life’.”

Before setting off, he investigated where his family had lived and made contact with a non-Jewish family who owned a print shop and had maintained contact with the Lowensteins.

“I went and met the family and saw a notebook they’d compiled with decades of correspondence between our two families. That experience was very powerful because it answered a lot of questions that I’d had. But I still thought it would be very meaningful to go back to Germany with my father.”

Through writing an article about his 2004

trip, Jeff connected with Gabriele Thimm, a teacher who worked in Essen and was committed to teaching her students about the Holocaust. She organised two ‘Ceremonies of Life’ in Essen – one at the old synagogue, now a Jewish cultural centre and the other at the school at which she taught. She invited Edward Lowenstein to attend and share his story with the community.

Although he was apprehensive and uncertain about what to expect, Edward agreed to go with his family, something that Jeff greatly appreciated and admired.

So, in 2012, almost exactly 73 years after he’d left Germany on the Kindertransport, Edward, his wife Lee, Jeff, his wife Dunreith, their son Aidan and Jeff’s brother Jon, returned to Essen.

“Gabriele, my wife and I planned out the week,” explained Jeff. “We all visited the apartments where my dad had lived, went to the Jewish cemetery, attended the Ceremonies of Life and enjoyed a surprise 78th birthday party the community organised for my dad.”

While the trip was largely a positive experience, a few poignant moments stand out. The family visited the apartment where Edward had had an emergency appendectomy shortly before he left Germany.

“My grandfather, a German World War veteran had taken my father all over the town, but no-one would operate on a Jewish child,” explained Kelly Lowenstein. “But my great-grandfather who was a doctor, prevailed upon a non-Jewish colleague who did the surgery on the kitchen table.

“So, we visited that apartment and the current owners, who have now become our friends, served us sweets on that same kitchen table!”

Arguably the most difficult moment Edward Lowenstein experienced on the trip, was when he stood across the street from the apartment in which he and his family lived. “It seemed like a memory of his was triggered; he talked about having nightmares of people wearing green uniforms and marching,” said Kelly Lowenstein.

“We learned that right across the street was actually a Hitler youth camp and they would march there. My brother, an accomplished photographer, captured the moment where you can see the pain on my dad’s face as he remembered.”

The Ceremonies of Life were incredible experiences for the family, though, and it was at the one held at the Jewish Centre that Edward Lowenstein announced the initiation of an award that the family had conceptualised.

“The community wanted to give my dad an honorarium for speaking at the ceremony, but he didn’t want to take the money,” explained



Jeff’s father Edward Lowenstein remembers the Hitler Youth marching.

Kelly Lowenstein.

“So, we spoke as a family and decided to use the money to create an award for tolerance and justice to honour young people who do the right thing. Gabriele Thimm has been remarkable in how she’s overseen the award, which is now presented annually in Essen.

“It’s grown to a become a broad honouring of community members, while remaining grounded in acknowledging young people making a difference in tackling themes of history, diversity, justice and tolerance.”

Kelly Lowenstein spoke of how the award has taken his father’s understandably negative perception of Germany and turned it into a positive experience.

“He’s been back twice since the 2012 trip, he’s very committed to keeping the project going and is very appreciative of what we’ve been able to do.”

While Thimm is now retiring from the project, the Lowensteins are committed to keeping it going. “Gabriele has spoken a lot about the rise of anti-Semitism and how troubling it is in the country and this rise makes the work and its message more important than ever.”

While Edward Lowenstein had been back to Germany before, he’d never set foot in Essen again until the 2012 trip.

“My dad said afterwards that he basically went on the 2012 trip because he thought I really wanted it to happen,” says Kelly Lowenstein.

“When he went, though, he was very gratified by how he was just appreciated, honoured and acknowledged. The community was so excited that he was there and he had a sense of healing – not just for him and our family, but for the community and what his return meant as he answered everyone’s questions and reached out with an open hand.”



Edward Lowenstein prepares to take the microphone from Gabriele Thimm and speak at the Ceremony of Life in Essen, Germany.

Photo courtesy of Jon Lowenstein, NOOR

UCT’s Max Price in a catch-22 situation over boycott

>>>Continued from page 3

Chairman of the Cape SABJD, Rael Kaimowitz, said this week: “This matter has been raised for discussion at the UCT Academic Freedom Committee (AFC). If the AFC is in favour, it can only make recommendations for consideration by the UCT Council.

“We are hopeful that the AFC will see the absurdity of the proposal and stop it in its tracks. This is not only an issue for the university or for the Jewish community, who will be shocked at any boycott, but something which the academic community around the world will take exception to.

“Academic freedom is a pillar of any self-respecting university and any initiative to promote or enforce

a boycott, is discriminatory and inconsistent with universal academic standards as well as undermining the right to freedom of expression, as laid out in Section 16 of the South African Constitution.”

It is understood that several members of the Academic Freedom Committee (AFC) are supporters of BDS and UCT-PSF’s call for a boycott

A prominent American law professor said that UCT would be placing its partnerships with its US counterparts in jeopardy if it succumbs to pressure from BDS activists to adopt the boycott.

Professor David Bernstein of the Scalia Law School at George Mason University, told the Algemeiner that if passed, UCT would be obliged to cut all ties with Israeli faculty and

academic institutions – a move which would “trigger outrage” among US academics and their colleagues in other countries.

“They are trying to isolate Israel, but they may find that UCT is internationally isolated instead,” he said.

“There would be a substantial number of professors like myself who would have nothing to do with UCT should they adopt an academic boycott of Israel,” he is reported to have said.

It is understood that UCT currently has partnership agreements with several American universities that facilitate student and faculty exchange programmes and other joint projects, and that some of these same universities have passed anti-

BDS legislation.

In its submission, SAUJS said: “Anti-Israel boycott campaigns create division, hostility and tension on university campuses. BDS events over the past few years have shown that anti-Israel boycott initiatives have consistently generated hostility between fellow students, including numerous incidents of anti-Semitic abuse.

Rowan Polovin, chairman of the SA Zionist Federation, Cape Council, said the “overwhelming majority” of universities around the world have rejected calls for academic boycotts of Israel on the basis of them being “discriminatory, bigoted and counter to the ideals of academic freedom, the pursuit of knowledge and the freedom of ideas”.

He said: “One hopes that sanity prevails at UCT, which falls under South Africa’s world-class Constitution, its outstanding anti-discrimination laws and the excellent Higher Education Act, which specifically promotes academic freedom and the advancement, not derailment, of academic values.”

He added: “It was deeply worrying that the AFC, a body currently tasked with making a recommendation to the university on whether or not to impose this boycott, contains individuals who have made anti-Zionist and in some cases blatantly anti-Semitic comments in the past, yet will not recuse themselves from the decision.”

Dr Price has his work cut out for him in the coming days.



THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Israeli President inaugurates Munich memorial, raps Palestinians for lauding massacre

SUE SURKES

President Reuven Rivlin attended the inauguration in Munich on Wednesday of a memorial to the victims of the massacre there at the Olympic Games 45 years ago, and castigated the Palestinian Authority for its continued expressions of support for the terror act, which left 11 Israeli Olympians dead.

During the September 1972 attack on the Munich Olympic Village by the Black September Palestinian terror group, 11 Israelis were taken hostage. Two were murdered in the Olympic village and nine others were executed at the airport. A German policeman was killed in a shootout with the terrorists.

“There are still those who see in the murder of sportsmen a heroic deed,” Rivlin said, before singling out the party of PA President Mahmoud Abbas. “Just last year, Fatah marked the massacre of the sportsmen as an ‘act of heroism’.

“The centre we are inaugurating today must be a message to the whole world: There can be no apologising for terrorism. Terror must be unequivocally condemned everywhere. In Barcelona, in London, in Paris, in Berlin, in Jerusalem, and everywhere else.”

The president, attending the inauguration with his German counterpart, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Bavaria’s Prime Minister Horst Seehofer, International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach, and victims’ relatives, also said that having waited 45 years for the memorial, Israel is still waiting for another historical injustice to be rectified, and for a minute’s silence to be observed at the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games to remember Israel’s dead.

Portraits of some of the Israeli athletes murdered at the 1972 Munich Olympics at the Olympic Village, are displayed inside the Memorial Centre.

“Our brothers who were murdered were not just the State of Israel’s sons,” Rivlin said. “They were the Olympic family’s sons. A family which for many years abandoned its commitment to them.

“‘The Games must go on’ – so said at the time the President of the Olympic Committee, in a sentence which will be remembered eternally as a disgrace,” he noted.”

Steinmeier acknowledged that Germany was unprepared for the attack.

“It should have never been allowed to happen,” he said. “Until today, we carry a heavy burden regarding this catastrophe. And this better recognition is part of the commemoration of this day – and I think it’s overdue, and we owe it you, dear family members.”

Steinmeier then turned to the present, noting that there are still people who preach anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.

“In Germany, our way of life includes inseparably a commitment to our history, a commitment to the history of the Holocaust, the responsibility for Israel’s security that grows out of it, and the rejection of any form of anti-Semitism.”

The International Olympic Committee first commemorated the victims of the Munich massacre at the Rio Olympic Village in August 2016.

To date, IOC officials have maintained that a minute of silence would politicise the Games, compromising “collaboration between all parties of the Olympic family”.

The memorial is the result of a decades-long campaign by relatives of the massacre victims for a permanent memorial to the athletes.

