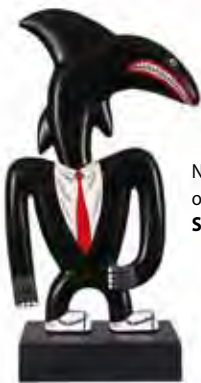


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Tertiary no-go zone

See page 2.

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University exams begin amidst heightened security

TALI FEINBERG

SA Union of Jewish Students Western Cape Chairman Jesse Soicher, described the atmosphere at the University of Cape Town (UCT) as “eerie” ahead of exams, which officially started on Wednesday.

The campus has increased its security and set up a new, temporary exam venue specifically to allow students to continue with exams on schedule and in a safe environment, as the #FeesMustFall protests have traditionally interrupted exams over the last few years.

The new venue is surrounded by perimeter fencing and security personnel in riot gear, some accompanied by guard dogs like Rottweilers and German Shepherds. A water cannon truck is parked nearby.

In an announcement on the university’s website, Registrar Roy Pillay wrote: “The university management has had to take the extraordinary step of arranging an examination venue on the upper campus rugby field.

“It is a decision that has not been taken lightly. It was an outcome of an assessment of what arrangements would offer the best chance of conducting and successfully concluding the

examination programme in the current circumstances of threats of disruption.”

Vice-Chancellor Max Price wrote to students ahead of exams: “We have taken this unusual step as a measure of our firm commitment to the huge majority of students who want to write their exams and see the academic year through to its end. A small number of protesters remain determined to see the university shut down, and have disrupted tests and exams over recent weeks.

He did not know of any Jewish students taking part in disruptions, but that SAUJS respected their right to take part in peaceful protests.

“We have reduced the immediate presence of security within the exam perimeter to a minimum. However, we will have Campus Protection Services officers in the exam tents. In terms of the current interdict, any protesters attempting to disrupt exams, will be handed over to the South African Police Service for arrest.”

Soicher said: “Everyone is trying to make it seem like ‘business as usual’, but it is definitely not

that way.” He added that SAUJS had received no complaints from Jewish students regarding their safety or interruption of their studies, but emphasised that the organisation would always be available to protect the interests of Jewish students.

He added that he did not know of any Jewish students taking part in disruptions, but that SAUJS respected their right to take part in peaceful protests. He pointed out that many leaders and participants of the protests, were not actually students at all, and that violence delegitimises what they are trying to achieve.

On Twitter, the new exam venue was greeted with derision and disgust, with some UCT students even calling it a “concentration camp”. Meanwhile at Wits, a potential protest was called off by the SRC after it received a plethora of complaints from students who wanted to take their exams on time and undisturbed.

“We will always be clear on our stance that we want free quality decolonised education, but if we will shut down campus with exams commencing, then we are not looking out for one another. We won’t be

careless and excited by instigators who want a shutdown for their own motives and not for the genuine cause of free education,” SRC spokesman Sandla Mtotywa said in a statement.

SAUJS National Chairman Rachel Raff said she welcomed this “strategic, mature and level-headed” decision. She added that she had been concerned when 12 out of the 15 newly-elected SRC members at Wits were from the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), especially with that party’s negative approach to Israel and their recent march on the Israeli Embassy.

However, she hoped that SAUJS could work with the SRC in the year ahead, especially with such rational decisions taking place.

Raff said that there had been no other disruptions on campuses. She wished all students well for exams and reminded them that SAUJS is here to support them, now and in the year ahead.

Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
18:18	19:10	Johannesburg
19:11	20:08	Cape Town
18:13	19:07	Durban
18:30	19:24	Bloemfontein
18:43	19:39	Port Elizabeth
18:31	19:27	East London

Parshat Toledot

Make your marriage work forever

Marriage is a sacred union of husband and wife. It is called “kidushin”. The word kadosh means holy and also separated and cut off. When a couple marry, they are a unit which has only them and no-one may invade that unit of separateness and holiness.

In these parshot we learn how important it is to find the correct partner. Yaakov was told by his parents to find a shidduch from the house of Betual, Rivka’s father.

“Do not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan, go to Padena Aron” (Bereishit 28:2).

When Rivka herself married Yitzchak, the verse reads; “And Yitzchak

brought her (Rivka) to the tent of Sarah, his mother and he took Rivka and she was to him a wife and he loved her.” (Ibid 24:67)

Rashi quotes the Midrash that Rivka had the attributes of her mother, the Shabbat candles lasted from Shabbat to Shabbat and there was a blessing in the bread and a cloud hovered over her tent.

The love came afterwards. Certainly, one must be attracted to one’s spouse and as in the story of Rivka, she consented to go with Eliezer, Abraham’s servant. However, true love comes from finding in one’s spouse the fine characteristics which one wants and expects.

With all this guidance from the Torah, to choose a good family, a kind person, a person who has spiritual character traits, there is one major overriding must. That is Hashem’s blessing and help.

Eliezer realised the necessity of Hashem’s intervention. “And he said blessed be the L-rd G-d of my master Abraham, who has

not forsaken His kindness and truth from my master. I am on the way and Hashem has led me to the house of my master’s brother.” (Ibid 24:26)

Marriage must be within the framework of chuppah and kidushin. We live in a promiscuous society where living together without chuppah or kidushin is not frowned upon.

Those who do not first marry before being together, are missing out on G-d’s blessings from beneath the chuppah, which should be at the beginning of their relationship. This will ensure an everlasting, happy marriage.

A couple at their golden anniversary were asked their secret and feelings. The husband replied: “She is my best friend.” True love grows and bonds them into “rayim ahuvim” - beloved friends, the blessing recited under the chuppah.



Rabbi
Siggy Suchard,
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South African
Jewish Report



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Editor Peta Krost Maunder – editor@sajewishreport.co.za • Sub-editor Paul Maree • Senior writer Nicola Miltz
Editorial Co-ordinator Martine Bass – editorial@sajewishreport.co.za • Proofreader Kim Hatchuel
Advertising and distribution Britt Landsman: 082-292-9520 – britt@sajewishreport.co.za
Design and layout Bryan Maron/Design Bandits – bryan@designbandits.co.za

Pravin Gordhan unpacks Michael Sachs’ resignation

SIMON SHEAR

Former Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan insists that this week’s resignation of Michael Sachs, who headed up Treasury’s Budget Office, must be understood in the context of state capture and a final attempt to wrest control from Treasury, before the ANC’s election conference next month.

Gordhan spoke to the SA Jewish Report following Sachs’ resignation this week, which most analysts see as a protest against executive interference with Treasury’s independence.

Sachs’ resignation follows reports that President Jacob Zuma was to impose a free education proposal that was drawn up outside of Treasury. This is despite the recently released Fees Commission report which states unambiguously South Africa cannot currently afford free education.

Sachs is widely admired for his commitment and technical proficiency. Ivor Chipkin, executive director of the Public Affairs Research Institute, described Sachs as someone of “extraordinary competence” with “a commitment to progressive projects”.



of tough measures. Sensible economic management and a relatively stable political order, aided by a good commodity cycle, saw investment confidence grow.

The upward trajectory was aided by tax policy changes in the late 1990s and early 2000s, coupled with increased revenue efficiencies, which saw a new compliance culture emerge.

Fiscal consolidation had significant consequences for the state’s capacity to help its citizens. Public spending increased and social grants were extended to millions of people.

According to Gordhan, tough policy decisions combined with effective implementation, meant that the state could deliver a measurably better life to more people.

Reaching that point was an enormous achievement, explained Chipkin. Consolidating disparate financial administrations to bring the country’s finances under a central department, and imposing strict protocols for reporting and allocating finances, was “a major democratic achievement” that was “important in terms of state building”.

Whatever one’s view of the preceding decades’ fiscal policy, Chipkin added, building an effective national department was hugely admirable.

However, the 2008 global financial crisis posed a challenge in terms of balancing fiscal responsibility with funding social services. Despite a muted recovery in the aftermath of the crisis, South Africa’s growth has been poor.

“In that kind of environment,” Gordhan said, further measures needed to be taken to retain fiscal credibility, such as minimising

increases to the deficit, focusing on growth and cutting expenditure in non-essential areas.

When he returned to the finance ministry at the end of 2015, it had become necessary to deepen budgetary cuts. Still, Gordhan stressed, cuts never ate into social grants or social services, as was the case with the austerity programmes practised in Europe.

In the context of relative austerity, Treasury increasingly finds itself acting as a restraint on government expenditure.

Ironically, analysts observe,

political efforts to diminish Treasury’s independence and loosen constraints on expenditure, have further eroded the country’s growth prospect, which can only make belt-tightening even more important.

Gordhan pointed out that amid uncertainty accompanying “state capture” and a weakening of essential institutions, we have seen a dramatic decline in investor confidence, compounded by the accompanied downgrades by rating agencies.

In the run-up to the ANC’s December leadership conference, Gordhan said: “Clearly what you have are attempts to grab onto power.”

A similar pattern is evident in attempts to shift budgetary supremacy to the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. Chipkin points out that although there may be a strong technical case for outcomes-based monitoring, “the performance process has been subverted by the president; the budgetary process is not clearly linked to the outcomes process.”

The upshot, Chipkin warns, is that the new budgetary process bypasses Treasury altogether.

“Michael’s resignation comes in the context of massive moves to

undermine Treasury.”

In this context, we can better understand why the president’s radical-sounding proposals, such as free education for all, should not be taken at face value.

According to Gordhan, South Africa still faces enduring structural issues: land redistribution, inequality and economic inclusivity still need to be adequately addressed, and serious social issues require bold new policies.

But these need to be pursued responsibly. “The ANC has said clearly there must be free education for poor students,” Gordhan said, but this “must be achieved in a balanced way. If we are not going to grow, have a poor compliance climate developing and investor confidence is weakening, this is going to have clear fiscal implications.”

However, Gordhan remains hopeful. The ANC’s December conference marks a crossroads for South Africa. If the right leadership team arises, Gordhan insists, “within three months we can reverse the situation”. To reverse the decline, Gordhan added, all sectors of society will have to work together. Now may be time not for despair, but for unity and action.

Zimbabwe Jewish community worried, but safe

TALI FEINBERG

“We are anxious as we don’t know who is in control,” says president of the Harare Hebrew Congregation, Arnold Joffe, on Wednesday as a military takeover occurred in Zimbabwe.

Joffe says that despite this dramatic series of events, which is now being called the “National Democratic Project”, life is returning to normal, despite parts of the city centre still being blocked off. Some people have gone to work, but most schools are closed, in accordance with the initial request to stay indoors.

Policy analyst Steven Gruzd, says that the takeover “does indeed look like a coup, although the first rule of a coup is not to call it that. It could also be described as a ‘soft coup’, which may give the Mugabes some kind of graceful exit.

“However, ultimately this is still an unconstitutional change of government and the military definitely has its own interests – this is



not altruism. It was probably also planned as it was very quick. South Africa will be sending envoys to work diplomatically, containing the fallout.”

African Jewish Congress Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft concurred with Joffe, telling the SA Jewish Report that life is going on as normal, especially in Bulawayo. In Harare, the school on the Jewish community’s property (which only has three Jewish

Continued on page 4 >>

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Laureen 083 789 0229

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ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

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Directions: Long into Jennifer
Joel Harris 082 926 0287 | Marco 082 048 2644

Fancy shopping for kosher fare at Woolies?

SUZANNE BELLING

It was hailed as “platz-worthy” by the kosher kids at the Beth Din. Woolworths took the community by surprise when it conducted a survey on social media last month to establish whether the company should expand its supply of kosher foodstuffs. The response was overwhelming, as many recall spotlessly clean Woolworth kosher chickens of yesteryear and long for them to reappear on the shelves. There was some scepticism as to the authenticity of the survey among a portion of the Jewish community. They were concerned that it was fake news. However, the SA Jewish Report was reassured by Richard Stockley, head of innovation at Woolworths Food, “It is certainly not a hoax, but part of a method of assessing the market,” he said. “Woolworths has a broad customer demographic and from time to time we conduct market research in the form of surveys and focus group discussions, in an effort to understand the needs of our customers. “Some surveys may focus on specific customer groups and interests,” as with the survey on kosher products, he said. The results of the survey have yet to be analysed and made public. However, Rabbi Dovi Goldstein, head of Kosher

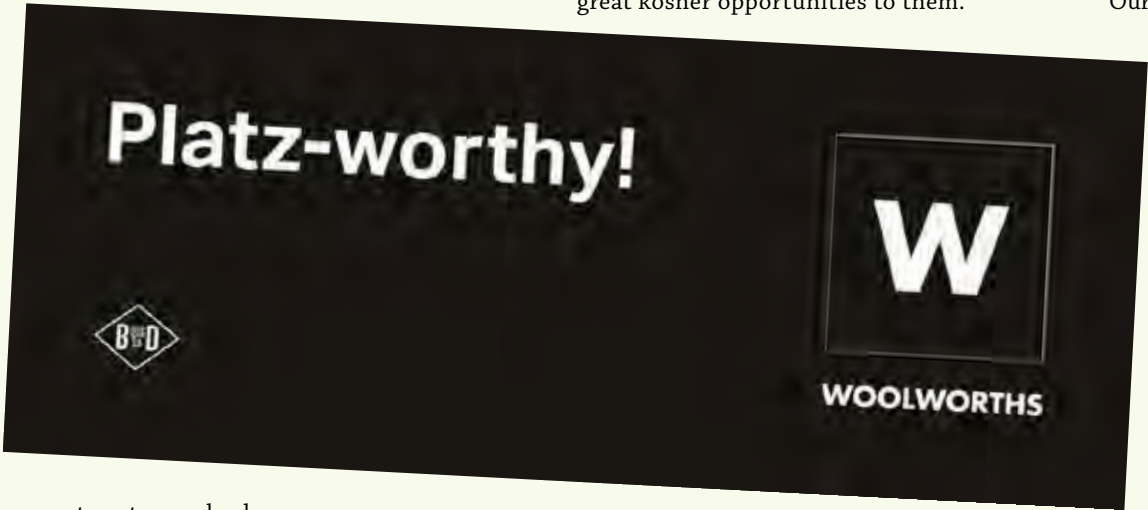
Partnerships at the South African Beth Din, was very happy with Woolworths doing the survey in the hope that they will indeed offer a wide kosher range. When he got wind of the survey, he forwarded it to members of the community on the Beth Din’s e-mail list. Goldstein believes this is all part of “fulfilling the vision of the chief rabbi for more people

very high kosher standards. We are here to facilitate, innovate and grow the kosher market substantially.” The Beth Din is hands-on in providing a platform for retailers to connect with consumers and for manufacturers to connect with retailers, he explains. “We see ourselves as serving the South African Jewish community by bringing great kosher opportunities to them.

has received between two and three new enquiries every week from companies wishing to become kosher. Goldstein said he was not in a position to elaborate on which companies these were until it became a fait accompli. However, he says: “We are witnessing companies seeing huge value in becoming kosher.

“Our role is to promote iconic South African products and brands – for example Nando’s and Sally Williams – and give them the opportunity to sell their products on a global scale.” To this end, Rabbi Goldstein, Rabbi Desmond Maizels, of the Cape Town Beth Din, and Jarred Abelson, head of finance and operations at the Beth Din, are in New Jersey, US, this week to take part in the annual international Kosherfest, “the biggest kosher food expo in the world”, where they have a stall. This gives South Africa an opportunity to sell its kosher products internationally.

