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south african
Jewish Report

■ Volume 21 – Number 41 ■ December 1 2017 ■ 13 Kislev 5778

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See Times of Israel page 1

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Photo: Haim Tzach/GPO

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Chief Rabbi addresses mixed faith over ‘shalom’

NICOLA MILTZ

Imagine over 50 000 South Africans from all walks of life, from every ethnic group including every religious denomination, singing a Hebrew prayer song in unison at the FNB Stadium in Soweto.

This, they say, can only happen in South Africa.

And so it did last Sunday at the National Day of Prayer organised by the Motsepe Foundation, together with religious and faith-based organisations. A day of unity and prayer, called in response to the “serious and grave challenges and problems of the time”.

In a rousing address, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, called for “peace in our land”, which he said can only come with “honesty and integrity, with compassion and with decency.

“The Hebrew word for peace is shalom. I want to pray for peace because our country, South Africa needs peace, we need shalom,” he said.

He encouraged the audience to sing and clap along and pray together for peace, stirring the crowd with chants of “shalom” and “peace” which they echoed enthusiastically.

Teenager, Shmuli Brill, 15, a grade 9 pupil at Hirsch Lyons Boys’ High School, held the capacity crowd captive with his moving rendition of Oseh Shalom – “May He who makes peace in the heavens, grant peace to us and to all our people; and let us say amen.”

The youngster had only a short while to prepare for his debut and to get his head around the idea of standing in front of literally thousands of eager worshippers, having been asked to perform only a few hours prior to the event.



Shmuli Brill with Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein at the National Day of Prayer

“I was shocked at first when my manager phoned and asked me how I would feel about singing in front of thousands of people. I had to process it,” he said humbly.

One of his first thoughts was how he was going to learn for his mathematics exam the following day.

And then the nerves kicked in and the adrenalin started pumping and before he knew it, he was standing alongside the Chief Rabbi with a microphone in his hands.

“I loved it, dancing to the rhythm and feeling the audience with me. When I sing, I go into a different world and when I stop I come back down to earth.”

Afterwards he was treated to a kosher meal in the VIP room with a host of well-known religious leaders and prominent politicians and other familiar faces, to keep him distracted from the maths books he had schlepped along.

Said Rabbi Goldstein: “The crowd really took to the Hebrew prayer and got into it. They were clapping and singing along and it shows the goodwill in the country that the Jewish community here is a treasured part of society. It was more than acceptance; there was genuine warmth, excitement and joy; there was a real connection.”

South African mining magnate Patrice Motsepe and his Foundation hosted the day for all South Africans, with the purpose to “pray for the unity of all South Africans of all races and languages; to pray for the poor, unemployed and marginalised; to pray for guidance, leadership and blessings for a bright future.”

As part of a prayer week leading up to Sunday’s gathering, Motsepe and members of various religious and faith-based organisations visited and prayed at numerous venues.

Motsepe together with other Christian leaders, attended the Friday night Shabbat service at the Gardens Synagogue in Cape Town where Rabbi Goldstein delivered the sermon.

“Patrice and I have known each other for many years. He is a visionary businessman and a philanthropist who I’ve worked with. He is a good friend of mine and of the South African Jewish community.”

Rabbi Goldstein said the timing of the National Day of Prayer was significant in that it made a “statement about the importance of faith and unity during this critical time in South Africa’s history. We are at a crossroads.”

Parshat Vayishlach

Jacob’s real ‘home’ and ‘dwelling’, was the Torah

In this day and age, where we are often faced with the twin challenges of religious fanaticism and freedom of expression, the Torah’s teachings have never been more pertinent. As George Santayana famously said; “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

In this week’s Torah portion, we read about Jacob returning to the Land of Israel, a made man. Having fled for his life from his brother Esau over 20 years earlier, arriving totally destitute on his uncle Laban’s doorstep, he now returned with a large family, flocks of cattle, household help and huge wealth.

Esau was as murderous as ever and came to greet Jacob with 400 men, intent on avenging his honour from all those years before.

Jacob sent Esau gifts and a message; “I have lived with Laban and tarried until now.” Jacob was not merely updating Esau on his travels; there was a deeper meaning to his message.

“Im Lavan garti – I have lived with

Laban”, Jacob said. The word “garti” is made up of four letters from the Hebrew Alef Bet: gimmel, reish, tav and yud, which have the numerical value of 613, the number of biblical commandments. The word “ger” also means both a “dweller” and a “foreigner”. Jacob was thus informing Esau that even though Laban’s home had been the antithesis of Judaism, he had stayed true to the Torah and its mitzvot while living there.

Jacob had not strayed from Torah observance precisely because he knew that Laban’s values were “foreign” to him; he knew that his real “home” and “dwelling” was the Torah and its commandments. This awareness enabled him to faithfully observe the Torah’s precepts in an environment hostile to holiness.

Further on in the parsha we read about Simeon and Levi rescuing their sister Dinah, while killing all the adult males in the city of Shechem. While legally the entire city was liable for

harbouring a rapist and child abuser, Jacob was upset about the ramifications of their actions on the surrounding nations.

Jacob’s message to Esau has resonated through the generations. As Jews we have lived for centuries in hostile environments and held our heads high. We know that the key to acceptance is not downplaying our Judaism, but rather highlighting our pride in our faith. Showing pride in our G-dly mission not only does not undermine our esteem in the eyes of the world, it enhances it. Treading the narrow line between pride in our religion and being cognisant of the views of others, is something that we have learnt through our experiences in the Diaspora. A look into our history could help other nations learn that the two are not mutually exclusive.



Rabbi Pini Pink, Chabad of Greenstone

South African Jewish Report



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Waiting game in the shadow of Bali volcano

TALI FEINBERG

“I can see the volcano from the beach and have heard numerous grumbles and roars – some of which could be mistaken for thunder – and some of which I am certain are from the volcano,” writes Capetonian actress and yoga teacher Samantha Laura Kaye from Bali, where she had been stuck indefinitely as all flights from the island were cancelled for three days this week while the Mount Agung volcano threatens to erupt.

“Depending on the wind direction, speed and time between the bouts of rain, I can smell something I want to liken to smoke or diesel from another planet. Something unfamiliar and familiar at the same time,” she says.

Volcanic ash poses a deadly threat to aircraft, and ash from Agung is moving south-southwest toward the airport. Ash has reached a height of about 30 000 feet as it drifts across the island.

“On Monday morning, tiny white flakes fell onto my phone as I watched the sky turn from black to pastel at sunrise,” continues Kaye. She arrived in Bali for a vacation after

attending a friend’s wedding in India.

“I was aware that the volcano was active and could erupt, but these warnings have come and gone before, without major eruptions before, so I didn’t know with certainty that the volcano would erupt,” she explains. “I did my research and knew I would be safe from the eruptions as long as I stayed 10km or



Samantha Kaye

more away from the volcano. The areas of Bali I planned to visit were 40-50 km away from the volcano, so I felt safe.”

Kaye is currently staying at Komune resort on Keramas beach – 40,2km away from Mt Agung. In an Instagram post, she said that

“everyone is carrying on as though nothing is really happening... but no one is leaving.”

At first she was excited at the prospect of spending a few extra days in paradise, “but the last 48 hours have been more stressful than relaxing. The information we have been given is very ‘last minute’, meaning that I’m almost constantly searching for Wi-Fi and trying to find live updates on the airlines and airports and flights – and update the relevant people, appointments and ‘real world’ things that this affects in my life,” she says.

At the time of going to print on Wednesday night, the airport had just reopened, but it wasn’t clear whether it would remain so indefinitely. And there is a massive flight backlog, so people like Kaye would have to wait her turn.

Thousands of tourists have been affected after a spike in volcanic activity grounded hundreds of flights. Aviation authorities will continue to monitor the situation on the ground, amid the possibility of another eruption.

“If somebody told me I would be here a month and that I had a place to stay and food and drink was taken care of, it would be a different situation, but as I am losing earnings

daily I am also aware of the holiday bills I could rack up if I am stuck here for weeks over the festive season – which puts a damper on the festivities.

“Costs and admin aside, I feel privileged to have seen the volcano cast in pastel colours yesterday in the sunrise – and to have smelt that unique smelling smoke. I would like to experience as much as I can during my time on earth and this experience will add to the richness of my life and memories.”

Kaye has been told that the people living closest to the volcano are among the poorest in Bali. Those within a 10km (originally 7km) radius have been asked to evacuate the area – but some have elected not to for fear of losing their livestock or homes or for other personal reasons.

“I have been told the authorities are attempting forced evacuations for the remaining families living on or around Mt Agung. The evacuees are currently living at the mercy of others in temporary evacuation camps.”

These evacuation camps are desperate for supplies – most notably food, medical supplies and air masks. South Africans can help by making cash donations that will be used towards these supplies. “I know that when the volcano does erupt, the people whose homes are closest will lose everything they own – so if anyone back home has it in

their hearts to organise a collection, drive or fundraiser, anything and everything would be welcomed by these people who stand to lose everything,” concludes Kaye.

Liat Solomon has lived in Bali for over 20 years. An Israeli by birth, she explains that Judaism is not allowed to be officially practised in Bali, but she hosts Shabbat dinners every Friday night at her home, and even turns her dance studio into a makeshift shul – including a Torah.

She lives about 70km away from the volcano, and has watched dark clouds of ash, lava and smoke eruptions for three weeks now. It has affected her life as it is currently the height of the tourist season in Bali, but no tourists are allowed in or out, and everyone on the island depends on tourism in some way.

“If the airport is closed, we are stranded ... the only other way out is by ferry and then a car ride, which is all about 12 hours away from where we are,” says Solomon. She is supposed to go to Europe in December, but doesn’t know if that will happen now.

Locals are also concerned about breathing in the toxic ash, which is filled with glass particles and can cause acid rain. If the wind changes, she will have to don a mask to protect herself. However, she is accepting of the situation: “We will have to surrender to Mother Nature!”

Raining on the first ‘walk for freedom’

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The Emmarentia and Greenside Jewish community held their collective breath last Saturday, waiting to see what the proposed Palestinian Solidarity Alliance (PSA) anti-Israel “walk for freedom” would bring.

This was to be the very first time such a protest has been proposed and held in the heart of suburban Johannesburg. It started in Marks Park, Emmarentia and wound its way for five kilometres around the suburb.

There were slick advertising posters up for at least a week beforehand, calling for people to join in this “fun walk” for Palestinian freedom.

There was also a masterful social media campaign to entice people to join the protest to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the United Nations’ declaration of an International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian people.

On November 29, 1977, the UN General Assembly called for the annual observance of

this day. On the same day in 1947, the General Assembly adopted the Partition Resolution



The protestors walking past Emmarentia Shul

that provided for the establishment of separate Jewish and Arab states, side by side.

“When are you going to make a difference for Palestine,” were the words in the highly emotive marketing video. “Show your support for the oppressed. How much pain and suffering can they take? Do you really feel their pain? As a South African, make a stand ... Let us unite and show our support. Walk for freedom ... Be Seen.”

Wendy Kahn, national director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, says: “It is the right of any South African to protest and hold political opinions. Our understanding is that this event was peaceful and that there was no apparent hate speech.

“Unfortunately in the past these anti-Israel events have often degenerated into incidents of anti-Semitism,” she says.

Continued on page 4>>

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Chrissie Hammer082 568 0440

ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

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Directions: Follow pointer boards on Club Street.

Laureen 083 789 0229

ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

Glenhazel – Inviting buyers from R1.999 Million
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ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY

Glenhazel – Asking R1.399 Million
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Directions: Directions: Follow Jawitz pointer boards from Cross into Mansion

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There’s hope after corruption, Feinstein affirms

MIRAH LANGER

“The Jewish community in the South Africa of today should be at the forefront of promoting the values of non-racism, tolerance and justice,” urges Andrew Feinstein, former ANC MP turned anti-corruption activist. Now living in England, he was in South Africa to speak at the Daily Maverick’s The Gathering at the Sandton Convention Centre last Thursday. “The community should be focused on addressing the historical legacy of apartheid, by providing opportunities for those who were most disadvantaged by the country’s racist system, and thereby addressing the massive inequalities that continue to bedevil the country,” the Capetonian-at-heart, who is now based in London, told the SA Jewish Report.

When it came to corrupt politicians, “this base, egregious theft should result in removal from office, criminal trial and imprisonment”, said Feinstein. It was also time to discard any belief that corruption remained a “victimless crime”.

While he was critical of the powers-that-be, Feinstein was refreshingly optimistic about the capacity for change and action still possible for ordinary South Africans. At The Gathering, he delivered incisive comments on the state of South Africa’s political landscape – as well as placing it in a global context. He mused that if President Jacob Zuma succeeded with his proposed nuclear deal with Russia, it would “make the arms deal seem like small change”. Feinstein commented that if there was any real interest in fulfilling South Africa’s power requirements, or preventing possible corruption, “the last two people on the planet one would want negotiating such a deal, are Messrs Vladimir Putin and Jacob Zuma.” As such, he said, the deal was not based on power needs. “No, just like the arms deal, it is what we want to meet our patronage and corruption needs.” As a whole, he said, the ANC and South African government had become a vehicle for “self-enrichment and personal aggrandisement”. And the National Prosecuting Authority and other oversight institutions, he maintained “contort their spineless bodies to pretend blissful ignorance that ensures impunity for the looters of the state”. The true tragedy of South Africa, observed Feinstein, was not that it had fallen into corruption – rather it was “the speed and enthusiasm with which, after 1994, we adopted the very tawdry global norms of politics”. South Africa had allowed itself to be tainted by the “systemic corruption on a truly gargantuan scale” which had spread globally. Yet, he suggested, decisive action to rid South Africa of its rot was still

possible. Next month’s elective conference was the “final opportunity” for the ANC to show South Africans that it favoured “the nation over the greed of party leaders, the Constitution over the corrupt mechanism of the state, the people over patronage”. When it came to corrupt politicians, “this base, egregious theft should result in removal from office, criminal trial and imprisonment”, said Feinstein. It was also time to discard any belief that corruption remained a “victimless crime”. The human cost came from other state projects that were then compromised by the loss of stolen funds. “We should never forget those who lost their lives in the Gauteng mental health fiasco,” entreated Feinstein, in citing the Life Esidimeni scandal as the most recent example of the long tentacles of corruption’s clutches. Following his 2001 resignation from the ANC, in protest at the cover-up of the country’s arms deal, Feinstein has pursued a career in both writing and the exposé of the global arms trade. Following his memoir, After the Party, his most recent book, The Shadow World, about the global arms trade, has also been turned into a documentary. He currently serves as executive director of Corruption Watch UK. At The Gathering, Feinstein explained that the arms trade had become a focus of his activism because of its darkly paradoxical nature. “Contrary to what we might read in the media and contrary to what we might see in Hollywood films and on our television screens, the world is actually more peaceful than it’s been at any time in human history – but we sell more weapons than we ever have ... Why is that?” A very small elite was manufacturing the trade through a “fear industry”, he suggested. “Politicians, business executives and the intermediaries, do things in the arms trade, all of which is secret, behind a veil of national security, that they wouldn’t dare do in other trades – even corrupt other trades like oil and construction. Yes, Feinstein was assertive in proposing that the power to fight against this evil, still lay in the hands and hearts of ordinary citizens. “We take to the streets first of all,” he advocated.

Andrew Feinstein



The courts and the media were also friends in the fight against corruption. Even the possibility of withholding a percentage of tax that was being funnelled to unethical outcomes, was something to consider. “Paying tax is very important in having a decent society – but you withhold tax for the things you find unacceptable. I think that if this continues in this country, we have to start thinking about things like that.” Poignantly reflecting on his own struggles in apartheid, Feinstein reminded the audience that South Africa’s history had already proved that the impossible was realisable. “Let’s not forget what we have done in this country; we have changed remarkable things. “I had to leave this country in 1986 because I did not want to serve in the apartheid army. I remember driving over Chapman’s Peak Drive in Cape Town and thinking I won’t see this county again: Apartheid is not going to disappear in my lifetime ... “If somebody had said to me:“No! No! In nine years’ time, you’ll be back in the country; the ANC will be in power and Nelson Mandela will be your president’, I would have recommended that they get a strait jacket. “...But the reality is that that is what happened – and the reality is that we remain a highly politicised and a highly politically active country.” Speaking this week to the Jewish Report,

Feinstein reminisced about some of his memories and ties to the South African Jewish community. Describing his family as “quite secular but culturally very Jewish”, Feinstein said that his mother’s legacy as a Holocaust survivor had fundamentally shaped his particular political beliefs. “My mother’s history [was] one of a very small number of Jews who survived the Second World War in Vienna, where she lived. She lost more than 30 relatives in Auschwitz and Theresienstadt.” Until the present, he remains a “keen observer” of the SA Holocaust Museum, “which I believe is an extraordinary resource for teaching about the Holocaust and the perils of racism of any sort”. Childhood memories of Jewish delis and “delicious meals” of chopped herring, chopped liver and other traditions delights, have continued to tantalise Feinstein’s taste-buds until today. On a more serious note, Feinstein characterised his Jewish identity as having forged a moral code against “intolerance, injustice and inequality “In a world in which anti-Semitism and Islamophobia remain prominent, and in which racism is again seen and heard from among the world’s most powerful political leaders, I believe that Jews should be at the forefront of speaking out against these evils.”