It occupies a large exhibition area and is carved into a grass mound, creating the effect of an open wound.

ADL hires Jewish-Iranian academic to head anti-Semitism unit

The Anti-Defamation League this week named Sharon Nazarian, an Iranian-American-Jewish academic and philanthropist, as its senior vice president of international affairs. She will head the Jewish civil rights group’s work combating anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred worldwide.

She has spent most of her career in academia and scholarship in international politics. A longtime adjunct in the political science department at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), Nazarian is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.



Photo courtesy the ADL

“Sharon’s depth and breadth of experience in academia, philanthropy, policy and international affairs, makes her the perfect fit to lead ADL’s international efforts,” ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt said in a statement.

HOLLYWOOD MOGUL QUESTIONED ON SUSPICION HE BRIBED NETANYAHU

ALEXANDER FULBRIGHT

Israeli-born Hollywood mogul Arnon Milchan, was reportedly questioned under caution by Israeli police on suspicion of bribing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The interrogation, which took place over a number of sessions last week in London, marked the first time Milchan was questioned as a suspect in the criminal investigation known as Case 1000, with his interrogation further strengthening the suspicions against him, Hebrew media reports said on Tuesday.

In the case, Netanyahu and his wife Sara are suspected of receiving illicit gifts from billionaire benefactors, most notably hundreds of thousands of shekels’ worth of cigars and champagne from Milchan.

According to a Haaretz report, police questioned Milchan, who has previously provided testimony in the investigation, over suspicions he bribed the prime minister in exchange for Netanyahu’s assistance in advancing his business interests in Israel and abroad.

Particularly, Milchan allegedly helped to orchestrate the sale of a controlling bloc of shares at Channel 10 to RGE Group, a media company owned in part by British-American billionaire Leonard Blavatnik.

Channel 2 said Milchan strengthened the suspicions against Netanyahu. It also said Milchan was not expected to be prosecuted in the affair.

A source close to Netanyahu was quoted by the Ynet news website denying the allegations.

“Any attempt to attach a tinge of inappropriateness to the deep and long-standing friendship between Prime Minister Netanyahu and Arnon Milchan is baseless and doomed to fail,” the source said.



Photo: Flashed90

Arnon Milchan and Benjamin Netanyahu on March 28, 2005.



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AGENCIES AND TOI STAFF

United Nations war crimes investigators on Wednesday said they had evidence that Syrian government forces were behind a chemical attack that killed dozens of people in Khan Sheikhoun in April. It came after 20 such attacks by the regime over a four-year period.

In the first UN report to officially lay blame for the attack on President Bashar Assad’s military, the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria said it had gathered an “extensive body of information” showing that Damascus was behind the horrific sarin gas attack in Khan Sheikhoun on April 4 that killed at least 83 people.

“Government forces continued to deliberately target civilians, including through the use of chemical weapons against civilians in opposition-held areas,” the inquiry said in a statement.

“As part of an aerial campaign in northern Hama and southern Idlib, on April 4, the Syrian air force used sarin in Khan Shaykhun, killing over 80 people, most of whom were women and children.”

The attack sparked outrage around the world, as photos and video of the aftermath, including quivering children dying on camera, were widely broadcast.

The report found that four bombs

UN says evidence shows Assad behind April gas attack



were dropped from a jet in service of the Syrian regime.

“Eyewitnesses and early warning reports identified the aircraft as a Su-22, which only the Syrian air force operates,” the report said.

Assad has denied using chemical weapons. His staunch ally, Russian President Vladimir Putin, said in June that he believed the attack was “a provocation” staged “by people who wanted to blame him (Assad) for that”.

The UN report noted that “in its investigation, the Commission considered and investigated all potential scenarios, including claims put forward by Russian and Syrian officials,” but had found “no evidence” that rebel groups were behind the attack.

In its statement, the commission said that it is also investigating “allegations that international coalition airstrikes, carried out as part of the ongoing offensive to repel” the Islamic State, “have resulted – and continue to result – in increasingly alarming numbers of civilians casualties.”

US President Donald Trump cited images of the aftermath of the Khan Sheikhoun attack when he launched a punitive strike days later, firing cruise missiles on a Syrian government-

controlled air base, from where US officials said the Syrian military had launched the chemical attack.

It was the first direct American assault on the Syrian government and Trump’s most dramatic military order since becoming president months before.

Wednesday’s report, the 14th by the commission since it was set up by the UN’s Human Rights Council in 2011, covers little more than four months, from March to early July. The report is based on information retrieved from satellite images, video, photos, medical records, and more than 300 interviews.

The Syrian government has denied the team access to the territory it controls.

The report said that, between March 2013 and March 2017, “the Commission documented 25 incidents of chemical weapons use in the Syrian Arab Republic, of which 20 were perpetrated by government forces and used primarily against civilians”.

It also voiced “grave concern” over the impact of coalition airstrikes on civilians. “In Al-Jinah, Aleppo, forces of the United States of America failed to take all feasible precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects when attacking a mosque, in violation of international humanitarian law,” it noted.



FEDTALK

SOUTH
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News and views from the Fed

Binding ties – an African-Israel love story

ROLENE MARKS

There is something remarkable happening on the African continent. A groundswell of love and support from African Christians for the State of Israel.

It was the legendary Golda Meir, Israel’s first female prime minister, who recognised the potential for Israel to help Africa.

Israel contributes to the economic growth and wellbeing of communities all over the continent. When it comes to ground-breaking technology, Israel is a world leader. From water purification and drip irrigation, to life-saving medical devices and hi-tech know-how, Israel is contributing and sharing much needed skill sets.

The father of modern Zionism, Theodor Herzl, envisioned a Jewish state; perhaps this is what he had in mind of it “being a light unto the nations”.

South Africa and Israel share a similar history: Both emerged democratic and victorious after painful pasts and share similar challenges. Water shortages and the management of farming output are areas where Israel has implemented many successful projects.

These relationships are not only built on agricultural or business co-operation. Founded in 2010, South African Friends of Israel (SAFI), “promotes inter-faith dialogue between the South African Jewish community and the broader community, in the pursuit of ensuring a balanced view and a better appreciation of Israel by all South Africans”.

South Africa is of strategic importance; not only is the country the economic powerhouse of Africa, but it also holds positions on several international bodies such as the Non-Aligned Movement and African Union, among others.

South Africa is also the country where apartheid was both conceived and defeated. The odious accusation that Israel is an apartheid state – and should be afforded the same treatment as South Africa – is growing. This manifests at university campuses around the world at their annual festivals of hate, known as Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) every March.

Alongside SAFI is DEISI (Defend, Embrace, Invest and Support Israel). DEISI believes that “as Christians who love Israel and believe Genesis 12:3, (that) it is our responsibility to defend the right of Israel to exist within safe and secure borders.

“The more the calls from Israel’s enemies to annihilate, the truer Christians should take a bold stand in her defence.”

The vision of Africa for Israel Christian Coalition (AFICC) is “to provide a continental association through which every pro-Israel church, ministry, association or individual in Africa, can unite, speak and act with one voice in support of Israel, based on our common Judeo-Christian foundations”.

AFICC has been successful in other countries in galvanising support for the Jewish State. “Many African leaders are realising that transcending politics and looking for ways to improve the situation of the people in their countries is far more productive.” says founder, Luba Mayekiso.

The continent is fertile terrain for investing in the land and its people. Israel’s founding father, Theodor Herzl, who wrote in 1902 “that once I have witnessed the redemption of the Jews, my own people, I wish also to assist in the redemption of the Africans”, would be most proud.

Honey-traps and birthday calls: Secret file reveals Mossad efforts to net Mengele

SUE SURKES

Some of the creative methods used by Israel’s Mossad, described in a long-buried secret file documenting the intelligence service’s ultimately unsuccessful attempts to capture the notorious Nazi doctor and “Angel of Death” Josef Mengele, are now coming to light, 50 years on.

In the run-up to a fuller exposé last Friday, daily newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth’s Ronen Bergman published excerpts in Hebrew from the so-called Meltzer File about break-ins, attempts to wiretap, and even a bid to plant a lover to seduce Mengele’s son.

The newspaper said the file, bursting with reports, maps, and photographs, has been in the Mossad’s archives since the 1950s.

Mengele was appointed chief medical officer of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in 1943.

Not only was he responsible for dividing new arrivals at the camp into those capable of work and those to be sent immediately to the gas chambers; he also carried out horrific medical experiments on prisoners, focusing on twins.

Mengele left Auschwitz on January 17, 1945, just before the Red Army liberated the camp. He fled to South America.

Following the Mossad’s dramatic capture of Adolf Eichmann – one of the main organisers of the Nazi Holocaust, in Buenos

Aires in May 1960 – the intelligence organisation was ordered to catch Mengele or, failing that, to assassinate him, Yedioth Ahronoth reported.

It quoted documentation in the Meltzer File about one occasion in 1962 when Mossad agents apparently came within a hair’s breadth of catching their prey.

It has long been public knowledge that agent Zvi Aharoni and his men, acting on a tip, travelled to an isolated area near São Paulo, Brazil, where they encountered a man who fit Mengele’s description.

In their book, “Mengele: The Complete Story”, published in 1986, Gerald Posner and John Ware wrote that Aharoni reported the sighting to his boss Isser Harel, but that the logistics of capture, budgetary limitations, and a deteriorating relationship with Egypt, persuaded Harel to scotch an operation.