Rabbi Goldstein said they were “driving the promotion of local kosher products relentlessly. “We are working hard with a fresh, innovative and dynamic team.” There are many exciting projects in the pipeline that will be announced on social media when they come to fruition.



to eat more kosher more often”. Goldstein also made contact with Woolworths over it and is now awaiting Woolworths to act on the survey. The Beth Din also took up the cudgels of the survey on social media with their “platz-worthy” campaign. Goldstein told the SA Jewish Report: “We have moved away from seeing kosher as limited. We never compromise on our

“Also, we see kosher as a premium offering, with great products and great service. We are here to drive the chief rabbi’s vision and to be global leaders in the kosher space.” Rabbi Goldstein said that retailers were viewing this service as great value for their businesses. Since the inception of this major kosher drive 15 months ago, the kosher department of the Beth Din

Zimbabwe Jewish community worried, but safe

>> Continued from page 3

children) has been closed as a precautionary measure. Shabbat services may also be cancelled so that community members are not walking in the streets if something chaotic were to occur. Most community members are elderly, but there are some families with children. If any community member feels unsafe, Rabbi Silberhaft has encouraged them to leave, and says the South African Jewish community will assist if needed. Joffe explains that the airport has been surrounded by the military, but this is more to stop Mugabe’s cronies fleeing, and citizens are allowed to leave. However, both men feel that whoever takes over the leadership, will not allow violence and anarchy. “Yes, there is uncertainty, but I don’t believe we need to get up and leave,” says Joffe. “Zimbabweans are generally very calm and non-confrontational, which is why this is taking place so peacefully,” says Rabbi Silberhaft. Furthermore, there has never been any anti-Semitic sentiment, and any anxiety is not specifically because we are Jewish, explained Joffe.

Bulawayo resident Raymond Roth, describes the city as “dead quiet” and says its Jewish community are not overly concerned, but there is a worry that there is a division between the army and the police, which may create conflict. Despite that, “we hope good will come out of it, and we don’t believe there will be direct harm to Jewish people,” he says. Roth describes the Bulawayo community as elderly, although there is a five-year-old boy, a nine-month-old

Zimbabweans are generally very calm and non-confrontational, which is why this is taking place so peacefully. Furthermore, there has never been any anti-Semitic sentiment.

baby girl and a newly-married couple. There are only about 10 people who are “able-bodied”, and they maintain a strong network between all community members, which will be utilised if things get difficult. A member of the Johannesburg Jewish community, who preferred to remain anonymous as she is a Zimbabwean citizen, said her parents and brother live in Harare. Her father went to work, but returned home midday, and the Zanu-PF youth who usually frequent the area he worked in, were “all gone... as were the police”. Her nephew had stayed home from school, but the suburbs where her family live are very quiet. “People are peaceful and even the army has done this peacefully. We are waiting in anticipation to see what will unfold.” SA Jewish Board of Deputies National Director Wendy Kahn said: “Over the past couple of weeks, the SAJBD, together with our African Jewish Congress Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft and the CSO, has been closely monitoring the situation in Zimbabwe and offering the Jewish community support where needed. We will continue to keep a close eye on developments.”



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A congregation divided over politics

NICOLA MILTZ

The presence of the SA leader of BDS at Beit Emanuel Synagogue – the largest Progressive congregation in South Africa – has driven a wedge of discontent between some of the shul’s members and its leadership.

The recent visit to the shul over Sukkot by Professor Farid Esack, has split the community, with some vehemently opposed to his presence, even contemplating resigning as members.

“People are fed up,” said one congregant who wishes to remain anonymous.” They do not want politics in their place of worship. The majority of members are devout Progressive Jews who love Israel and any interaction with BDS is unacceptable.”

The sentiment of those in opposition is that they love their shul and everything it stands for, but they don’t want it to encourage visitors who are against the State of Israel. They have asked to remain anonymous, because they want the situation to change without alienating themselves.

“This has been simmering for a number of years,” said one of the complainants referring to a so-called “left-wing element” at the shul which was threatening to divide the vibrant, all-inclusive community.

The chairperson of the South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ), Monica Solomon, said this week: “Those who have spoken to me, or messaged me, have made it very clear that they are not happy with the situation as it is at present. This has caused great division in the community, not only within the South African Progressive community, but in the wider Jewish community.”

Meetings on the issue were held last week between the SAUPJ and Beit Emanuel senior leadership.

The shul this week again denied inviting Esack over Yomtov insisting that he chose to attend the shul’s open Sukkah event which was open to the public.

Chairperson of the shul, Liebe Kellen, told the SA Jewish Report: “Neither Beit Emanuel’s management, nor its rabbi, have ever endorsed BDS.”

Realising that his presence at the shul was causing some controversy among its members, Esack wrote a long letter to the shul recently, saying: “I have been coming to the shul in the last two years from time to time, usually for Shabbat, but also on the other odd occasion. I am given to understand that my presence has caused, or is causing, discomfort to members of the larger Jewish community.”

He said he understood the discomfort.

“For many in the Jewish community, the State of Israel is synonymous with one’s identity



as a Jew and to oppose Israel and/or its policies, is to be opposed to (possibly even be an enemy of) all Jewish people.”

He said when he attends Beit Emanuel, which is in his area, he goes “as an ordinary person with an enquiring mind...” and remains as “unobtrusive as possible”.

“Coming to your shul provides me with much needed contemplative space where I can join in along and observe fellow worshippers of G-d and long-lost cousins.”

“Beit Emanuel prides itself on being the most diverse shul in the country: white, black, straight, gay, political, non-political, left-wing, right-wing... Keeping all of that together is a delicate balance in which each side needs to allow others their space.”

He said he acknowledged that it was difficult for some to separate his identity as a “believer and scholar of religion, from that of his work as an activist in the movement for justice for the Palestinian people”.

He assured the shul: “I mean no harm,” apologising for the discomfort caused and said he would “slide away gently” if it was in the shul’s best interests.

In another strongly worded, carefully re-crafted response to the SA Jewish Report article last week, Esack said it was “an untruth that anyone was shocked by my presence”.

“I have been to Beit Emanuel about ten times in the last two years, and to Orthodox shuls about three or four times. To the latter, I have sometimes gone alone and sometimes accompanied by a whole class of university students, where we were welcomed and addressed by the rabbis who all acknowledged that I was there as an academic who wanted his students to be exposed to Judaism as an alive religion.”

Beit Emanuel’s Kellen said: “Lots of outsiders attend our services; that is part of our philosophy of openness. As long as they

are unarmed and cause no trouble, we do not interrogate them on their views.”

Said one congregant who also asked to remain anonymous: “It is very sad when a sacred space of introspection, meditation and spiritual growth, becomes a platform for egos and private agendas.

“The problem is that a policy of ‘selective’ inclusion driven by and for the pompous gratification of a small group of individuals, has led to the fracturing and isolation of the Beit Emanuel community. It is now seen as a politically-driven community, attendance at which implies a buy-in. The broad religious and humanitarian ideals that drew congregants, have become collateral damage.”

In response to whether this issue was dividing the community, Kellen said: “Beit Emanuel prides itself on being the most diverse shul in the country: white, black, straight, gay, political, non-political, left-wing, right-wing... Keeping all of that together is a delicate balance in which each side needs to allow others their space.

“It has worked for many years. There are indeed, and have always been, strong differences of opinion. We call it democracy.”

Following last week’s article, a number of people posted anonymous letters on the SA Jewish Report website.

One member said: “Many of us would simply like our shul to be a place for prayer, study, and community, not a hotbed of radical politics... This is about the governance of the shul, and whether the shul is there to serve the broader membership, or only a small, self-appointed political clique, determined to use the shul to further their radical agenda.

“Beit Emanuel’s strength is (or was) that it is a diverse and inclusive congregation, with everyone made to feel welcome, irrespective of just about anything (including their politics). Lately, though, a form of political correctness has driven out this diversity of views, with only the politics of the hard left being tolerated as the ‘official’ politics of the shul. Sad!”

In response to an SA Jewish Report question about members expressing their unhappiness anonymously for fear of offending the leadership of the shul, Kellen said: “This is utterly outrageous. Only ten days ago the shul held an open session to which all members were invited and asked to express opinions about the management or rabbi, either in public or in private, which a great many did.

“We regularly ask congregants for feedback and hold open discussion sessions, for example about the shul’s vision.”

Said another: “Engaging with BDS in any way, shape or form, is an abomination to the greater Jewish community. Why then does this rabbi feel that it is OK to do so?”

Esack insisted in both his letter to the SA Jewish Report and the shul, that he wished no harm for any Jewish person. “An injury to one, is an injury to all.”

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Israel wants a bigger cut from those blue tzedakah boxes

ANDREW TOBIN
JERUSALEM

Jews around the world dropped coins into the Jewish National Fund’s blue charity boxes to help Zionists build the Jewish State.

More than a century later, the JNF, known in Hebrew as Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael, is rich. It owns 13 per cent of all the land in the country and brings in some \$3 billion a year, most of it from land sales.

Israel now wants a big cut of that revenue to help fund state-run national infrastructure projects, and the government is pushing legislation that would force JNF to pay up. But JNF is holding out, saying it is doing a fine job developing the country on its own.

The government feels entitled to JNF’s money, which according to its mission is held in trust for the Jewish people. While JNF is not state run, the government appoints many of its officials and a public agency, the Israel Land Authority, manages and sells its land.

In the past, the government has often drawn on JNF funds to meet its needs, and is currently seeking to fund its two-year budget.

“The JNF sells lands every year and receives billions of shekels in return,” Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last week at an emergency government meeting on the issue. “It is very important that this money be channelled to the needs of the State of Israel.”

In response, the JNF argues that it has earned the right to independence. Founded in 1901, it bought land and founded settlements on which Israel was established in 1948. Famed for planting hundreds of millions of trees in Israel, the not-for-profit group also focuses on land reclamation and development of communities outside central Israel.

“Mr Prime Minister, KKL-JNF invests billions every year in strengthening the periphery, education and the environment,” JNF head, Dany Atar, tweeted, using an acronym that includes its Hebrew name. “It’s a shame that you, Bibi, are fulfilling Zahalka’s dream of dismantling the JNF.”

Jamal Zahalka, a Knesset member from the Arab Joint List party, is among those who criticise JNF for selling land exclusively to Jews.

Some would like to see JNF reformed for other reasons.

For over a century Jews around the world have contributed to the development of the land of Israel. Even before the establishment of the state our parents and grandparents collected funds in the Blue Box with the hope that one day they would have a Jewish homeland. The JNF (KKL) have ensured that these funds belonging to the Jewish people of the diaspora are used for afforestation, water projects, assisting kibbutzim and moshavim with land preparation making Israel a world leader in water conservation and afforestation and ensuring that all new olim have housing through JNFs land preparation.

For decades JNF has worked together with the Government of Israel through the Israel Lands Authority and JNF has for many years given funds to the Government of Israel. It is to say the least, a sorry state of affairs when the Government states it will collapse if JNF (KKL) does not hand over 65 per cent of its revenue.

In January, a scathing state comptroller report characterised JNF as wasteful, opaque and possibly compromised by conflicts of interest. According to the report, over the 15 months leading up to November 2015, the JNF spent just a third of its revenue on public projects to develop land compared to 43 per cent to “expand its own financial assets”. The comptroller recommended expanded government oversight of the organisation.

In response, JNF issued a list of planned reforms in May that Atar said would “deal courageously with the failures and the criticism and use this low point to create

a significant turnaround in the life of the organisation”.

Under pressure from the government, Atar agreed last month to hand over 2 billion shekels, or \$570 million, in two instalments – one this year and one the next. But the JNF board of directors rejected the deal and instead offered to make just the first payment.

That led government ministers to advance legislation last Tuesday that would require JNF to transfer 80 per cent of its revenue to the Finance Ministry every year or lose its tax-exempt status. Coalition Chairman David Bitan reportedly told ministers that the government must collect the money, or it could collapse, forcing new elections.

Nonetheless, several coalition members opposed taking a hard line against the venerable Zionist institution, and later last Tuesday, the Knesset Finance Committee lowered the legislation’s demand to 65 per cent of JNF’s annual revenue.

For the time being, JNF has declared a freeze on the marketing and development of housing projects on the land it owns. On Thursday, the leaders of the World Zionist Organisation, which is affiliated with JNF, will hold an emergency meeting to discuss the situation.

Isla Feldman, chairperson of the JNF of South Africa, says: “For over a century, Jews around the world have contributed to the development of the Land of Israel. Even before the establishment of the State, our parents and grandparents collected funds in the Blue Boxes with the hope that one day they would have a Jewish homeland.”

She says the JNF (KKL) has ensured that these funds belonging to the Jewish people of the Diaspora, are used for afforestation, water projects, assisting kibbutzim and moshavim, with land preparation. Because of

this, Israel is a world leader in water conservation and afforestation, and new olim are ensured of housing through JNF’s land preparation.

“For decades, JNF has worked with and given funds to the Israeli government – through the Israel Lands Authority. This is to say the least, a sorry state of affairs when the government states it will collapse if JNF (KKL) does not hand over 65 per cent of its revenue.”

While the JNF (KKL) have said they have frozen the development of housing projects, “I feel sure that there will be more meetings and discussions and hopefully both parties will settle amicably”, says Feldman.

The World Zionist Organisation is a large beneficiary of the JNF and this drastic cut will affect them, she explains.

“In South Africa, JNF will continue to work on our designated projects and I have been assured by JNF Israel that they will all be undertaken as previously advised,” explains Feldman.

“JNF of SA is the founder of Food and Trees for Africa, probably the largest and most successful environmental and food production organisation in SA. And our projects at the Walter Sisulu Environmental Centre in Mamelodi, educate 12 000 children every year in water conservation, energy and waste management. JNF in KwaZulu-Natal, have a similar successful educational project.”

(Additional reporting by SA Jewish Report)

Photo: Flickr Commons



The Jewish National Fund collects money through donations in boxes that look like this



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Rapper Drake’s South African family

PETA KROST MAUNDER

Multi-award-winning international rapper Drake is not only Jewish, but he has a close South African connection.

His relationship to the local Jewish community is so close, some of his cousins were even educated at King David Linksfield. While some of them have emigrated, others are living in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

King David alumnus Joel Levy – who initially discovered he was related to Drake – spent three years living in Israel before settling in England 22 years ago.

Although he is a dentist by profession, he has much more than a fascination for genealogy. He has dug deep into his own family background, which is how he discovered his kinship with this year’s newly anointed King of Music.

Drake, a black Jewish Canadian rapper, won 2017 Billboard Music Award’s top artist and took home a record 13 awards at this year’s ceremony in May. He is the Billboard Music’s biggest single award winner ever and his awards this year include: Top Male Artist, Top Billboard 200 Artist, Top Rap Artist and many more.

When the SA Jewish Report told the story in June of how this Rap king was Jewish, Levy alerted the newspaper to the fact that Drake was his cousin.

Levy has been involved with the Jewish Genealogy Society in Great Britain for 10 years – having been the society’s vice chairperson for some years – and often gives talks

there.

He discovered that his and Drake’s great-grandparents were siblings, thereby making the superstar and the dentist third cousins. While Levy hasn’t met Drake, he had a family reunion in Toronto, Canada, in May 1999 when he met Drake’s now late grandparents – Ruby (Reuben) and Evelyn Sher.

“Drake wasn’t there and neither was his mother, Sandy Sher,” says Levy, who at the time knew nothing about Drake. “When I was discussing doing the family tree with them, they spoke of their grandson, Aubrey Drake Graham. I didn’t know who he was or that he was famous, although they may have assumed I did. Neither of us said anything about it.