Raining on the first ‘walk for freedom’

>> Continued from page 3

However, beforehand, the community was not sure what to expect, in terms of how big it would be and how aggressive. The CSO was on high alert around many of the areas where the Jewish and Muslim communities live side by side, not least of all the area of the scheduled walk. Be it the rain or be it just a lack of interest, less than 400 people attended the rally and the “walk for freedom” was very peaceful. The route went directly past the Emmarentia Shul, which was closed for business that afternoon. As the protesters passed the shul, some snide comments were passed and a few raised voices shouting pro-Palestinian slogans, but they were quickly quelled. The CSO had warned a number of the shuls’ spiritual leaders – including Emmarentia and Greenside – that it would be advisable not to hold the Mincha and Maariv afternoon services at the usual late afternoon time. Instead, many shuls chose to have Mincha right after a brocha and/or shiur around midday. “While we weren’t expecting any problems, we believed it was worth taking precautions to ensure that Jewish people were not walking to and from shul at the same time or just after the march,” said Jevon Greenblatt, CSO director of operations. “We can protect people at shuls, we can’t protect them

out on the road.” The CSO wasn’t worried that the organisers would incite violence, but that there might be fringe elements that could go looking for trouble and target shuls or Jewish people on the roads. Be it the rain or be it just a lack of interest, less than 400 people attended the rally and the “walk for freedom” was very peaceful. “We will not be intimidated by this, but most religious leaders saw the validity of not taking chances,” says Greenblatt. He said it “was impossible to imagine how many people would venture to join, particularly because of the high level of marketing”. As it happened, it was a rainy day and when the event began at 14:00, with pop-up stands at Marks Park and speeches, there were very few people. The numbers grew slowly during the speeches and by the time they left on the “freedom walk”, the crowd had swelled to around 400. The Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department and the PSA’s own members monitored the walk. Despite the numbers, this was seen as a very successful protest because as Ismail Moola,

spokesperson for the Palestinian Solidarity Alliance, told Saalamedia, it was a challenge to have this walk outside of the “traditional Muslim apartheid areas” and bring it to “the north”. Moola said: “We have been trying for many years to get some traction there (in the northern suburbs).” He added that coming to “the north” meant they had to be far more “creative and innovative”. So, there may not have been thousands of people, but they significantly put their footprint in the northern suburbs, which could be the beginning of an annual trend. Says Greenblatt: “The truth is this was a once-off event and plans were made to increase security. However, we have to ensure that every day and every Shabbos, we have sufficient measures in place to prevent any ugliness. “It takes one lone wolf who is triggered by something. So, as a community, we need to be building long term resilient and sustainable protection – not just for annual marches.” Greenblatt explains that there is “no power in panicking”, the best defence is to always have the right security in place. Also, it is important for the community to keep CSO informed about anything they hear that might be an attempt to breach security, he says.

Community rallies around Israeli stabbed in Cape Town

TALI FEINBERG

When Israeli couple Shahaf Edut and Yariv Nitzan arrived in Cape Town last week, they were looking forward to sightseeing and enjoying the nightlife. But as they walked the busy streets of Green Point on Friday evening, their lives changed in an instant.

“We were walking past the Prestwich Memorial when suddenly about seven youths surrounded us. I screamed and Yariv tried to protect me,” remembers Edut. The attackers fled with the couple’s cell phones and Edut ran to the other side of the street. She was joined by Nitzan who said he needed to get to hospital – he had been stabbed.

They took a taxi to Christiaan Barnard Memorial Hospital and Nitzan collapsed at the door due to loss of blood. But within half an hour he was stabilised, and sent for a CT scan, which showed his arteries had not been affected. However, he did need to

be operated on, and the ER team set about looking for an anaesthetist.

The couple were astounded when they heard that no anaesthetist was willing to go to the hospital at that late hour, so the operation was delayed until the following morning.

Meanwhile, Edut, alone and scared in a city she didn’t know, reached out to Israeli friends who then alerted the Jewish community in Cape Town.

“I woke up early on Saturday to a lot of phone calls,” says Michal Ilan, a new shlichah in Cape Town. She was told about the incident and rushed to the hospital to see if she could help – along with strangers, community leaders and Hebrew speakers who did not know the couple, but put aside their weekend to come to their aid.

“I sat with Shahaf and her phone just kept ringing with phone calls and messages from near and far,” says Ilan.

Director of the SA Zionist Federation Cape Council, Julie Berman, also rushed

to assist, organising an instant support network for the couple, ranging from trauma counselling to food.

“They were in the wrong place at the wrong time and it wasn’t political – it can happen in any country,” emphasises Berman.

She recalls just a year ago when an Israeli student was knocked down by a car in Cape Town and spent months recovering in the city. She also spoke of a South African child being hurt in Ra’nana, who was embraced by the community there. “We look after each other, and the outpouring of love and support from the community has been unbelievable.”



Shahaf Edut and Yariv Nitzan

Town. When Nitzan was discharged, he also stayed with the Shers.

Nitzan has made an excellent recovery, “but he has two large scars and is dealing with flashbacks and nightmares,” says Edut. The couple are now in Johannesburg, which Nitzan visits monthly for work, and he will continue to do so. They hope to return to Cape Town one day for a better experience.

Edut appeals to anyone with influence at Christiaan Barnard Hospital to ensure there are anaesthetists on call at all times; and that security is stepped up in Green Point near the Prestwich Memorial.

“I want to say to the community: Many thanks ... we felt really embraced by your willingness to help. There was so much warmth and it is really important that we can rely on someone and ask for help. After that traumatic experience, it feels good. It feels good.”

Mandla Mandela in Israel that he insists is Palestine

ILANIT CHERNICK

The grandson of the late anti-apartheid hero, former President Nelson Mandela, went on a “historic visit” to Israel this week; however, throughout his time in the country, he referred to it as Palestine.

While in the country, Mandla Mandela called on South Africans to further the boycott against Israel and continue fighting for the “freedom of the Palestinian people”.

“It is now for the next generation to uphold his (Nelson Mandela’s) commitment to the Palestinian people,” Mandela said.

As part of his visit, Mandela had “constructive meetings” with 83-year-old PA President Mahmoud Abbas as well as Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, Fatah official Azzam al-Ahmad, director of the Arafat Foundation Nasser Al-Kidwa and the Governor of Jericho Majed Al Fityani.

According to the Wafa news agency, while meeting with Mandela, on Monday Abbas hailed South Africa’s continued support for the Palestinian cause.

While meeting with Mandela in Ramallah, Hamdallah highlighted the inspiring legacy of the younger Mandela’s late grandfather.

He also stressed the strength of bilateral ties between the Palestinian Authority and South Africa and the historic relationship formed between the late presidents Yasser Arafat and Nelson Mandela. He also praised South Africa’s position in supporting the Palestinian people and championing their cause in the international arena.

Hamdallah briefed the South African MP on Israel’s so-called “violations against the Palestinians, including settlement expansion and displacement projects that constitute a major obstacle to realising the dream of establishing a Palestinian state”.

The two politicians also discussed ways to strengthen their co-operation and advance bilateral relations.

On Tuesday, Mandela also visited Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Hebron and Arafat’s mausoleum in Ramallah. Close to the mausoleum is a six-metre high, bronze statue of Nelson Mandela, who is famous among Palestinians for saying: “We know all too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the

Palestinians.”

Mandela visited the Palestinian territories as part of international solidarity month with the Palestinian struggle. Prior to the four-day visit, which took place from Sunday to Wednesday, he met with Palestinian leader and BDS co-founder Omar Barghouti in Amman.

A statement released earlier this week said Mandela, a staunch Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) supporter and a member of Parliament, would “hold several meetings with Palestinian leaders” but made no mention of meeting with his Israeli counterparts. The Foreign Ministry appeared to corroborate the statement by saying: “We have no information on the visit.”

In the past, Mandela has made several calls for the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador to South Africa and has continuously supported the cutting of ties between the two countries.

In August, he applauded the South African Parliament’s decision to shun a delegation of Israeli MKs who were visiting the country.

During an anti-Israel march in July, he demanded “that all ties be cut with Israel ...



Mandla Mandela

no trade ties, no cultural ties and no travel! We demand that Israel complies with international law and demand the return of six million Palestinian refugees, driven from the land of their birth. We demand that all occupied land be returned, and we condemn the continued expansion of illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land.”

He continued: “Today, we stand to salute the brave and fearless Palestinian people who are facing the brutal might of the Israeli Army to defend al-Aqsa with their bare hands. We demand that all occupied land be returned. Madiba reminded us that our freedom is incomplete until Palestine is free.”

Although Nelson Mandela was critical of “the occupation”, he fully supported Israel’s right to exist.

During a visit to Israel in 1999, the former South African president said: “I cannot conceive of Israel withdrawing if Arab states do not recognise Israel within secure borders.” But he also made it clear “that talk of peace remains hollow if Israel continues to occupy Arab lands”.

• See open letter to Mandla Mandela on page 9



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Jewish Report

What of the ‘Gupta minyan’?

It is time to address the elephant in the room. Wherever I and my colleagues go, we get asked why we haven’t written about the so-called “Gupta minyan” as if this is absolutely our job. Others challenge us as to when we are going to get on with “loshing” about these people who haven’t had their day in court.

For those of us who have had our heads in the clouds, or have been so far away from media in the last year or so, I am talking about the Jewish businessmen who have been linked to the Guptas and to the corruption that surrounds them.

Yes, you all know at least five names that perhaps are linked to Trillian, Eskom, McKinsey and I could go on. The truth is: The rest of the media – particularly Daily Maverick, amaBhungane and top business publications – have been full of stories about these men and what they have allegedly done.

So, what is it exactly you expect us to do that hasn’t already been done? Are we to give them a right of reply that some may not have had? Are we to join the dots so that there can be no mistaking what they did or didn’t do? Are we to protect them and give them a platform to tell you how innocent they are?

Suffice to say, we do have a couple of pokers getting hot in the fire.

However, we have also gone down a lot of roads that led us back to point one on this issue. We have given most of them an opportunity to have their say, but each one turned us down.

There was a sense that when we gave Mark Pamensky that opportunity, it certainly didn’t do him any good. Nor was it meant to. Apparently, business people in the community thought it was an unsatisfactory story because, among other reasons, they were sure Pamensky wasn’t telling the truth.

Others didn’t believe we should have given him so much rope. What is true is we gave him a platform – like it or not – to have his say and he did. He may have hoped the community would give him the benefit of the doubt, but they clearly didn’t.

I once suggested to a colleague of mine that there were two types of South African Jews, those who support the Gupta guys and those who don’t. He disagreed, saying there were no Jews supporting them. Only their closest family and friends are backing them, but for the most part we are unforgiving.

Here’s why: We hold ourselves and our community up to extremely high standards. We are meant to be a light unto the nations and live scrupulous lives. Truth is: We are human and we all make mistakes. However, the public aspect of so many Jewish people having been seen and believed to have crossed the line and supported the unsupportable, is more than most of us can bear.

We are all watching as our tax money, and money the government doesn’t even have, is being sucked into corrupt and wasteful purposes. A nuclear power deal with the Russians?

That is just one of many ...

When other people are involved, we can be angry and frustrated, but it is embarrassing and humiliating when our own are involved. It is hard to blame an unknown rogue element when we went to school with people involved. Even harder when you serve on a Jewish communal board with another.

But what do you say to that person when they arrive at the board meetings? Is it okay for them to be sitting on boards? And how do you feel when they walk down the aisle at your shul on Shabbos?

Do we have a right to look down our noses at them? They have not had their day in court.

They have not been found guilty – no matter what evidence is out there. Do we have a right to play G-d and punish them by ostracising them or expecting them to step down from positions of authority? Are we way too judgmental because they are part of us?

We must remember that their children attend the same school as ours and their child may be your child’s best friend. No matter what you think, they are still an integral part of our community. So, how do we deal with them?

I may have all the questions, but the truth is: I don’t have the answers to this.

Personally, I don’t believe in punishing people unless I have 100% proof positive that they are guilty. I always like to give people the benefit of the doubt.

Am I angry that people who had the same upbringing as I did may have crossed the corruption line in the name of pure greed and may never be held to account? You bet.

Do I believe they should hold communal leadership roles while their integrity is being questioned? I don’t. I believe that they should do the honourable thing and stand down until their names are cleared.

Do I believe we should turn against them? Absolutely not. They are innocent until proven guilty!

As a community, no matter how angry and frustrated we are, we need to be fair, kind, live within our integrity and hold onto our moral compass.

As a newspaper, you need to know we are not letting this go. We will continue to work tirelessly in the pursuit of the truth.

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

Dateline: Middle East

Netanyahu’s growing alarm as terror attacks inch towards Israel



PAULA SLIR

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quick to send a letter of condolence to the Egyptian government after a deadly attack in a crowded mosque in Northern Sinai last Friday. More than 300 people were killed and 120 injured after several gunmen, some masked, entered the mosque during Friday prayers and started firing. It is the deadliest terrorist attack in Egypt’s modern history.

But Netanyahu’s concern was not only for those killed and their families. He and his security establishment have been watching with increasing alarm Egypt’s ongoing battle to contain terror groups that are inching their way closer to Israel’s southern border. Just last month two rockets were fired from the Sinai Peninsula at Israeli communities.

Like in the mosque attack last Friday, no one claimed responsibility but it is widely believed Wilayat Sinai, the Islamic State’s (IS) affiliate in the Peninsula, was behind them both. The group has been waging a bloody war against Egyptian security for years and on multiple occasions has launched rockets at Israeli communities, including Eilat.

It is not clear whether Israel is a specific target. Or is it, as is happening on Israel’s northern border, spillover fire from the fighting between Egyptian troops and IS? Analysts I talk to believe the rockets are deliberately aimed at Israel, but are more a propaganda exercise than any serious attempt to start a war with the Jewish State.

Regardless, attacks in, and from, Sinai are happening more frequently. Last Friday’s mosque assault was the second in just over a month. At the end of October, more than 50 Egyptian policemen were ambushed and killed at a Muslim Brotherhood hideout. It was one of the worst losses of life for Egyptian security forces in years.

In an attempt to calm his nervous population, in a televised address, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, promised that operations against terrorist groups operating in the Sinai would become more brutal. But proclamations aside, Netanyahu is also becoming frustrated at the seemingly lack of progress the Egyptians are making in tackling terror. It’s no secret Cairo receives American technology and Israeli intelligence – and in great supply.

Egypt has long been one of Washington’s closest allies in the region and receives millions of US dollars in military aid each year. US President Donald Trump announced a “resetting” of relations between the countries in stark contrast to his predecessor Barack Obama who froze aid to Egypt for two years after el-Sisi, then an army general, overthrew former Egyptian

president, Muslim Brotherhood leader, Mohamed Morsi, back in 2013.

As for Israeli assistance, since 2013 Israel has allowed additional Egyptian forces in the Sinai, beyond the numbers permitted under the 1979 peace accord between the countries. Foreign media reports suggest that Israel has also been carrying out drone strikes against extremists operating in the Sinai with the knowledge and blessing of Cairo. Israeli officials have kept quiet on this issue.

On the positive side, the fact that Israel has allowed Egyptian tanks and artillery to be brought into the Peninsula to fight IS, shows that Jerusalem is not worried they will be used against her. Egypt and Israel are also likely to increase their intelligence sharing after last Friday’s attack.

After all, they have the same goal: to defeat the same terrorist groups. For the Israelis, el-Sisi’s regime is a pragmatic, stable one in a volatile region, one she can rely on alongside Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

But the latest developments beg the question as to whether the Egyptian forces are up to the mark. The fact that such a large attack was carried out under their noses, underlines huge flaws in their security, intelligence-gathering and counter-terrorism efforts.

From their side, senior Egyptian officials insist patience is needed and claim they’ve all but stopped underground trafficking of terrorists between Gaza and Sinai, which is a noteworthy achievement. They also boast that they’ve managed to get some of the Sinai Bedouin tribes to help in the fight against extremist groups.

It’s worth noting that last Friday’s attack happened in a territory where the dominant tribe had refused to co-operate with IS. This is why there is some speculation that the jihadists targeted this mosque. The worshippers were also Sufi and IS has not shied away from saying their “first priority” is to combat polytheism, the belief in more than one god, and have given Sufism as an example.

Since coming to power four years ago, el-Sisi prioritised the fight against terror. However, the cold reality is that in this time such attacks have grown more frequent and deadly.

Whether Wilayat Sinai carried out this assault or not, the group will benefit from the perception that it did. Is there more that Israel and America can do to help Egypt? Or is the problem, as some analysts suggest, with the Egyptian security forces themselves?

These forces have been criticised for being sluggish and slow to act, and some say it doesn’t matter how much money and guns are thrown at them.

For Netanyahu, watching across the border, these questions just add to his growing alarm.

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



Gordhan and Pogrund consider SA’s need to unite to move forward

SIMON SHEAR

Put a rabbi – whose made his name through ethics and governance – and a consummate activist/politician in a business school auditorium with microphones and an educated audience, and you get some seriously honest discussion about the rights and wrongs of this country.

Rabbi Gideon Pogrund recently introduced Pravin Gordhan as special guest at a forum held at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) in Johannesburg, to discuss the crossroads South Africa finds itself at and, more importantly, how society should to unite to chart a way forward.

Pogrund, who directs the Ethics and Governance Think Tank at GIBS, commenced by recalling anthropologist Ruth Benedict’s distinction between “guilt cultures” and “shame cultures”.

In a guilt society, behaviour is directed by an internal moral compass and a sense of guilt at moral transgression. In a shame society, by contrast, behaviour is modulated with reference to others, to how our actions may cause us to be perceived.



Rabbi Gideon Pogrund

Taking the social grant payment scandal as a case in point of gratuitous rent seeking, Gordhan voiced concern that “materialism and consumerism, and the lack of shame and guilt, allow for unprecedented and an unrestrained greed to be a key driver both in the public sector in terms of stealing

and in the private sector in terms of the assembling of profits or bonuses”.

At this juncture, Gordhan believes that shame and guilt alone will not change the attitude of those in power. In order to effect change, we need to mobilise society, we need a more acute understanding of how patronage networks emerge and are sustained.

“What is going to shift society to be mobilised is a keener awareness going beyond the connection of dots. How do systems like these work, and how does building the politics and economics, the behavioural dimensions and dynamics work to actually inform the kind of rent seeking and patronage processes. Putting it more simply, how the stealing and neglecting processes actually work.”

There’s an immediate lesson for the still-comfortable middle classes. Corruption and state capture may seem like abstract problems, but complacency is not an option, he explains. Gordhan suggested that the upper middle classes of all races are more concerned with the fees for moving their investments offshore, than seeking practical ways to resist corruption.

A discussion is urgently required about resisting corruption and the abuse of power. The middle class needs to ask itself: “How do we actually contribute to revitalising the vision we had in the National Development Plan, of the kind of South Africa that we actually want. How do we all become active in one way or another, to contribute to the realisation of those plans and, more importantly, contribute to shifting the balance in the right kind of way?”