Yedioth Ahronoth quoted from a telegram sent to Mossad HQ which reported the sighting of “a man answering to the description of Mengele in his shape, height, age and dress”.

It also described another mission documented in the file – this time in 1983 – to use Joseph’s only son, Rolf, who was then living in West Berlin, to get to their target.



US Jewish leader urges PM: Rethink Kotel prayer, or risk wider chasm

DAVID HOROVITZ

The head of American Jewry’s main umbrella group, has urged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to rethink his approach to the suspended Western Wall compromise, and move to “restore the confidence” of US Jewry or risk broadening the “chasm” between many American Jews and Israel.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice president of the Conference of Major American Jewish Organisations, noted that his group normally steers clear of such issues because “you cannot deal in consensus on religious issues, on issues of conviction like this”.

Nonetheless, Hoenlein said that the government’s unexpected decision 10 weeks ago to suspend an agreement negotiated over years with Diaspora leaders “hurt a lot of people” and exacerbated what he said were already some “troublesome and troubling aspects of the relationship” between US Jews and Israel.

Therefore, Hoenlein, speaking to The Times of Israel on Monday, urged Netanyahu to



revisit the decision.

“If we care about the US-Israel relationship, if we care about the relationship of the Jewish community to Israel, the internal support, then we cannot afford to alienate and lose significant portions of the American Jewish community,” he said.

For American Jews “to stand with Israel, and to feel that they are wanted, and that their concerns are taken into account, will require somewhat of a different approach. And I do think that the prime minister has to look for a resolution [to the Western Wall prayer issue] that restores the confidence, that ends the controversy...”

Hoenlein said the bitter controversy over the

government’s decision to freeze the deal – which would have ensured a permanent pluralistic prayer pavilion in the Robinson’s Arch area of the Wall, with leaders of non-Orthodox Judaism given a formal role in its oversight – had been exacerbated by the way in which the move was presented.

“People thought that Reform and Conservative Jews could not pray anywhere [at the Western Wall], whereas of course, the areas remained open, Robinson’s Arch is being expanded, etc.”

If Israel, G-d forbid, were in real peril, Hoenlein added, “American Jewry will rally behind it.” But, he warned: “We are seeing trends that are very

Executive Vice President of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations, Malcolm Hoenlein (left), with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during the Jerusalem Day celebration

Democratic left, the support [for Israel] is weakening. We’re seeing a significant drop [of support for Israel] among young Jews... We have to do much more to reach out to those constituencies, to those that we can reach.”

He highlighted the contrast between the extensive dialogue between Israel and Diaspora representatives that enabled the deal to take shape, and the lack of dialogue when it was abrogated.

“There was a lot done that should have dampened, diminished, if not eliminated the possibility of this explosion,” he said. And now “it’s very hard to put the cat back in the bag... There are a lot of hurt feelings, people feel disenfranchised... and [they feel there was a] lack of consideration about their feelings.”

If an Israeli government decision on an issue of such global Jewish sensitivity is “only going to be based on the political realities of the moment, and whose party you need for



support for what, then it will broaden the chasm”, he said. “American Jews don’t relate to Israel on a political basis. They don’t associate with a particular party or think in those terms.” They think, rather, that “Israel” did this to them.

“We’re seeing not only more anti-Israel, but blatantly anti-Semitic attacks” in the US. “Not just the daubing of swastikas, which is serious enough, but physical assaults. There’s a heightened concern. Charlottesville is not the cause, it’s a symptom. It brought out into the public what we know.”

The American Jewish leadership is now working to enhance security at its institutions. “For too long we took for granted that our places are safe... We can no longer do that.”

Diaspora minister pushing \$1 million aid package for Houston Jews

TOI STAFF AND AGENCIES

Diaspora Minister Naftali Bennett on Monday said he is working towards approving a \$1 million aid package for the Houston Jewish community to repair the damage caused by flooding from Harvey.

“The Jewish State is measured by its response when our brothers around the world are in crisis,” Bennett, who heads the Jewish Home party, said in a statement.



Homes surrounded by floodwaters, last Sunday, in Houston, Texas.

Bennett said the aid will go to repairing Jewish schools, synagogues, and the Jewish Community Centre, which do not receive US government aid.

“The city of Houston was hurt badly last week, and the Jewish community, 70 per cent of which lived in the flooded neighbourhoods, was hit hard,” said Bennett, who is also education minister.

“Schools and synagogues were flooded and can’t be used. The old-age home and JCC were damaged, and hundreds of families will remain homeless.”

Bennett said the Diaspora Ministry was working on finalising the aid package.

Also on Monday, the Bay Area-based foundation Taube Philanthropies, said it would contribute \$1 million towards Houston relief, with \$100 000 earmarked for the Jewish community.

An official from the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, said the city’s Jewish community has seen “devastating” damage from Harvey and could take years to recover.

Seventy-one per cent of the city’s Jewish population of 63 700 live in areas that have experienced high flooding, Taryn Baranowski, the chief marketing officer for the federation, told JTA last week. That includes 12 000 Jewish seniors.

Three of the city’s five major synagogues have experienced major flooding, Baranowski said.

The federation is communicating with the rest of Houston’s synagogues – the area is home to 42 congregations and communities – but is focusing on helping people impacted by Harvey.

The Evelyn Rubinstein Jewish Community Centre of Houston, the city’s only JCC, was flooded with three metres of water, while Jewish schools were closed, with some experiencing major flooding.



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When Israelis protest, they don't tear down statues – they put them up

ANDREW TOBIN

Israel recently got two new statues of political leaders: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Supreme Court President Miriam Naor.

However, both statues were torn down within hours. For their creators, that was part of the point.

Israel has very few official statues of its leaders – or anyone else for that matter. The statues of Naor and Netanyahu were not erected by the government, but by artists and activists who sought to subvert rather than celebrate their subjects.

Both statues were near life-size golden replicas of their subjects on white pedestals. Both were placed in evocative public spaces.

However, their creators had very different agendas.

Last Thursday, right-wing activists put up the statue of Naor outside the Supreme Court in Jerusalem. Members of the Way of Life, a settler group that promotes legislation based on Jewish law, and Hebrew City, a group that opposes African migrants in South Tel Aviv, said the statue was part of a campaign against “the dictatorship of the High Court”.

The activists took issue with the Supreme Court’s ruling last Monday that the government cannot indefinitely detain undocumented migrants who refuse to be deported.

While the court allowed the government to continue the deportations, the five judges were unanimous in saying it could only detain migrants who do not agree to go, for up to 60 days.

Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked of the hard-line Jewish Home party criticised the court last Tuesday for not taking into consideration “the preservation of a Jewish majority”. Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely of the ruling right-wing Likud party, similarly accused the court of abandoning Jewish values in favour of democratic ones.

Police briefly detained a number of activists involved in setting up the statue but quickly determined no crime had been committed. Municipal workers took it down last Thursday.

One of the activists told Israel’s Channel 10 that the statue was inspired by the similar one of Netanyahu set up last December in Tel Aviv’s Rabin Square. The artist behind that statue, Itay Zaliat, said he sought to test freedom of expression and get Israelis talking about their government.

“Israelis have become stupid. They don’t think,” Zaliat said last Thursday. “I wanted to hold up a mirror, and get people to stop and think and talk to each other, which is exactly what happened with the statue.”

At the time, most observers understood the statue as disparaging Netanyahu, for better or worse. One passerby reportedly accused Zaliat of “seeking to destroy the country”, while others yelled, “Well done! Well done!”

Culture Minister Miri Regev of Likud posted on Facebook that the statue was “disconnected art, whose one golden calf is hatred of Netanyahu”.

The Tel Aviv Municipality gave Zaliat a deadline to remove the statue, but just beforehand, someone toppled it.

Zaliat said he expected the statue to be taken down, but he did not support its removal. Public art is a legitimate form of expression, he argued.

“It doesn’t really matter to me what they’re trying to say,” he said. “Leave the statues alone.”

Israel has some 2 900 official monuments, or about one

A statue depicting Supreme Court Justice Miriam Naor, placed illegally near the Supreme Court in Jerusalem



Photo: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90

for every 78 or so sq km. But very few of them depict leaders, or even people.

“Israelis tend to be uncomfortable with statues of their leaders,” said Maoz Azaryahu, a researcher at the University of Haifa, who studies monuments. “They see them as golden calves.”

Far more common in Israel are monuments like the Holocaust memorial in Rabin Square, which comprised two interlocking metal pyramids.

Azaryahu said this is partly because Israel was founded after the Second World War, when abstract art was in fashion. But he said officials embraced the style as in line with Jewish tradition.

Contrary to Zaliat, David Stav, a leading Orthodox rabbi, said Israelis are “very, very smart” about their leaders. He said their aversion to memorialising them is rooted in the Jewish prohibition against idolatry. Today, he said, that manifests as a more general scepticism of personalities.

“Jewish tradition does not encourage admiring individuals, but rather admiring ideals,” he said, noting that the Torah is conspicuously silent on the location of Moses’ grave. “Directly and indirectly, this affects Israeli society, and it makes us scared of raising people up and making statues of them.”

Holocaust survivor celebrates barmitzvah 80 years late in Israel

JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

Better late than never, right? A 93-year-old Holocaust survivor celebrated his barmitzvah in Haifa last Thursday, a mere 80 years after he was supposed to have the coming-of-age rite.