“Drake was very close to his

forever forgive anybody that never was there/ For me, no other woman could ever compare/ My angel I hope heaven’s prepared for whenever you there.”

On “Look What You’ve Done”, he toasts his mother in the first verse and then his uncle in the second, then turns the mic to his grandmother who apparently talks to him from her nursing home, saying over the beat of the piano: “All I can say Aubrey is, I remember the good times we had together and the times I used to look after you and I still have wonderful feelings about that. So, G-d bless you, and I hope I’ll see you.”

Drake even named his upmarket private members-only club in Toronto, Sher Club, after his grandparents.

Levy explains that Drake’s parents, Sandy and Dennis Graham – a well-known African American musician – were divorced. Drake, who is Jewish, having attended a Jewish day school in Toronto and had his barmitzvah.

“I went to a Jewish school, where nobody understood what it was like to be black and Jewish,” he has reportedly said. “When kids are young it’s hard for them to understand the make-up of religion and race.”

Drake also identifies strongly with his black cultural roots, according to Levy.

Levy says: “When I told my sister’s children that Drake was related to them, they started screaming with excitement.”

Levy’s sister Coreen Crown, who lives in Johannesburg, says: “When Joel told us, I was totally amazed. Now, it is surreal. When my

kids went to school and told their friends, nobody believed them. My husband teases me that my cousin is on the radio when Drake is playing.”

Levy explains he first became interested in genealogy when he worked on a Holocaust project at King David High School. “My mother’s family was wiped out in Lithuania and I wrote down a list because I wanted to know their names, so they weren’t nameless. I wanted them to be remembered.” While his mother’s side had a sad history, his father’s side gave him plenty to work with.

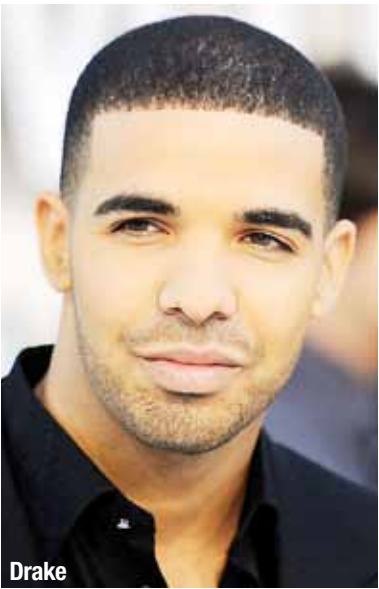
His father’s mother’s side had been in England and Wales since 1823. So, after he left Israel after making aliya, one of the drawcards about moving to England was that he would have a good chance to resume doing his family tree.

While working on his family tree, he discovered that there were five Sher siblings on the other side; two women, Anne (Chassel) and Liebe Michle; and then three men, Beryl, Morris and Louis who were born in Lithuania between 1873 and 1891.

“My grandparents – Tzippa (Gavendo) and Israel Sher – were first cousins because the daughter of Liebe Michle married the son of Beryl. This was quite common for people from Lithuania of that generation.”

Morris Sher – Liebe Michle and Beryl’s brother – was Drake’s great-grandfather and was the father of Ruby (Reuben) Sher, his grandfather. “Rueben was first cousin to my grandfather and grandmother on my mother’s side,” says Levy. “He is my third cousin and his mom and my mom are second cousins.”

Levy explains that his grandfather, Israel came to South Africa in 1930, before the war broke out in Lithuania. His grandmother



followed two years later.

“My grandfather only knew of an aunt, Chasia, who went from Lithuania to Canada. “Back in the 1940s, someone in our family went to Canada to meet the part of the family that went there and apparently they had lots of children. One of Chasia and Sam Miller’s granddaughters – Gail Faust – was also doing the genealogy of the family. She and I found each other around 20 years ago.

“Until then we only knew of her grandmother, Chasia, but she told us that there were two other brothers that went to Canada, Morris (Drake’s great grandfather), and his younger brother, Louis.

Levy is not holding his breath to meet Drake because of his fame. For him, it is much more about connecting with all the members of his family and completing the family tree. Some of the younger members of the family, however, would love to meet their famous cousin.

Crown, however, would love to have Drake over for Shabbat. “I would love for him to see how special our traditional family Shabboses are. We don’t really mind that he is famous, but he is family and we are a very family-oriented family. And he is one of us and for that reason, we would love to meet him.”



Joel Levy with Drake’s maternal grandparents

grandparents, particularly his grandmother. He mentions her in a number of songs,” says Levy. He featured her on his hit album Take Care, when he rapped: “I heard they just moved my grandmother to a nursing home/ And I be actin’ like I don’t know how to work a phone...”

On an unreleased song called “The Winner”, he uttered: “Yeah, and in the name of Evelyn Sher/ I’ll

There goes the Vintage Man!

OWN CORRESPONDENT

If you happen to be in the Johannesburg suburbs on the weekend and you hear someone shout, “There goes the Vintage Man”, don’t look for an elderly gentleman. Move your gaze to the road to see the man driving a Model T Ford or another of his collection of working vintage cars.

The “Vintage Man” is Paul Koski, who may have three young boys, but he certainly can’t yet be construed as “vintage”. Despite his flamboyant cars, Koski is an introverted chartered accountant with a big passion for vintage cars.

His love of these cars began when he was just a little boy, who had many Dinky cars. “I suppose I never really grew out of them. I simply moved onto playing with bigger and more complicated cars,” Koski told the SA Jewish Report.

“Driving a Model T Ford is an acquired art; it is not easy. But when you learn the idiosyncrasies of the planetary gear transmission system, then driving one of these cars becomes most rewarding and gives one a sense of great pleasure,” says this car enthusiast.

“Friends and I built up a 1925 Model T from a base car and other bits and pieces we

found. We chose to give it a “paddy wagon” (prisoner transport) van body, suitably sign written.

“I am also in the fortunate position of having the privilege of caring for two other Model T Fords – 1915 and 1919 models – that had been stored in a warehouse for about 15 years before I got them back on the road.

“This situation has enabled me to become fairly proficient in driving these cars with their complicated transmission system. The accelerator is a lever on the steering column, not on the floor. The three pedals on the floor do everything differently when compared to the modern car.

“The pedal on the right is a brake pedal not an accelerator, while the centre pedal, normally a brake on a modern car, is a reverse gear. The left pedal, usually the clutch on a modern car, selects high and low speeds, thus driving and not concentrating can get you into trouble quickly,” explains Koski.

“I believe the special appeal of the Model T Ford comes from mastering the driving technique. Then, of course, it is amazing to be part of history when at the steering wheel of the car that put the world on wheels, with Henry Ford using a moving conveyor line to speed up production and thereby reduce the



cost of the car.

“When I became interested in collecting classic cars, about 15 years ago, I started initially with comparatively late models – 1950s and ‘60s – but then switched my allegiance to much older models.

“My current collection includes a 1904 Curved Dash Oldsmobile and a 1909 Star, made in England,” adds Koski, who serves on the committees of the Vintage and Veteran Club and the Southern Africa Veteran and Vintage Association.

Koski says he sees himself as a “fulltime apprentice” who does whatever restoration work he can in terms of his mechanical ability, but when he gets stuck, he calls on the

services of his friends, Brian Style and Tony Watson, both of whom are very skilled at working on these old cars.

So, during the week, it is suits and numbers, but any given weekend and holiday down time – when he is not doing family things – is spent on his cars.

“It really does suck my time, but I get so much enjoyment from them. And when we do drive to Parkview or Parkhurst for a coffee on a Sunday, people are fascinated and love to see the cars.”

But as for his two sons, they are far more interested in new cars and if you gave them a choice, “they would much prefer driving around in a brand new Porsche”, says Koski.

Keeping Brandon Ossip’s memory alive

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

When the King David High School Victory Park five-a-side soccer players ran onto the Discovery Soccer Park field for this year’s tournament in October, they did so in the memory of past pupil Brandon Ossip. From this year on, they will do so annually and they will remember Brandon who was just 14 when he was tragically killed in a car accident 20 years ago.

“The tree was planted outside the school hall about a week after his death,” says Anton. “It’s now enormous. I’m grateful for all King David has done. It was such a shock at the time that it was hard for us as a family to do anything – it was just too hard to deal with.

“Brandon was like any young kid – full of life,” says his brother Anton Ossip, who’s now the CEO of Discovery Insure. “He had a great sense of humour and was very sporty, a very well-rounded, well-liked, popular person. He was just a happy, young Jewish boy.”

While in his grade 9 year at KDVP, Brandon passed away in a car accident in April 1997.

“He was eight years younger than me,” says Anton.



The Ossip family with this year's five-a-side soccer players

“There were three siblings in the family, myself, my sister and him. It’s a very hard thing to deal with for any family. Different people deal with it in different ways.”

The Ossips battled to process Brandon’s death and barely spoke about it. “My family went through some horrific times in the same year,” says Anton. “We lost my mother just six months after Brandon’s death, so it was really rough.”

In 1997, the year Brandon died, KDVP planted a tree in his memory and initiated an annual all-rounder trophy award in his name.

“The tree was planted outside the school hall about a week after his death,” says Anton. “It’s now enormous. I’m grateful for all King David has done. It was such a shock at the time that it was hard for us as a family to do anything – it was just too hard to deal with.

“I’ve always wanted to do something, though and it’s weird that it took 20 years to happen. Better late than never.”

Also looking for a way to honour his memory 20 years after his death, Brandon’s closest friends decided to rejuvenate the area around the tree at KDVP.

“They came together from around the world and decided to make it a nice place for the kids to use,” explains Anton. “So, they added a bench and a water fountain there and paved around the area. The school held a ceremony to open it a few months ago.”

At the ceremony, which the Ossips attended, one of Brandon’s friend’s David Kaplan, made a speech. “It was the same speech he’d made at the time of Brandon’s death, when he and his friends were just grade 9 boys standing there, not knowing what hit them. It was very touching.”

Afterwards, Anton was approached by pupil Gaby Nossel who had been awarded the Brandon Ossip best all-rounder award earlier this year. Coincidentally, Gaby is also the son of Dr Craig Nossel, Anton’s colleague at Discovery.

“Gaby wanted to do something more through dedicating the soccer tournament to Brandon’s memory,” explains Anton. “For me it was important that even 20 years later we find a way to remember him and to ensure that other people remembered him too.” Anton sponsored the tournament and hopes to make it an annual event.

“Having his memory resurface so he’s not faded into history, is important to me,” he continues. “I have young kids and so does my sister and they obviously never got to meet their uncle, so

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Making her divorce trauma work for other women

TALI FEINBERG

When Stacey Lewis’ husband arrived home in 2008 to tell her that he wanted a divorce and it was not negotiable, she was shattered and didn’t know where to turn. They had three children aged, eight months, 22 months and three years old.

“It was not preceded by any obvious discord and I was shocked and heartbroken. I suffered from severe depression as a result, became anorexic (weighing 38 kilograms) and was passively suicidal,” says Lewis.

Her experience taught her that divorce can be an extremely lonely and traumatic experience. In addition to the loss and heartbreak of separation, one may experience alienation, judgement, and conflict, ugly courtroom confrontations, emotional, physical or financial abuse, and negative effects on children.

After what she went through, she became passionate about helping other women going through divorce. She eventually founded “The Divorce Source” website and authored (in collaboration with many experts) *Divorce 101: survive and thrive*.

As she explains: “What I noticed at the time was the absence of formal support structures for women going through a divorce,” and she now fills this gap with her website, book, public speaking, coaching, courses and mediation.

Although she was formerly a physiotherapist, this has become her passion and she works closely with the Chevrah Kadisha and the Shoshanna

Foundation (which assists single mothers).

“I was fortunate in that the Chev was receptive to my idea of training volunteers to accompany women to court,” Lewis says.

Social worker Tova Goldstein heads up this work at the Chevrah Kadisha. “One of my responsibilities is running the new ‘court support’ programme, where we trained a group of volunteers to go to court with women or men in abusive relationships, or getting a divorce, and to help them with protection orders and maintenance claims.”

Goldstein explains: “It is very overwhelming to go to court on your own and wait in queues for hours till you are called up by the magistrate. Not only that, but often the ex is in the courtroom at the same time and that can be very intimidating.

“With our court support programme, the individual has someone with them the whole time, offering support, encouragement, and even providing food.

“The last case we had was a woman

After what she went through, she became passionate about helping other women going through divorce. She eventually founded “The Divorce Source” website.

who was trying to get an increase in her maintenance as her circumstances had changed. She went to court with one of our volunteers who sat with her the whole time, kept her calm and helped her fill out the maintenance forms,” explains Goldstein.

“Unfortunately, it did not end in her favour, which left her feeling utterly devastated. She told us afterwards that having the volunteer with her when she received the bad news, was the most comforting and hopeful experience. And the fact that the volunteer was a total stranger gave her a level of privacy that she needed.”

A Jewish woman who preferred to remain anonymous agrees that the support she got from the Chev and Lewis, was key in helping her emerge stronger after her divorce.

“The Chev even organised a volunteer to drive with me to court, and it was so helpful to have that support. Sometimes it is better not to have friends or family with you as they are too close to the situation,” she says.

She adds that from the moment Lewis heard about her situation, she made herself constantly available to talk to or WhatsApp, day or night. She was even on the phone when this woman went to the Beth Din to receive her Gett, which she describes as “far more emotional” than the civil divorce.

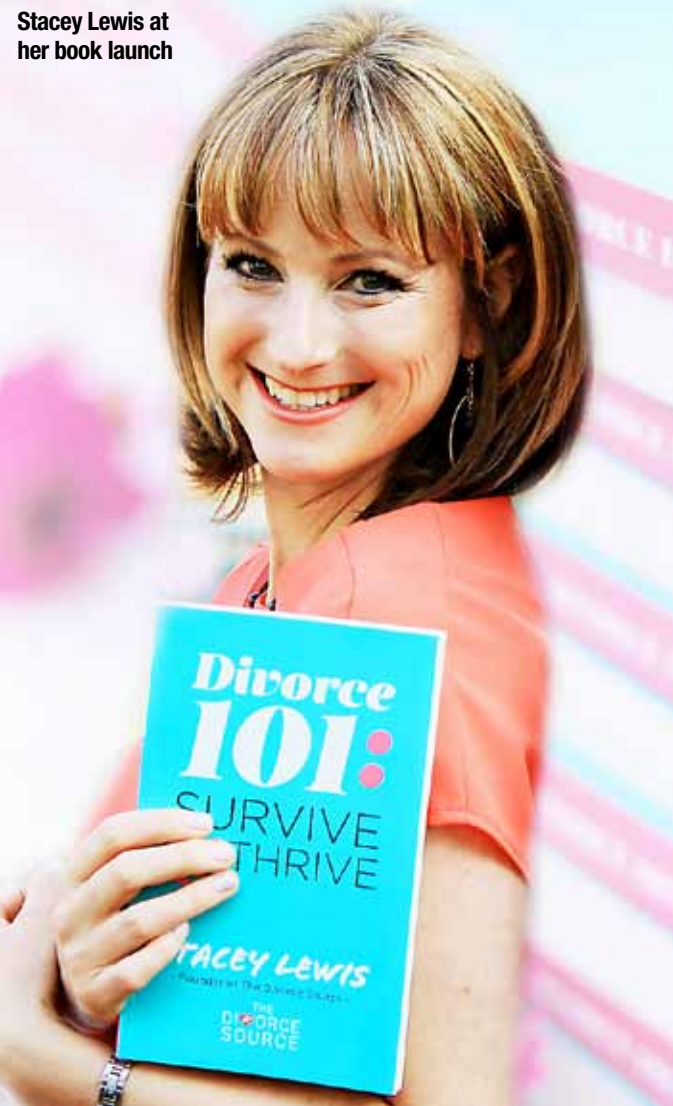
She was the only female in the room (although she found out later that you can bring someone with to support you), and although she found the dayanim to be supportive, she still found the Gett ceremony to be a huge emotional strain.