Turning to the ANC’s December conference, Gordhan explained that while most South Africans are still committed to the ANC, people want to see a change in leadership within the party. The majority of people desire an ANC “capable of leading South Africa in a different economy, a more cohesive society, a socially just society, a society that actually begins to live the values that is in our Constitution”.

A more cohesive society depends on a more inclusive economy. Somewhat counterintuitively, Gordhan suggested that inclusive growth requires radical steps outlined by Cyril Ramaphosa’s leadership campaign. However,

Gordhan was careful to point out that “radical” in this context referred to profound steps towards achieving inclusive growth, rather than populist policies unguided by reason.

Rather than passively waiting for a resolution in December, the lesson may be that all communities need to mobilise and join together, to try to understand our society but also to change it.



Pravin Gordhan

is clearly a crisis of governance and ethics, there is also a crisis of wealth and income inequality, “reflected in the fact that we still haven’t got rid of the structural features of apartheid”.

It is in this context that the politics of patronage and a culture of greed has emerged, leading to “corruption on a systemic scale, which results in what we today call state capture in our own society”.

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Increasing demand for subsidies a challenge for the KD Foundation

GILLIAN KLAWSKY

With a 2018 fundraising budget of R32 million, the King David Schools’ Foundation (KDSF) needs more donors than ever. Yet, as the costs of living rise and the need for subsidies increases, factors like emigration and stretched bank balances make fundraising increasingly challenging.

At King David, annual school fees for learners in grade 9-12 will be R131 500 in 2018. If you have two children in those grades, you’re paying over a quarter of a million rand in school fees each year – before you’ve even thought of food and rent.

“The reality is that many people are battling to pay school fees and we’re seeing increased demand on our subsidy budget,” explains Raelene Tradonsky who runs the KDSF. “We’ve had a large number of requests from parents requesting financial assistance.”

Yet, she argues, King David’s fees are significantly lower than some of the country’s top private schools.

With South Africa’s national education system in crisis, public schools are generally no longer an option for Jewish parents who place an enormous emphasis on education.

“We still manage to be one of the top performing schools in the country, a phenomenal achievement. What differentiates us is that we’re a community school and as such, we offer subsidies to families who cannot afford our fees. Even with scholarships, our initial basis has to be one of ‘financial need’.”

Tradonsky, however, emphasises that no-one at King David gets free schooling. “Even in cases where families are helped by the Chevrah Kadisha, the Chev will give us a small percentage towards school fees – even at a public school you’d have to pay fees.

“No Jewish child is denied a Jewish education for financial reasons.



However, we do have strict policies, that if your committed payment is not made, the school may terminate the agreement. Fortunately, this very rarely happens.”

With South Africa’s national education system in crisis, public schools are generally no longer an option for Jewish parents who place an enormous emphasis on education, says Tradonsky. This means the need for subsidies steadily increases.

“Jewish parents largely sacrifice other things for the education of their children. Middle-class parents, who typically would not be at a private school but rather at a good public school, just don’t have this option anymore,” she says.

“They come to King David because they want good teachers and good education and that’s where the public school system often falls down today. This reality is why we’re so proud of the subsidy scheme we offer.”

Yet, covering the subsidy shortfall comes with challenges. As uncertainty rises in South Africa, change is inevitable with many, largely wealthy, families emigrating, which often means that the KDSF loses major donors.

“The Jewish community in Johannesburg has dwindled substantially since the 70s” says Tradonsky. “We’ve just been to London, a city which has attracted a

large number of our donors. A donor who emigrates is always difficult to replace and they take many years to resume donating back to South Africa, as they need to establish themselves in the new country and get involved in the community there, so it’s always a worry for us when wealthy donors leave.

“The KDSF has a R32 million target for 2018, which is what my team has to fundraise for,” she explains. “That yearly budget rises on an annual basis – there’s a constant rising trend in the value and demand for subsidies.”

Tradonsky says that subsidies from the KDS board and fundraising by the KDSF, are two sides of the same coin. “Each year just under 10 per cent of fully-paid school fees go into a subsidy fund.

“So, for 2018, we’re tasked with bringing the R32 million that covers this subsidy pool back into the system so that we can do what is needed for the schools. This includes educational advancement and infrastructure improvement, so that we aren’t compromising those who pay full fees in any way.”

With annually rising fundraising targets, the work of the KDSF gets increasingly difficult, yet they always meet targets with the help of dedicated fundraising staff and generous donors. “We have enough money this year because I’ve gone grey” laughs Tradonsky.

“It’s a lot of hard work, we do a number of different fundraising drives, both locally and overseas, where we appeal to donors to not forsake their roots. That’s our call to action, if you had the privilege of a King David education, and if you’re in a privileged position and may be able to give back, please do!

“The bulk of our donors are alumni and parents. For them, thank G-d there is the concept of ‘hakarathatov’, a debt of gratitude. There’s also a real desire to keep King David Schools excellent,” she says.

“I honestly believe that without a Jewish school of excellence – and King David, which continues to thrive, is by far and away the mainstay of the community in terms of this – young families would seriously consider leaving South Africa.

“It’s the glue that holds the community together. We currently have around 3 500 Jewish children in our schools – 15 per cent of which are on subsidies. We’re proud to be assisting what translates to around 500 families.”

World News in Brief

French-speaking Belgian Jews sue to overturn ban on ritual slaughter

ANTWERP – The umbrella group representing French-speaking Jewish communities in Belgium, earlier this week filed an appeal with a federal court against a regional ban on the production of kosher and halaal meat.

The Belgian Federation of Jewish Organisations, or CCOJB, filed the motion with the Constitutional Court of Belgium, seeking an injunction against the ban passed in May by the parliament of Belgium’s Wallonia region – one of the binational kingdom’s three autonomous regions, CCOJB’s president, Yohan Benizri, told JTA on Tuesday.

Both the Wallonia region and Belgium’s largest, the Flemish region, passed laws earlier this year that as of 2019 outlaw any slaughter that is not preceded by stunning.

Both halacha, the Jewish religious Orthodox law, and

Muslim religious laws, forbid the consumption of animals that are not fully conscious when their necks are cut. If the animals are stunned at the time of the slaughter, the meat is not considered kosher by Jewish standards and halaal by Muslim standards.

In recent years, ritual slaughter has come under attack from anti-Muslim activists and animal welfare lobbyists who view it as cruel or foreign to European culture.

“If the legislation is not annulled prior to coming into force in 2019, it would undermine the ability of minority faith communities to practise central tenets of their religions in Belgium,” CCOJB said of its lawsuit, which is being supported by The Lawfare Project, a legal think tank combating what it regards as anti-Jewish discrimination. (JTA)



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An open letter to Mandla Mandela from Dr Avraham Neguise

Dear Mandla Mandela,

There is a well-known African proverb: “The words of the elders do not lock all the doors; they leave the right door open.”

Your grandfather Nelson Mandela was a great, singular and visionary man, and it is in his memory and the struggle for which he bravely stood, that I write this open letter to you.

Nelson Mandela was a man who always listened, even to his opponents, and fought hard for dialogue and understanding. It appears that you have not inherited these vital qualities from your grandfather.

On your recent visit to the region, you became a tool in a hate campaign, a campaign that seeks to suppress the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in our historic, ancestral and indigenous homeland.

In recent comments during your visit to the Palestinian Authority, you claimed that Israel is the “worst version of apartheid”. However, you made no attempt on this visit to our region to meet with any Israeli official, organisation or individual. If you had, you would have found that Israel is actually the opposite of apartheid, it is a story of liberation, emancipation and anti-colonisation.

You would have heard how a people exiled and enslaved two thousand years ago, were scattered to the four corners of the earth and subjected to humiliation, oppression, slavery, and even attempted annihilation.

Even while under the most trying circumstances, the Jewish people never forgot their heritage and their historic, ancestral and indigenous homeland with a remnant always remaining in the Land of Israel.

You would have heard how the Jewish people, unique in history, returned to their land, throwing off two millennia of colonial foreign and occupying rule and reconstituted sovereignty. We came from more than 100 different countries, speaking dozens of different languages and from a myriad backgrounds and traditions.

Unfortunately, even while continually extending our hand in peace and friendship to those whose ancestors came to our region as an occupying and colonising force, our opponents and enemies continue to seek our destruction.

I am certain that if you sought to understand and research the conflict beyond the superficiality you are currently exposed to, you would see the truth. The Jewish people were the colonised, not the colonisers, the indigenous, not the occupiers, and the liberators and not the conquerors of this land.

Unfortunately, either for domestic political reasons, to shore up the Muslim vote in troubled ANC areas in South Africa, or in a misguided attempt to emulate your grandfather, you have actually shamed his legacy.

Comparing Israel, a nation that took in more refugees per capita than any nation in history, and where people of any religion, ethnicity and background can reach every level of office, to apartheid, dishonours your grandfather’s legacy.

Your grandfather fought against a brutal system that created a legal apparatus to keep people of colour from mixing and associating with the white ruling classes. There were separate sinks, bathrooms and sidewalks for blacks and whites. The black majority was banned from voting or holding public office, and had few rights.

I would like to know where any of this exists in Israel, because if it did, I would be the first to stand against such injustice. However, like me, you probably know that there are no such limitations in Israel.

The facts are that there are 15 Arab Members of Knesset, four from the Druze community, including a government minister, and countless more who came from Africa, including myself, and I am honoured to be the chairman of a Knesset committee.

There is an Arab Supreme Court Justice, Salim Joubran, who sent a former Israeli prime

minister to jail.

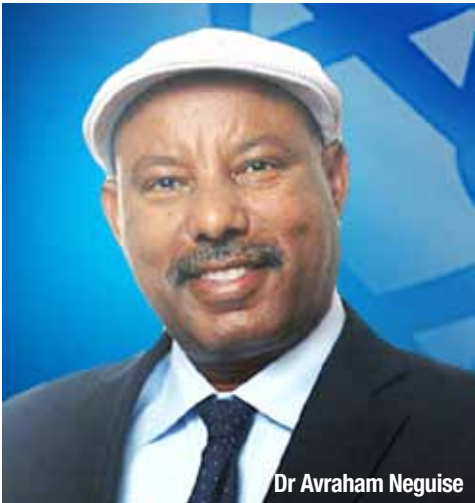
Any minority can run for president and prime minister, and all Israelis have exactly the same rights and freedoms embedded in our quasi-constitutional Basic Laws.

You know better than I that this was not the case in apartheid South Africa. In fact, the opposite was true. That is why your analogy of Israel to South Africa is not only a nefarious lie, it degrades the legacy of apartheid and thus cheapens and devalues the struggle of your people that your grandfather led.

Every time you use the term ‘apartheid’ so frivolously, you chip away at the memory of a regime that terrorised South Africans for decades. By comparing Israel to apartheid, you do not harm Israel as much as the memory of your people’s sacrifice for freedom and liberty.

Such banal and hackneyed comparisons sully this sacrifice and undermine one of the greatest struggles in modern history.

However, it is not too late to rectify your error and historic injustice. I invite you personally



to visit Israel, to visit our robust democracy and its seat and representative institution, The Knesset; to see for yourself how hopelessly far reality really is from the image you are perpetrating.

Your grandfather visited Israel on many occasions and, while he was an undisputed

supporter of Palestinian statehood, he recognised “the legitimacy of Zionism as a Jewish nationalism” and proclaimed that “we insist on the right of the State of Israel to exist within secure borders”.

Your elder, Nelson Mandela, left this door open for you.

You can ignore it and remain divisive, belligerent and anti-Semitic, or you can walk through that door to embrace understanding and dialogue, and hear, perhaps for the first time, the story of a people, who, like yours, successfully threw off oppressive foreign colonialism and strove towards national liberation in their historic, ancestral and indigenous homeland.

My door remains open to you, should you wish to follow your grandfather’s example.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Avraham Neguise
Member of Knesset and chairman of the Knesset Committee on Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Affairs



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To obtain a role specification, applicants should contact:

Madeline Coady, recruitment consultant advising the Board.
E-mail: mc@madelinecoadyconsulting.com.au; or
Mobile: +61 450 627 276

Applications close Wednesday 13 December 2017

Moriah College provides a dynamic working environment where staff are valued and students are committed to learning

Moriah College is a modern Orthodox Jewish Day School with a tradition of strong academic results

Nicholas Wolpe being honoured like royalty

NICOLA MILTZ

When a South African CEO is honoured with an award that is normally reserved for foreign heads of state and royalty, there is a good reason to find out why.

Nicholas Wolpe, the founder and CEO of the Liliesleaf Trust, has been awarded with a Knighthood by the King of Sweden in recognition for his unwavering commitment to keeping the memory of the struggle against apartheid alive.

Wolpe was only a tiny baby when police raided Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, Johannesburg on July 11, 1963 arresting the high command of uMkhonto we Sizwe. His father, Harold, was one of those.

The arrests led to the famous Rivonia Trial at which eight accused, including Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Denis Goldberg, Elias Motsoaledi, Andrew Mlangeni and Raymond Mhlaba, were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Wolpe’s parents, Harold and AnnMarie, fled into exile shortly after Harold escaped from the Marshall Square police headquarters in Johannesburg by bribing a young warder, just before the start of the Rivonia Trial. Nicholas returned to South Africa as a young man on a mission to bring those defining moments in the history of South Africa to life.

He went back to Liliesleaf Farm and created a centre of memory.

This week Wolpe told the SA Jewish Report he was “shocked, surprised and somewhat dumbfounded” when the Swedish Ambassador, Cecilia Julin informed him that the King of Sweden, Carl XVI Gustaf, had bestowed upon him a Knighthood of the First Class of the Royal Order of the Polar Star – awarded to those who have “displayed a civic merit for devotion to duty, for the science, literary, learned and useful works and for new and beneficial works”.

“It took me completely by surprise and came out of the blue ... I never dreamed it

would ever happen to me,” he said.

“It is a great honour and privilege to receive a knighthood ... it is an acknowledgement and recognition of my commitment and dedication to ensuring that a unique and seminal epoch in our struggle for freedom is not lost and forgotten, but remembered and honoured.”

He said it gave him a “deep sense of satisfaction” that his life’s work had been recognised as worthwhile.

“That people appreciate what I have been striving to achieve and accomplish through Liliesleaf and the Liliesleaf Legacy Project... fills me with a sense of pride, joy and elation,” he said.

It has not always been easy for Wolpe to achieve his goal of preserving the memory of a specific moment during the struggle.

“There have been times when I have been consumed with the dread that the work ... has fallen on deaf ears and has been done in vain, that there exists an indifference to

“This is not just about me, but is also an honour and recognition to the memory of a unique, ethical and principled group of leaders who rose above self-interest, wants and aspirations.”

preserving the memory of our struggle.”

However, he said this award had given him “renewed hope” that it had been worth it, and that it still had relevance and meaning.”

When asked what the award would mean to his father, he said that although Harold Wolpe did not “seek the limelight” it would go a long way to recognising the role he played in the struggle for freedom.

“I feel he never received the due recognition of his commitment ... contribution towards bringing about a free, democratic, just and non-sexist and non-racial society for all,



which he deserved ... a part of me feels that this knighthood is also honouring and recognising his contribution... I am sure he would be immensely proud.”

And of course, to the others arrested in July 1963 at Liliesleaf Farm.

He said this was also for the men who sacrificed their own lives so that the South Africans of today could enjoy the “fruits of freedom”.

“This is not just about me, but is also an honour and recognition to the memory of a unique, ethical and principled group of leaders who rose above self-interest, wants and aspirations.”

Liliesleaf and places like it, continue to be of major significance to South Africans, he said.

“South Africa stands at a cross roads, at a defining moment of reckoning, where we are grappling with the cancerous encroachment of corruption, self-interest and state capture

– the very antithesis of the ideals, principles, beliefs and aspirations of the Struggle heroes.

“As we struggle to roll back the tide of self-interest and wanton material accumulation ... Liliesleaf and what it symbolises ... stands as a reminder to the youth of the importance of what underpinned our Struggle and what can be achieved through a unified commitment defined and underpinned by self-dedication.

“As a site of memory, Liliesleaf keeps the history of a significant and seminal period in our liberation struggle alive and in the consciousness of all. For it is our link to the past, our connection to the present and our bridge to our future.

“Liliesleaf has a crucial and indispensable role to play in highlighting that the Freedom Charter is not merely a statement, but a statement of intent, a reality as highlighted by the role individuals across the colour bar played in the liberation struggle and fight for freedom, justice, equality and democracy.

Age no impediment to Edna Freinkel’s accomplishments

SUZANNE BELLING

Her angelic appearance and sweet nature belie her high achievements – she has just added yet another prestigious award to her already long and impressive list – as a 2017 Continental Lifetime Achiever, one of Africa’s most influential women in business and government.

Educator, author, counsellor and trainer, Edna is the founder and consultant of Readucate, an NGO that fights crime through prevention by teaching teachers how to train children to read, so they do not drop out of school and into crime.

Readucate also rehabilitates criminal offenders by training those who are literate to teach their illiterate colleagues a multidisciplinary approach to reading and life skills.

She herself has taught hundreds of children and adults to read and has lectured and run workshops locally and internationally.

Mother of four, grandmother of 11 (with one great-grandchild), selflessness and helping others is in her genes.

It was her mother, Rebecca Ostrowiak, who pioneered teaching methods she had researched over 30 years. Edna became involved in helping Rebecca write down her method.

Rebecca finally published her book series, Teach Any Child or Adult to Read, in 1965.

Edna says that between 50 and 70 per cent of schoolchildren can barely read



Corinne Ossendryver (daughter), CEO’s Continental Lifetime Achiever Edna Freinkel, Annelize Wepener, Chief Executive of CEO Global

and millions of adults are either totally or functionally illiterate.

The Readucate course empowers a literate person to teach children and adults too. Its elements include reading, writing, spelling, comprehension, efficient memorising, successful studying, developing self-confidence and thinking courageously.

Innately spiritual, Edna refers to Educator’s Privilege daily, a book compiled from the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, and Empowering Thoughts, a motivational religious booklet by Rabbi Avraham Tzvi Schwartz.