But Shalom Shtanberg, was living in the Warsaw Ghetto when he was 13, Reuters reported.

Unlike most of his family, he survived the Holocaust. His skills as an electrician made him a valuable worker.

“In the beginning I did not speak,” Shtanberg told Reuters of his time in the Warsaw Ghetto. “I said and told nothing because I stayed a child, aged 13, 14, and [living in the] Warsaw Ghetto was extremely difficult, every day.”

Local police officers brought Shtanberg and his wife to a synagogue in Haifa, where he was greeted by a cheering crowd.

As a video on Ynet News shows, Shtanberg had quite the time dancing at the ceremony after reading his Torah portion.

Last year, the then-oldest man in the world, 113-year-old Yisrael Kristal, celebrated his barmitzvah he never had 100 years late. Kristal passed away last month.



Shalom Shtanberg at his barmitzvah in Haifa on Thursday

Three teens charged with murder of Jewish MMA fighter

JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

Three Florida teens have been charged with first-degree murder in the killing of Orthodox Jewish professional mixed martial arts fighter Aaron Rajman.

A judge in Palm Beach County Criminal Court, last Saturday ordered them to be held without bond, local media reported. They also face charges on two counts of armed home invasion robbery with a firearm.

The teens, who were arrested week Friday, have been named as Roberto Ortiz and Jace Swinton, both 18, and Summer Church, 16. Church, a high school junior, became friends with Rajman after meeting him in January at a convenience store, and Swinton is her former boyfriend, according to reports.

Rajman, 25, was killed on the evening of July 3 when several men entered his home in West Boca Raton. The men reportedly argued with Rajman and shot him before driving away.

Church’s mother Judith, said that on the day of the murder her daughter was forced at gunpoint by Ortiz

Aaron Rajman



Photo: Facebook via JTA

and three other unidentified gunmen, to call Rajman to see if he was home and was then let out of the car before they drove to the fighter’s home, the Palm Beach Post reported.

Police say Church masterminded the murder. She agreed to be interviewed by detectives over 12 hours on three days, according to the newspaper.

“This was no random act of violence. Mr Rajman was targeted by these defendants and we intend to seek

justice for the victim and his family,” Palm Beach County State Attorney Dave Aronberg said in a statement.

Rajman turned professional in 2014 and held a 2-2 record after winning several MMA titles as an amateur. He is believed to be the only Orthodox Jewish MMA fighter.

Rajman reportedly studied Torah at the local Chabad and taught children at a local Jewish school. He also reportedly self-defence classes for children and Krav Maga techniques to local police. Krav Maga is a self-defence system developed for the Israeli army.

Israeli wins bronze at world gymnastics champs

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

Israeli gymnast Linoy Ashram finished third in the all-around competition at the World Rhythmic Gymnastics Championships, making her the first Israeli to ever win a medal in the category.

Prior to Ashram’s performance last Friday in Pesaro, Italy, the best result for an Israeli in the category was Neta Rivkin’s seventh

place finish at the 2015 world championships.

The all-around competition includes hoop, clubs, ball and ribbon.

Following her third-place finish, Ashram said the significance of the historic result is “slowly” starting to sink in.

“I am slowly beginning to comprehend what I did, but on the other hand I must be focused and

quickly return to my routine in order to work on my next goals,” the 18-year-old Rishon Lezion native told the Yedioth Ahronoth daily in an interview published last Sunday.

Asked about the possibility of winning a medal in the 2020 Olympics, Ashram said: “In the meantime I am not thinking about that.

“There are three years of hard work waiting for me.



BENJI SHULMAN

The edge of the Kinneret, or the Sea of Galilee as it is also known, is a profound place to have a discussion about the future of the Jewish people. The azure waters exude an aura that is ancient, beautiful and serene – and is enmeshed with the history of the people of the Levant. The gravity of the history of this area is immense. It is also very present.

As I conclude a discussion with a resident of Jerusalem, the night-time air is punctuated by a dull thud. This signals the landing of yet another munition in the current Syrian civil war and a reminder that the chaos of the Middle East has not stopped menacing at the edge of the Jewish State.

Despite this reality, tonight’s discussion about the future of the Jewish people is not focused on external threats like ISIS, Iran or BDS. It centres rather on something far more abstract, but perhaps equally important – how to preserve the space for healthy Jewish debate.



You see, I am attending a conference organised under the auspices of the Nahum Goldmann Fellowship, a yearly meeting of Jewish lay leaders, professionals and activists for a cross-communal conversation about the state of the Jewish future.

Those who come to the conference are deliberately chosen to reflect the diversity of the Jewish community. The 2017 gathering is no exception – attendees come from 30 countries and every imaginable religious and political stream within Jewish life.

Included in this year’s list, is a conservative think tank director, a female rabbi, a Jewish film critic, a Charedi educator, a venture capitalist and a professor from Yeshiva University – to name just a few.

The goal of the conference is to try and get these Jews, many of whom would never had encountered one another in ordinary life, to learn together, eat together, even pray

together – and, most importantly, to talk to one another about their perspectives on the path forward for the Jewish people.

I have found that we sometimes take the idea of communal debate for granted. It is as if the institution of “two Jews, three opinions” was simply there, already existing in our collective Jewish lives, like the communal version of your grandmother’s chicken soup.

Unfortunately, there is reason to be concerned about the state of our Jewish conversation. The Nahum Goldmann Fellowship is carefully curated to be engaging but challenging, because as Jews, we are not immune from the age of Trump, Twitter and Brexit.

Certain topics that are addressed in Jewish life today often have us screaming at one another, instead of constructively debating the way forward.

We all know what these topics are. We see them in our Jewish media all the time – gender, religious observance, Israeli politics, South African history, the price of kosher chicken, the idea of even eating chicken and the status of our holy places.

Like a Somali sea pirate, they move in quickly and hijack the larger but more vulnerable communal conversation, continuously holding it to ransom, never allowing it to go forward.

To stand up for the idea of open debate is not always popular. Frankly, it’s much easier to troll on Twitter, disrupt communal events, boycott talks, issue threats of legal action or use Facebook for name calling.

Yet it is crucial to find ways of engaging that don’t damage our institutions or further erode some of our limited social capital both inside our community and in the wider socio-political environment.

More importantly, unnecessary, ugly fights inside the community, entirely put Jews off wanting to engage in the Jewish conversation. It is critical that those who want input, whatever it might be, into issues affecting the community, are treated with respect – even if they are being challenged vigorously.

If we don’t find a way to do this, the long-term price may well be very high; less engagement in our Jewish conversation means less innovation, less inspiration, more apathy, more anger and a downward slope to a diluted, weaker Jewish community.

• Benji Shulman is the executive director of the South African Israel Forum and volunteers for several Jewish community organisations. He was a participant on the Nahum Goldmann Fellowship of 2017.

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**N E X T
S T E P S**

Heritage and Beyond

Sick men hold the doomsday nuclear button



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Sigmund Freud is probably frowning in his grave while world citizens watch despairingly the rising momentum towards nuclear war between the United States and North Korea, driven by politicians holding nuclear buttons he would have had much to say about. Two at least are psychologically dysfunctional.

US President Donald Trump, wanting to appear smarter than everyone, throws tantrums when anyone disagrees; North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, in total control of his people and military, wants to appear more macho than everyone – a gang leader daring others to take him on.

North Korea is “begging for war” says US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley.

Freud, a neurologist who founded psychoanalysis, was born to Jewish parents in Austria. He fled to London in 1938, aged 82, to escape the Nazis. His secular Jewish identity influenced his intellectual and moral outlook, and psychoanalysis’s rationalist values.

Can religion and rationality reconcile? Last week, an eminent Orthodox rabbinical delegation representing 90 per cent of the Orthodox Jewish world, met with the Pope, presenting the document “Between Jerusalem and Rome”, calling on Catholics and other faith communities “to assure the future of religious freedom, to foster the moral principles of our faiths, particularly the sanctity of life and the significance of the traditional family”, and to strengthen the “moral and religious conscience”.

It marked the five-decade anniversary of the radical 1965 Vatican statement Nostra Aetate, devised by Pope Paul VI, to guide Catholics in relations with non-Christian communities, heralding a sea change in attitudes towards Jews and denouncing anti-Semitism and treatment of Jews as the people who had rejected the Messiah.

Pope Francis said Nostra Aetate “represented the Magna Carta of the Church’s dialogue with the Jewish world”. Despite irreconcilable theological differences, the Church and Jews were trying rationally to construct a better world together, “blessed

with peace, social justice and security”.

Freud had a “rationalist” approach to morality, evoking scepticism among religious leaders about psychoanalysis. But the thread of psychoanalysis runs through many places. Pope Francis admitted recently to a French sociologist and author of an upcoming book, that he regularly consulted a female Jewish psychoanalyst in the 1970s in his native Argentina when he was 42 and working as a Jesuit official.

“She helped me a lot,” the Italian newspaper La Stampa quoted him as saying.

He said people with straitjacket points of view bother him, even singling out “rigid priests... It’s a form of fundamentalism... Whenever I run into a rigid person, especially if young, I tell myself that he’s sick... in reality, they are persons looking for security.”

Although the Catholic Church used to mistrust psychoanalysis and other forms of therapy, it has softened on the subject. Vatican guidelines applied today in seminaries training future priests, appreciate psychologists’ help in assessing candidates’ suitability.