“Like other families in the Jewish community, I was the woman behind the man, supporting his career and having a big family. When my marriage fell apart, I was left without adequate financial support.”

Indeed, Jewish women may experience specific challenges going through divorce – for example, celebrating Shabbat, chaggim and simchas without their children. “For a Jewish woman going through a divorce, chaggim can be a tremendously difficult time,” says Lewis.

“It is difficult to adjust to being alone without one’s children at times, and the pain of divorce is often heightened at these times. The sense of loss is also heightened at simchot and family occasions. A good parenting plan can go a long way towards preparing everyone for the necessary adjustments and avoiding conflicts.”

Another Jewish woman who asked to remain anonymous, emphasises this point, explaining how she struggled to keep Shabbos after her divorce because “Shabbos is for happy families” and it became



Stacey Lewis at her book launch

suffocating instead of restful when going through divorce.

She also felt alienated and judged by other frum families. She had always felt “protected” by the observant lifestyle, but when her husband announced he was having an affair and wanted a divorce – while she was pregnant – all that was shattered.

“Like other families in the Jewish community, I was the woman behind the man, supporting his career and having a big family. When my marriage fell apart, I was left without adequate financial support, and Stacey helped me get a pro-bono lawyer,” she says.

This woman adds that she has seen “marriages exploding left right and centre... especially to those of us like me who never thought it would happen”. She has been alienated as “people are scared to be around you and think you are interested in their husbands”, which is obviously untrue.

But her journey also led her to meet new people from all walks of life, as divorce doesn’t discriminate, and support forums have been a great place to connect with others in the same scenario.

Lewis agrees that many positives can come from divorce: “It can mean a new beginning. A divorce can be positive if one’s mindset is set on finding the positive aspects. From my personal experience, my divorce was the catalyst to a new and better life, and I truly feel as if my divorce was my ‘gift wrapped in sandpaper’.

Lewis says divorce is “a major life trauma, right up there on the scale with death of a spouse... but it doesn’t have to be the end”, she says.

“You may not have chosen your divorce, or you may have felt that divorce was the only choice you had... but you can choose how to move on from that point. It is possible to work through the pain, to rebuild your life and find happiness again.”

One of the many women she has helped, says: “A divorce may feel like ‘Hiroshima’, but you do become okay. I don’t believe time is a healer – I believe YOU are a healer. We all dream of a fairy tale, but life can have different chapters, and it doesn’t have to be the end.”

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THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Threatened south to north, IDF seeks calm while steeling for worst

JUDAH ARI GROSS

The Israeli military is finding that striking a delicate balance between keeping terror groups from preparing for a future war and keeping the region relatively calm is easier said than done. This, with tensions rising in the south amid fears that the Islamic Jihad terror group will attempt to avenge a tunnel demolition two weeks ago.

While neither side may be gunning for a fight, a miscalculation by the IDF runs the risk of triggering a bloody tit-for-tat fight that can lead to all-out war.

For the past two weeks, the military has been trying to prevent such an escalation as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist group has vowed revenge for the army’s demolition of its attack tunnel that crossed into Israeli territory from Gaza.

Israel Defence Forces troops in southern Israel have been on alert following last month’s tunnel razing.

In the army’s most recent measure, on Monday it deployed its Iron Dome missile defence system in central Israel – including at least one battery in the greater Tel Aviv region – out of concerns the group may retaliate with a barrage of rockets.

In addition to preparing for attack, the Israeli military has also been trying to prevent one, repeatedly warning against a retaliation in direct addresses to both the Gaza-based Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the Strip’s rulers, Hamas.

The army blew up the tunnel, which originated in the Gazan city of Khan Younis and crossed into Israeli territory, near Kibbutz Kissufim, on October 30.

In total, 14 terrorists were killed, two of them from Hamas and the rest from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, including two senior commanders. The bodies of five of the Islamic Jihad terrorists, who were working on the tunnel inside Israeli territory, were recovered by the IDF a few days later.

But according to the army, this high body



count was not intentional. The goal for the operation, per the IDF, was the destruction of the tunnel, not assassination. In comments after the blast, IDF officials also noted that many of the terrorists died not in the explosion, but in botched rescue attempts.

But the military stressed it does not regret the deaths of terrorists, after facing a backlash from politicians who interpreted the officers’ comments as apologetic.

In light of the body count, the military determined that the group “will have a hard time holding back”.

Incidentally, Tuesday also marks five years since the IDF killed then-Hamas military commander Ahmed Jabari in an airstrike, which sparked the week-long Operation Pillar of Defence campaign in Gaza. Palestinian terror groups have been known to carry out attacks to coincide with significant anniversaries.

Former Military Intelligence chief Amos Yadlin praised the military on Monday for preparing to counter the threats from Gaza, but warned it not to forget that “the northern front is Israel’s main focus – Assad, Hezbollah, and Iran will seek to challenge the IDF.”

On Saturday, Israel shot down a drone from Syria with a Patriot missile in the third such incident this year, which military officials say is an indication of Syrian dictator Bashar Assad’s increasing brazenness in light of his successes in the country’s civil war.

TOURING NORTHERN BORDER, LIEBERMAN VOWS NO IRAN PRESENCE IN SYRIA

TOI STAFF

In remarks apparently addressed to Russia, Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman on Wednesday said Israel will not tolerate Iran’s presence in Syria as part of a US-Russian ceasefire deal that will reportedly allow Iranian-linked militias to remain in the country.

“We simply will not allow Shiite and Iranian entrenchment in Syria. And we will not allow all of Syria to become a forward operating base against the State of Israel. Whoever doesn’t understand that – should understand that,” Lieberman said.

The defence minister spoke during a visit to the northern border, a day after Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told reporters that the ceasefire terms did not include a Russian commitment to ensure Iran-linked militias would be pulled out of Syria.

Lavrov said Iran maintained a “legitimate” presence in Syria, according to the Interfax news agency.

It was not clear if Lavrov’s comments on Tuesday related to media reports that the deal would place restrictions on how close to the Israeli-Syrian border Iran-backed groups would be allowed to remain.

‘PEACE AND LOVE’ AS MISS ISRAEL AND MISS IRAQ POSE TOGETHER

TOI STAFF

The Miss Universe international beauty pageant contestants from Israel and Iraq – officially enemies – posed together for selfies that they posted to Instagram and Facebook.

“Get to know, this is Miss Iraq and she’s amazing,” enthused Miss Israel Adar Gandelsman in her Instagram post. “Practising bringing world peace,” she wrote on Facebook, in time-honoured beauty queen style.

“Peace and Love from Miss Iraq and Miss Israel,” wrote Miss Iraq Sarah Idan on her Instagram post, followed by heart emojis.

Both had well over 1 000 likes on the photo-based social network as of Tuesday evening.

The warm greetings of the two women could land Idan in hot water.

A 2015 selfie that put then-Miss Israel Doron Matalon in the same photo with then-Miss Lebanon Sally Greige, led to calls to strip Greige of her title. It is illegal for Lebanese citizens to have contact with the Jewish State.

“From the first day I arrived at the

Miss Universe pageant I was very careful not to take any pictures with Miss Israel, who tried repeatedly to take pictures with me,” Greige wrote. “While I was preparing with Miss Slovenia and Miss Japan to get our photograph taken, Miss Israel jumped in and took a selfie with her phone and posted it on social media.”

Lebanese critics of Greige pointed to Matalon’s service in the IDF.

Israel’s Adar Gandelsman, 19, from Ashkelon, is currently in the middle of her military service, “and is passionate about her duties with the force”, the Miss Universe website relates.

Luckily for the 27-year-old Baghdad-born Idan, she now lives in the US, according to her website profile, and so may be freer to associate with Israelis at the pageant than other Arab contestants.

Both Gandelsman and Idan are at the Planet Hollywood resort in Las Vegas preparing to join the roughly 100 women who will be competing in the 66th Miss Universe competition at the casino resort on November 26.



Miss Israel Adar Gandelsman (left) and Miss Iraq Sarah Idan, share a moment at the 2017 Miss Universe beauty pageant

The Russian envoy’s remarks came as officials from the US National Security Council flew into Israel for talks with security heads, primarily over the US-Russia agreement regarding Syria and Iran’s growing threat to the region.

The US officials were likely to discuss Iran’s alleged construction of a military base less than 50 kilometres from Israel’s Golan border.

Last Friday, the BBC, citing a Western security official, reported that Iran was setting up a permanent base on a site

used by the Syrian army near el-Kiswah, 14 kilometres south of Damascus, and 50 kilometres from the Israeli border.

The ceasefire agreement, announced in a joint US-Russian statement on Saturday, affirms a call for “the reduction, and ultimate elimination” of foreign fighters from southern Syria.

According to reports, the deal applies to Iranian proxies fighting on behalf of Assad’s regime, which would be required to leave the border area and eventually Syria.



SOUTH
AFRICAN
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FEDERATION



Netanyahu warns terror groups: Don’t even think about it

TOI STAFF

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned on Sunday that the country would respond harshly to any attack against it, no matter where it comes from.

Netanyahu’s comments appeared to be prompted by blustery statements from the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group in Gaza, which is threatening Israel with retaliation for the destruction of a terror tunnel it dug under the border into Israel, but they also came amid increasing tension on Israel’s northern borders.

“These days, there are still those who toy with trying renewed attacks on Israel,” Netanyahu said at the start of



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attends the weekly Cabinet meeting

the weekly Cabinet meeting. “We will take a very strong hand against anyone who tries to attack us or attacks us from any sector.

“I say this to every entity, rogue faction, organisation – every one. In any case, we see Hamas as responsible for every attack that emanates from, or is planned against us in, the Gaza Strip,” he said.

The Hamas terror organisation seized control of Gaza in a 2007 coup, taking over the coastal enclave from the Palestinian Authority.

Islamic Jihad said earlier on Sunday it would not back down on its “right” to retaliate against Israel for the tunnel explosion, which led to the death of 12 terror group members – 10 from Islamic Jihad, including two commanders, and two members of Hamas’s military wing.

The “threats to target the movement’s leadership is a declaration of war, which we will confront”, Islamic Jihad said, according to a statement carried by its media affiliate Palestine Today News Agency. “We reaffirm our right to respond to any aggression, including our right to respond to the crime of aggression on the resistance tunnel.”

On Saturday, Maj Gen Yoav Mordechai, who runs the Defence Ministry’s chief liaison office with the Palestinians, publicly warned Islamic Jihad not to try to retaliate for the tunnel destruction.

Mordechai, speaking in a video posted to YouTube, addressed by name the terror group’s leader, Ramadan Shalah, and his deputy, Ziad Nakhleh, who run the Gaza-based group from Damascus, and said they would be “held responsible” should Islamic Jihad attack Israel.

On October 30, the Israel Defence Forces blew up a tunnel that originated in the Gazan city of Khan Younis and crossed into Israeli territory, near Kibbutz Kissufim.

According to the army, the tunnel had been under surveillance the entire time that it was inside Israeli territory and did not pose a threat to civilians.

The army said later that killing the terrorists was not the primary objective of the tunnel demolition.

The bodies of five terrorists who were working on the tunnel inside Israeli territory, were recovered by the IDF, the army said.

According to Palestinian media, Hamas encouraged Islamic Jihad to abstain from retaliating, both in order to prevent further escalation with Israel and to prevent the reconciliation talks it has been conducting with the Palestinian Authority, from falling apart.

Earlier this month, a senior officer in the IDF’s Southern Command, warned that the military suspected the terror group may retaliate for the tunnel demolition with attacks on soldiers serving near the border, rocket fire at southern Israeli communities, or terror attacks in the West Bank.

“The [Palestinian] Islamic Jihad will have a hard time holding back,” said the unnamed senior official.

Rivlin to US Jews: ‘Pained’ that Kotel now ‘a symbol of division’

JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY
LOS ANGELES

President Reuven Rivlin on Monday lamented the Western Wall’s transformation into “a symbol of division and disagreement” between Israel and the Diaspora, and expressed hope that understandings would soon be reached on egalitarian prayer at the holy site.

Addressing the General Assembly of the Jewish Federations of North America in Los Angeles, Rivlin said: “It causes such pain that the symbol of unity, the Wall of our Tears and Joy, has become a symbol of division and disagreement.

“I hope that in the future we can return to the table together, and reach an understanding on this important issue.”

He added that it was important to “respect Israel’s democratic process, the decision-making process. Whether we like it or not, in the only Jewish democratic state, ‘religion and state’ is a political issue – maybe the most explosive one.”

The government earlier this year suspended an agreement that would have upgraded the egalitarian prayer platform adjacent to the main plaza at the holy site, and set it up as a permanent prayer site.

The decision led to widespread anger in the Jewish world, and faith leaders have warned of a growing rift between Israel and the Diaspora over the former’s treatment of the non-ultra-Orthodox streams of Judaism.



Rivlin said Israel “was, and will always be, the home of every Jew: Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, secular, traditional, Ashkenazi, Sephardi. Jews. We are all one people, and Israel is dear to all of us.

“The Jews of the Diaspora, especially in North America, are full partners,” he said. “You are true stakeholders in this wonder called Israel. You stand beside us at times of crisis and joy. You dream with us. You challenge us. You help keep us strong.”

That support, he said, “cannot be taken for granted”.

Rivlin said Jews should stand together “against anti-Semitism in all its forms, from the vandalism of Jewish cemeteries, to terror attacks against our brothers and sisters around the world, from BDS on campuses, to attacking Israel’s legitimacy in the United Nations. There is no room for hesitation, we must continue the fight against it as one

united front.”

He also spoke of a need to preserve Jewish identity “and to pass it from one generation to the next,” as well as an imperative of safeguarding Israel – facing the Iranian threat to Israel and the region and ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“The lives of Palestinians and Israelis, Arabs and Jews, are bound together,” he said. “We live side by side, and with each other. We share the same land, the same holy places, the same water and the same sky.

“There will be no peace, until we all understand that we are not doomed to live together, it is our destiny to live together” (JTA)

IDF deploys Iron Dome, raises alert amid Gaza terror threat

JUDAH ARI GROSS

A number of Iron Dome missile defence batteries were deployed in central Israel on Monday, the military said, amid heightened tensions with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad since the army demolished the terrorist group’s border-crossing attack tunnel last month.

The IDF confirmed on Monday the anti-missile systems were installed in “central Israel”, but would not elaborate on their exact location.

The Iron Dome system, which is designed to shoot down short-range rockets and, in some cases, mortars, was deployed to counter the threats made by Islamic Jihad, which has vowed to avenge its members killed in the tunnel blast and its aftermath.

Israeli officials have tried to dissuade the terror group, warning of a harsh retaliation by the IDF.

On Saturday, Maj Gen Yoav Mordechai, who runs the Defence Ministry’s chief liaison office with the Palestinians, publicly warned Islamic Jihad in a video posted to YouTube. He addressed by name the terror group’s leader, Ramadan Shalah, and his deputy, Ziad Nakhleh, who run the Gaza-based group from Damascus, and said they would be “held responsible” should Islamic Jihad attack Israel.