“But it was my mother who was my inspiration. She believed we are made

in G-d’s image and can’t be disabled and hopeless.

“Her solution to problems was to ‘wear warm broeks, take Phillips Milk of Magnesia and say your prayers’.”

Edna carried her mother’s credo with her throughout her years in Durban, while in boarding school, and in Germiston, where her supportive late husband Lionel was the district surgeon, later becoming a pathologist.

Edna has a BA through Unisa. Her psychology professor helped her to work out a theoretical and practical method for her pupils to reach a pass mark of 70 per cent.

“If they could do this, then they could subscribe to world literature.”

Her course had an exponential effect,

with each teacher training many people.

In 1969 she opened the Rebecca Ostrowiak School in Germiston to “prove the efficacy of the method”.

Finances were proving difficult and in 1981 Edna was tempted to close the school.

“No!” said Lionel, “Not while you are serving the community.”

She finally sold the school in 1992 to one of her teachers. She continues to work fulltime for Readucate and says: “I can’t retire as long as there is one child or adult who cannot read.”

At the ceremony, where Edna received her honour on November 7, Annelize Wepener, chief executive of CEO Global, a business and professional services company that focuses on identifying Africa’s leading talent and arranged the awards, said: “There are tremendously inspirational stories at the core of each winner’s professional and personal life. Lifetime achievers have often been absolute pioneers in their field.”

Among Edna’s many other awards (at least 11) are the Counsellor of the Order of the Baobab, awarded by President Thabo Mbeki in 2004 for “lifelong dedication to the development of specialised learning methods for the learning impaired in South Africa”, and, in 2010, a Unisa outstanding educator award.

Edna is also the holder of Rotary’s prestigious Paul Harris Award and was a nominee for the Jewish Achievers Awards earlier this year.



THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Israel paves way to boost energy ties to Africa

SHOSHANNA SOLOMON

Israel and the US are scheduled to sign a memorandum of understanding next week that will see Israel join the Power Africa initiative, an international programme led by the US that aims to connect 60 million households in Africa to the electricity grid by 2030. Being part of the programme will enable Israeli energy firms, including start-ups, to make use of the tools provided by Power Africa to promote electricity generation projects on the continent, and could lead “to billions of dollars of deal-flow for Israeli firms”, according to Israeli solar energy pioneer Yosef Abramowitz, whose firm, Energiya Global Capital is one of the founding partners of Power Africa. Energiya is already working with the US and Israeli government to deploy \$2 billion in solar and wind installations in 10 countries in Africa over the next five years. Following the agreement, Israeli companies will be able to take part in the Power Africa initiative, and will receive a diverse toolbox to promote electricity generation, including increased access to local government bodies, financial grants, contacts with financing entities, professional and legal advice and feasibility surveys. “Israel is becoming a partner in one of the biggest aid programmes available today, and this initiative is a result of Prime Minister Netanyahu’s policy to leverage Israeli ingenuity to strengthen diplomatic ties,” said Eli Groner, the director general at Israel’s Prime Minister’s Office, who will sign the agreement on December 4 in Jerusalem, together with the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Joining Power Africa “is the manifestation of our unparalleled relationship with the US, assisting in the deepening of our ties with African nations”. In July 2016 Netanyahu became the first Israeli premier in decades to travel to the continent, when he visited four East African nations: Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Ethiopia in a bid to forge closer ties with Africa. On Tuesday Netanyahu left for Kenya, for an official visit that will include meetings with 11 African leaders. The purpose of the one-day trip to Nairobi, Netanyahu said before boarding the plane, “is to deepen [Israel’s] ties with Africa, including by establishing connections with nations with which we do not have diplomatic relations.” Some 600 million people, or 70 per

cent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa are without electricity. Power Africa, one of the biggest private-public development programmes ever launched in the world, started its activities in 2013 with the aim of addressing poverty in Africa by adding more than 30 000 megawatts of cleaner, more efficient electricity generation capacity and 60 million new home and business connections. The initiative fosters government-to-government collaborations, encourages private sector engagement and provides experts with energy and finance sector expertise to help firms set up innovative and clean energy projects in Africa. Making use of its global partners and those on the ground, the organisation addresses bureaucratic impediments that could stall projects, provides companies with on-the-ground support to implement solutions, and helps find financing to lower the risk of investments – so that public and private investors will fund the projects that drive electricity reforms and work with African governments to push ahead with policy reforms to promote the power sector. Israel will also be injecting some “millions of dollars” into the Power Africa initiative, a person in the know said, tapping into existing budgets of the Ministry of Economy and Industry and the Israel Innovation Authority. Even if Israeli companies are already working in Africa, the new connection to Power Africa will enable them “faster and easier” access to these markets, he explained. Partners in Power Africa include the United States government, the World Bank Group, the African Development Bank, the European Union, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the African Union’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development, the United Nations’ Sustainable Energy for All initiative, the International Renewable Energy Agency, the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa, the Government of Japan, the Government of Sweden, the Government of Norway, the Government of Canada, the UK Department for International Development, the Government of France and over 100 private companies. The programme is led by USAID. Immediately after the agreement with Power Africa is signed, a business seminar will be held to present the opportunities and tools that will be provided to the Israeli companies.

RIVLIN INVITES PRINCE HARRY AND FIANCÉE TO HONEYMOON IN ISRAEL



President Reuven Rivlin on Monday congratulated Prince Harry and Meghan Markle on their engagement and invited the couple to honeymoon in Israel.

Israel to open embassy in Rwanda

RAPHAEL AHREN

Israel is opening a new embassy in Kigali, Rwanda, and is weighing direct commercial flights to the East African country, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on Tuesday. “This is part of the expansion of Israel’s presence in Africa and of the deepening co-operation between Israel and African countries,” Netanyahu said after a meeting with Rwandan President Paul Kagame in Nairobi. Currently, the Israeli ambassador to Ethiopia deals with Rwanda-related affairs. Israel recently agreed to pay the Rwandan government \$5 000 for every African migrant in Israel it is willing to accept, as the Jewish State steps up efforts to deport the largely Sudanese and Eritrean population residing in the country illegally. Netanyahu arrived in Kenya for a whirlwind visit to celebrate the inauguration of President Uhuru Kenyatta and for a marathon session of bilateral meetings with African leaders. Netanyahu was seated next to Kenyatta – who won a contested election, critics say was rigged – and Kagame at a luncheon in Nairobi’s Presidential Palace. The event, at

which Netanyahu delivered brief remarks, followed Kenyatta’s inauguration in the city’s Kasarani Stadium. Due to security concerns, Netanyahu did not attend the inauguration, which was marred by protests and violence. Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga said police have shot dead three people during protests against Kenyatta’s inauguration. At the sidelines of the luncheon in Nairobi, Netanyahu also met the presidents of Gabon, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, South Sudan, Botswana and Namibia, and the prime minister of Ethiopia. Netanyahu may also have conducted secret meetings with African nations with which Israel does not have diplomatic ties. “Our intention is to deepen ties with Africa also by forging links with countries that we do not have diplomatic relations with,” he said earlier on Tuesday, before boarding the plane to Nairobi. In the last two years, four African countries have opened diplomatic missions in Israel, and he was inviting others to follow suit, Netanyahu added. Notably, Rwanda abstained in the UN vote on advancing the Palestinian statehood bid at the UN Security Council in 2014.

Why Islamic State is obsessed with targeting Muslims

DOV LIEBER

The Islamic State insists on slaughtering innocent worshippers, even Muslims, as they pray. The horrific massacre last Friday at a mosque in Northern Sinai, was a stark reminder of this reality and prompts the question: why and to what end? While no one as of Saturday night had claimed the deadly massacre that

killed 305 worshippers, Egyptian officials said the terrorists were waving the black Islamic State banner as they fired into the mosque.

The main suspects are Islamic State’s Sinai Province, the group formerly known as Ansar Bait al-Maqdis. Its leader, who goes by the nom de guerre Abu Osama (his real name is Muhammad al-Isawi), took over when his predecessor, Abu Du’a al-Ansari, was assassinated in August 2016.

Last Friday’s attack was perpetrated against a mosque for Sufis, followers of a mystical stream of Islam that once flourished throughout the region, and whose message is generally one of tolerance, peace and a love of G-d and humanity.

That the attack took place at a mosque, was no mistake. Yes, it is a convenient place to target a large gathering, but, more importantly for the killers, it also conveys a message to Sufis to stop practising their religion.

This is not due to a unique hatred for Sufis. It’s much bigger than that: a hatred for anyone not conforming to Salafi Islam – a puritanical version of the religion that emerged from Saudi Arabia in the 18th century. Anyone, be they Christians, Jews, Hindus, Yazidis, Shiites, or Sufis, or even Sunnis deemed too lax in their practice. All are targeted.

By definition, the Salafist ideology – derived from the Arabic for “forefathers” – is backward-looking. The earliest generations of Muslims

who were close to the Prophet Muhammad, lived correctly, according to the creed, the Salafis say, and society should strive to emulate them, eschewing anything considered an innovation.



Relatives of worshippers grieve outside the Suez Canal University Hospital in Ismailia, Egypt.

The Islamic State is a Salafist jihadist group and its members believe Salafist Islam should be spread by the sword.

But what makes the Islamic State different from the original Salafist jihadist group, al-Qaida, is that it has no qualms about killing other Muslims.

In 2005, then al-Qaida number two Ayman al-Zawahiri, now the group’s leader, sent a letter to the godfather of the Islamic State, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who led al-Qaida’s wing in Iraq.

Zarqawi, a Jordanian thug who found G-d while in prison, led a ruthless campaign against Shiites in Iraq, including targeting mosques.

Zawahiri urged Zarqawi to stop targeting anyone who was not a Salafi Sunni, to end the graphic violence and beheadings, and stop imposing Salafi law wherever al-Qaida gained territory.

Zawahiri argued that the jihadist needed broad support across Muslim society to achieve the success of building a caliphate. He also urged Zarqawi to think reasonably.

“Can the mujahideen kill all of the Shiites in Iraq? Has any Islamic state in history ever tried that?” Zawahiri asked.

Zawahiri believed a war with Shiites would eventually occur, but much further down the line.

Zarqawi didn’t listen. He continued to bomb, behead and impose a strict interpretation of Islamic law wherever he could.

But perhaps the most distinct ideological difference between Zarqawi and his al-Qaida brothers was his belief that the main battlefield wasn’t the West, but right at home in the Middle East. He didn’t want to play the long game; he wanted to shoot and slaughter, to ignite sectarian tension and set up a Salafist caliphate as soon as possible.

Zarqawi, who was killed in a targeted strike by US forces in Iraq in 2006, didn’t just make other Muslims fair game; he made killing other Muslims the primary goal.

Israel will ‘lend a hand’ in Egypt’s fight against Islamic State

JUDAH ARI GROSS

Israel, according to foreign reports, has assisted Egypt throughout its fight against the Islamic State insurgency in the northern Sinai Peninsula, including intelligence sharing and even allegedly carrying out drone strikes against the terrorists.

But in the wake of the deadliest terror attack ever on Egyptian soil, Israeli officials were evasive on specific actions being taken by Israel following the devastating mosque massacre last Friday that killed over 300 people, including at least 27 children.

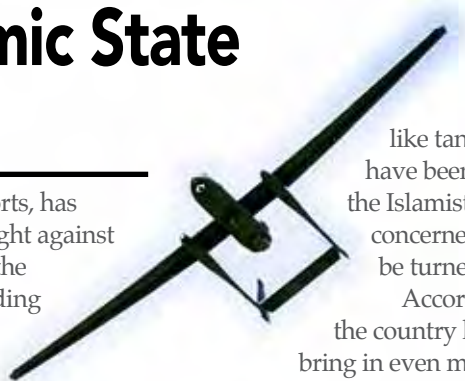
“The Israeli defence establishment expressed its sympathies and, as always, is willing to lend a hand to any country in order to help fight terror,” an Israeli security official said on Sunday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“That’s how it was in this case, and how it will also be in the future,” he added.

Asked specifically if Israel was co-operating with the Egyptians, Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon told Channel 13 in an interview that “this is an issue to discuss in the Cabinet”.

Israel has assisted Egypt throughout its fight with the Islamic State terrorist group in the Sinai, and its precursors. According to foreign reports, this has included conducting drone strikes in the peninsula on Islamic State targets. It has also reportedly taken the form of significant intelligence sharing.

More publicly, since 2013, Israel has also allowed additional Egyptian forces into the peninsula, beyond the level permitted under the 1979 peace accord between the two countries. Heavy weapons,



like tanks, artillery and attack helicopters, have been brought into Sinai to fight the Islamists, a sign that Jerusalem is not concerned those big Egyptian guns could be turned against it.

According to Egyptian media on Sunday, the country has yet to ask Israel to permit it to bring in even more troops to the restive region. An Egyptian military spokesman did not immediately respond to requests for confirmation.

Last Friday, a group of 25 to 30 armed terrorists, wearing camouflage dress and carrying Islamic State (IS) black flags, carried out the deadly massacre at a mosque that is associated with followers of the mystical Sufi branch of Sunni Islam, outside the northern Sinai city of al-Arish, Egyptian officials said on Saturday, as the death toll rose to 305, including 27 children.

IS, which is conducting a deadly insurgency in the Sinai, has not claimed responsibility for the attack, but it is the main suspect as the terror group has branded Sufi Muslims “heretics”.

A statement by Egypt’s chief prosecutor, Nabil Sadek, said last Friday’s attack left another 128 people wounded.

It said the terrorists arrived at the mosque close to the small town of Bir al-Abd in five all-terrain vehicles and positioned themselves at the main door and the facility’s 12 windows. After setting off an explosion in the mosque, they opened fire on the fleeing worshippers.

The Prime Minister’s Office on Saturday condemned the “terrible and despicable terror attack and send condolences in the name of all the citizens of Israel to President (Abdel-Fattah) el-Sisi.

Ultra-Orthodox health minister resigns over Shabbat railway works

TOI STAFF

Health Minister Yaakov Litzman of the ultra-Orthodox United Torah Judaism (UTJ) party, officially resigned from his Cabinet post on Sunday in protest of infrastructure work on rail lines performed on Shabbat.

After an ongoing dispute related to the installation of a new signalling system on a track in the Negev, Litzman notified Netanyahu last Friday that if the maintenance work was conducted on Saturday, he would resign on Sunday.

The work was carried out Saturday, with Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz and Welfare Minister Haim Katz – who also serves as the state’s top labour regulator – insisting that delaying the maintenance work would have left the railway tracks less safe in the interim, and carrying it out during the work week would snarl traffic for days.

In a video statement, Litzman explained that he could not countenance the “state-sanctioned public desecration of Shabbat.

“Citizens of Israel, throughout the generations the Jewish people knew it must safeguard the Sabbath as a supreme value, and even to sacrifice one’s life for it. The holy Sabbath is the national day of rest, and we were raised to protect against desecrating the Sabbath. Unfortunately, in light of the great pain caused by the government’s work [on the Sabbath] carried out openly by Israel Railways for some time now, I’ve decided to resign my position as health minister.

“I cannot continue to bear ministerial responsibility as a minister of Israel while there is state-sanctioned public desecration of Shabbat, in contravention of the sacred values of the Jewish people, the status quo and the coalition agreement,” Litzman said.



Litzman’s resignation won’t weaken Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s parliamentary coalition, as his six-MK United Torah Judaism party plans to remain in the coalition, according to a statement from Netanyahu’s office last Friday.

“The heads of the factions have clarified that they do not intend to leave the coalition,” the statement said, noting that the government would work to find the “best solution” it can to the crisis “to both respect the Sabbath and ensure safe, consistent public transport”.

In a bid to entice Litzman back to the Cabinet, Netanyahu will take over the health ministry and will not be appointing a replacement, he informed fellow Cabinet ministers on Saturday.

The move leaves the portfolio open should UTJ retract its decision and agree that Litzman would rejoin the Cabinet. Netanyahu also plans to leave Litzman’s appointed senior officials at the ministry in place, according to Hebrew media reports.

The prime minister was also reportedly weighing attempting to pass an amendment to a constitutional Basic Law to allow Litzman to serve as a deputy minister in the ministry with no minister serving above him.



SOUTH
AFRICAN
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FEDERATION



Israel ‘expects’ its chess players to make history by playing in Saudi tourney



Israeli chess players could make history by participating in a tournament in Saudi Arabia after the international chess governing body on Tuesday said it was pushing to allow it to happen.

A spokesman for the Israel Chess Federation told AFP seven players had filed requests for visas to participate in the games to be held in Riyadh on December 26–30 as part of the world rapid and blitz chess championships.

Israel and Saudi Arabia have no official relations. The presence of Israelis there would be highly unusual, and comes as officials from the Jewish State increasingly hint at covert ties with the Sunni-ruled kingdom.

Israel and Saudi Arabia share a common fear of Iran’s attempts to increase its influence in the region.

Georgios Makropoulos, deputy president of the World Chess Federation (FIDE), said that the papers of the seven Israeli chess players – five men and two women – had been handed to the Saudi organisers “and the visa status is currently pending”.

“We are making a huge effort to assure that all players get their visas,” Makropoulos said in a Tuesday statement.

The Israeli chess federation said it “supports FIDE’s policy to hold the tournament in Saudi alongside FIDE’s commitment to ensure the participation of Israelis would not be subject to limitations,” spokesman Lior Aizenberg told AFP.

“We expect the Saudis, aided by FIDE, to approve our requests for visas to play,” he said.

Aizenberg noted the Israeli Chess Federation Chairman Zvika Barkai, had discussed the issue of the Saudi visas with Makropoulos as well as with FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, who recently visited Israel.

A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said he didn’t believe there would be a problem for the Israelis to participate in the Riyadh games if the visas were granted.

Israeli athletes often face difficulties when competing around the Middle East, due to hostility toward their country.

In a recent incident, an Iranian wrestler was lauded by his government after he intentionally lost an international bout at a tournament in Poland over the weekend to avoid having to face an Israeli opponent. (AFP)

War criminal drinks poison in court

JO BIDDLE and RUSMIR SMAJILHODZIC
THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS

Bosnian Croat war criminal Slobodan Praljak, died on Wednesday after drinking poison in a dramatic courtroom scene after UN judges upheld his 20-year sentence, Croatia’s state-run news agency said.