Coincidentally, tensions between faith and rationality are superbly portrayed in a play currently running in Johannesburg directed by Alan Swerdlow, entitled “Freud’s Last Session”.

It portrays an imagined fierce conversation between an old, sick Freud approaching death from mouth cancer, and CS Lewis, a much younger Oxford professor of literary scholarship and firm believer in Christianity and G-d.

In the argument between these two great intellectuals, Freud claims morality itself is something brainwashed into people by their parents.

When his cancer becomes too much to bear, he will commit suicide. Lewis protests that only G-d gives life and only He can take it away.

Whatever one thinks of Freud and Lewis, rationality and faith, one thing is certain: Some of the leaders the world has mistakenly put into the most powerful positions on earth, could do with serious interventions, whether rational or faith-based. Untold millions of people could die if these men’s pathologies are given free rein.

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

Community Columns

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

SA Jewish students on frontline in fight for Israel

Last week the Academic Freedom Committee (AFC) at the University of Cape Town, at the behest of the Palestine Solidarity Forum, hosted a debate on whether or not, UCT should sever its ties with Israeli academia.

This forms part of the latest campaign by so-called “BDS” (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel) activists to promote an academic boycott against Israel in this country.

A number of such initiatives have previously been attempted, to date without success. Similarly, academic boycotts around the world have likewise failed to make headway in getting universities to boycott Israel on an institutional level.

On the other hand, the nature of these campaigns has undeniably helped to foster a hostile, intimidatory atmosphere on campuses, against both Jewish students and faculty and visiting Israeli scholars. For that reason alone, they must be strenuously resisted whenever they arise.

Originally, only the Palestine Solidarity Forum was to have presented before the AFC, which meant that the committee would have been exposed solely to the pro-boycott perspective regarding this controversial, highly politicised question.

Eventually, and then only after much engagement with the organisers, it was agreed that SAUJS would also be able to present on the issue. On the day, its representatives by all accounts did a superb job. They were well-prepared and sure of their message.

The SAJBD and SAZF worked closely with the students in helping prepare their written submission and oral presentation, but when it came to the debate itself, it was they who had to go out there and argue the case.

Once again, our youth found themselves on the frontlines of fighting for Israel and once again they were not found wanting.




Above Board
Shaun Zagnoev

The very fact that such a discussion was taking place at all, was an affront to decency and common sense. No country’s academic institutions should be selectively targeted for boycotts, and certainly not at the behest of those with political agendas that have little if anything to do with human rights.

That Israel, the only Middle Eastern country where academic freedom is respected, should be targeted in this way, and that a proposal to outlaw any engagement with its scholars should be hosted by a forum ostensibly designed to uphold academic freedom, is something that even George Orwell would have struggled to imagine.

But as we have learned in the course of many bruising battles to counteract the anti-Israel propaganda tide, having facts and logic on your side is not always enough.

One has to recognise that the other side is not interested in intellectual debate on the Israeli-Palestinian question, indeed will try to suppress it at every opportunity, and that we ourselves must ensure that we are not sidelined or silenced.

Moving on, I can now report that the Board has formally laid a charge of hate speech against Black First Land First (BLF) leader Andile Mngxitama in the Johannesburg High Court, in this matter to function as an Equality Court.

We have on board an excellent legal team, comprising Attorney Ian Levitt and Advocates Tembeka Ngcukaitobi, Anton Katz SC and Lawrence Hodes SC, to be assisted as and when required by our professional staff.

A summarised copy of the complaint can be found on our website (sajbd.com).

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

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

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

A spring in my step




Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff

I’m writing this column on the first day of September. The weather is idyllically perfect for Spring Day. The temperature is warm, the sun is bright and there is a strong aroma of jasmine in the air – a clear sign that temperatures are on the way up.

With only three weeks between now and Rosh Hashanah I am reminded about how fortunate the Jewish community is in South Africa that our new year arrives with the promise of summer, in a season of rebirth and renewal. A feeling of hope, confidence and optimism surrounds us and the coming year already feels blessed.

As I walk from my office at the Donald Gordon Centre up the parking ramp to Sandringham Gardens, the beautiful newly-renovated dining room and Nosh Bar come into focus and add to the sense of revival.

Our residents have been relocated to a temporary venue for meals for the past several months while the entire area – including the bathrooms and freshly landscaped gardens – were redesigned.

The look is fresh and modern. All the furniture has been replaced, the room has been extended and two serving stations facilitate efficiency. It will be ready to receive residents in time for Rosh Hashanah. I’m excited for them!

As I get closer to the kitchens, the delicious scent of cooking becomes evident. Our chefs are preparing lunch. Do you know that the Sandringham Gardens kitchens prepare 75 000 meals each month – around 2 500 per day – just for residents at this home and at allied Chev residential facilities?

That does not include the meals that are prepared daily for government hospitals, mental health institutions, the food parcels we supply and the support we provide to other organisations.

At this special time of year, leading up to Rosh Hashanah, families make a concerted effort to drop in on their loved ones at Sandringham Gardens.

When you visit, I urge you to take a small detour to the new dining room area to see for yourself how wonderful it is. Step by step this residential facility is being

renovated and revived to make it a more comfortable and aesthetically pleasing place to call home.

Everything about this day feels positive and I have high hopes that the year ahead will be filled with the blessings of good health, peace and happiness for all of us.

Shana tova u’metukah! May our partnership continue to thrive – feedback@jhbchev.co.za

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

Memorial to be built in Lithuanian town where no Jews remain

ANT KATZ

The townsfolk of Jurbarkas in Lithuania slaughtered thousands of Jews living among them in 1941. Now, the mayor of Jurbarkas has requested relatives of a family who used to live there, to build a memorial to honour their once-thriving community. The twist, however, is that the trio – a famous sculptor, an accomplished architect and an artist – are expected to raise their own funds and cover the building costs.

Over the course of three centuries, Jewish culture thrived in this Lithuanian town, known to its Jewish population as Yurburg. Records show over 2 000 Jewish surnames listed in the town that date back to 1815 and that the Jewish population peaked at 7 000 at the end of the 19th century. At the time about 70 per cent of the businesses there were owned by local Jews.

By the late 1930s only around 2 000 Jews remained in the town. They were among the first victims of the Nazis. Today there is not one Jew left in the town.

The town want the Litvak memorial to stand at the site renamed Synagogue Square, where the town’s massive Major Synagogue complex once stood.

The town’s mayor, Skirmantas Mockevicius, heard and read interviews with a well-known Israeli-Lithuanian sculptor David Zundelovitch – in which the sculptor said his father had been born in Jurbarkas. The mayor contacted Israeli Ambassador Amir Maimon and said he “thought it would be symbolic that a memorial to the Jewish community would be made by a descendant of this very community”, Zundelovitch’s daughter, Anna, told SA Jewish Report.

Ambassador Maimon phoned Zundelovitch in Israel in April 2016 and forwarded the personal letter from the mayor, asking if Zundelovitch might consider creating a memorial to the erstwhile Jewish residents of Jurbarkas, explains Anna.

Jurbarkas lies about 180 km east by road from the capital city of Vilnius. The town, which today has a population of 13 000, was among the first to fall when the Nazis invaded.

Zundelovitch, who made aliya in 1990, agreed to create a statue. The statue, however, grew into a huge memorial project.

What remains of the Sundelowitz/ Zundelovitch families, are scattered around the world, including Anna’s cousin, Selwyn Sundelowitz who lives in Johannesburg. Their grandfather got out before the war.

The family is collaborating with two international NGOs, says Anna, making huge efforts to find contributors among Yurburg community descendants in the US. The organisations are: Outset Contemporary Art Fund, which receives contributions for this

project in Israel, and the Friends of the Yurburg Jewish Cemetery. “My cousin Anna Zundelovitch (an architect and interior designer who made aliya with her family) has been the commissioned architect for the project and her father David, the sculptor,” Selwyn told the SA Jewish Report. Anna’s brother, Greg Zundelovitch, is the art director and visual artist for the project. Anna envisages “a sculptural space” and not simply “just a statue in the middle of a square”. It will redefine the current layout of the new Synagogue Square, she says.

Anna explained that when the Nazis occupied Lithuania, Jurbarkas was one of the first towns they took over. “The first ‘action’ was on July 3, 1941, when they executed 300 people.” These included the leaders of the Jewish community, the community rabbis and elite Lithuanian liberals who could stand up to the Nazis. Later, in a series of actions, the rest of the Jews were murdered in the woods around town. In the beginning of September 1941, Jurbarkas was declared Judenfrei (free of Jews).

She is at pains to point out that the Nazis only issued the orders, while the “work” (killing the Jews) was carried out “by Lithuanians living in this very town. They murdered their own neighbours and took their properties without hesitation,” she says. “This memorial is not about the Holocaust and its victims,” says Anna. “The Second World War was the end of the Jewish community in this town, but we think that the legacy of more than 300 years of Jewish culture is at least as meaningful as its end.”

However, while the Lithuanian authorities invited the erection of the tribute to their Litvaks and have made the space available, they won’t pay for it. The mayor is, however, expected to start a local fundraising campaign this month, Anna told the SA Jewish Report. This has led to the Sundelowitz/Zundelovitch families around the world going on a frenetic fundraising drive.