In the video, Mordechai said that Israel is “aware of the plot that the Palestinian Islamic Jihad is planning against Israel”, and warned that “any attack by the Islamic Jihad will be met with a powerful and determined Israeli response, not only against the Jihad, but also against Hamas”.

Islamic Jihad responded to Mordechai’s video on Sunday, saying the Israeli threats against its leaders constituted “an act of war”, and vowing to continue in its plans to carry out a revenge attack against Israel.

The group said it would not back down on its “right” to retaliate against Israel for the tunnel explosion, which led to the deaths of 12 of its members, including two commanders, as well as two members of Hamas’s military wing.

“We reaffirm our right to respond to any aggression, including our right to respond to the crime of aggression on the resistance tunnel,” its statement said. The Israel Defence Forces blew up the tunnel, which originated in the Gazan city of Khan Younis and crossed into Israeli territory, near Kibbutz Kissufim, on October 30.



SOUTH
AFRICAN
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In Morocco, Israeli judoka permitted to display Israel’s name

TOI STAFF

Israeli judoka Ori Sasson was booted from the Openweight World Championships in Marrakech, Morocco on Saturday after losing to Frenchman Cyrille Maret. But Sasson, a 2016 Olympic bronze medallist, was at least allowed to wear Israeli insignia – in contrast to the ban imposed on Israeli national symbols at a tournament

When on October 26 Tal Flicker of Herzliya beat Nijat Shikhalizada of Azerbaijan to take gold in the men’s under-66 kilogram category in Abu Dhabi, the IJF’s anthem was played instead of Hatikva. Adding insult to injury, athletes from the UAE and Morocco refused to shake hands with their Israeli opponents who defeated them. The head of Israel’s judo federation, Moshe Ponte, later told The Times of Israel he believed Israel’s flag and national anthem will not be taboo in the UAE in the future. “I can confirm that they told me that they will do everything so that next year things that happened this year won’t happen again,” Ponte said, referring to a meeting he had with the head of the Emirati judo federation.

Ponte added that he sincerely believes that at the 2018 Grand Slam in Abu Dhabi, Israeli athletes will no longer be forced to hide their nationality. On October 28, the president of the UAE’s judo federation, Mohammad Bin Thaloub Al-Darie, met with Ponte and congratulated him on the Israeli team’s success in the tournament. Al-Darie also “apologised because of the UAE athletes not shaking hands with the Israel athletes”, IJF president Vizer said, according to the organisation’s website. “He apologised for the treatment we received and promised it won’t happen again,” Ponte said, adding that he understood Al-Darie’s apology to include the absence of Israeli national symbols. “The president of the International Judo Federation is making a great effort to allow us to compete with our flag and anthem,” Ponte said. In the October 28 statement, Vizer had hailed the



Israeli judoka Peter Paltchik seen with UAE officials at the Abu Dhabi Grand Slam

Emirati’s apology as “a gesture of courage, humanity and respect for the sport” and hinted at his attempts to convince Arab states to allow Israeli national symbols at their tournaments. “Sometimes with courage, respect and politeness, you can solve tensions and conflicts, which have not been solved in many decades,” he said. “Two years ago, we achieved the first participation of the Israel team in Abu Dhabi, now it’s the second time, but with a much better approach and I hope in the near future we can achieve the best condition of participation for the Israel teams.” Added Vizer: “Such delicate issues between countries, governments and nations cannot be solved overnight and cannot be solved through the sport immediately... I hope soon we can break down more barriers for more tolerance between countries and nations to express the real value of the sport, friendship unity and solidarity.”

• Raphael Ahren contributed to this report.

Olympic gymnast Aly Raisman says US team doctor molested her

JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY

Six-time Olympic medallist Aly Raisman said that she was sexually abused by Dr Larry Nassar, who worked as the women’s gymnastics national team doctor for decades. Raisman, who is Jewish and one of the most accomplished gymnasts in US history, made the allegation in an interview scheduled to air last Sunday on CBS’s 60 Minutes, as well as in her new book, Fierce. She is the second member of the gold medal-winning 2012 Olympic women’s team to accuse Nassar of abuse, the online edition of Time Magazine noted in an article published last Friday. In October, her teammate, McKayla Maroney, wrote on Twitter that Nassar molested her for years, beginning when she was 13. Nassar, who worked as a volunteer doctor for USA Gymnastics, is currently in jail awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty to child pornography charges in Michigan. Raisman, who is now 23, was 15 when first treated by Nassar, according to Sports Illustrated. The magazine reported that details of her experience appear in a biography set to appear next week. Nassar is also named in more than 100 lawsuits filed by gymnasts and athletes he treated while

working with USA Gymnastics and at Michigan State University. Those suits claim he sexually abused athletes under the guise of medical treatment. Nassar resigned from USA Gymnastics in the summer of 2015. In the interview, Raisman says she spoke to FBI investigators about Nassar after competing at the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016, after an investigation by the Indianapolis Star revealed that USA Gymnastics had a policy of not reporting sexual abuse reports unless they were filed by the victims or a parent. Raisman, who competed on the 2012 and 2016 Olympic teams and is the nation’s second most decorated female Olympic gymnast according to Time, is pushing for change at USA Gymnastics, which governs the sport and oversees the selection of world and Olympic teams. “I am angry,” she said in the 60 Minutes interview. “I just want to create change so [that young girls] never, ever have to go through this.” In a statement to the programme, USA Gymnastics said it has adopted new policies that require “mandatory reporting” of any potential abuse. “USA Gymnastics is very sorry that any athlete has been harmed... we want to work with Aly and all interested athletes to keep athletes safe.”

Silver medallist Aly Raisman at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games



Photo: Alex Livesey/Getty Images via JTA

Will Smith ‘chills’ at the Western Wall

TOI STAFF

In a surprise visit, Hollywood star and rapper Will Smith last Thursday arrived in Jerusalem, where he toured the Old City and prayed at the Western Wall. “I’m chilling at the Western Wall,” Smith said, adding that he was “honoured to be here” and calling the holy site a “very spiritual, very powerful place”. Smith, the star of the television series “The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air” and films such as “Men in Black”, apparently popped over from neighbouring Jordan where he is filming a remake of the Disney classic “Aladdin”. He was accompanied by several of the cast members and also visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The musician and movie star last visited Israel in 2006, when he was accompanied by his wife Jada Pinkett Smith.



American actor Will Smith is seen outside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem last Thursday.

Photo: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90

Taking on the city and making a business out of it

NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR

Laurice Taitz-Buntman

“If Johannesburg and Cape Town were on a dating website, Cape Town would be the blonde in the bikini and Johannesburg would be the one with the really great personality.”

Laurice Taitz-Buntman, publisher and editor of Johannesburg In Your Pocket, heard that from a friend, and she says it’s stuck.

But, thanks partly to Taitz-Buntman’s informative city guide, Johannesburg’s personality is giving Bikini Babe more than a run for her money. The city itself, seemingly delighted to discover it has more than just business acumen to offer, is looking sexier, sounding cleverer and, yeh baby, feeling really groovy.

This new Johannesburg has edge. Renewed confidence. It has voomah and razzmatazz. It rocks without ever having to squeeze into a bikini.

And that’s helped it become a magnet for suitors – or tourists – who are eager to uncover the soul of this authentic yet bejewelled belle of the ball.

In this space, Taitz-Buntman’s has carved a niche for herself. She has single-handedly taken the Johannesburg tourism industry by storm. This, just a few short years after discovering the Moscow In Your Pocket on a visit to the city and, on finding it “clever, quirky and opinionated” buying the Johannesburg guide licence, and taking advantage of a rise in city tourism around the globe.

So, Taitz-Buntman morphed from travel writer to entrepreneur, the go-to girl with a guide for those who want to unzip the outer layer of a place and go beneath the surface. She caters to those travellers – whether in their late teens or in their 70s, whether locals or international tourists – who have an “appetite for discovery”. She now employs three fulltime people as well as extra designers.



“the history of our darkest and brightest days”, or the chance to see the “underground” bars of the city, or perhaps Jewish historical tours, Taitz-Buntman puts on her walking shoes and becomes a tourist. “We test everything we promote.

“If the experience doesn’t measure up, we’re honest about it and will revisit when the glitches have been fixed. When you’re leading people around a city that can be untrustworthy, you have to be completely trustworthy.

“The best thing is that there is no end to my curiosity” she says. In fact, as much as she loves home, Taitz-Buntman says her favourite place is the airport “because it holds the promise of travel to a new destination”.

She says Johannesburg In Your Pocket is designed for both the mainstream traveller “seeking the expected and the adventurous traveller dreaming of the unexpected.

“It’s a mad city – I’m under no illusions – but it’s full of unexpected things, both good and bad. It’s wildly energetic and has a heartbeat you’ll never find in a seaside town. It also such an interesting, eclectic mix of people. And I truly believe, that if you don’t meet the people, you miss out on everything.

“We’re all tourists in the city. I hesitate to encourage safari-type tours. I believe in guiding people towards having immersive experiences – not about sending people on a bus to look at the locals. Meeting people gives tourists a sense of our generosity of spirit.”

She says the Jewish community is one that has helped shape the city.“We should take pride in that. We just haven’t quite negotiated where we fit in.”

Maria Malepa, co-owner of Lebo’s Soweto Backpackers, says Taitz-Buntman has filled an “important gap in promoting small establishments that are authentic and perhaps a bit alternative.

“She has an understanding of what we aim to do, she knows how to put herself in travellers’ shoes. She is an explorer. She likes to do what she writes about.”

Laura Vercueil, PR and communication manager for Johannesburg Tourism, describes Taitz-Buntman as “knowledgeable and passionate”.

“She provides a quality product that is well written and well researched, in an easy to read format that puts Johannesburg in a good light. Laurice has helped to popularise Johannesburg as a great destination.”

Vercueil says one of the organisation’s mandates is to leverage off business tourism to promote leisure tourism. “Laurice is one of the people we work alongside to help us do this.”

Of course, there’s no getting away from some of the city’s grim realities and tourists being attacked as happened recently has an impact on the entire industry. “Tourism is the canary in the mine. Whatever is wrong, must be fixed for everyone,” says Taitz-Buntman.

She firmly believes, that “the more information you have, the safer you are”.

She says we have a lot to learn from New York. “New York is a celebration of different cultures. Look at Brooklyn or

Little Chinatown. They take pride in their diversity. We can do the same. Look at our Ethiopian district, new Chinatown, old Chinatown, Fordsburg, Mayfair...

“If everyone who landed here spent one extra night, our whole economy would shift.”

Johannesburg is a city that is still becoming, she says. “We have no idea what we will become. It’s constantly changing and re-energising. We are a pioneering kind of people.”

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JEWISH AGENCY
FOR ISRAEL

This new Johannesburg has edge. Renewed confidence. It has voomah and razzmatazz. It rocks without ever having to squeeze into a bikini.

Johannesburg In Your Pocket is available as an app, a printed guide you’ll find in hotels and airport lounges, (10 000 magazines are printed three times a year), on the website www.inyourpocket.com/johannesburg, and also via a weekly newsletter giving what’s-on coverage.

“I’ve always been passionate about how cities tell the stories about themselves. A city is a complex, organic entity. I’ve always felt Johannesburg has been underrepresented and misunderstood. It’s a hard city to get to know on your own – there’s an overwhelming perception of danger for one – so there was a big gap in the market,” says Taitz-Buntman.

She says the “traditional” tourism establishment fell behind in how they treated this city. “There was a perception that people only visited for business reasons, so there was a focus on the best conference centres and maybe taking in some wildlife in the Pilanesberg.”

But Taitz-Buntman grew up in Benoni and says the bright lights of Jozi beckoned pretty much as they did for Dorothy and the Emerald City. “Nothing’s changed. I’m still passionate about its energy, quirky core, the beauty just beneath the grit.” And this is what she communicates in her guide.

Taitz-Buntman wouldn’t dream of advising tourists where to go without testing it out herself. Whether it’s a graffiti walking tour in the inner city, the amazing museums at Constitution Hill which shows, as she puts it,

The gathering of King Davidians in the UK

SHIRA DRUION

When King David Schools alumni hang up their uniforms, they never quite part ways with their school. There is a loyalty and a sense of pride that they carry with them, wherever they may roam.

Last week, alumni gathered to salute their alma mater and catch up with old school friends in London. Hundreds of ex-Davidians have made the United Kingdom their home and as many as possible made their way to this gathering.

Today, the bunk of alumni there are in the finance industry, but there are others who have made their mark in business, education, the arts and the charity sector, while also holding up many community organisations culturally, religiously and at a humanitarian level.

There are surprisingly many King David dentists who have been there for years because, recalls Raelene Tradonsky, King David Foundation director, “there was a time that there was a big demand for South African dentists”.

At the reunion, former long-time King David High School Linksfield Principal Elliot Wolf lit up the room with his passion for the schools and their many alumni.

Sir Mick Davis paid tribute to Wolf, “Elliot, I have yet to meet a pupil who was taught by you or was a student when you were headmaster, who does not speak graphically and sincerely of your positive



Raelene Tradonsky, Barbara and Sir Mick Davis and Elliot Wolf

influence on them and the wonderful environment for learning that you created in your long teaching career.”

“King David has inspired me to be courageous and confident,” says Linksfield alumnus Candice Rakusin who has been in the UK for three years and is currently completing her MA in psychotherapy at the Tavistock Institute.

“As Davidians we often refer to this as ‘chutzpah’ but it feels like much more than that. A King David education insists that its students learn to question, to challenge and to create opportunities.

“We are not frightened off by hard work, obstacles or failure, and these life lessons have proven to

empower me with the necessary tools for life in London.”

Ralph Frank, actuary and co-head of defined contribution at Cardano Risk Management, has been in London for close on two decades and currently works in investments for a pension fund.

“I was concerned about the long-term future in South Africa and particularly the corruption and the long-term consequences it would bring. But I will always support King David because I benefited from a King David education and am very grateful for how it instilled in me a strong moral compass based on Jewish values and imbued me with a competitive streak and tenacity.

“These things have helped me in my life in London, which is a competitive city on every level.”

Former Linksfield vice head boy, Ariel Zadikov, head of technical marketing for Vitality Health in London, said: “It’s tough to pinpoint the exact things that impacted on me from being at KD. It played such a crucial role in my development.

“It’s clear to me that there is just something different about King Davidians – a different edge. It helped mould who I am, where I am, and the connections I have today. It is an incredible network and I am grateful that I am a part of it.”

Daniella Jaff-Klein is married and a mother of three and has lived in London for the last 16 years. She currently advises a number of charities, mostly involving human rights or education, teaches yoga

and Jewish concepts and sits as a magistrate.

“I only arrived at KDVP when I was 15 and it was a huge eye-opener for me. It sounds like a platitude to say that a school brought out the best in each child... but coming from a state school in Johannesburg where I was fairly anonymous and where academic achievement wasn’t hugely celebrated, I found that there was a place at KD for everyone to shine.

“On the first day I was called in to Mr Wolf’s office and was fairly gobsmacked that he knew my name and had time to check on how I was doing. I definitely feel that the school nurtured my love of learning and I was fortunate to have incredible teachers, not least of all Mr Crawford, who taught (me) the importance of discipline and also how to learn.”

Klein had also made her mark in South Africa prior to coming to the UK. “Soon after qualifying as a lawyer in Johannesburg, I went to join Taddy Blecher, another KD alumni who was building Cida City Campus, the first free university in South Africa.

“I’m sure that the individual attention and nurturing that I felt at KDVP, in such stark contrast to the school I had been at before, helped me understand the importance of this and I wanted to pass this on to the students at Cida.