The 72-year-old died in a hospital, according to the HINA agency quoting a source close to Praljak, after he drank from a brown bottle at his appeal judgment at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

UN judges were handing down judgment in the appeals case of six former Bosnian Croat political and military leaders, in the court’s final verdict for war crimes committed during the bloody 1990s breakup of Yugoslavia.

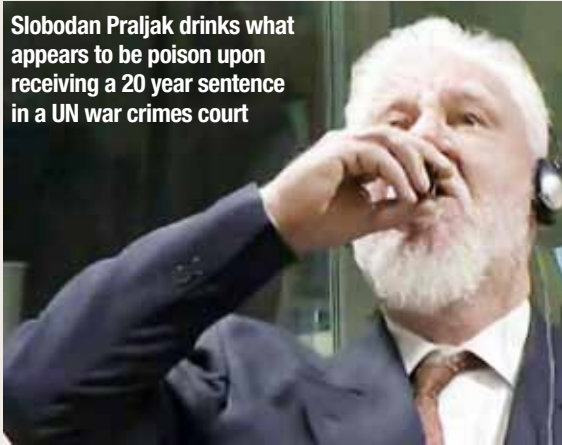
Seconds after his sentence was upheld, the former military commander shouted out angrily: “Praljak is not a criminal. I reject your verdict.”

He then drank from the bottle in full view of the cameras filming the hearing, which was quickly suspended as Praljak’s lawyer shouted out: “My client says he has taken poison!”

Praljak was specifically charged with ordering the destruction of Mostar’s iconic Ottoman-era bridge in November 1993, which became symbolic of Bosnia’s devastation in the war. The landmark was later rebuilt.

Judges in the first trial said its destruction over the Neretva River had “caused disproportionate damage to the Muslim civilian population”.

But in Wednesday’s ruling, judges in fact allowed part of Praljak’s appeal, saying the bridge had been a legitimate military target during the conflict. They also overturned some of his convictions, but refused to reduce his overall two-decade sentence. (AFP)



Slobodan Praljak drinks what appears to be poison upon receiving a 20 year sentence in a UN war crimes court

Three Israeli universities ranked among world’s 100 most innovative

Three Israeli universities have been ranked in the top 100 most innovative universities in the world on an annual list by Reuters.

The Hebrew University was 82nd, climbing 12 spots from last year. Tel Aviv University was ranked at 88 and The Technion-Israel Institute of Technology at 89.

The Reuters analysis identifies the educational institutions doing the most to advance science, invent new technologies, and power new markets and industries. The ranking is based on a number of indicators, including patent filings and research paper citations.

Reuters cited The Hebrew University’s technology transfer company, Yissum Research Development Company, which brings students’ and researchers’ technologies and discoveries to market, with 10 000 registered patents covering 2 800 inventions, more than 900 licenced



Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

technologies, and the launch of 125 start-ups.

Stanford was ranked first for the third consecutive year, followed by MIT and Harvard.

Overall, the top 100 consists of 51 universities based in North America, 26 in Europe, 20 in Asia and the three in Israel – the only universities ranked from the Middle East. (JTA)

Hotovely grounded after insulting US Jews

A scheduled trip to the Czech Republic by Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely, was reportedly scrapped a week after she disparaged US Jewry in an interview in English.

Hotovely had been scheduled to leave for the Czech Republic on Wednesday. Hours before her departure, the Prime Minister’s Office contacted her and told her not to travel to the Eastern European country, Hadashot news reported Wednesday afternoon.

The report characterised the order as punishment for the deputy foreign minister’s comments.

Hotovely’s office said the trip was postponed, not cancelled.

Leaders of the Reform movement in the United States and Israel have called for Hotovely’s removal.

She appeared last Wednesday on i24, an Israel-based English-language news channel.

She was addressing increased tensions between Israel and US Jewry, including over restrictions on non-Orthodox prayer at the Western Wall and over the Israeli government’s policies on Israeli Arabs and the Palestinians.

After stating that she wished more American Jews would move to Israel to influence its political process and to “bring American Jews closer to Israel”, she segued into a depiction of US Jews as distant from the sacrifices other Americans make, and from the threats that govern life in Israel.

“The other issue is not understanding the complexity of the region,” she said.



“People that never send their children to fight for their country, most of the Jews don’t have children serving as soldiers, going to the Marines, going to Afghanistan, or to Iraq. Most of them are having quite convenient lives.

“They don’t feel how it feels to be attacked by rockets, and I think part of it is to actually experience what Israel is dealing with on a daily basis.”

The following day Netanyahu condemned what he called the “offensive remarks” about American Jews.

Hours later Hotovely apologised for her remarks, but she did not retract them.

“They are my brothers,” she said in an interview with Hadashot news. “If someone was hurt by my words I’m very sorry.” (JTA and TOI)

Raisman embraces role as ‘Fierce’ advocate for abuse victims

**WILL GRAVES
ASSOCIATED PRESS**

The people come forward to Aly Raisman almost daily now. Random strangers. Men and women of various ages, races and backgrounds. They see the six-time Olympic medal winning gymnast out in public and approach with a hug to give and a story to tell.

It was jarring at first, if Raisman is being

understand what exactly abuse is. It’s very complicated. It’s very confusing. I didn’t know that I was being abused because I was manipulated so horribly.”

In the process, Raisman discovered the abuse Nassar committed against other female athletes – including allegations from Olympic teammates McKayla Maroney and Gabby Douglas – is a very small part of a much larger problem that extends far beyond the actions of just one man. It’s why she took those painful memories and put them on paper, to share with the world that, as she says over and over again: “It’s not okay. It’s never okay.”

The 23-year-old’s new calling makes thinking about a return to competition in time for the 2020 Olympics seem trivial.

“This is the focus,” Raisman said. A focus that has turned her into an unexpected symbol of strength for others who share their experiences.

by it and it’s disgusting. That’s why I want change.”

Raisman has become an increasingly outspoken critic of USA Gymnastics, blaming the governing body for a lack of oversight on Nassar’s conduct. The 54-year-old spent nearly 20 years as the team doctor for the US women’s elite programme, often working with athletes one-on-one.

Raisman declined to get into specifics about the abuse she was subjected to, but her experience falls in line with what many others have claimed against Nassar: that he touched them inappropriately while describing it as proper treatment.

Nassar pleaded guilty to multiple charges of sexual assault in Michigan late last month and will face at least 25 years in prison. He still faces additional criminal charges and has been named in more than 125 civil lawsuits filed by former athletes. Nassar’s downfall began following reporting by the Indianapolis Star in 2016 that highlighted chronic mishandling of abuse allegations against coaches and staff at some of USA Gymnastics’ more than 3 500 clubs across the country.



Photo: Tom Pennington/Getty Images/JTA

Aly Raisman competing on the uneven bars at the Rio Olympic Games

honest. When she pitched her autobiography Fierce to publishers last summer shortly after the 2016 Olympics, she intended to focus on her journey from tenacious prodigy to champion. And while all of that is in there, the part of her experience that’s resonated the most since the book’s release earlier in November, is the one she wasn’t sure she’d be able to share.

It’s Chapter 22, titled The Survivors. In it, Raisman outlines how she was abused by former national team doctor Larry Nassar, how he “groomed” her by presenting himself as a friendly ear and how she feels he was empowered to continue over the course of years by those in charge at USA Gymnastics.

Raisman spent weeks working on the section, revisiting it again and again, trying to get it just right. Or at least as close to right as she can get.

“I put in a ton of thought whether how I wanted to come forward about this,” Raisman told The Associated Press. “What I realised at the end of the day is that I want change and I want people to

“Unfortunately, sexual abuse is far too common,” Raisman said. “I’ve realised how many people are affected

and was replaced by Kerry Perry, who takes over from December.

The Internet wonders: Is Meghan Markle Jewish?

**GABE FRIEDMAN
JEWISH TELEGRAPHIC AGENCY**

Is Meghan Markle, the American actress and the fiancée of the British royal, Prince Harry, a member of the tribe?

Stories in publications across the United States and United Kingdom have prompted the question. An article in the British tabloid Daily Express claims that Markle’s father is Jewish; Vanity Fair, Elle UK, Tablet and many others have cited the story.

The story also says that a spokesman for Westminster Abbey, the historic London church where British royals get married, confirmed Markle’s Jewish background.

“The spokesman also confirmed that Meghan’s Jewish background would not prevent her from having an ‘interfaith’ marriage there,” Camilla Tominey writes in the May 14 article.

Unfortunately, for those who would love to see a Jew marry into British royalty, the claim is utterly false.

Duncan Jeffery, Westminster Abbey’s head of communications, told JTA last Wednesday that the church never said Markle was Jewish. It only confirmed that Markle could be married at the church despite a previous divorce, thanks to a rule that was instated in 2002.



Meghan Markle

“[Markle’s Jewishness] is merely conjecture on the part of other people,” Jeffery said.

A source who works with Markle also confirmed last Wednesday that she is not Jewish.

Markle, who is best known for her role on the USA Network drama Suits, was married to Jewish producer Trevor Engelson from 2011 to 2013. As Tominey notes, the pair had a Jewish wedding in Jamaica (complete with a “Jewish chair dance”, meaning the hora).

Markle’s father is Irish and her mother is African-American. She wrote an essay for Elle magazine in 2015 about her identity (it was subsequently published in Elle UK, one of the publications that has misstated her Jewish identity). The essay did not mention any Jewish ancestry or hint at a past conversion to Judaism.

““What are you?” A question I get asked every week of my life, often every day,” she wrote.

Tominey’s article is correct in explaining that there is no “legal barrier that keeps a royal for marrying someone from the Jewish, Buddhist or Muslim faith, or even an atheist”. Since 2015, even those formerly despised Catholics can marry into the royal family – however, a Roman Catholic still cannot become the queen of England.

What did the billionaire WhatsApp founder have to say at Limmud FSU?

**JULIE MASIS
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA**

Almost every chair in the Oakland Marriott’s windowless conference hall was full last Saturday evening when Russian-speaking Jews came to meet one of the most successful members of their own community: Jan Koum, founder of WhatsApp.

The young Ukraine-born billionaire came to the Limmud conference for Jews from the Former Soviet Union dressed simply in a T-shirt and hoodie, with a bottle of water in hand – and requested that everything that he said be off the record.

After answering questions in English for about an hour (although he also offered to speak Russian), he posed for pictures with anyone who wished to be photographed next to him.

Koum, 41, immigrated to the United States from Ukraine with his mother and grandmother when he was a teenager. The family lived on welfare and food assistance from the government. Koum’s mother worked as a babysitter, and he swept the floor of a grocery store.

His mother died of

cancer when he was in his mid-20s, and Koum found himself alone: his father had already passed away and he had no brothers or sisters. So, the mogul-to-be bought an iPhone and decided to make an app. Three years ago, Facebook bought his messaging platform WhatsApp for \$19 billion.

Limmud FSU co-founder Sandra Cahn, who also attended the question and answer session, was impressed by Koum’s humility.

“I was very surprised. He wasn’t boastful, he wasn’t hawkish, he was private,” she said. “He represents for us someone who used his brains and achieved success. It gives the Russian Jewish community a sense of pride.”

She added that she was particularly taken by how much Koum cares about the State of Israel.



Jan Koum, founder of WhatsApp

Photo: Cc-Sa/Dan Taylor/Tech.EU

Indeed, according to Koum’s Facebook page, which has almost 90 000 followers, the young billionaire is a strong supporter of the Jewish State.

At the end of October, he posted a link to the Israeli national anthem on his wall (after they refused to play it at the Abu Dhabi Grand Slam judo tournament).

Youth movements' healthy competition on eve of machanot

GILLIAN KLAWSKY

While they are each others' biggest competitors, trying to draw on the same pool of potential chanichim for camps, Habonim Dror SA and Bnei Akiva SA feel theirs is a healthy rivalry.

So they say as they count down days to their respective machanot. They insist the two movements are enjoying a closer working relationship than ever before.

While Progressive youth movement, Netzer, successfully caters to a relatively unchanging, niche group of kids, there's often strong competition between the mainstream Habonim and Bnei Akiva camps. That is, especially now with Betar no longer in the picture.

Much like Netzer, they offer sun, sea, activities, delicious meals, prayer, inspiration, socialising and more. South Africa's Jewish youth movements are all poised for exciting summer camps.

Habonim and Bnei Akiva are expecting large numbers at their respective machanot this year – Habonim around 660 kids and Bnei almost 750. Together with madrichim, support staff and speakers, Bnei will have over 1 000 people on site, while Habonim will have around 850.

Netzer is expecting around 50 chanichim at their Grabouw site and will have 22 madrichim, some of whom are international and come to South Africa especially for camp.

“The fact that we’re small is actually one of our biggest selling points as it creates an environment where kids have individual attention, which they love. We’re like a family,” says Kendyll Jacobson, Netzer’s rosh machaneh.

“Everybody plays a role in our special Shabbat services. Outside visitors are always wowed by these really incredible Shabbats we host.”

With the other two movements having similar numbers of chanichim, it's clear there's room for both. "I think there's not really much of a fight," says Habonim's rosh machaneh, David Schwartz. "We're the predominant camp in Cape Town – the majority of Cape Town kids who go to camp come to Habonim – and we're expecting just over 100 of them. In Johannesburg, it's split about 50/50 between kids who come to Habonim and Bnei."

Schwartz however acknowledges that there are challenges. “In each grade there are always kids who are on the fence about which camp they want to go to, especially when they’re considering where their friends are going. But on the whole, we have a big core of kids who come to Habonim.”

Habonim would never actively target Bnei chanichim, says Schwartz, but the movement does send letters to some potential campers, who may incidentally belong to other movements.

Bnei Akiva's rosh machaneh, Martin Skudicky says: "We're both growing, so we must be doing something right!" he says. "There's always going to be banter and rivalry with Habonim, though, but the rivalry is more healthy than unhealthy. Together we can offer more chanichim the chance to come to camp rather than trying to steal the same few people from each other."

The first-ever South African Zionist Youth Council Seminar took place this year, where the two mainstream groups came together and discussed possible joint projects. The first of these was a campaign for Movember, where Habonim and Bnei madrichim worked together to raise funds for men's health.

“We’ve grown tremendously in our relationship with Habonim this year,” says Skudicky. “I’ve personally worked quite closely with the top leadership at Habonim, through the youth council and we’ve been able to break that tension that’s existed previously.” Schwartz agrees and is excited about the potential their strengthening relationship



offers.

Asked what sets Habonim apart, Schwartz says: “Our campsite is really incredible and unique with massive grounds spanning the breathtaking Onrus beach, accessible throughout the camp.

"There are great facilities on the campsite and it's just a beautiful environment to have a camp in."

Offering varying activities from sports events to arts and crafts to singing around campfires, Habonim also offers different learning experiences with madrichim and fascinating guest speakers. The camp also has a revamped kitchen with a chef from Israel.

“Because we’re not geared towards one stream of Judaism, on Shabbat we offer different services,” says Schwartz. “Kids can go to an Orthodox service, or a Reform or Egalitarian service.”

“They can also experience Shabbat through studying different Jewish texts. We offer a holistic, wide experience for every different Jewish kid who wants to come, from the religious to the secular. There’s really something to connect to for everyone, which definitely sets us apart.”

Jacobson says: "If Netzer had competition, it would be Habonim, as they have branched

out more in the last few years to include more Progressive Jews, which is great. But we still have our core base of chanis."

“We have an open door policy, so anyone is welcome, from Orthodox Jews, to non-Jews who have an interest in Progressive Judaism.”

While Bnei is known as a religious camp, Skudicky says everyone, regardless of their observance levels, is made to feel comfortable. “We don’t force anything on anyone – we just want kids to grow and attain the self-confidence they need to find a sense of purpose.”

Says Skudicky: “Bnei offers the best of everything. We have an unreal campsite with amazing facilities, including two putt-putt courses, a new obstacle course and revamped bathrooms. There’s a massive variety of activities including arts and crafts, sports, educational programmes, a beis midrash with tons of learning content. We have shiurim, a beach close by and incredible ruach and a community vibe.

"We've upped the game in terms of meals from Nando's to schwarmas to burgers as well as a variety of chefs with one for kids who are



lactose intolerant. There's a brand-new barista service on camp in our tuckshop as well."

Bnei are constantly innovating when it comes to marketing the movement and machaneh says Skudicky. “We do school visits and launches even offering photo booths and party buses – we always look at things we can do better or differently. We publish a Rosh Hashanah magazine and we’re very active on social media.”

Netzer targets chanichim through the Progressive shuls. They are sometimes involved in the services, so people get to know them. They also interact with the shul's databases to encourage parents to send their kids to the camp.

At camp, they do a lot of educational activities around the five pillars that underpin their movement and they offer sport and cultural activities as well a fabulous scenic tiyul.

All three movements believe the future of youth movements in South Africa is bright.

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Dis-Chem’s Lynette Saltzman building a business empire that cares

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

They have a food garden next to their company headquarters that feeds 14 000 people and employs 30 people permanently. This garden was a piece of open land, but Dis-Chem saw its potential.

That big-heartedness is just one of the many reasons why this almost 40-year-old pharmacy group is still soaring during the toughest time in the South African economy.

Dis-Chem’s growth has been exponential since Lynette and Ivan Saltzman started it in 1978. By the end of this year, they are set to have 125 stores operational. Dis-Chem was listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) in November last year. Listing 27,5 per cent of Dis-Chem’s issued share capital on the JSE, the Saltzmans retained the majority stake in the business. Since listing, shares have continuously climbed, solidifying the company’s strong standing in South Africa’s business landscape.

However, it is believed to be the group’s social responsibility initiative, the Dis-Chem Foundation, that gives it an added edge in an economic climate where young people want to use their rand wisely. Supporting socially aware companies that help others, it lives up to its promise: “Pharmacists who care”.

“We never had a vision of becoming a national chain; everything was done one store at a time and was based on what we thought we could handle,” reflects Dis-Chem co-founder and managing director Lynette Saltzman. She laughs as she recalls how worried her mother and mother-in-law were when she and husband Ivan kept opening new stores in their early days. “After we opened our fifth store, they said ‘it’s enough now!’ ” Yet, for the Saltzmans, growth was organic.