“We managed to collect about 40 000 euros in Israel alone in two weeks” in June, says Anna. “To complete this memorial, we need 180 000 euros, so we still have some work to do.” She is asking “the global Litvak community” to “contribute and support it”. “Our concept consists of many symbolic solutions, says Anna. For instance, they intend to mention about 2 000 surnames of all Jewish families ever registered in Jurbarkas. “These



The Major Synagogue complex stood at the very heart of the Jewish community of Yurburg.

surnames will be written in Yiddish and in English so descendants of this community can easily locate their own surname,” she explains. They believe that this will offer “the best description of a community as a whole”, by presenting the individuals who made it. “Another symbol is the main axis that defines the composition – a thin line of black polished granite that crosses the whole square and is directed towards Jerusalem,” she says. Jerusalem is holy to both Catholics (Lithuanians are mostly Catholic) and Jews. They see this as relating to “a bridge between the two nations and two religions. The beginning of the axis will be at ground level and rise progressively higher, carrying the names of the Righteous Among the Nations from the

vicinity. Among them are the two families who saved the child, Aharon Barak, who grew up to be the president of the Israeli Supreme Court. What happened to reduce the Jewish population from 7 000 to 2 000 in a few decades? They followed the money. “With the installation of railroad in Lithuania, Jurbarkas lost its position as a river port,” says Anna. A large part of the population “left either to other Lithuanian towns (as my closer family did) or abroad (as Selwyn’s grandparents did) to Germany, Russia, France, UK, US and SA.” The fact that the Lithuanians initiated this project, says Anna, and want a memorial to the Jews in the centre of their town, “shows that something is changing in Lithuania itself”.

David, Anna and Greg Zundelovitch on the memorial site



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south african Jewish Report

Crème de la Crème of Jewish Day Schools

There is nothing simple about being head boy or head girl – it takes a special kind of person to successfully take on this role. The SA Jewish Report contacted a number of Jewish schools to find out about their new student leaders – who will run from now until this time next year – and what makes them tick.

King David High School Linksfield

The King David High School Linksfield Student Leadership programme is service based. Students need to belong to one of the eight committees (namely Arts & Culture, Awareness, Eco, Judaica, Outreach, Sport, SMACC, and Wellbeing) to be considered for student leadership. These committees are student-driven under the guidance of senior staff and afford students the opportunity to express

themselves in a way that best reflects their passions and interests. At the same time, the students are involved in many other aspects of school life and commit themselves fully to the school. The electoral process is democratic and is determined via a two-tiered process. It’s an evolving process and will continue to be refined so that the school best meets the needs of the students.

Ben Atie, head student leader

I have been in the King David Schools system my whole life and it’s been a privilege. For me, King David Linksfield is my second home. I have grown up embracing its principles and its values.

I am proudly South African, Jewish and Zionist and as head of the Judaica Committee, I intend to further the love of Israel and Judaism at the school.

I have constantly been involved in many activities offered by the school, be it sporting and cultural. I follow the philosophy that what you put in is what you get out – nowhere is this more true than at King David. I further believe that every single person has the power to contribute to the world and make a change and no one is ever too young to start making a difference.



Ross Nowitz, deputy head student leader

In addition to having been appointed deputy head boy, I also have the privilege of being the head of the SMACC (Sound, Media and Communications Committee).

I have always been determined to make a positive impact and now I have the opportunity to do so. I began my King David career in the nursery school. As I grew through the KD environment, the ideals of being a “mensch” were always strongly present and I believe this is what contributed the most in making me who I am today.

Also, being head of the SMACC, we are responsible for constantly promoting the incredible institution that is King David Linksfield.

We are always present – at every sporting game, cultural activity and school event. We live in a world surrounded by technology and as SMACC, we continue to capitalise on this by documenting our school as frequently as possible in innovative ways.

My committee has allowed me to express to others what makes me the unique King Davidian that I am, but most importantly, SMACC expresses what makes King David unique.

Hannah Bloch, head student leader

I find it important to have balance in my life and therefore enjoy participating in a variety of different activities, including sports such as swimming and soccer, cultural activities such as art, public speaking and performing arts, as well as interacting with the disadvantaged within the Jewish and broader community of Johannesburg.

This manifests itself through my involvement in the Outreach Committee, which is the epitome of selflessness and kindness within the school. As head girl, I aim to raise the issues of poverty and inequality, while enriching the lives of those who are less privileged. This feeds into the main aim of mine for the school – to create an environment of acceptance, where having a perspective is encouraged and where we create a community that is tolerant of different opinions and beliefs.

I hope that the passion of reaching out plays a pivotal role in the culture of our school for the current year, as every student that feels the kindness, shall pass it on.



Natalia Laffer-Liebson



Natalia Laffer-Liebson, deputy head student leader

I believe that I was given this position not only to improve the relationships between each student, but to encourage uniqueness and respect between all students, teachers and the community.

I am a passionate humanitarian who aims to educate as well as be educated to ensure I can make an impact and succeed my responsibilities. I am also a member of the school’s Outreach Committee that gives every individual an opportunity to contribute to our broader community.

This committee encourages its members to give to the disadvantaged and in doing so, empower themselves. This committee has also offered me the opportunity to grow and develop, by giving to others.

Theodor Herzl, Port Elizabeth

Amber Dickson, head prefect

I have attended Theodor Herzl since the age of three. I consider myself to be diligent and dedicated. My leadership skills became evident at a young age as I won both the Principal’s Leadership Award and the Coaches Award, as well as being elected as house captain of Ben-Gurion in grade 7. I’m currently president of the Theodor Gavel Club, serve on the Judaica Forum and I have attained the Silver Level in the President’s Award programme.



The Theodor Herzl new prefect body:
Back row: Amber Dickson, Reinhardt Malherbe, Benjamin Schmidt and front row: Jessica Elliott, Megan Potgieter, Kasvia von Memerty, and Silke Langner

King David High School Victory Park

Rebecca Matisonn, head student leader
I am passionate and determined, whatever task I take on, I’m always 100 per cent committed. I have been actively participating in the school and its activities.

I stand for integrity, tolerance and respect in all areas. I’m a proud South African Jew and I am proud to attend King David Victory Park and honoured to represent it.

I am very vocal and passionate about the excellence of my school and over the years have been very involved within the Jewish and South African communities.

I would like to give all aspects of the school an equal platform and encourage student involvement in all the various committees and opportunities the school enables us to have.



Gadiel Shepherd



Rebecca Matisonn

Gadiel Shepherd, deputy head student leader
I’m an observant Jew who strives to live by the Torah values, along with the principles in the school’s motto, of integrity, tolerance and respect. I am also passionate about being healthy and playing sports.

I believe in always being kind, fair and just. I know that everyone has something to contribute and everyone deserves a second chance.

I strive to be friendly and respectful, aiming to never judge others or undermine them. My goal is to help others and make them feel at ease. I enjoy friendships with people from the full rainbow of Jewish life at Victory Park.

I hope to promote Jewish values and help every student find their place within our community.

I want to make sure that community service becomes a core aspect of KDVP. I believe that taking responsibility for our community, both the Jewish as the South African community, creates a culture that we can all feel proud of.

Natasha Lipschitz, deputy head student leader
I’m diligent, respectful, responsible and self-motivated and take pleasure in giving of myself and helping those around me and being a good example to others.

I’m a proud King Davidian and a proud Jew who identifies strongly with Israel. I’m passionate about my school and everything it stands for.

I embrace what my school promotes – courtesy, respect, integrity and good behaviour. Hebrew and Judaica studies are very important to me.

I have achieved well in sport, cultural and academic activities and am a strong believer in putting my school and its interests ahead of my own. I believe in working as a team to resolve issues and achieve positive outcomes. I work well with others and recognise their strengths. I’m able to engender enthusiasm among the students to ensure their participation.

My quintessential role on the SRC would be to ensure that we have a congruous relationship between the student body and the teachers with good and open



Jason Mervis



Natasha Lipschitz

communication, to create an environment for learning, skills transfer and individual growth.

I intend to be a leader who is motivated and able to inspire and win the support of the student body.

Jason Mervis, head student leader
I’m a proud Jew, Zionist and also proudly South African. I always strive to be the best I can be and put maximum effort in everything I do.

Just like the three pillars of King David Victory Park, I stand for respect, integrity and tolerance – being fair, just and honest not only to those around me, but also to myself.

I have been involved in many aspects at the school, academically, culturally and on the sports field and have also held leadership positions. I believe my passion for and involvement in the school, is what resulted in my being elected onto the SRC.

My role as a member of SRC is to ensure and help all other students in the school to have the same positive experience that I have had and to maintain and promote the positive name of our school.

For a full list and profiles, see our website www.sajr.co.za

Herzlia High School, Cape Town

The real power in a school comes from the student group, says Herzlia High School principal Marc Falconer. “Herzlia continues to mobilise this force by moving from a Student Representative Council

(SRC) to a Student Leadership Council (SLC). We are confident that, under our new leadership, our school will continue the journey of creativity and contagious energy.”

Alexander Korber, head prefect
I’m essentially the overall leader of the council, chairing the meetings that we have and organising the structure for Friday assembly. I also work very closely with Mr Falconer and Mrs Connibear in ensuring that their requirements of the SLC are met.

I work closely with the executive in ensuring we stay on track as far as goals and objectives are concerned. While it is still early days, we have made much progress in some of our short-term goals, such as establishing an SLC e-mail. Communication is a central theme of this council. We work very closely with portfolio leaders with regards to goals that pertain to specific areas of the school.

The issue of school pride is a priority. We are unbelievably excited and thrilled to have been given this opportunity to lead and represent the school. It is an absolute honour and a privilege.

