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Jewish Report

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The dawn of a new era



A selfie taken by Zev Krengel, vice president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies with Cyril Ramaphosa, the newly elected president of the ANC

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SA leaders oppose embassy downgrade

MIRAH LANGER

The ANC remains determined to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel to a liaison office – even after recent calls by Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini to the party not to interfere in the situation.

“Our responsibility is to implement the resolution without delay,” ANC spokesperson Zizi Kodwa told SA Jewish Report, insisting: “The ANC will downgrade.”

Kodwa said the decision was not against all Jewish people, many of whom had been part of the ANC and the struggle against apartheid.

He added that the decision to downgrade the embassy, announced at the governing party’s 54th national elective conference in December, was “not an anti-Israeli decision... [but rather] a resolution to condemn the Israeli state, which is committing atrocities against the people of Ramallah and denying the freedom of the Palestinian people”.

Kodwa’s remarks come in the wake of a recent address by Zwelithini, who, during a meeting with ANC officials – including newly elected party president Cyril Ramaphosa – said the party should not be interfering in the situation with Israel.

The king’s comments were made during a courtesy visit, paid to the Zulu monarch earlier this month by some of the newly elected top six ANC leaders. They paid homage to the king at his Osuthu Royal Palace in Nongoma, northern KwaZulu-Natal.

“Mr President, there are things that I don’t like talking about much, which is to interfere in things we know nothing about,” Zwelithini told



King Goodwill Zwelithini

Ramaphosa, according to a translation from isiZulu to English that was provided by the SA Zionist Federation (SAZF).

He told Ramaphosa: “I am pleading that we should not find ourselves involved in wars that we know nothing of, because we will find that the people in whose wars we involve ourselves with are the same people who work in ways that can help us with our drought issues.”

Kodwa declined to comment on Zwelithini’s remarks.

Prince Thulani Zulu, spokesperson for the royal household, said the king’s remarks were offered as advice and not meant to be political. “The king is not a politician, but he speaks his mind,” said Zulu. “Whatever he gives to anyone is advice. He is not taking sides with any people.”

Zulu described Zwelithini’s relationship with South African Jewry as “very good”, adding that he had visited the Israeli embassy in Pretoria.

He put the monarch’s interest in Israel down to the agricultural skills its people offered. “They can help us grow our own food in times of

drought... They can turn our country into a bread basket,” said Zulu.

He said Zwelithini’s palace was “the home of everyone” and that he was always looking for good ideas from people who visited which could help the nation.

“The king is a farmer – he has looked internationally and in Africa to see where they can till the soil. He will take any assistance from a government where we can get help; he is not politically inclined.”

So, said Zulu, the king’s comments to the ANC went along these lines: “There is something good to take from other people. I would advise you to do the same.”

Asked why Zwelithini met with the ANC if he was not politically involved, Zulu said it was part of a broader open-door policy. “Economic Freedom Fighters leader Julius Malema has visited the king; the DA has visited; almost all the political parties have visited,” he said.

“They come to seek blessings as he is the father of everyone – without fear or favour.”

In response, the SAZF issued a statement “imploing the ANC to take note of the call of the Zulu king, who represents a major constituency of the ANC”, said SAZF national chairperson Ben Swartz.

Continued on page 4 >>

Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
18:46	19:38	Johannesburg
19:41	20:36	Cape Town
18:42	19:35	Durban
19:00	19:53	Bloemfontein
19:13	20:08	Port Elizabeth
19:01	19:56	East London

Parshat Bo

Parshat Bo – Tragic indecision

As the process of redemption moves towards its climax, our Sages tell us that great tragedy occurs. A terrifying number of Jews perish during the plague of darkness, and it is a diminished nation that leaves Egypt in triumph.

Our Sages explain further that these Jews who died were the ones who did not want to leave the exile, and in order to hide their deaths from the Egyptians, their demise was in secret and in darkness.

This account, however, simply begs another question: Why would any Jews refuse to leave Egypt? After decades of slavery, oppression, torture and misery, Moshe (on behalf of Hashem) offers them a chance at freedom! I would expect them to jump at it.

Rabbi Mordechai Yosef Leiner, of the great Chassidic Masters of the 1800s and the Rebbe of Ishbitzer Chassidut, suggests that it wasn’t exactly the case that these Jews refused to leave, but that they hesitated. They were reluctant. They asked themselves the question: “Is our freedom worth sacrificing for? Are we willing to give up everything that we have to serve Hashem in the desert?” And they did not have an immediate answer.

The famous Jewish American novelist Herman Wouk wrote about the time that one of his novels was adapted into a Hebrew play, and he was invited to Israel for the first performance. He sat next to Israel’s then prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, and was invited to Ben-Gurion’s home after the play – where Ben-Gurion told his wife, Paula, to serve only kosher food for the religious Wouks.

At the end of the evening Ben-Gurion asked: “Why

don’t you come to live here? Here you’ll be free.”