“Both Ivan and I are pharmacists; we met studying pharmacy and got married just as we finished studying,” says Lynette. They bought their first pharmacy in Mondeor where Ivan was doing a locum.

“We felt it had good potential and within about the first six months we’d doubled the

turnover. A few years later we wanted to have a store in a mall. That was the hardest decision – everything we had went into that store in Randridge Mall, so it had to work. Fortunately it did and so the third and fourth stores were a bit easier. Both of us being pharmacists, also helped.

“While our vision grew, we were always very conscious that we wanted to bring down the price of medicine, because medicine and toiletries were very expensive.

“As the stores got progressively bigger, we started going into the bigger shopping centres.”

Looking to increase their selection and lower prices as the stores grew in size and number, the Saltzmans travelled to Hong Kong and began doing direct imports.

It is believed to be the group’s social responsibility initiative, the Dis-Chem Foundation, that gives it an added edge in an economic climate where young people want to use their rand wisely.

“Our travels were aimed at seeing new innovations and bringing in products at the most affordable prices – consumers want value.”

Central to the Dis-Chem vision is a pharmacy in every store. “We’re pharmacists and we’d never open a shop unless it had a dispensary,” says Lynette. “Another key aspect is the clinic – there is a professional clinic sister in all the stores and we offer customers a healthcare service.

“Our third main emphasis is service and professionalism. Even if we’re selling cosmetics, the sales people need to be trained and know what they’re talking about.”

Another early unique selling point for Dis-Chem, was their health offering, especially in terms of bodybuilding supplements and specialised food, a division driven by avid sportsman Stan Goetsch, who was employed as a pharmacist by the Saltzmans when they opened their second store. Goetsch later

became a business partner and is still at Dis-Chem.

“We started developing those markets. We were ahead of the times and this resonated with our customers.” Lynette also took an interest in the vitamin and homeopathic medicine offering.

The Saltzmans officially launched the Dis-Chem Foundation in 2006, developing a benefits programme, using their success for the upliftment of South Africa’s impoverished communities. “Some of the first charities we went to were Jewish,” says Lynette who serves as founder and director of the Foundation.

“Dis-Chem is a public platform and there’s so much need in this country.”

“As time went on, we wanted to open the Foundation to others and that’s when I met Penny Stein, who now oversees the day-to-day running of the Foundation and runs it together with us,” says Lynette. “She wanted to do something with us and we wanted so many more people to benefit from the Foundation and so together we brought in more beneficiaries.”

Identifying food nutrition as one of South Africa’s biggest needs, the Foundation opened its food garden alongside their head office in Midrand. “There are a number of people working in the garden,” says Lynette.

“There are also recovering drug addicts who find the work therapeutic. We also have interns doing agricultural internships, alongside our other gardeners. We donate the food to various beneficiaries and all food is grown based on organic principles.

While Lynette acknowledges that uplifting communities is good business practice, she says the Foundation has become so much more than that. “We have such an involvement with it. When you see the need from abandoned babies – we work with some of those homes – it’s just terrible. HIV created havoc among the population and children are growing up with no one to take care of them.

“Then there are old-aged homes where people are also faced by abandonment. The more you get involved, the more you see the need.” Having started as a



family business, Dis-Chem has retained its family ethos. The Saltzmans’ three adult sons, Saul, Dan and Mark, are involved in the business to varying degrees and there’s a very low staff turnover as employees become part of the family too.

“My cosmetic managers can come straight to me and the store managers can go straight to Ivan,” says Lynette. “It’s not a big structural thing, they know they can speak to us and deal directly with us. There’s a closeness within the company, staff feel that it’s their business too, it’s not just a job.”

Speaking of working with her husband, Lynette says that while there have been challenges, it’s been largely positive. “We obviously have our disagreements but they’re constructive and agreements are more common. We’ve managed to achieve a lot more together than we would have alone. To be able to support your husband and be there with him and build something together gives you a great sense of achievement and satisfaction.”

It hasn’t always been smooth sailing though. “At home it was very much a part of our lives and with the children growing up, it wasn’t that easy,” says Lynette. “Juggling work, the business and

home was challenging, but there are a lot of mothers facing that today.” Yet family has always been central to the Saltzmans and today they have eight grandchildren. “We’re all together for most shabboses, which is very important to us.” Ivan and Lynette are also very involved with the Linksfield Shul and

When you see the need from abandoned babies – we work with some of those homes – it’s just terrible. HIV created havoc among the population and children are growing up with no one to take care of them.

with various aspects of the wider Jewish community, including the IUA-UCF and Chai FM.

Lynette has no plans to slow down. “I hope retirement is a long, long time away,” she laughs. “It’s a challenging, interesting, varied job and you meet fascinating people through the Foundation, our stores, our magazines and more. The sense of achievement that one gets from seeing one’s work paying off is very satisfying.”

World News in Brief

Mike Pence: Trump mulling ‘when and how’ to make embassy move

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump continues to consider “when and how” to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem, Vice President Mike Pence said.

“President Donald Trump is actively considering when and how to move the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,” Pence said on Tuesday at an event in New York organised by the Israeli mission to the United Nations in partnership with the World Jewish Congress marking the 70th anniversary of the UN General Assembly vote to recognise Israel on November 29, 1947.

Pence’s pledge comes days before the December 1

deadline for Trump to decide whether to waive a 1995 law mandating moving the embassy to Jerusalem. Every president since the law was passed, including Trump, has exercised the national security waiver, an action that must be taken every six months.

Trump campaigned on a promise to move the embassy, but has walked back from the pledge as president. A number of other presidents similarly campaigned on a promise to move the embassy but reneged in office.

Pence drew implicit contrasts with the Obama administration, which had tense relations with Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government and in its final days allowed through a UN Security Council resolution condemning Israeli settlement policies.

“With the leadership of our president and the efforts of our ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, the days of Israel bashing at the United Nations are over,” he said.

Pence referred to Trump’s decision to redefine terms of the Iran nuclear deal, which swops sanctions relief for a rollback in Iran’s nuclear programme.

“We will no longer tolerate Iran’s support for terrorism across the region and across the entire

world,” he said. Under Trump, the vice president said, “the United States of America will not allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon”.

President Barack Obama similarly pledged to keep Iran from developing a nuclear weapon on his watch and argued that the deal was the best means to do so. Obama’s envoys to the United Nations also worked closely with their Israeli counterparts to push back against anti-Israel initiatives.

Pence said there was “valuable progress” in efforts led by Trump’s son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner, to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace. (JTA)

SA Jewish women played crucial roles in the building of the country

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Social conditions unique to South Africa, allowed Jewish women to play a pioneering role beyond that in the older, larger and more established Jewish communities of the United Kingdom and the United States.

So said Veronica Belling, delivering the Jacob Gitlin Memorial Lecture about the lives of South African Jewish women from the mid-19th century to 1945.

“Jewish women in South Africa, many of whom are today either unknown or forgotten, played crucial roles in fields as diverse as the early Indian struggle against discrimination, the fight for the recognition of the Afrikaans language, for Women’s Enfranchisement, in the struggle for human rights and democracy. They played leading roles in politics, literature, theatre and art,” she says.

Belling started the Jewish Studies Library at UCT and retired as head librarian after 31 years’ service at the end of 2012. This lecture was condensed from her doctoral thesis in Historical Studies completed in 2013.

Belling examines the lives of several Jewish women of the time and explains what she describes as their “undue prominence” in the early days. However, she adds, some of them followed a path prepared for them by lesser-known personalities.

She examines the various factors at play, ranging from the influence of the culture of origin to the role played by education and social conditions that enabled the women to pursue their causes or careers.

“How do they compare to their gentile counterparts? Was it simply limited numbers, within the ethnically divided white settler community that allowed their rise to prominence? Were they simply big fish in a small pond?” she asks.

Belling labels Ita Hersch the first female Jewish intellectual in the country. Arriving in Johannesburg from Lithuania in 1891, she “overcame the limitations on women’s education”, later teaching Hebrew in Doornfontein and contributing to the South African Hebrew press.

Belling singles out Tony Saphra, a German immigrant who in 1931 “virtually singlehandedly” founded the Union of Jewish Women, which included in its objectives social welfare work among the needy of all races.

“There can be no doubt that the availability of cheap domestic labour facilitated the development of South Africa’s strong female communal networks,” she comments.

In those early years, many women were forced

to leave school at the end of grade eight to help support their families so that their brothers could study to become doctors and lawyers, she continues. One of these was Sarah Goldblatt, future literary executrix of Afrikaans national poet Cornelis Langenhoven.

“Sarah was forced to leave school in grade six to help in her father’s business, so that her brother could become an advocate. Yet undeterred... Sarah studied privately for a matric to become a teacher.

“Unable to get a job in Cape Town, she went to Oudtshoorn where she became the secretary of Langenhoven and dedicated herself to his mission to have Afrikaans declared an official language.”

In the cultural sphere, South African historian Karl Schoeman declared novelist Sarah Gertrude Millin and artist Irma Stern, to be the leaders in their fields prior to the Second World War. “Both initially enjoyed some notoriety for focusing on the non-white population,” says Belling.

On Stern she comments: “Although she was initially controversial in South Africa’s conservative racist society, both for her subject matter and for her expressionist style, her Jewish supporters had her paintings accepted into the National Gallery – and the rest is history.”

Before 1945, South African theatre was kept alive by several highly qualified and experienced women, the earliest of whom were Jewish, namely Muriel Alexander and Leontine Sagan.

In the political sphere, Belling notes that active opposition to racism was not the norm in the Jewish or white community at the time. So, how does one account for the exceptions and why were so many of them women?

“It is possible that women are by nature more inclined to be sensitive to racial discrimination than men, simply because they themselves were traditionally discriminated against and treated as second class citizens for centuries,” she posits.

“For their time, Sonja Schlesin and Ruth Schechter Alexander, were exceptional as most of the female political activists and politicians were born much later in the 20th century. The most prominent Jewish woman in the Women’s Enfranchisement Association of the Union in South Africa was Bertha Solomon who became one of the first female MPs.

“Bertha epitomises Jewish women’s advancement through formal education, where they excelled disproportionately to their numbers (as did Jewish men),” says Belling.

“When women were finally

admitted to the Bar in 1923, she was one of the first women to qualify.”

Other activists Belling cites include Hilda Bernstein, Fanny Klenerman, Pauline Podbrey and Ruth First. Klenerman taught English to Africans for many years in the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union.

First became the first white woman to be imprisoned under the 90-day detention law in 1963.

Trade unionist Ray Alexander Simon established the Federation of South African Women, a broad-based interracial women’s organisation that was the first to give women of colour a



Ita Hersch (1871 – 1958), the first South African Jewish female intellectual

“It is possible that women are by nature more inclined to be sensitive to racial discrimination than men, simply because they themselves were traditionally discriminated against and treated as second class citizens for centuries.”

platform.

Belling concludes: “For the driven Anglo-German women such as Muriel Alexander, Leontine Sagan and Irma Stern, it was the influence of their cultural roots, whether German or British. For Sagan and Alexander, it was also the early timing of their family’s migration that put them at the forefront of the development of theatre in South Africa.

“For Irma Stern and Sarah Gertrude Millin, it was also their fascination with South Africa’s racial diversity. Eastern European ideologies played a key role both for the Zionist and for the radical women.

“Education, whether in the universities or the political movements, played a key role in the lives of the political activists as well as that of the politicians. Add to this mix the availability of cheap domestic labour that freed women to pursue communal work, political activism, or a career in whichever field they chose.

“And finally, it was small numbers in the dominant white colonial society which reduced the competition and allowed talented and driven Jewish women to rise to the top of their chosen careers,” she states.



Hilda Purwitsky (1901 – 1999) and Roza van Gelderen (1890 – 1969), teachers and journalists.



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Rebuilding life after immeasurable pain

NICOLA MILTZ

Four years ago, Cape Town-based psychologist Lisa Michalson’s world fell apart following a horrific car accident which killed her husband and only child instantly, leaving her broken beyond repair.

Today Lisa is changing lives with her unique approach to coping with loss and all its devastating consequences.

Her journey of transformation from the depths of despair to where she is now, is inspiring countless others who have come face-to-face with pain and loss.

“There is a well of pain that I can dip into. It is a container of grief that I access mostly when I choose, when I miss my son too much, when I see your child gets to celebrate her birthday, and when I long to buy new stationery and to pack school lunches. There is a barrel of grief that I tap into,” she said.

At a recent charity event hosted by the Angel Network, Lisa gave a talk to a packed audience titled “Accessing your Resilience” in which she shared her personal journey and offered life skills on how to tap into one’s resilience.

“I remember clearly when it wasn’t this way. When grief was a tsunami that drowned and dumped and bruised me beyond the horizon of my limits, when I lived in a sea of pain and came up for breath between the tumbles.”

She doesn’t remember when this pain transformed, but she knows “if love expands us then so too does loss – beyond the version of who I was”.

Who was Lisa before the loss? She was a mother of an 11-year-old son, Jordan, and the wife of Michael.

“We were happily married for 17 years,” she said. This ended on March 31, 2013 on a bright, clear Sunday morning soon after embarking on a road trip from Johannesburg to Durban to visit family.

Jordan fell asleep 15 minutes into the journey.

“Michael and I held hands and we gave thanks, grateful to have our beautiful new car a 4x4 ... we gave thanks for each other and our beautiful child. Little did I know that those would be the last words we would say to each other, and the last time we would touch each other.”

A car travelling at bullet speed hit them from behind at approximately 200km an hour bringing to an end life as she knew it.

Lisa miraculously survived. She suffered massive internal injuries, but these were nothing in comparison to the psychological and emotional trauma of loss.

“And that’s how it ended and that’s how my life without them in this physical world began,” she said.

In May this year, Lisa was the guest speaker at a breakfast fundraiser for Nechama Counselling for the Bereaved, at which she described her pain.

“I think of my grief and my healing as a toddler. My grief is four years old; it looks very different and feels very different to how it did at four months old, and I would imagine in four years’ time and in 14, it will be a very different being. That is the process of transformation.”

Nine months after the accident, when Lisa was preparing for the unveiling and writing the words to inscribe on the tombstone, an image came to her mind of the plaited kitka bread that her “Jordy” used to make at his school every Friday.

“I thought the strands entwined together are like Michael, Jordan and I and that we were separate beings but we would always be plaited together ... our souls are plaited by love across eternity.

“I thought about my transformation from the person I was, to the person I am now, about the journey of my loss, and the kitka with its three strands came to mind again. And

I realised there have been three strands that have plaited me into the transformed Lisa.”

The three strands in her plait of transformation include: being open to love and kindness and feelings; having trust in the universe and in herself; and making choices.

“One of the first things I was open to, was receiving this outpouring of love and kindness ... when something so terrible has happened to you, kindness is the balm and the antidote that soothes and makes it better.”

She was also “open to love”.

She met up with Craig, a friend of 20 years. “Craig ... offered me incredible love and kindness and he opened a door and he said to me there’s beauty, there’s adventure, there’s goodness, there’s love in the world. He motivated me to step forward to take his hand and to continue into the world of the living.

“Being open to kindness and love has been an important strand in my transformation.”

She was also open to feelings.

“As a psychologist I knew that a feeling can only exist for 90 seconds ... I knew when the pain came all I had to do was stay with it for a minute and a half without getting my mind involved, without allowing thoughts to take over.”

She allowed herself to experience the grief. “I



Lisa Michalson

allowed the tears to flow and I gave myself lots of quiet time, and that’s what sadness calls us to do ... I didn’t deny the pain, I let it flow.

“I had to let go of my roles, my role as mother, my role as wife. I didn’t have those roles anymore, but I did have a sense that there was goodness and there was love and there was kindness and that there would be other ways

in which I could continue.”

The second strand in her transformation is about trust.

“I’ve always had an incredible sense of trust in the bigger picture. So, when the accident happened, I didn’t say why me? I understood that if I could see the bigger picture I would know... there is a benevolent force that takes care of us all. This trust has been very important to allow me to continue.

The third strand in the process of transformations, has been about choice.

“I realised that I didn’t want to live with the pain. There were times when I just wanted not to be here so that I didn’t have to live with the pain. But I wanted to live. And then I made peace with the pain and sadness as a part of life and I created and chose and made decisions about living alongside with the pain.”

“I chose to reframe, to look at things differently, because this allowed me to access my resilience. Over and over I make choices, I make reframes, so that I can be transformed into an expanded version of myself.

“I do not think that my grief has shrunk; I think that I have expanded to contain it... Through being open, through choosing to remain open, through choosing to be trustful in the universe and in myself, I have expanded beyond the version of who I was.”

Remembering Vienna

NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR

“What happens when we forget to remember?” That’s the question US artist, educator and activist Dr Karen Frostig, posed at a talk she gave at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre recently.

It is also the question she has asked herself repeatedly since inheriting 69 precious letters in 2004. They were written by her grandparents Moshe and Beile – who had been killed in the Holocaust – to their son, her father, Benjamin, between 1938 and 1945.

Benjamin was in exile, first in Cuba, then the US, after being arrested and deported by the Gestapo in the spring of 1938.

The letters were written in German, so Frostig saved up the \$4 000 needed to have them translated into English. She also filed the letters, which she’d received in a non-descript bag, chronologically. In this way, she circled around them until she was ready to sit down and get to know these grandparents who had been brutally murdered.

She was also introduced to an extended family she never knew existed. They, too, had all been exterminated.

She was well aware of being the daughter of a survivor and a granddaughter of Holocaust victims. It was an inescapable part of her DNA – but the letters brought history to life.

“It was very emotional getting a view of my unknown family. I started to have a relationship with my grandparents that I’d never had in reality. I made art from their two passport photos. Using Photoshop, I made images where I would situate myself within my grandparents’ space. Of course, I was aware I could never truly know them – the art was an effort to create this intermediary, imaginary space. It was a time of yearning and sadness.”

She took a journey to Vienna “in pursuit of them and my family’s history” in 2006, reclaiming her Austrian citizenship in 2007.