“The love of learning that was developed in me at KDVP, played a big role in my wanting to ignite

Continued on page 15 >>

Just what makes a memorial memorable and worthwhile?

TALI FEINBERG

Did you know that one of the proposals for the September 11 Twin Towers Memorial was to fill Ground Zero with orchards of fruit trees and fields of wildflowers?

It was proposed by a team of French architects and artists, but eventually fell through due to complications. This was just one of the fascinating stories shared by Professor James E Young at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre’s recent Stern Visiting Scholar Lecture to mark its 18th anniversary.

In a talk entitled “The Stages of Memory” Young shared his expertise in the building of memorials and his experiences being on the jury panels to decide both the Berlin Holocaust Memorial and the September 11 Twin Towers Memorial.

Young described how in 1995, when Germany began to broach the idea of a Holocaust memorial in Berlin, one artist suggested blowing up the Brandenburg Gate, as he saw the only way to symbolise such destruction was by destroying. “An edifice can never be adequate,” he said. Indeed, how was Berlin going to build something “to reunite Germany on the bedrock of its crimes”? asked Young. Hardly any other countries had to accomplish such a task – for example, is there a memorial to the slave auctions that took place in front of the White House? “Not a pebble,” he said.

Thus, when the design for the Berlin Holocaust Memorial was finally chosen, it was always going to be controversial. Architect Peter Eisenman filled the 19 000 m² site (formerly a “no-man’s land”) with 2 711 concrete slabs or “stelae”, arranged in a grid pattern on a sloping field. An attached underground “place of information” holds the names of approximately three million Jewish Holocaust victims, obtained from Yad Vashem,

and takes visitors through Holocaust history.

Young described how in the original design, some of the concrete pillars were up to eight metres high, but the jury requested that they be scaled down due to the risk of accidents or anyone literally getting lost. “We wanted them to be ominous, but didn’t want anyone literally falling!” he said.

The site is also surrounded by trees to provide “shade, refuge and life”, while the space between the slabs only allows one person to walk at a time. The museum underneath is vital to anchor the abstract design in “hard history”, he said.

According to Eisenman’s project text, the stelae are designed to produce an uneasy, confusing atmosphere, and the whole sculpture aims to represent a supposedly ordered system that has lost touch with human reason.

Wolfgang Thierse, president of Germany’s parliament, described it as a place where people can grasp “what loneliness, powerlessness and despair mean”. He also talked about the memorial as creating a type of mortal fear in the visitor.

The site is also surrounded by trees to provide “shade, refuge and life”, while the space between the slabs only allows one person to walk at a time.

The Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe’s official English website, states that the design represents a radical approach to the traditional concept of a memorial, and Professor Young agrees. “How do you articulate a void without filling it? How do you formalise a wound without repairing it? And how do you memorialise a national shame?” he asked.

In answering these pressing



The National September 11 Memorial & Museum

questions, Young explained what he calls a “counter-monument” or “counter-memorial” – something that involves the viewer and forces them to question their own role in acting against injustice, that demonstrates emptiness, a void and a disruption, and a memorial that does not look like a typical edifice.

For example, he explained that the ground-breaking Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial is a simple, feminine and darkly-coloured structure, as opposed to the tall, phallic and white memorials that came before it. Instead of listing the names of the soldiers in alphabetical order, it lists them in the order that they fell, forcing the viewer to consider this series of events.

The only human figures are the reflections of the visitors, which brings the past and present together and shows the visitor that they need to play a role in ensuring such a monument is never needed again.

Meanwhile, in 1997 in Hamburg, an artist erected a memorial against fascism that was another counter-monument. It invited viewers to scrawl their names in its marble, and as they did, it would slowly sink into the ground. It eventually disappeared into the earth.

Many other artists of this generation were preoccupied

with trying to show a void while memorialising it. A memorial to the book burnings in Germany simply has a plaque describing the event, another plaque with the foreboding quote “where books are burned so people will be burned too”, and below the ground, through glass, we see rows of empty bookshelves. “Those books are gone, those authors are gone, and they can never be replaced,” explained Young.

He describes another project where an artist found photos of Jews going about their daily lives before the Holocaust. He turned these into slides and at night he projected them onto the buildings where they occurred, without telling people he was going to do this. Hauntingly, he brought back memory to “an amnesic site, scraping the cover off”, said Young.

Another excellent example of a “counter-monument” is the Stolpersteine that scatter Europe’s streets – tiny “stumbling stones” outside homes, listing the names of Jews who had lived there before the Holocaust and where they had been killed.

Returning to the final choice for the September 11 memorial, Young describes it as “a void within a void”, as water falls into two pools 30-feet deep (the largest man-made

waterfalls in North America). These are surrounded by trees, and as these grow, the voids grow deeper, but life also regenerates. In fact, he says there are more people living in the area now than on September 11, 2001.

The memorial reflects “absence and missing”, which were key themes that emerged in the days after the tragedy, where “Missing” posters wallpapered the city.

The jury received 5 200 entries from 63 nations, a reminder that a third of those who were killed on September 11 were not American. When visiting the memorial, Young says he hardly ever hears New Yorkers there.

When he asked a New York friend who developed lung cancer after being caught in the toxic dust cloud as the Twin Towers fell, why this was, he said: “Make a place where we can go to forget.”

This is just part of the ongoing conversation on the making of memorials, and it is something in which we can all play a role. One audience member described a Jewish fundraising dinner that had been planned before 9/11 and went ahead in the days after.

Many who were supposed to attend had died, but their places were still laid, a yartzeit candle burning where they should have been.

Israeli hi-tech on show in Cape Town

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Many take access to medical attention for granted, but this is not the case for those who live in rural areas, far from the nearest hospital or medical practitioner.

Telemedicine – the remote diagnosis and treatment of patients by means of telecommunications technology – is revolutionising the practise of medicine and one such operator, Equatel Health, was exhibiting at AfricaCom, along with over 20 other Israeli tech companies, at the Cape Town International Convention Centre last week.

It was billed as the largest Africa-focused technology event in the world.

Equatel Health focuses on digital health services for the rural and urban population, Gershon Gutmer, vice-president, tells the SA Jewish Report at the expo. The company has built a digital health kiosk that allows for remote consultation for those who have limited access to health services, using the existing infrastructure of mobile providers.

“So, anywhere that you have 3G or 4G Internet connectivity, with our solution you’re able to have a remote consultation with a doctor, speak to him, see him on video. You can have all your vital signs and blood tests done remotely as well as scans for pregnant women.

“The doctor could be in

Johannesburg and the patient in any remote area of South Africa and they communicate in real time. So, instead of you going to the doctor, we’ve brought the doctor to you.”

Patients can pull up additional information, from how to dress a wound, to queries on pregnancy and childcare.

Equatel’s product is unique in that it allows one to do everything on one platform, from making an appointment, to the medical consultation, to receiving a prescription, to the online mobile payment, all accessed with an Equatel SIM or smartcard.

“Our main customers are hospitals, doctors and health ministries, with mobile operators forming a big part of our business, as we move data from the patients to the doctors.”

The company also works with NGOs – Unicef in Uganda and USAid in Ghana. Today it has more than 2 000 digital kiosks around the world, not all situated in rural areas.

“Our biggest project is in India with a healthcare company that operates 52 hospitals. The waiting time to see a doctor is three to four hours, so now when you arrive, there’s a nurse who

does all the tests, it goes through the cloud and the doctor sees all your results by the end of the day.

“If there’s something wrong, they will call you back. In the meantime, you can go back to work or care for your children,” says Gutmer.

At the expo’s national pavilion, Israel’s leading hi-tech companies showcased the latest solutions for mobile communications. The country

today many employees are using their own phones for company e-mails and (accessing) databases.” Inpedio, for example, provides cutting-edge cyber solutions to government and business sector customers around the world.

Melchior says that close to a thousand meetings have taken place over the three-day expo, a third of them being with South African

entities and two thirds from the rest of Africa. “We’ve really had a great response, no politics – we’ve even had interest from ‘surprising’ countries who just want to see the technology,” he states.

One Smart Star has developed an app that allows one to contact emergency services or any other service provider with a short dial – star plus four digits – and the

relevant website will open visually as a menu with all the options, thus averting the frustrating experience of hanging on endlessly to call centres.

Co-founded in Israel in 2004 by David Sussan, initially to sell short numbers for company call centres (for example *Visa or *Avis), today the company, with a worldwide patent, services over 250 000 operators,

including all the international brands as well as government offices.

“In Israel, by law all government offices must have a star number and this app in order to serve the citizens better,” he says.

Thanks to the company’s visual integrated voice response (IVR) technology, one needn’t waste time listening to laborious instructions, Sussan explains.

“On the tablet you get to a landing page and choose by clicking on any department you want or to go to social media to send an e-mail, and we cater for 50 languages.” This is all done via the One Smart Star master application that one downloads onto one’s phone free of charge, giving access to thousands of companies.

Most important, Sussan says, is that the company provides the app free of charge to the police in many countries.

“On the home page, we have a panic button to the police – so if somebody breaks into your house, you press it and they can see the location, they can hear and they come to help without you talking to them.

“So, actually we are saving lives and we’d be happy to provide it free of charge to the police in South Africa. What is nice,” he adds, “is that if you download the *Pol app and you travel tomorrow to Israel or to Fiji, for example, you will have a panic button to the local police on the home page.” Literally at your fingertips.



Some of the Israeli exhibitors at the AfricaCom exhibition in Cape Town

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PETER FELDMAN

Myriad emotions came flooding back as I watched Johnny Clegg in action at the Ticketpro Dome on Saturday night. It was his final concert.

Johnny Clegg and I go back a long, long way. He was a 15-year-old school boy when we met. His mother, Muriel, a jazz singer of note and also a record company public relations officer, used to tell me about him when I was covering the music beat for The Star.

She wasn’t keen on him going into the townships and the hostels to meet with various black musicians. She asked me to chat to him and try to dissuade him from pursuing this “hobby”.

I told her that I did not want to interfere with Johnny’s obvious passion, and I left it at that.

Ironically, these were the very musicians who helped shape his style and rocket him into the annals of South African musical history.

He has announced his retirement from performing and undertook what he called his Final Journey. Watching him going through his paces in this cavernous arena with his band in top gear and his faithful dancer and singer, Mandisa Dlanga, at his side, brought back so many memories.

I travelled to Paris in 1988 at the invitation of Clegg’s management to watch him perform to sell-out French audiences at a venue Le Zenith.

The audience danced along and knew

Taking a Johnny Clegg Zulu dance down memory lane



every word of every song. I was moved by the compelling nature of his performance and how a foreign audience embraced him and took him to their hearts.

Even in Paris, walking down the street with him, we had had Parisians coming up to us from everywhere for a chat and an autograph. It was at this time that he was given an honour by the French Government for his contribution to music and, I think, his stance against the apartheid regime.

Over the decades I’ve done numerous interviews with him. His views on the world, anthropology and on music always captivated me because it came from an informed place in the man’s psyche. He is articulate and highly intelligent and well versed in the politics of South Africa. He is fluent in iZulu and hearing him engage with his black musicians – and fans – is something to behold.

He is humble and fame and fortune have never changed him.

We attended his wedding to Jenny at a country estate outside Johannesburg. It was a multi-cultural wedding and a fascinating affair. I recall that both Johnny (being an honorary

Zulu) and Jenny underwent a second ceremony. This was in KwaZulu-Natal and done in traditional Zulu fashion, where they had to wear traditional garb and go through all the rituals.

When I turned 70, Johnny was performing at The Mandela at the Joburg Theatre. His management allowed me to celebrate this occasion by inviting a group of friends to attend the concert and enjoy the amenities of the theatre.

Saturday night’s event allowed me to renew musical acquaintances with some of Clegg’s musician friends, performers who gave of their talent to help the Clegg legacy. On stage at various times were Arno Carstens, Soweto Gospel Choir, The Parlotones, Prime Circle, Just Jinjer, Tailor, a relatively newcomer to the business, and Johnny’s son Jesse who shared the spotlight briefly with Dad to sing Great Heart.

It was an occasion for celebration. When Clegg’s former musical partner, Sipho Mchunu, joined him on stage, it almost brought the house down. There were dancers, too, and a special appearance at the end by members of the George Goch Hostel dance group. Johnny was a member of the hostel dance group in his earlier years.

Johnny Clegg’s energy is unflagging and he has a new album coming out soon and it should be another blast of creativity. Will this really be this irrepressible icon’s last concert? Let’s wait and see.

Johannesburg mom on the box

PETER FELDMAN

Every Thursday night, thousands of South African TV viewers watch Johannesburg Jewish actress Sharon Wagner play a strong, resourceful woman named Despina Giannopolous. It’s women power at its best.

Wagner, a mother and dedicated theatre and TV practitioner, landed the plum role in Bedford Wives, a new comedy drama at 19:30 on SABC 3. Another noted Jewish actress in the series is Annabel Linder.

Describing Dee, Wagner says she is a gorgeous character to play and she is fully invested in her story. “She is vulnerable and determined. She is ferocious and strong. Everyone underestimates her, which makes her the ideal underdog and to be able to reveal her triumph against this set up is great fun.

“She gets to touch on every genre – the show is comical; has drama; action; elements of mystery; horror; it’s simply thrilling to watch.”



Set in the lavish (yet with a seedy underbelly) suburb of Bedfordview, Bedford Wives follows the lives of four women and a community of Bedfordview criminals. On the surface, they seem to live pristine and perfect lives but, behind closed doors, they have skeletons in their closets and secrets aplenty.

When Dee’s restaurateur husband, Marco, is found dead under a side of lamb and dripping in gourmet olive oil, she vows to keep the family businesses going – but then learns that crime is the family’s real business.

Wagner continues: “I loved this TV role. The writing was progressive and thoughtful, and the journey of the character was a delight to portray. It felt exhilarating to be on set. When that magic word ‘Action!’ is heard, it’s like a firecracker being lit. That kick is so exciting.”

Wagner says motherhood and a career work because she has tremendous help at home and

from a supportive husband.

She landed the role thanks to her agent who sent her to an audition. “Initially they didn’t ask me to audition,” she told the SA Jewish Report. “I was the last girl they saw for the part. And the next day I was hired. I’m not entirely sure what I did differently, because there is so much talent out there, but I’m so grateful they selected me for the job.”

Everyone asks how she manages to balance motherhood and her career. She responds by saying: “I wouldn’t call it balance. When you are performing or shooting that takes so

much of your time and energy. I make sure that everything important is taken care of so that I can fully invest in my work.

“My work requires total commitment, so there is definitely a disproportionate energy when it comes to my kids. So how do I still be there for my beautiful children?”

“I choose projects carefully. I can’t go from one job to the next without spending time with my kids.

They will only be young once and I can’t miss out on that. So, when I get an opportunity I carefully consider how it will affect my family and if it’s right for my career. Playing Despina was a huge undertaking, but it was an opportunity I simply couldn’t pass up. And I would do it again tomorrow!”

Wagner is equally at home on stage, on TV and on the big screen. Earlier this year she was nominated for a Naledi Theatre Award for her role in “I’m Playing Your Song – The Marvin Hamlish Story”.

She is also proud to be a part of the Acapella group HONEY, which came fourth in SA’s Got Talent 2014. She has two teachings diplomas (ATCL) from Trinity College London for Musical Theatre and Dramatic Art and also won the prestigious exhibitionist award for Dramatic Art. She has also completed her honours in Psychology with distinction.