Aaron Kruss van der Heever, deputy head
My main goal, as head for grade 10s, will be to ease and facilitate the transition from middle to high school, by providing a mentor and even friendly figure who has perspective and experience from the students’ side.
I will ensure that these new, but important voices, are heard and problems will be, if necessary, taken to the necessary staff member and resolved accordingly.



Back row: Aaron Kruss van Der Heever (deputy head), Mathew Jacobson, Skye Zive (deputy head), Zoe Glanz, Anna Valkin, Simona Stone
Front row: Claudia Greenberg, Alexander Korber (head student), Maddie Wingerin, Peter Oki (deputy head)

Photo: Marc Berman

The diamonds in the life of bnoth mitzvah

Diamonds shine from within. The theme of the Linksfeld-Senderwood Hebrew Congregation batmitzvah ceremony was diamonds and the 11 participating girls told family and friends at the shul on August 27 of the real diamonds in the lives of a young Jewish woman. These diamonds included family, chessed, morals, heritage, Jewish learning, family, friendship and mitzvot.

Each girl focused on a different element and the genuine way in which they spoke, gave motivation for their parents, families and the broader community.

Chazzan Nachie Levin added a special touch to the ceremony when he sang “Eishet Chayil” to the girls and Rabbi Levi Avtzon addressed the young women by praising their achievements in the programme and he encouraged them to further their growth beyond their batmitzvahs.

After the girls received their batmitzvah certificates, they danced and hosted a high tea in the shul hall, which gave an opportunity for all family and friends present to celebrate with them.

The ceremony was a culmination of an intense and fun year of engaging in their Judaism with weekly meetings led by Rebbetzins Chaya Avtzon and Hannah Bank. The girls also participated in an inspiring Shabbaton, joined their mothers in a challah bake, had fun outings and went for a tour of the mikvah.



Top: Emma Glickman, Danielle Allan, Ella Levin, Aura Kopelowitz, Megan Tobias, and Kira Fruman. Bottom: Micheala Saayman, Mira Kohn, Mira Lipman, Kayla Mandel, and Eden Novick.

Letters

A POIGNANT TESTIMONIAL TO THE WORK DONE BY KOSHER MOBILE MEALS

I am writing in response to Michael Sieff’s column in which he implies that since the Chevrah Kadisha sees to the needs of the disadvantaged people in our community, other Jewish organisations do not make significant contributions to members of the community.

I am quoting from a letter that Kosher Mobile Meals, a project of the Union of Jewish Women, received before Rosh Hashanah some years ago:

“It is now the month of Elul and I am counting my blessings.

“Since the death of my husband I live alone in my home in Bellevue. I had always been independent. I used the bus to travel to visit friends and to do my shopping. I cooked for myself. I still have a char who comes in twice a week to help me.

“At 2 am one Wednesday morning I slipped on the tiles in the bathroom. I could not get up. I was in pain and I panicked. Eventually I passed out. When the char arrived on Thursday morning, she could not get into the home and called my neighbour who phoned the police.

“I woke up in hospital. I was very ill, dehydrated and I had a fractured rib and collarbone. The doctor arranged with Kosher Mobile Meals to deliver meals to me. The volunteers come twice a week and check on me. They are concerned and friendly. I turned 78 at that time and the volunteers and social worker made it a very special birthday.

“I was given a panic button which I always keep with me so that I am confident that I will never be without help when I need it.

“Kosher Mobile Meals is one blessing that helps me stay in my home and enjoy my life. I thank everyone involved in Kosher Mobile Meals for the work that it does...”

I think that this letter shows how significant an impact that Kosher Mobile Meals can have on the life of an individual.

Shirley Ancer
Kosher Mobile Meals
Johannesburg

PS: This recipient has since died.

FUTURE AND DESTINY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE LIE IN ISRAEL

Much has been written and discussed regarding the plight and future of Jewry in the Diaspora.

I would submit two “opinions” regarding this issue, written by two famous sages centuries ago, which have been explicitly clear and prophetic. Both opinions were written at a time when there was no Jewish sovereignty in Israel.

First: The great Rambam (Maimonides) wrote in the 11th century in “letter of Teman”, quoted in Kuzari 2:24: “The obligation of the commandments is not dependent on the coming of Mashiach. Rather, we are too busy ourselves with Torah and precepts, and to strive to fulfil everything we can...

“However, if a man will stay in a place where he sees the Torah is waning, and where the Jewish people will be lost with the passage of time, and says, ‘I will stay here until the Mashiach comes and survive where I am’, this is nothing but an evil heart, and a great loss, and a sickness of reasoning and spirit.” (What has happened to all those great places of Jewish learning in Europe?)

Second: A great tragedy results when we make

Jewish life in exile (Diaspora) the goal of Jewish existence. Rabbi Yaacov Emden (Ya’avitz) writes: “When it seems to us in our present peaceful existence outside the Land of Israel, that we have found another Eretz Yisrael and Jerusalem, this to me is the greatest, deepest, most obvious, and direct cause of all the awesome, frightening, monstrous, unimaginable destructions that we have experienced in the Diaspora.

“Whether the destruction comes through pogroms, a holocaust, or day-to-day assimilation, the tragedy is the same.” (This was written by Rabbi Emden 200 years before the German Holocaust, and the present-day “holocaust” of assimilation in the Diaspora.)

In these days, when the Jewish people have sovereignty again in Eretz Yisrael after 2 000 years of punishing exile, it should be obvious that there can be no doubt as to where the future and destiny of the Jewish people lies.

Choni Davidowitz
Johannesburg

APPEALING TO WITNESSES WHO MIGHT HAVE SEEN ACCIDENT

Can anyone assist me? I was involved in a motorcycle accident on July 23 at the 5-way intersection at Ohr Somayach in Savoy. A white car jumped a stop sign while driving down Douglas Street. I was forced to drop and crash my bike to avoid a collision with the car. (I had the right of way.)

My left foot was badly fractured, I have a broken rib and head injuries, which affected movement of my jaw. I was treated at the Morningside Clinic. My foot was so badly smashed that I will not be able to use it for four months.

I have to use a wheelchair, then a walker with wheels, while hopping on one leg – and finally

crutches. I am also faced with huge medical bills.

The driver of the car did not stop, but I was told there were a number of witnesses to the accident.

I am appealing to readers to assist me with the following:

- I would like to find the person/s who phoned Hatzolah so that I can thank them.
- I would also like to find the driver of the white car in the hope that he/she was insured and that I can recoup some of my medical costs.

Roni Lea 082-352-4291
Johannesburg

The DL Link event of gratitude

CHANDREA SEREBRO

What began as a simple idea to spread awareness of an organisation that supports over 700 people struggling with cancer, the DL Link dinner has now become a highlight of the social calendar.

The second annual DL Link 3 Cs fundraising gala dinner on August 31, was a night to remember, with many a laugh to be had, compliments of comedian Nik Rabinowitz. Oscar von Memerty’s musical entertainment added to the unforgettable night.

Bev Segal told her cancer story, trying to shed some light on the everyday struggle that cancer warriors face, including many of the challenges and difficulties that even their families might not be aware of.

“In essence, the night was about gratitude,” says Michelle Goodman, founder of the DL Link, in memory of her daughter Devorah Leah, who succumbed to cancer.

The gratitude is “to the DL Link for enabling so many people who are struggling, as well as their families, to face this journey with friends, resources, support and a bit of cheer when they need it most”.

She had a special word of gratitude for the sponsors – especially main sponsor Liberty – who made the dinner possible. And finally, she singled out the “DL warriors” for their bravery and fortitude.

The night ended with an auction of some rare and exciting sports memorabilia, raising much needed funds that will go a long way toward helping the DL Link angels to continue.

The DL Link does not charge for any of its services. It relies entirely on the support from the community.

- For more information, visit www.dlink.co.za



Michelle Goodman, Brenda Stern, Tammy Lewin and Terri Friedland

MNGXITANA SHOULD JUMP IN A LAKE – AND NOT COME UP AGAIN...

And this Andile Mngxitana graduated with a degree in sociology? Sociology? Forgetaboutit!

Either they really conferred the degree upon someone else of the same name, or else he qualified at the university of Putsonderwaterfontein where he majored in stupidity, inanity, vitriol, hate speech, and especially “ how to choose a burger” and “how to know when the shoe fits”.

Surely nobody with a true qualification in sociology would be capable of expressing such arrant nonsense and feel justified in making such assertions.

Please just go jump in a lake, Mr Mngxitana.

Jack Miller
Johannesburg

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Hadracha: 19 lives changed in 19 days

RAQUEL NATHAN AND CHAD RAYD

Who would pass up the opportunity to see Israel in just 19 days? Grade 10 pupils of King David High School Victory Park joined other grade 10 pupils from other Jewish schools in South Africa for Hadracha. It was a once in a lifetime experience to spend 19 days growing, learning and sharing memories that will last forever.

The experiences shared in Israel on Hadracha were truly eye-opening for every pupil as they savoured the taste of Israeli culture and Jewish life. Travelling from north to south, from Safed to Eilat, being shown aspects of the amazing heritage of the Jewish homeland certainly ensured that the ties between our South African Jewish children and Israel have been sealed forever.