“Very quickly it became a pursuit of my relationship to Vienna, the city that had exiled my father, that had murdered my family. I delved into the existence of memory art (artwork inspired by past traumatic events of loss or survival) and was assured Vienna had invested in this area, despite this being a ‘post-memory era (second generation remembering)’.”

Frostig found few Holocaust memorials. “There were three: they were tucked away, ambiguous and inadequate in terms of self-awareness. They



Dr Karen Frostig

never really addressed the issues of murder and genocide which was, obviously, central. I became more intent upon exploring my voice in Austria.”

This was the start of a personal mission that grew into large-scale social action, which became the Vienna Project. After many challenges, including difficulties around raising funding and a tacit philosophy from some Austrian officials of “let the past remain in the past”, The Vienna Project – a temporary public memory project – was launched in 2013.

Engaging with the public, the Vienna Project included performance and installation art, photography and videography, typography and street art, interactive web design, Holocaust education, plus a “naming memorial” project prepared as digitised slides of the names of 91 780 victims.

“Occurring in the public space, the project joined history with memory, and collaboration with participation,” says Frostig.

The Vienna Project was dedicated to remembering all victim groups, including Jewish, Roma and Sinti victims, the mentally ill, physically disabled and homosexual victims, as well as communists, dissidents, socialists, Slovenian partisans, and Jehovah’s Witnesses.

She says it enabled the public “to engage in collective acts of remembrance”.

“I had broken through a kind of silence. I was allowed to do a closing at the national library at the Hofberg, one of the most prominent locations in the city. And then it was over. If you weren’t there you missed it. So, In the middle of it all, I started to think maybe temporary isn’t sufficient.”

To that end, Frostig has started to make designs for a small memorial naming installation and returns to Vienna in February to gauge synergy between her ideas and a planned House of History museum.

“I’m headed in a few directions. One is writing a book that has to do with my family’s history, and the projects I’ve worked on.

“And the other is, if Austria is not interested in a naming installation – the country has voted in a very right-wing government – I have a lot of artwork I’ve made in regard to my family’s history and these projects. I could adapt this, using the 16 members of my family who were murdered and create a smaller installation that also still encompasses the multiple groups and the larger numbers.”

Connecting it to South Africa, Frostig says the message of the Vienna Project is that memory has got to be tied with accountability.

“There is still ambivalence around this in Austria whereas in South Africa there really has been a deeper commitment to look at the history.”

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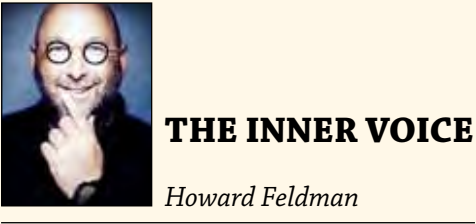
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Radio listeners’ tough response to Zapiro



THE INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman

It was my fault. Because not only did I invite cartoonist Zapiro into the studio for an interview but because I asked him about his Israel views. I also invited listener comments and questions.

My intention was to focus only on the release of his new book *Hasta La Gupta Baby* which was due to be launched in Johannesburg immediately following my discussion with him on my afternoon drive show on ChaiFM.

But I couldn’t help myself.

Zapiro’s views on Israel are no secret. He is vocal and he is scathing. Nor are mine a secret. I am vocal and I am a supportive. We in fact stand so far apart on this issue that it is a wonder that

we would be able to converse on this subject at all.

I am also a huge fan of his work. I believe that he has made a significant contribution to political and social discourse in South Africa. His voice is a powerful one. His talent is spectacular.

It was after we chatted about his iconic images like the shower head that follows President Jacob Zuma wherever he goes, after we spoke about the enormous pressure that he has to have endured given the outspoken nature of his work, that I tentatively broached the subject of his well-documented Israel views.

Truthfully, I didn’t want to get into the debate itself. What interested me was his personal reaction to being a pariah of the Jewish community. Whereas the community reaction to him might well be a direct result of his own decisions, I was still mindful of how painful it must be to be in that position.

As Jews we are generally quick to claim a

In truth, I have no idea what he would have said. Because whereas his views are no doubt important to him, they are less so to me. I am not offended by them, because I am not threatened by them.

person as a member of the tribe, even if the links are tenuous, but we are also unforgiving, unrelenting and perhaps cruel, if we feel betrayed by one of our own.

We are a bit like the ANC this way.

“I want to know from the esteemed Zapiro what it’s like to be a traitorous anti-Semitic Jew,” said one listener. Another said: “OMG this mother Teresa is making me vomit,” and another suggested (after he had left the studio) that if I asked him about Israel’s right to exist as

a Jewish State, that he would either say it has no right or that he would obfuscate the answer.

In truth, I have no idea what he would have said. Because whereas his views are no doubt important to him, they are less so to me. I am not offended by them, because I am not threatened by them. He is fully entitled to his opinion as I am to mine. My choice is how to react to that. Mine was to have a conversation with him in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Because I still believe that we achieve so much more by inviting people to Shabbat dinner than we do by throwing stones at them.

Many, if not most, of the listeners took issue with my approach. They seemed to feel that by engaging with Zapiro that I had let them down. They intimated that I had not stood up for something that they valued, and by doing so I had in essence crossed over to the other side.

But I respectfully disagree with that. Which is essentially what it’s all about.

Criticism of Israel: Whose right is it, anyway?



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

It is not unusual for elder South African politicians to use their anti-apartheid struggle credentials as political capital, as if their views are superior to others.

The issue found a reverse echo in Israel last week, when Israel’s Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely – an ardent right-winger and settlement supporter – contemptuously criticised American Jews who “never send their children to fight for their country (America)... most of them are having quite convenient lives”. And they don’t really care about the Kotel, she added.

as the majority of American Jews do – they accuse Israel of acting arrogantly as if it held a copyright on Judaism. They perceive Israel’s Orthodox establishment as being contemptuous of other streams.

Israel was created as a worldwide Jewish project to be a moral, democratic state for all inhabitants, with the intention of being intimately connected to the Diaspora. Do Israeli public officials have the right to criticise Diaspora communities? Could Hotovely’s attack on US Jews also be applied to South African Jewry?

And should South African Jews criticise Israel, against the accusation that they don’t live there, face Middle East dangers, serve in the IDF, and so on?

South African Jewish institutions are loath to criticise Israel, believing it gives ammunition to anti-Israel groups such as BDS. The recent controversy provoked by a Johannesburg Reform shul inviting people with BDS connections to its sukkah, highlighted the issue.

At Israeli-oriented events such as Yom Ha’atzmaut in Johannesburg, left-wing Jews demonstrate against Israeli actions, and promote the Palestinian cause, evoking anger among mainstream Jewry. Even moderate Jewish groups who support Israel passionately, but demand an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories, are often branded – without any evidence – as belonging to BDS in order to silence them. They are accused of being traitors.

Even moderate Jewish groups who support Israel passionately, but demand an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories, are often branded – without any evidence – as belonging to BDS

The South African political environment is receptive to attacks on Israel. Deputy Secretary General of the African National Congress Jesse Duarte, for example, published an article in the *Daily Maverick* this week in anticipation of the ANC leadership conference later this month, saying: “Israel has continued to violate international law, occupation continues and the brutality of the Israeli system of oppression has, rightly, been likened to apartheid ... As the ANC therefore prepares for its national conference, South Africa’s future relations with Israel hangs in the balance and rightly so.”

For South African Jews who support Israel but oppose the occupation, it is a difficult line to tread. But it must not stifle meaningful debate about Israel, including praise and criticism where necessary. Like South African struggle veterans’ critiques of the ANC and South Africa, this kind of engagement is crucial for people to identity with Israel.

She, on the other hand, lives in Israel and serves in the IDF, as if that makes her views superior to Jews who don’t – which means most American Jews. Her comments outraged sections of American Jewry. A response in Israeli media from a high-ranking US military officer, listed Jews who fought with the US army in the Second World War, and hold high military positions today.

Hotovely also disparages Diaspora Jews who criticise Israel’s weakening of liberal values, and the occupation. Sadly, many American Jews – the world’s second largest Jewish community after Israel – who are overwhelmingly liberal, do not see Israel as part of their identity, but a problem, evoking antagonism from other people because of the occupation.

US Jews dislike racism and religious extremism. Despite being only two per cent of America’s population, they played a huge part in the civil rights movement, and continue to do so in culture, the arts, politics and the economy.

Their relationship with Israel has weakened as the country has moved towards right-wing extremism and nationalism. If they have a Reform or Conservative religious identity –

Community Column

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Board’s Parliamentary Liaison an indispensable link

The position of Parliamentary Liaison is a relatively new one within the SAJBD. It was introduced with a view both to keeping ourselves abreast of major political developments affecting the country, and to be the interface between our community and other sectors of our diverse, multicultural society.

In view of this, it was very heartening to read in last week’s issue of the SA Jewish Report the letter from Michael Bagraim, Democratic Alliance MP and former SAJBD national chairman, commending the excellent work of the Board’s Parliamentary Liaison representative Chaya Singer.

So fulsome an endorsement of what Chaya, and by extension this department of the SAJBD, has been able to achieve in this challenging arena, is a welcome indication of how successful this venture has been to date.



Above Board Shaun Zagnoev

it is of much value for the SAJBD, as the recognised spokesperson for SA Jewry, to be seen to be concerned with and involved in issues of concern to the greater society, as well as with those specifically pertaining to the Jewish community.

The SAJBD itself is strictly apolitical. As a matter of policy, we seek to meet with people from right across the political spectrum, since no matter how widely our views might differ, the very process of dialogue and engagement is beneficial. It helps to break down misconceptions, find common ground and in general move past the barriers that are inevitably created when people have no real knowledge about one another.

Parliament is the vital, beating heart of our democracy, but politics being what it is, building such relationships in that environment is far from easy. It is therefore

very much to Chaya’s credit that she has been able to establish cordial relationships with so wide an array of constituencies.

Parallel to fulfilling our core mandate of upholding the civil rights of South African Jewry, the Board seeks to have an active, visible presence in issues of broader national concern. Part of this involves making input into new legislation, in which regard we have been able over the years to draw on the considerable legal expertise that our community has always had in abundance.

By having a continual presence in Parliament, we are made aware well in advance of upcoming legislation concerning issues of relevance to our community and plan accordingly.

Democracy is about grassroots participation, and there is certainly nothing wrong in individual constituencies promoting their own particular agendas. That being said, it is of much value for the SAJBD, as the recognised spokesperson for SA Jewry, to be seen to be concerned with and involved in issues of concern to the greater society, as well as with those specifically pertaining to the Jewish community.

Once we are seen to be involved in addressing matters of broader national concern, it becomes easier to obtain a sympathetic hearing for our own issues when the time comes.

South African politics is certainly not for the faint-hearted, but at the same time, it offers multiple opportunities for ordinary people to get involved and make a difference.

Our Parliamentary Liaison branch is one way in which we are able to lead the Jewish community in being an active, contributing part of the process, while at the same time being able to deal with whatever issues of specifically Jewish concern that might arise.

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

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

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

Faye Kellerman brings Yiddishkeit into her novels

SUZANNE BELLING

There are not a lot of frum crime novel writers, or few that bring their Yiddishkeit into their novels. Faye Kellerman – international best-selling author, is quite the opposite.

In her first novel, *Ritual Bath*, she was inspired by a mikveh. This book featured a frum woman, Rina Lazarus, and her husband-to-be, Peter Decker (who later discovered he was Jewish himself, although he did not know it at the time). Together they solved the mystery of the rape and murder of a young religious Jewish woman.

“We’re modern-Orthodox, which means we’re shomer Shabbat, and, of course, kosher. We are affiliated with the community in Los Angeles,” she said.

“My Judaism is reflected somewhat in my novels, but the books are written to entertain. If I wanted a book about Judaism reflected in my life, I’d write non-fiction.

“Nonetheless, it is interesting to people to get an aspect of religious life and have it treated respectfully.

"I knew I wanted to write crime fiction and I wanted a little bit of my culture in there. Rina came first. But since it's illogical to have an observant woman go around solving crimes, Decker was invented."

For Faye Kellerman fans, it is hard to believe that the Deckers are fictional – they sound like people from Glenhazel. Peter's fellow detectives have dubbed him "rabbi", but he manages to fill the role of the tough top cop, while always making it home in time for Rina's delicious Shabbat dinner.

When she started writing *The Ritual Bath*, she wrote from her heart, not knowing whether it would be worthy of publication. She only realised she had written her first novel once she was acknowledged by the publishing house's editor.

She is a former practising dentist but switched careers into becoming a writer with ease, as did her psychologist-author husband, Jonathan.

“He is the reason that I’m writing – he was always a source of



"I had to work my way up and we were published within a few years of one another."

She has written some 22 books in the Lazarus/Decker series, several “stand-alone” novels, books of short stories and has co-authored two books with Jonathan.

“But we never write in the same room – we co-wrote via e-mail and now we’re basically working on our own projects. Jonathan does write with our son, Jesse Kellerman. They’ve written three great novels together and are contracted to do others.

“The first were great mysteries with Jewish content – called The Golem of Hollywood and then the The Golem of Paris.

“The next novel that came out was a contemporary crime fiction novel called *Crime Scene*. It got great reviews and made the best-sellers’ list. Jon loves working with Jesse and I think Jesse loves working with Jonathan. It’s a sweet deal,” says this mother and grandmother, who calls her grandchildren “the lights of my life”.

Faye says it takes her about a year to write a book from conception to finish. "Lately, it's been taking me a bit longer – around 18 months. Much thought goes into it and, having written so many books, I

don't want any repetition," says a youthful-looking Faye, who claims she also needs more time as she gets older.

How does she feel about her global fame? "I write books – thankfully people buy them. I don't think much about being a best-seller, although I am always happy when a book is successful, more so for the publisher.

"I am really in the moment when I write. I think about the story, about my characters and don't think about its future. The book has to be written without any thoughts of its future. If you get too involved with how it will perform, your writing suffers."

Faye was experiencing jetlag at the time of the interview, having just returned from a visit with her husband to Israel for the Oud Festival in Jerusalem, as Jonathan plays the oud, a central instrument of Arabic music. The oud is a stringed instrument said to have originated over 3 500 years ago in Persia.

"It was a world-class festival of Mid-Eastern music."

Besides bringing home memories, the Kellermans bought about 60 bottles of fine Israeli wine, most of which they brought back to the US. “I think there are more than 350 wineries [in Israel] to date. One of the places we visited has an ancient wine press from biblical days on site.”

Reuniting with a prized possession after 64 years

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Carole Borne recorded a 78 RPM record when she was just seven years old and didn't really think of it again, until a stranger in Australia contacted her to say that he had the record – 64 years later.

Carole, who was then Benatar, grew up in Johannesburg in the 1950s and went to live with her grandmother – who was a music teacher – when she was five.

"She taught me to play the piano, and in 1954, she took me to a recording studio where I recorded a solo, and a 78 RPM record was made," says Carole. "In 1991 my Gran passed away, and my mother cleared out her flat in Bree Street.

Carole attended Johannesburg Girls High School (JGHS) in Berea and matriculated in 1964. Fifty years later her JGHS year had a school reunion and Jackie Israel created a simple website to trace pupils from the class of 1964.

In October this year Jackie – whose contact details were on the website – got an e-mail from Steve Hooppell, who lives in Albury, New South Wales, Australia. He told her that he had found Carole's 64-year-old record among his record collection and he wanted to return it to its rightful owner.

“It was still in its original sleeve, which I had made on the February 10, 1954 at the SABC in Johannesburg,” explains Carole. “He has absolutely no idea how this record came to be among his possessions.”

Jackie forwarded his e-mail to Carole. "I was sorting through some random records in my collection and came across this 1954 pressing of a piano solo by Carole (aged seven years), read the e-mail.

“After some detective work I have tracked

Carole to the JGHS class of '64 website (hence your contacts) as well as a possible link to Shaarei Torah Primary School (as a school teacher under her married name Carole Bome).

"I thought that Carole and/or her family may like the 78 record which I am happy to forward as soon as I have an address (if available)."

Piecing things together, Carole says: “When my grandmother passed away and some of her belongings were auctioned off, somebody who emigrated to Australia must have purchased a lot of records, including this one. That must be how this landed up at the other end of the world. How it ever reached Steve Hooppell in Albury, is a mystery.”

Carole contacted Hooppell as soon as she got his e-mail and he returned her record.

"I am happy to say I have just received this prized possession, which brought back many memories. How amazing is the power of the Internet, and the kindness and determination of this total stranger who took the trouble to return this to me. It certainly restores one's faith in humanity," she says.




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SAJBD Pretoria honours stalwarts

**DIANE WOLFSON
PRETORIA**

South African Jewish Board of Deputies Pretoria Council chairperson Louis Pearlman honoured two stalwart community workers at the AGM last week. Sivea Stein, a former Union of Jewish Women chair, was presented with a Community Service Award in recognition and appreciation

of her outstanding contribution. Her work, in association with the Union of Jewish Women, Pretoria, was in uplifting and supporting the poor and vulnerable of the broader Pretoria community in the true spirit of tikkun olam. The second award went to Mervyn Horwitz, former chairman of the IUA/UCF Pretoria, in recognition of and appreciation for a lifetime of loyal service to the community and

Israel, through his organisational and fundraising work. Guest speaker Chaya Singer, gave an overview of her work on behalf of the Board of Deputies at the parliamentary office in Cape Town, which had the large crowd enthralled with her numerous anecdotes.

Chaya Singer addressing the audience



Seeking the Bricha Movement Holocaust survivors and family members

The JNF of South Africa is seeking Holocaust survivors who were part of the 300 000 people who came to Israel with the Bricha Movement between 1945 and 1948. Most of them settled in Israel, but some of them came to live in South Africa. The JNF of South Africa will be launching its new partnership project in January 2018 and would like to interview these South Africans and their descendants. The Bricha Movement organised groups of Holocaust survivors to escape from Eastern Europe to the West and from there to reach Israel. Abba Kovner, the partisan fighter and poet, was one of the early organisers. Jews fled through Czechoslovakia and Romania to Italy, Austria and Germany. In the wake of the pogrom in Kielce, Poland on July 4, 1946, when 42 Holocaust survivors were murdered, a large number of Jews – around 95 000 – fled Poland. This flood overwhelmed the Brichha organisation. The approximately 300 000 Jews who used the Bricha routes, including the trail from the Haifa area to inland Israel, renders it the largest organised illegal mass movement in modern times.