Bringing down the ‘Man with the Iron Heart’



Film review by PETER FELDMAN

He was known as the Butcher of Prague and as the architect of the Nazis’ Final Solution. Reinhard Heydrich was indeed the “Man with the Iron Heart”.

While the film with this name is not the first about Heydrich, it brings a very fresh perspective on the subject.

It is set in 1942 during a time when the Third Reich was at its peak.

It chronicles the rise to power of this ruthless Nazi leader, brilliantly played by Jason Clarke. Heydrich was not only the brains behind the plan to annihilate the Jewish people, he was also the leader of Czechoslovakia under Nazi occupation, and the head of the Sicherheitsdienst (the SS intelligence agency).

The film also devotes time to a plot by two young Czech resistance recruits, Jozef Gabcik (Jack Reynor) and Jan Kubis (Jack O’Connell), to assassinate him in Prague.

French director Cédric Jimenez has fashioned a taut and thrilling production, which devotes equal time to two halves of a gripping narrative.

The first half looks at the unlikely ascent to power of Heydrich. The man was a loser who was dismissed from the navy and then egged on by his flag-waving, National-Socialism-loving wife (a cold, calculating Rosemund Pike) to succeed.

The second half catches up with the Czechoslovak Resistance fighters and their meticulous plot to assassinate him.

The film opens with a quick flash forward to the moments just before the assassination. It then backtracks to the German port city of Kiel in 1929, where we first meet Heydrich who is being court-martialled and dismissed, because of his relations with a woman.

At the time he was already courting his future wife, Lina, who suggests he join the Nazi Party. One thing leads to another and soon Nazi bigwig, Heinrich Himmler (played by a creepy Stephen Graham), asks him to lead the Nazi intelligence agency, the SD.

There is strong character development as Heydrich grows in stature and his cold, violent temper and penchant for killing emerges. We see this unfeeling monster come out of his shell.

At a party Lina is told by one of her husband’s colleagues that Hitler has nicknamed her husband “The Man with the Iron Heart”. Ironically, in the background we see him gently lifting up a baby.

Lina’s character is more complex. She starts off as an early Nazi sympathiser who genuinely believed the party could turn her country around. She gave her husband hope and a lucrative Nazi career, but soon realises she is married to someone who’s always absent and who treats her like a glorified caretaker of his children.

The film also reveals how the Nazis radically transformed from a disorganised group of dissatisfied rabble-rousers and losers, into a well-oiled, merciless war machine. Its systemic killings lead the top brass, including Heydrich, to devise something more efficient – the Final Solution.

A point about the film is that Nazi sadism and cruelty led to the deaths of many people across Europe and does not focus only on the Jewish aspect.

Visually stunning, this film has energy and verve and engages its audience with both its intellectual and emotional content and the quality of the acting. The action sequences, too, make compelling viewing.

I would rate it highly among this genre and is a must for members of the Jewish community with an interest in history.

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

Time to say goodbye

Most regular readers of this column will be surprised to know that this is my last one, as I have decided to leave the Chev to pursue other opportunities. As King Solomon, the wisest man ever to have lived, famously said: “To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven...”

I would like to share that having worked for this remarkable organisation for the past eight years, I hold it in the highest esteem.

As it approaches its 130th anniversary, it remains faithful to the beautiful philosophy upon which it was founded. There is a purity of purpose, a genuine and sincere commitment to help our community and the many within it who cannot help themselves.

It is the reason there are no Jewish beggars on our streets and the reason every Jew in our city has shelter, food, education and healthcare. It is an organisation deserving of community support – deserving of your support. No Jew gets left behind.

This period has been a time of considerable growth for me, both personally and professionally. I have seen people rise to the highest heights of kindness, compassion, generosity and integrity. I have also, sadly, seen people sink to the lowest depths of misery.

What has always inspired and motivated me, is how the Chev is able to raise them up in such situations and restore them to a place of dignity and hope. Those are the humbling times when G-d’s presence in the world feels tangible – He is always with us, always watching and caring.

Working at the Chev has been a labour of love for me and I have instituted and observed many positive improvements over the years.

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

I leave confident in the knowledge that our staff culture has completely evolved – team spirit and work pride has never been higher, which translates into an elevated standard of care and service for all our 1 000 residents and the thousands more families and individuals who receive our support.

Due to the outstanding work of our superb professional team and lay leaders, our facilities are in the process of being transformed – not only physically but also in terms of service delivery.

We have a fully compliant financial reporting structure; our proactive and reactive social services programmes are cutting-edge, relevant and constructive; our cemeteries run efficiently, compassionately and have never had better security and two-way communication between the Chev and all our stakeholders is unprecedented in its history.

I move on, personally satisfied with the extensive progress made.

All that remains is for me to wish you, our truly wonderful, supportive Jewish community, joy and success in all your endeavours. I feel blessed and honoured to have been your partner and to have been of service to you.

May our partnership continue to thrive.
feedback@jhbchev.co.za



Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff

A column of WIZO South Africa

The Duke of Edinburgh International Award

At the beginning of November, the Israeli Youth Award Ceremony was hosted by the British Ambassador to Israel. This distinguished international award programme has been in place since 1956, and began as the “Duke of Edinburgh International Award”.

Among the 115 award recipients of the “gold medal”, 56 were WIZO students from WIZO schools and youth villages. Gold awards were presented to students who have proven to be tomorrow’s leaders in the State of Israel.

Guests included Knesset Member Revital Swaid; and the co-chairmen of the International Youth Award-Israel, Hilton Nathanson and Amir Amar. The guest of honour was Israel’s President Reuven Rivlin. In addition, members of the World WIZO Executive came to show their pride in our WIZO award recipients.

This dignified award is open to all youth in Israel, from all walks of life, religions, and ethnicities throughout Israel. Recipients of the gold award have demonstrated true leadership qualities, aspiring and inspiring not only others, but themselves to be the best they can be.

Our WIZO gold award winners are our most effective hasbara tool. They will go out into the wider world, equipped with values that we, WIZO chaverot, live by: the values that we teach, the values of self-worth, volunteerism, humanity, and excellence. These students are Israel’s ambassadors of the future.

WIZO prides itself on being the only social welfare organisation that has partnered with this important international programme.

This column paid for by WIZO SA



WIZO South Africa
Moonyeen Castle
President

Each and every year WIZO students excel, and we are so proud of their achievements and of WIZO’s partnership that benefits not only them, but Israeli society, and indeed, the wider world by their shining example.

Thanks to you, our chaverot, who partner with us, an initiative such as this is an integral part of the success of all those who benefit from the greater impact of WIZO on their lives!

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration which recognised officially for the first time, the 2 000-year-old aspirations of the

Jewish people to return to their country from which they had been dispersed. As Jews continue to return to Israel, WIZO’s help in integrating these often distressed families, remains invaluable.

The year 2017 has been a very productive one for all the WIZO centres in South Africa, and we were proud to have this unity, with all our shining lights, at our challah bakes as well as over the Shabbos Project weekend.

The prestigious Rebecca Sieff Awards took place around the country where members were honoured for long service in recognition of their dedication to the organisation.

Our very own Mandy Bernstein has just left for the WIZO Aviv International seminar in Israel, and we look forward to hearing her report back.

Wishing you all happy holidays, safe journeys and happy Chanukah.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Paying tribute to some illustrious Jews and non-Jews

From the very outset and to this day, the leadership of the SAJBD has included some of South Africa’s most eminent lawyers, among them many judges. Their skills and knowledge have time and again proved invaluable in confronting the many legal challenges facing the community over the decades, whether relating to immigration and citizenship, resolving intra-communal disputes, combating anti-Semitism, safeguarding Jewish religious rights, or sundry other areas.

In addition, we can be proud that in addition to donating their time to Jewish causes, a number of senior Board leaders were also prominently involved in defending political activists fighting against apartheid.

They included former SAJBD Chairmen Isie Maisels and Maurice Franks, Nat Levy and Harry Schwarz (who also gained considerable renown as a stalwart member of the liberal political Opposition in parliament in the 1970s and 1980s).

Last week, the National Assembly adopted with acclaim, a motion recognising and paying tribute to SAJBD Cape Vice-Chairman Advocate Michael Donen for his role in defending freedom fighters during the apartheid years.

Michael, in addition to being a valued member of the SAJBD’s legal team, represents our community at the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. This position was previously held by the late Mervyn Smith, another leading lawyer who perhaps more than any other Jewish leader at the time was instrumental in the SAJBD’s adopting a clear stance against apartheid in the mid-1980s.

The actual motion to honour Michael was introduced by Democratic Alliance MP Michael Bagraim, one of South Africa’s foremost labour lawyers and himself a former national chairman of the SAJBD.

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



Above Board
Shaun Zagnoev

We commend him on taking the initiative in this regard, and congratulate Advocate Donen on this long overdue recognition of the contribution he made to the South African freedom struggle.

Last week, I also made reference to two other human rights activists, namely Helen Suzman and Advocate George Bizos who, despite belonging to the privileged white ruling caste, devoted their careers to fighting racial injustice in South Africa.

Recognising and paying tribute to those who stood up for victims of persecution even when they did not belong to their own particular community (whether defined along religious, racial, national, or ethnic lines) has had particular resonance for Jews.

This has obviously been especially in evidence in the post-Holocaust era, but long before the Holocaust, much honour has been accorded in our tradition to those gentiles who went against the prevailing tide to defend the rights and dignity of Jews in their society.

Earlier this month, I was privileged to say a few words in memory of the Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara, who defied his own government to rescue hundreds of Lithuanian Jews from the Nazis.

The occasion was the screening of a new documentary on the life of Sugihara, organised by the Embassy of Japan in partnership with the Johannesburg Holocaust Centre and Centre for Japanese Studies.

In remembering and paying tribute to such heroic figures, it is appropriate that we ourselves make a commitment to trying at all times to do what is right, not what is necessarily convenient, and in general doing whatever we can to make our world a kinder, more just and more peaceful place.

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

More news on our website www.sajr.co.za

World News in Brief

Brazilian students simulate Nazi human experiments for science fair

RIO DE JANEIRO – Brazilian high school students simulated medical experiments that the Nazis conducted on concentration camp prisoners during the Holocaust.

The students at Milecimo da Silva high school in Rio De Janeiro were recently assigned to recreate a Nazi laboratory for a science fair. According to the Brazilian Israelite Confederations, the country’s umbrella Jewish group, the purpose of the exhibition was to highlight the supposed scientific progress made by Nazi doctors working in concentration camps.

Photos posted on Facebook show a red banner hung in the school with swastikas and white letters saying “Nazi laboratory”. In the darkened fake blood-stained “lab”, students playing doctors wear medical uniforms and swastika armbands. Others pretend to be suffering patients.

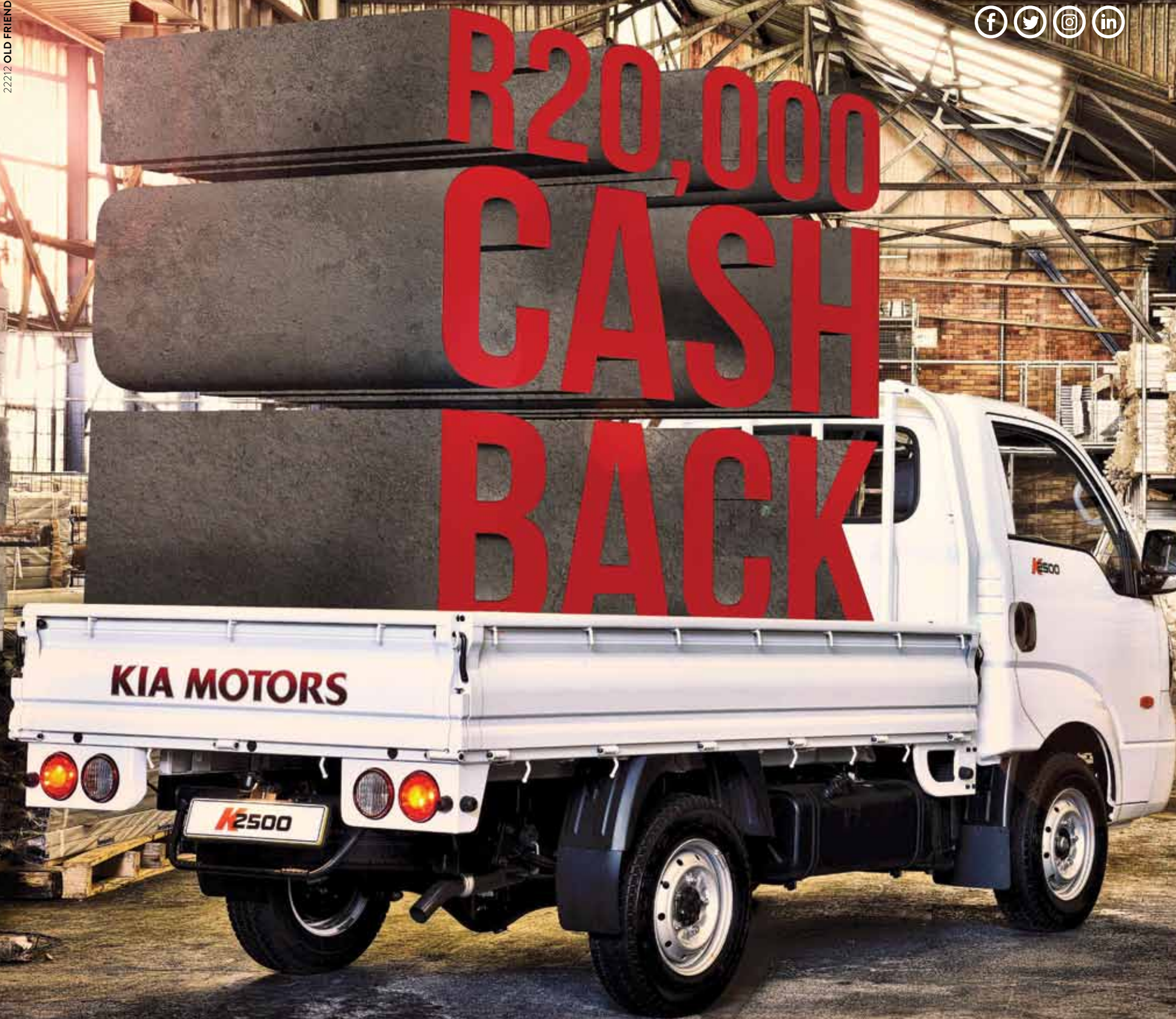
The Rio State Department of Education reportedly has opened an investigation to determine whether the school promoted

Nazism, which is punishable by up to five years in prison and a fine.

During the Second World War, a number of German physicians – notably Josef Mengele – conducted painful and often deadly experiments on thousands of concentration camp prisoners without their consent. The experiments sought to improve the performance of Nazi soldiers and advance the Nazis’ racial ideology, including the inferiority of Jews, six million of whom were exterminated during the Holocaust.

In April, a third-grade classroom in a private school in Recife, in northeastern Brazil, was decorated with Nazi flags during a lesson on totalitarian regimes. The teacher wore a Nazi armband. The school later praised him on social media for the lesson.

After facing criticism, the school’s officials conceded that the tone of their post was inappropriate and took it down, but they refused to apologize for the lesson, according to the local Jewish federation. (JTA)



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WIZO takes Garden Day to Arcadia

The magnificently restored Arcadia House gardens was the setting for this year’s WIZO Etgar branch in Johannesburg’s Annual Garden Day last weekend.