Back: Joshua Michel, Liron Cohen, Thomas Stenz, Danit Krawitz, Gabriel Shapiro, Kira Fisher, Dylan Dermeik, Megan Kanto, Joshua Dov, Michaela Klug, Emma Berger, Abigail Klug, Raquel Nathan, Alexis van Eeghem, and Nicole Kantor. Front: Michael Blou, Gabriel Ferreira, Chad Rayd, and Isabella Friedman.

Torah Academy's 'Happiness' concert



"Ashreinu ma tov chelkeinu (How happy we are – our lot is so good)" was the theme of this year's annual Torah Academy Primary School grade one siddur concert.. Arranged by Kodesh teachers Chani Bacher and Yaffa Liberow, the children sang songs and portrayed their learning to read and daven from the siddur, as well as their Torah teachings. Each child received his/her very first siddur.



Children with their welcome posters for Refiloe Moahloli King David Junior Primary Linksfield gets 'hooked on books'

JACKY BELLON

King David Junior Primary Linksfield is celebrating Book Month. Reading is the cornerstone of any child's mental development and the school wants reading for pleasure to become a lifelong habit among its pupils.

The young, vibrant author Refiloe Moahloli, visited the school last week to introduce her book, "How many ways can you say Hello?" to the pupils.

The children created posters to welcome her and thoroughly enjoyed her talk. They were also so interested and excited about the book sale and a reading competition with lots of prizes.

Spring is in the air at Sydenham Pre-Primary



Dressed to impress for spring are Ayla and Devyn Toker

It was a "Blooming Marvellous Spring Shabbos" at Sydenham Pre-Primary last week. The children enjoyed a "Spring Shabbos Ring" outside and each child came to school either carrying or wearing flowers.

To mark the beginning of Spring, they planted spinach, tomatoes and coriander in the school's window boxes and each child sipped on a delicious berry smoothie!



Friday (September 8)

- UZLC hosts Shirley Zar on "Changing the World - Tikkun Olam". Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 -14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Sunday (September 10)

- Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets at Beit Emanuel Slome Auditorium. The programme is compiled by Ron Cowley - an audio on people related to big bands on anniversaries and after interval a DVD on an Andrew Sisters biography. Time: 14:15 sharp. Enquiries: Marilyn 072-243-7436 or Jack 082-450-7622.
- Second Innings hosts Marlene Bethlehem on "Connections, Reconnections and Returning to Our Roots". Venue: Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: Tea at 10:00. Meeting at 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors (incl tea and light refreshments). Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.

Monday (September 11)

- UJW hosts Elliot Wolf, long-serving principal of King David High School, Linksfield and executive director of the SABJE on "Reflections on a Long Career in Jewish Education". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 10:00. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW office (011) 648-1053.

Tuesday (September 12)

- WIZO Forum hosts Howard Sackstein, chairman of the SA Jewish Report and Howard Feldman, author and radio host, on "Reading Between the Lines". Time: 09:30. Cost: R100 (incl tea and refreshments). Bookings and venue details: Jenny (011) 645-2515.

Wednesday (September 13)

- Second Innings hosts outings to Bristle Cone Nursery and shopping at Chameleon Village. Bus departs at 09:00 from the parking below Golden Acres. Cost: R180, includes the bus, guided tour and tea. Enquiries: Laura Sher and Betty Jankelowitz (011) 532-9701.
- Chevrah Kadisha Enrich Talk centres on "The Adolescent and Substance Abuse: How to Approach it and What to do About it", with Sue Hickey, addiction expert and author. Venue: New Arcadia Daycare Centre. Tea and cupcakes. Time: 19:45. Cost: R50. Information and bookings (011) 532-9616 or enrich@jhbchev.co.za

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Dan making it big time in ‘fickle game’ of horse racing

JACK MILNER

Dan Katz, a horseracing trainer, has always loved horses; he was involved in racing straight out of the army, left it for a number of years and has finally returned – full circle.

“I’ve got a job where I don’t have to deal with hundreds of people; I love every moment of what I am doing and with the support of my family I could not be happier.”

Dan matriculated from Herzlia in Cape Town in 1983 and went into the army.

“When I was at school, we would sit at the back of the class listening to racing commentaries and that got the adrenalin pumping. My parents understood my passion and they were always behind me.”

When Dan came out of the army he got a job with trainer Darryl Hodgson, who at the time was training out of a farm in Philadelphia, owned by Harold Sirin. “Darryl had his own horses at the time and I spent six months with him. Then I got a job offer with Derek Dalton, so I decided to move.”

Guy Rixon, one of the top trainers in the Western Cape, offered him a job. Rixon was the son of Ralph Rixon who trained one of South Africa’s favourite greys, Jamaican Music, who went on to win the Durban July.

Guy had some very good horses at the time and it was a great opportunity for Dan. “He had a top string including a filly called Wainui

who won the Queen’s Plate.”

Dan had a great position at the stable and when Rixon went up to Durban during the winter season, Dan was left to run the stable in Cape Town.

But at the tender age of 24, Dan decided to go out on his own, but he learned the harsh reality that training horses and running your own business were two entirely different stories.

“I was just too young and had no business acumen. I couldn’t deal with all the owners and the bills and accounts, so after two and a half years I decided to give it up.”

Also, he got married and they moved to Umtata where he managed a supermarket.

He got divorced and decided to go to Israel, where he met his present wife, Liat.

Then in 2000 Dan’s mother passed away and he felt that as an only child it was his duty to come back and spend time with his father.

“We returned to Cape Town and for the first year I managed the tea room at Kirstenbosch Garden.”

At that point he had a chance meeting with one of the leading Cape trainers, Greg Ennion. “He was looking for someone and that’s when I decided to go back into horseracing.

“In 2007 I got back together with Darryl Hodgson. He was training for Hassen Adams who is one of the leading owners in the country and it was a great opportunity for me. So, after 30 years, I had gone full circle and was back where I started.” Dan remained Hodgson’s

assistant trainer for nine years but Adams, who is chairman of Grand Parade Investments, needed somebody to manage his racing affairs. Hodgson was Adams’ first choice as the pair had been together for many years.

“Darryl is very involved with Hassen and there are few new things brewing. So, he has moved on and I took out a trainer’s licence.”

The new racing season in the southern hemisphere always kicks off on August 1 and that was the date Dan could saddle his first runner in his own name. “I thought things went very well in August. I could not have hoped for a better start.”

His first winner came on August 19 when Lalena, despite having run well on her first start, narrowly beat Love Supreme by a short head at generous odds of 25-1. Dan also had two placed on the day.

At this time of the year they race at most twice a week in Cape Town, so it speaks volumes that winner number two came just one week later when I Am Captain romped home by .25 lengths, this time at much shorter odds of 2-1.

Just four days later Dan ended the month on a high when Dex Dexter notched up his second win from just three starts.

“He is way, way above average, he has the right pedigree and an excellent temperament. He could go places as long as he remains sound.”

At the moment Dan has 32 horses in his stable – Adams owns all 32.

“You always have a nice injection of horses from Hassen. He’s been very good to me.”

Five years again, Dan and his wife experienced a great moment when their son Dor-El, was born. “We waited for him for many

years, but he was born in 2012. They are my backbone. They support me through thick and thin and without them I would not be able to do this job.

“Horseracing is a very fickle game. You’re only as good as your last winner and as quickly as you come out on your feet, you can get knocked back just as quickly. I have a job I love with a family who support me, and I couldn’t wish for anything better.”



Dan Katz at the stables with his son Dor-El, who is very comfortable around horses

Adam Lipschitz – Durban’s athletic trump card

Durban athlete Adam Lipschitz became South Africa’s most notable individual performer at the Maccabi Games, having won two individual gold medals in the 10km road running race and the 5000m track race in the open category.

This 23-year-old student is a Glenwood High old boy and started running cross-country and athletics events in primary and then high school, but only took a keen interest in the sport in grade 11.

At the beginning of his semi-professional career, he represented South Africa at a junior level in cross country (8km) and then represented SA again at an under-20 level in the 5000m and 3000m steeplechase events.



Adam Lipschitz at this year's Maccabi Games

was a lot more difficult as I saw the start list in the morning and saw three guys had much faster times than me entering the race, but this was mainly due to the fact that I haven’t had a track season in four years.

“But I was in shape and made sure to make the race as tactical as possible. I ended up winning with 30m to go, as I went into the last lap in third place. I ended up closing the last lap in 58 seconds. So, the second gold is more cherished as I had to work a lot harder than the first.”

He added: “I am very happy with my results as it’s given me the platform to compete internationally again. I hope to continue the hard training and compete in a few half-marathons or 10kms in Europe later this year.”

Lipschitz also made a point of mentioning that he was incredibly proud to represent his country again, but also the Durban Jewish community whom he holds dear to his heart. He plays an active role both in his shul and as a CSO volunteer.

The Durban Jewish community now has around 2 000 members, down from its heyday of 7 500. Despite their size, they had seven of their own athletes participating in the Games, of which five won medals.



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18⁴⁹



STEINZ
HONEY
375g

34⁹⁹



124⁹⁹

MONTAGU
CRANBERRIES
1kg



ORLI 48 HOUR CANDLE

14⁴⁹

SNOWSOFT
FACIAL TISSUES
200'S



15⁴⁹



STEINZ
FRUIT
COCKTAIL
410g

14⁹⁹



JEMZ
COCONUT MILK LITE 400ML

16⁹⁹

5778 CALENDAR
AVAILABLE NOW



24⁹⁹

EXCLUSIVELY @
KOSHERWORLD

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