• Contact Sharon on sharon@beyachad.co.za

Aish Partners Conference success

The 18th annual Aish Partners Conference, which took place the weekend of November 17-19, was its largest event to date, with over 1 000 attendees. The participation of Rav Yisroel Meir Lau, former Chief Rabbi of Israel, his son Rav Dovid Lau, Chief Rabbi of Israel, and Rabbi Warren Goldstein, lent stature to the event.



A packed house at the AISH partners conference

Letters

OPEN LETTER TO DR IQBAL SURVÉ

Dr Iqbal Survé, in your position as chairman of the Independent Media Group, your emphatic statement in the SA Jewish Report in early May of 2015, strongly denied that any of your newspapers carries an anti-Israel or anti-Jewish bias. Writing in The Star (July 31, 2017) you claim: “We are a media company that presents news accurately, without bias and gives everyone a fair voice.” That is a very bold statement. In the same article, you are quoted as saying: “Using their surrogate, their untruths were spread and shared until they appeared to be the truth.” “Their fake news attacks became increasingly vicious and spurious...” This in reference to a dispute with another media company. Hardly a day goes by without one or other paper from the Independent Group publishing a derogatory piece on Israel, some of them extremely insignificant. The Star (November 14) reported on the arrest of a senior member of Islamic Jihad as tensions were rising as a result of Israel blowing up a terrorist tunnel. This was certainly not fake news but was this really worthwhile news? Was the arrest of one person, even a terrorist, really hot news? Again (November 15) The Star reported on the closing off of the entrance to a Palestinian village. Really hot news again? No – again

superfluous news but anything Israel does which is seen to be harmful to the Palestinians, even when deserved, becomes hot news. Last week this same newspaper reported on a “selfie” taken by an Israeli soldier of some prisoners. Was that real news? Again, they were the uber victims, and anything to do with the Palestinians becomes hot news when agendas are at play. And then finally all most of your newspapers printed a photograph and report dating back to 2014 describing rocket fire into Gaza from Israel. The retraction? Nothing more than a mealie-mouthed, pathetic apology blaming junior staff (of course) and refusing to take responsibility – and appearing on page 8 and page 11 in some papers, where to all intents it would not be seen by readers. So, here we have the Independent Group publishing both false news AND superfluous news together. This was a real coup for its sales. Given the constant vilification of Israel almost daily, your readers are encouraged to believe that Israel is the rogue state. Published almost daily, the lies and distortions that this news group perpetuates about Israel become the truth and sow the seeds of hatred.

**Allan Wolman
Johannesburg**

DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION BEST FOR RESOLVING MIDEAST CONFLICT

After centuries of persecutions and suffering, many Jews decided that it was time to seek safety in our ancient homeland and return to the Holy Land. The horrors of the Holocaust re-enforced this urgent need. Conflict with the Arab neighbours was the last thing they were looking for. Since it was felt that the world stood by and allowed all these repeated anti-Semitic atrocities, many of our people were hardened and decided that in order to survive, we would have to become fighters. “Attack is the best form of defence.” Unfortunately most of the Arab inhabitants bitterly opposed the return of their Hebrew cousins into what they also considered to be their homeland and holy land. And so, the stage was set for bitter conflict, in a part of the world where revenge is a part of life. This hostility re-enforced the worst fears of the Jews who felt that they had better respond in kind in order to survive. And so we experienced a tit-for-tat escalation of war, with neither side benefiting.

An unfortunate side-effect of this battle for survival is that many Israelis have become war-like and the women have lost their femininity. Judaism inspired the world with the commandment to “love thy neighbour”. Sadly, after the Six Day War, when tiny Israel won a David and Goliath battle against the Arabs, much of the world supported her. And over two thirds of countries voted at the UN in 1947 to establish a Hebrew state. Some of us pessimistically believed that peace could not be achieved. But then it WAS established with Egypt (formerly our largest enemy) and with Jordan! There are also good relations with Saudi Arabia and Morocco. A diplomatic solution would thus be a better way of ensuring our survival and reducing anti-Semitism. After all the ongoing conflict is bad for everyone.

**Martin Zagnoev
Johannesburg**

INDEPENDENT MEDIA GROUP'S ANTI-ISRAEL BIAS CLEAR IN ITS REPORTING

Independent Media Group’s (IMG) foreign editor, Shannon Ebrahim, is being disingenuous in her explanation and half-hearted apology (“Star dishes up three-year-old story as news”, SAJR, November 24). Ebrahim is well-known for her anti-Israel, anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic comments in her regular columns that are a feature of Independent Media’s titles which are known for their bias when reporting on the Middle East conflict. No sub-editor would pull a story from Telesur without checking the date, unless he was told to find something to fill an unexpected hole in The Star newspaper. In her response she says: “We will also have to look at the veracity of their (Telesur) stories in general from now on.” Perhaps she should also check on the “veracity” of her own opinion pieces, but even an opinion should be based on truth. Ebrahim is the wife of Ebrahim Ebrahim, deputy minister of International Relations, and he is no friend of Israel. The cliché, Birds of a feather, is probably appropriate. IMG’s retractions are always the same when they have deliberately printed misinformation, whether about Israel or anything else. it was “an honest mistake” or “the error was introduced during the editing process”. The SAZF can’t complain to the Press Ombudsman as IMG has withdrawn from his jurisdiction and has their own in-house tribunal, which is certainly not staffed by Israel- or Zionist-friendly members.

**Brian Josselowitz
Milnerton**

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 SA 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. editorial@sajewishreport.co.za

KDVP soccer girls are league winners



King David High School Victory Park's junior soccer girls emerged as overall winners of the 2017 JVW Jo'burg Stream 3 league. Back row: Gabriela Bonert; Shayna Sundy; Luchia Turtledove; Samara Wolf; Tzipora Krawitz; and Lauren Gruzd. Middle: Danya Meyerthal; Ruby Kapelushnick; Isabella Goldberg; Paris Obel; Aerin Cohen; Chloe Valkin; Bethia Milner; Georgia Lewis; and Director of Sport Thulani Ndlovu. Front: Shaina Resnik; Micaela Heyes; Angie Fisher; India Milne; Dannica De Aguiar; Michaela Grasko; and Jasmine Lewitton.

Mina Lopato graduation concert brings the house down

Mina Lopato Nursery School's grade Rs did their families and their school proud with their South African graduation concert. From Fiddler on the Roof, to Nkosi Sikelel iAfrika, the children shared with much enthusiasm, the unique ethos with which they have been educated during their time at Mina Lopato.



Hirsch Lyons girls help senior with memory difficulties



Hirsch Lyons girls with Kim Lewitte and Andy Goldman, senior life orientation teacher

Pupils from Hirsch Lyons Girls' High School volunteered recently at the Union of Jewish Women's brain boost programme for seniors with memory difficulties. This programme is co-ordinated by Kim Lewitte, an experienced occupational therapist in this area, and a group of dedicated volunteers. Kim prepared the pupils with an informative talk at the school, regarding memory loss and its challenges. Research suggests that brain exercises may help delay symptoms and keep the mind working better for longer. The Hirsch Lyons pupils loved playing word games with the attendees and bingo was the highlight of the morning. The pupils also organised a beautiful art activity for the caregivers, which included a caregivers' prayer by Bruce McIntyre, "unknown and often unnoticed, you are a hero nonetheless ... you rise to face the giant of disease and despair ... "

Black Friday Sydenham-style

Black Friday took on a whole new meaning last week when the children of Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primary School held a "Black Shabbos" and "Black Snacks" fun day. Just for fun the children dressed in black and got to eat all "black foods" including raisins, prunes and licorice!



Friday (December 1)

- UZLC hosts Tali Nates on "Remembering the Holocaust All Over the World". Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Sunday (December 3)

- Open Ongoing Nechama – Growth From Grief Support Group. Venue: Jossel Card Room, Golden Acres. Time: Tea from 09:30. Group starts promptly at 10:00 – 11:30. No need to book. Contact: Linda Fleishman (011) 532-9701.
- Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets at Beit Emanuel, Slome Auditorium, Parktown. Programme compiled by Harry Fidler, is called "Thanks for the Memories – a Music Miscellany Compilation". Time: 14:15 sharp. Enquiries: Marilyn 072-243-7436 or Jack 082-450-7622.

WHAT'S ON

- Second Innings hosts singer Danny K on "I'm Still Standing". Time: Tea at 10:00. Show starts at 10:30. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Cost: Members: R70 per ticket, visitors: R90 per ticket. Book with Ivy Grushkin (011) 640-5996. Bookings must be done in advance from the end of October for catering purposes.
- WIZO hosts a mouthwatering tea in a magnificent garden Share in the funny, sad, nostalgic memories with Zee Bergman, Gertie Feinstein, Yvonne Jawitz,

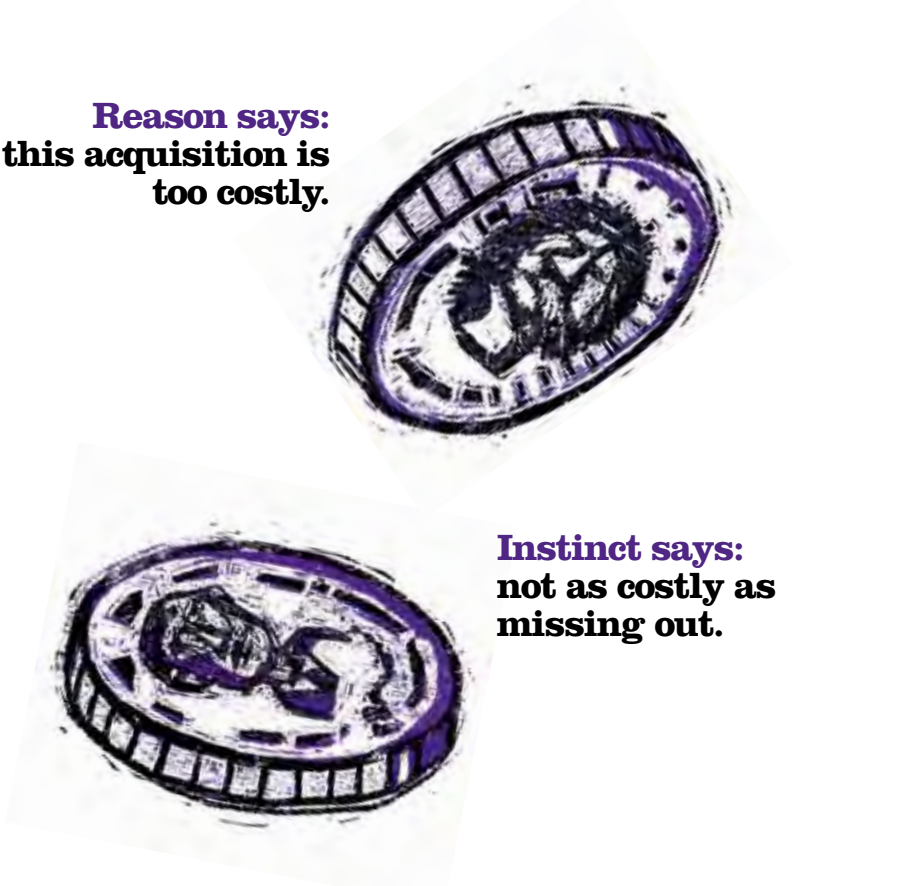
Wednesday December 6

- Lodge Jerusalem of the Hebrew Order of David international will be holding a BINGO evening at the HOD Centre, 58 Orchards Road, Orchards at 7.30pm for 8.00pmAll the prizes are CASH. Refreshments will be served. Tickets at R 100.00 for 5 games are available from Colin 072-114-6969, Louis 083-457-7827, Joe 011485 5140 [w] or Allen 081 451 2360

Thursday (December 7)

- Hebrew speakers meet at Beyachad, second floor at 11:00.

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Who are the members of the Springbok minyan?

There have been 10 Jewish rugby players who have represented South Africa in rugby Tests. Do you know who they are?

Morris Zimmerman was the first. He attended Jansenville High School in the Eastern Cape which was an Afrikaans medium school and made his debut on December 5, 1931. He played in four Tests and the team won all four. He later became a Springbok selector.

Fred Smollan was No 2. He was born in Uitenhage and attended Grey High School, making his debut on August 12, 1933. He was selected for three Tests in the 1933 home series against Australia. They won two and lost the Test in Bloemfontein. Smollan went on to found the Smollan Group of companies, still operating today.

Louis Babrow was No 3 and Zimmerman’s cousin. He made his debut on June 26 1937. He was born in Smithfield in the Free State and attended Grey College. He played five Tests, winning four of them. with the only loss coming against the All Blacks at Athletic Park in Wellington. But they did win the 1937 series in New Zealand.

Babrow was chosen for the final, series-deciding Test of the 1937 Springbok tour of New Zealand. The Test fell on Yom Kippur but Babrow decided to play, arguing that with the time difference, he would have played the game before the start of the holiday in South Africa.

Dr Cecil Moss was next. The Springbok vice-captain in 1949 when the Springboks beat the All Blacks 4-0 in a series (the only four he played in), he went on to later become Springbok coach. He loved

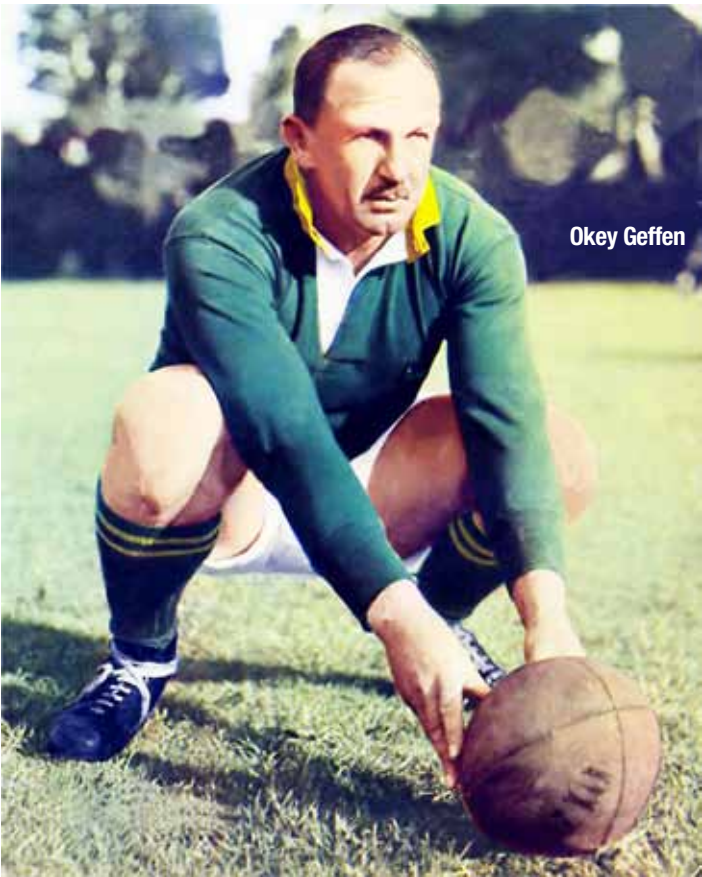
his rugby and was closely involved with UCT rugby. He was born in Riversdale and educated at SACS and passed away in October this year.

Okey Geffin was born in Johannesburg and schooled at the Harris School. He represented South Africa seven times, winning all seven Tests, including four consecutive Tests against the All Blacks, where he played alongside Cecil Moss. The family name was originally Galombik, but when his father arrived by ship in Cape Town from Poneves in Russia, there was a wanted sign for a horse thief called Galombik. Okey’s father gave his second name, Gavin, and stopped there. From his pronunciation he was then registered as Geffin.

The name, according to his father, originated when the clerk registering the birth asked him for his son’s “Christian name”. His father explained that he did not have a Christian name as he was a Jewish “okey”. That is what the clerk wrote down.

Joseph “Joe” Kaminer was born in Warmbaths (now Bela Bela) and schooled in Pietersburg (now Polokwane). He played a single Test for the Boks, making his debut on August 16, 1958, with the Boks losing against France at Ellis Park. Kaminer played for Wits and Transvaal.

Professor Alan Menter was born in Doncaster and his medical achievements were many. He represented the Springboks in 1968 while studying at Wits University medical school. He completed his dermatology residency at Pretoria General Hospital at the University of Pretoria. Menter made his debut on the successful Springbok tour of France, both matches being won by the Boks. He played his



Okey Geffin

drawn matches. Three of his four losses were in one-off matches and he was on the winning side in every series he played.

Dr Wilf Rosenberg may very well be the most controversial of our Jewish Boks. Born in Cape Town and schooled at Jeppe, he made his debut on August 20, 1955, all in all, playing five Tests for South Africa, winning two, drawing one and losing two. The controversy surrounding him came about through his decision to go to the UK to play rugby league, a heresy at the time, that caused severe ructions in those amateur days.

The 10th man is **Joel Stransky** who booted himself into history, and legendary status, from

provincial rugby for the Blue Bulls.

Then there was **Syd Nomis**, the most capped Jewish player with 25 Tests. He was the favourite of Afrikaans commentator Gerhard Viviers, whose calls of “Sydie, Sydie, Sydie” every time Nomis darted down the wing to score, were legendary. Nomis was born in Johannesburg and schooled at Damelin College. He made his Springbok debut on August 12 1967 against France at Newlands. Of his 25 Tests, he won 16 and played in a remarkable five

a single inspired action that took no longer than a heartbeat. The Springbok flyhalf locked on to a pass from Joost van der Westhuizen in the dying minutes of extra time to decisively take the drop kick that won South Africa the 1995 Rugby World Cup.

Stransky was born in Johannesburg and schooled in Pietermaritzburg. He played 22 Tests, winning 16.

All in all, Jewish players have played 78 Tests for South Africa, winning 57, drawing six and losing 15.

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