Gardening enthusuasts love this event – now in its 13th consecutive year – as they get to see Johannesburg’s prettiest private gardens.

Arcadia House – which was the home of the Jewish orphanage for over 80 years – was sold to Hollard Insurance and the Enthoven family in 2003. Both the house and surrounding gardens have been lovingly restored. The Enthoven family generously opened Arcadia for WIZO. Prior to the visit to Arcadia, our guests enjoyed another beautiful private garden in Westcliff.

Helen Maisels, vice president of WIZO SA and members of the Etgar branch, chaired the event.

Patrick Watson and Oscar Lockwood, considered the doyens of the indigenous gardening and landscaping industry in South



Helen Maisels, WIZO SA vice president

Africa, spoke to a rapt audience in one of Arcadia’s magnificent rooms

Maisels told the audience that WIZO’s main objective is the empowerment of women through programmes and projects which stretch from lobbying in the Knesset to providing shelters for abused women, the establishment of day-care centres, schools and training colleges for children and young adults.

In South Africa, WIZO operates outreach organisations dedicated to supporting women and children, and it donates a portion of the funds it raises to local charities.

KZN Zionist leader, Antony Arkin, makes aliya

LAUREN SHAPIRO

After 42 years of community service, Professor Antony Arkin is pursuing his lifelong dream of making aliya.

Arkin may have earned a doctorate in economics, but it’s his commitment to Jewish and Zionist organisations that will be his lasting legacy in our community.

The former Capetonian met his wife Marion Beit at Rhodes University and followed her to Durban in 1974. He had no aspiration to communal politics.

“My ambition was to be assistant warden of Bnei Brit and eventually I became the national vice president,” he would tell people.

Arkin has worn numerous “hats” in the community, many with a strong Zionist fit. He is chairman of the KwaZulu-Natal Zionist Council, treasurer of the South African Zionist Federation and an ex officio member of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

He is also a delegate of the Vaad Hapoel

(working committee) of the World Zionist Organisation, a member of the General Assembly of the Jewish Agency, and he sits on the executive of Keren Kayemet Le’Yisrael (the Jewish National Fund).

Congregationally, Arkin has been very involved with Reform Judaism, as president of the Durban Progressive

Jewish Congregation and national vice chairman of the South African Union of Progressive Jewry, as well as chairman of Artzeinu, South Africa.

He has also been editor of Hashalom – Durban’s monthly Jewish magazine – for the past 15 years.

Communal life presents its challenges. Arkin says the key to successful leadership is “learning to

respect differences”.

The couple are making aliya in December and will join their children and grandchildren who already live in Israel. “It’s not a push factor, but a pull factor,” he explains. “We wish every success to the community.”



Antony Arkin

Friday (November 17)	WHAT'S ON	Thursday (November 23)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UZLC hosts journalist Robyn Sassen on “The Good, the Bad and the Incompetent University Student in 2017”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.	<p>Service will be followed by a light breakfast. Safe parking is available at Rosettenville Junction, opposite the shul. RSVP rosminyan@gmail.com with your (1) full name, (2) cell-phone number (3) number of people attending.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hebrew-speakers meet from 11:00 - 12:00 on the second floor of Beyachad.• JWBS hosts Stacey Lewis, author of “Divorce 101” and how she triumphed over adversity. Venue: Frangelicas. Time: 19:30. Cost: R180 includes eats. All proceeds to the JWBS to purchase new underwear for those in our community in need. Contact: (011) 485-5232 to reserve your seat or e-mail gloria@jwbs.co.za
Sunday (November 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open Ongoing Nechama Growth From Grief Support Group. Venue: Jossel Card Room, Ground Floor, Golden Acres. No need to book. Time: Tea from 09:30, group starts promptly at 10:00 - 11:30. Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.	

Letters

SEEKING FAMILY OF THE LATE BARNET SOLWAY OF CAPE TOWN

Kibbutz Ma’ale Hachamisha, near Jerusalem, is looking for family of the late Barnet Solway of Cape Town.

When the kibbutz decided to research the history of its water system, they came across a plaque dating to the 1930s that reads: “This water installation has been erected with a gift made by the late Mr Barnet Solway of Cape Town in memory of his father Yehuda Soloweitzick.”

The kibbutz is keen to get in touch with the family.

If anyone has information, please contact Dafna Bahir at bahir@msn.com

BUTCHERED PALM TREE ON TOP OF SYLVIA PASS LEAVES ME ASHAMED

Once again someone in the community has butchered the beautiful palm tree on top of Sylvia Pass. I am so ashamed that a person can do such damage to a beautiful tree. And the person who phoned me two years ago to try and tell me that the Parks department cut down the branches, do not bother.

I have checked with the head of the area, and was informed that they NEVER cut palm leaves down. Kindly note for future, leave trees that do not belong to you, alone.

Gina Bergman
Johannesburg

CAR GUARDS EXPLOITED AT THE MAJOR SHOPPING CENTRES

Do you know that the car guards at all major shopping centres have to pay on average R50 per shift so that they may assist you with your parcels and guard your car against theft?

They in turn hope what they receive from us as tips to cover the R50 plus what they make for the shift. It used to be per day, but under the shopping centres’ watch, the organisers of the parking lots are now running two shifts – one till 15:00 and then another into the night – all in cash and an abusive act against poor, mostly immigrant people who are just too happy to do this work.

What I find alarming is that the patrons of the shopping centres are

(seemingly) unaware and don’t know that the guards have to pay in advance for the use of the cap and jacket which identifies them as car guards.

It is a smokescreen intended to provide a sense of security by dressing them in a uniform so that you assume this is organised by the shopping centre.

It started when some smart Aleck at the local supermarket, saw that by having permission from the owner of the supermarket, to get somebody to watch the cars, there was an opportunity for him to give the owner say R50 per day and he could charge each man or woman R50 per day and walk away with R150 for doing nothing. Problem is that

with the growth of the large shopping centres, some companies saw the opportunity to make big bucks on the backs of these poor human beings, by relying on our generosity.

Why I mention this issue, is because many of the shopping centres where this injustice takes place, are owned by Jewish businesses and this is against tikkun olam – creating a better world for all.

Everyone is entitled to make a buck, but we were slaves in Egypt and I equate this with slavery and extortion.

Ernest Waner
Brakpan

COMPLEX MIDEAST SITUATION NEEDS MORE THAN SIMPLISTIC ANSWERS

An article on Edwin Cameron in the edition of September 29, in the Jewish Report, Cameron sites Louis Brandeis, the first Jewish justice on the US Supreme Court, who worked hard to ensure justice for the vulnerable and poor.

Brandeis was a Zionist who embraced the notion that Zionism “...would promote education, social justice and democracy and would protect the rights of all its inhabitants, men and women, Jews and Arabs...”

Then Cameron went on to criticise the modern State of Israel... But I believe that Israel does offer Jew and Arab, men and women, education, justice, democracy, etc.

The Middle East has a very complicated history. To simply say that we should have respect for the law in and of itself, is not enough. For even in this country, apartheid WAS the law.

And when we speak about the West Bank, for example, it was never its own country. It belonged to Jordan before 1967. No one cared about “Palestinian rights” to self-determination at that time; perhaps because the people living there were not referred to as “Palestinian”. They were referred to as Arabs.

No-one cared that they were under Jordanian rule. Only after 1967, when Israel took over from Jordan, did this area get any attention. Seems strange.

Likewise, Turkey occupying Cyprus since 1974, doesn’t get much attention. Would occupied Cyprus get more attention if Israel somehow got involved? It would probably get more attention if Israel stepped in somewhere. Why do you think that is?

With reference to “international law”, as idealistic as that sounds, The UN gave the Jews and the Arabs a piece of “Palestine” in 1948. The UN recognised Israel as a sovereign country.

The day after Britain walked out of “Palestine”, five Arab armies ILLEGALLY – under international law – attacked this new-born fledgling internationally recognised country called Israel.

So basically, as lofty, impressive or as idealistic as the term “international law” sounds, it is an empty term. Although it ideally should protect the weak countries of the world, it is actually a tool for the strong, rich countries, who do what they want.

Therefore, respectfully, I offer that it would behove Mr Cameron to do historical research before making judgements that are unworthy of his illustrious history as a judge in South Africa.

Michele Engelberg
Johannesburg

Disclaimer: The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report.

Guidelines for letters: Letters of up to 400 words get preference. Provide your full name, place of residence, and daytime phone number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.

Hey Diddle Diddle Shabbos at Sydenham Pre-Primary

The children of Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primary School had a “Nursery Rhyme Shabbos” last week. Their shabbos table was set with Hey Diddle Diddle, the candles were lit with Twinkle Twinkle Little Star and the challah was baked with Pat-a-cake, Pat-a-cake Baker’s Man (Humpty Dumpty played a role too)!

Flowers were picked from Contrary Mary’s garden and Jack and Jill donated a pail of water to keep the flowers fresh! Nursery rhyme books were read in the library and Incy Wincy Spider take-home treats were baked!



Dressed to impress are Rebecca Symanowitz, “Queen of Hearts” and Matthew Kadish, “Hickory Dickory Dock”.

Crawford pupils excel in physical sciences

Tomer Melnik from Crawford College Sandton recently excelled at the National Science Olympiad.

He was one of two pupils from Crawford College Sandton short-listed for selection to represent South Africa at the 50th International Chemistry Olympiad in Prague (Czech) in July next year.

The final team to represent South Africa will be selected after writing two more selection tests in January and February. The level of the chemistry at the ICHO is first and second year university level.

Dr Denise Hudson-Lamb, senior science teacher at Crawford College Sandton, says they are very proud of these Crawfordians and wish them well for the upcoming tests.



Tomer Melnik

Yeshiva College watch the Balfour Declaration re-enacted

Yeshiva College’s grade R children watched an enthralling dramatisation of the historic meeting between Weizmann and Balfour to commemorate the 100th year anniversary of the Balfour Declaration.

In the meeting, Weizmann “took” Balfour and the children 2 000 years back into Parsha Lech Lecha and Vayeira.

Hashem’s irrevocable promise, to the Jews, of always having Eretz Yisrael, was linked to the Balfour Declaration. It was amazing to see the knowledge the children gained!



Erin Neofytou (grade R), proudly presents one of her works

Budding young artists show off their work

Some beautiful works of art were on display at the King David Pre-Primary Victory Park exhibition on October 31. There was much naches-sharing among parents, grandparents and siblings who attended the event.

Lynda Romain, the headmaster, believes that young children learn best through play and exploration and she embraces this belief in all that she does at the school. And she wanted to share their work with the family. Where possible, each child had at least three pieces of art displayed. Space was certainly an issue, so trying to do this attractively, was no small effort. Teacher intern, Kaylee Oddess, took on the challenge to ensure that all the art was beautifully presented.

A column of Netzer South Africa

Netzer Machaneh Kol HaNeshama – ‘All of the soul’

Netzer South Africa is the Jewish youth movement, affiliated with the South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ) and the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF). We are a dynamic, entirely youth-led and youth-organised body, which works with the youth to provide the unique Netzer community a space of fun, learning and growth.

Our main aims are to educate, grapple with and consciously strive for; the Jewish notion of tikkun olam (repairing the world), being proud Progressive Jews, empowering the youth, being Proudly South African and ensuring we are active Reform Zionists.

And as a small movement, with less than 100 channichim (student campers), Netzer prides itself in the family-like environment, where interactions take place on a personal and individual level. We are a non-profit, Progressive Jewish, Reform Zionist youth movement of South Africa and form part of the international Netzer movement, Netzer Olami (worldwide).

So, why Kol HaNeshama? We’ve all sung it once or twice in shul; the Hallelujah, ending off with “Kol HaNeshama Te Hallel Ya”, (“let everything that has a breath, praise the L-rd”).

If you were to read up about it, you would find so many translations and ideas. And from the many, we chose the translation which we identified with the most, “All of the soul”, not only because we are so very proud of our Judaism and the individual souls that we have been given, but also because we loved the double meaning hidden in this sentence.

For those of you who don’t know much about Netzer, we are the youth movement that caters to everyone, AND every soul. We are weird, we are intelligent, we like to be barefoot, we like

to organise, we sing, we dance, we read and we play.

No one is too different, too Jewish, not Jewish enough, “too” anything for us! All the singular souls connect, and we create one very special and very unique Netzer soul. In an effort to remain true to ourselves and our channichim, we have chosen a camp name that encompasses them all. It helps that we can also play on the meaning of the word “soul” and make this a funky, groovy, fun-loving Netzer camp that everyone knows and loves.




ROSH MACHANEH
Kendyll Jacobson

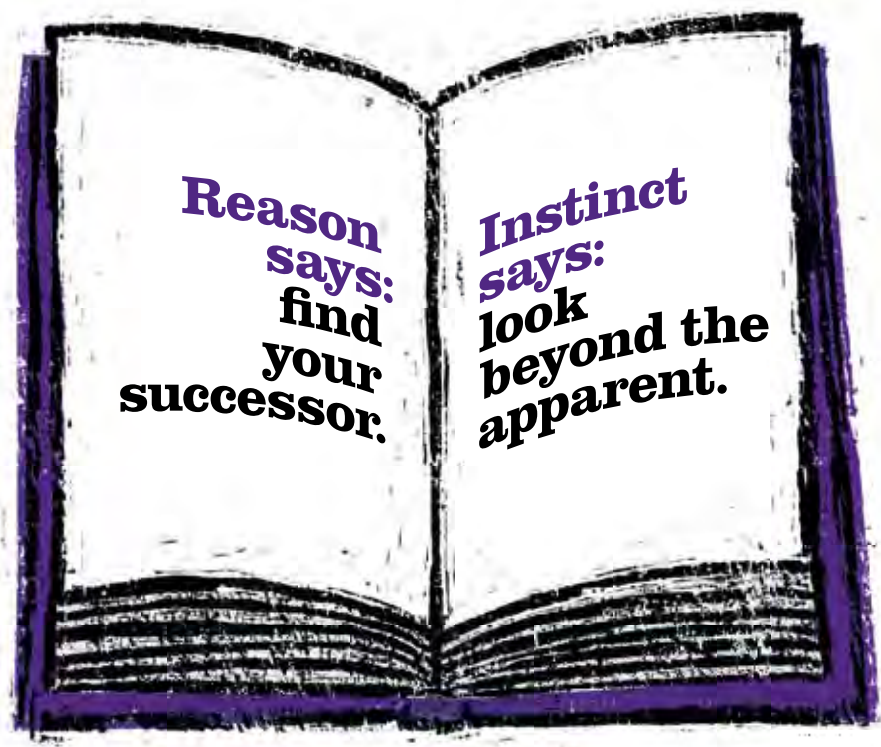
Throughout the year, our educational goals have been to show our channichim how to be Jews in the 21st century, allowing them

to explore their Yiddishkeit and inspiring them to be who they are.

Not only is Kol HaNeshama about praise for Hashem and a celebration of Progressive Judasim, but it is also a celebration of those who give us a purpose to do what we do; the channichim.

We look forward to having every chanich/a on our campsite enjoying, learning, growing and embracing their inner-funk!

This year, camp will be running from December 12 – 26. Contact us to find out more: www.netzer.org.za or on Facebook – Netzer South Africa



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Dominant victory for Musikanth and team

JACK MILNER

1 Long Avenue, Glenhazel 011 440 9517 | info@kosherworld.co.za | www.kosherworld.co.za
Hours: Mon-Thurs 7am-10pm | Fri: 7am-4pm Sat: 1/2 Hour After Shabbos -10pm | Sun: 8am - 10pm