“Free?” Wouk responded incredulously. “I have seen soldiers, tanks and extra security everywhere I’ve been!”

“I didn’t say that here you’d be safe,” Ben-Gurion quipped. “I said that here you’ll be free.”

Wouk conceded the point.

Freedom can indeed come at a high cost. A commitment to spiritual greatness requires relinquishment of many things that we would otherwise like to have. But ultimately, we have room in our lives only for a certain number of priorities.

Jewish history has shown us that the Jewish future belongs to those whose greatest priority in life is their Judaism and their commitment to Hashem. We have been forged time and again in the iron crucible, and many times were forced to choose a life of holiness, sacrifice and transcendence over a life of comfort, familiarity and ease.

Our ongoing commitment to this choice must be such that we do not have to wrestle with the decision when it is presented to us, but will immediately choose our faith, people and destiny. The tragedy of the lost Jews in Egypt, says the Ishbitzer, was not that they chose to opt out of the Exodus, but that they didn’t choose to opt in.

It is all too easy to fall away from spiritual greatness – and it is thus all the more crucial that we grab each opportunity for holiness as soon as we see it.



Rabbi Sam Thurgood, Beit Midrash Morasha

South African Jewish Report

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'We were played,' says Krengel

NICOLA MILTZ

The ANC was steamrolled by anti-Israel lobbyists into making its unilateral decision to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel, said one of the Jewish community's leading voices this week.

Zev Krengel, vice-president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), was the only Jewish representative invited as a guest to the 2017 ANC elective conference, held at Nasrec in December.

He told SA Jewish Report this week that the international relations commission tasked with addressing the controversial downgrade issue was an "orchestrated, staged" affair. He said it had a "predetermined outcome" and culminated in a verbal anti-Israel "bloodbath", in which South African Jewry were hung out to dry.

"It was a sad day; my lowest point as a community leader," he lamented. "There were no discussions. There was only one narrative."

He fingered the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, saying: "The ANC international relations commission was captured and hijacked by a minority force using its relationship with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which goes back years, to further its agenda.

"We were definitely played," said Krengel. "There was dishonesty in the process. We were misled by the leadership of the ANC international relations committee to believe that our submissions would be heard and debated. We thought there would be thorough, intellectual debate about the possible benefits for the Palestinian people.

"There was no discussion. It was purely orchestrated to be vindictive and make Jews feel less welcome in South Africa..."

"There was no commitment to looking for solutions to help the Palestinians get their state, or how to help them in any way. It was only about isolating and demonising Israel."

On the day of the controversial decision – Tuesday, December 19 – the ANC policy conference had been rocked by a serious voting dispute over the election outcome of the party's secretary-general. This overshadowed the euphoria of the previous night, following Cyril Ramaphosa's election as new leader of the party, and went a long way in upstaging the international relations commission. The day was characterised by numerous delays and pandemonium as delegates debated the

outcome of the election.

"The international relations commission was almost like a non-event," said Krengel, counting only about 150 present (out of 4 700-odd delegates) in one of the side halls set up specially for commissions. He said he battled to find the right hall, as did several others, and it was delayed by hours.

Eventually, Krengel saw the international relations commission chairperson, Water and Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa, and asked where the commission was being held. "She replied: 'Why can't you do something about your prime minister?' To which I replied: 'I only have one president.' I took it she was referring to Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and I knew then that we were on a hiding to nothing."

Only a week before the ANC made its decision about Israel, US President Donald Trump unilaterally announced a decision to declare Jerusalem the official capital city of the state of Israel. This decision, Krengel said, was "the last red rag to the bull".

A host of well known anti-Israel lobbyists and BDS supporters were present. They included Mandla Mandela, the grandson of former president Nelson Mandela, who is outspoken in his pro-Palestinian and anti-Israeli views; BDS board chairperson Professor Farid Esack, who was involved in the University of Johannesburg's academic boycott of Israel; BDS co-founder and director Mohammed Desai, known for justifying the singing of Shoot the Jew; struggle activist Mohammed Dangor, who is a former ambassador to Libya, Syria and Saudi Arabia; activist Braam Hanekom; and Bongani Masuku, the international relations spokesperson for labour federation Cosatu who has a hate speech ruling against him for threatening the Jewish community.

Each took to the stage and encouraged an embassy downgrade.

"I went there, believing there would be real intellectual discussion, after which I thought it would go 50/50," said Krengel. "I never for a minute thought it would be so one-sided. I really thought there would be robust debate with opposing views.

"There was no discussion. It was purely orchestrated to be vindictive and make Jews feel less welcome in South Africa. There was absolutely no discussion on how a downgrade was going to help the Palestinians."

Krengel said he would have felt differently if the ANC had come to its decision following two to three hours of constructive debate. "That was my disappointment."

He sat alone while speaker after speaker, sporting non-voting delegate observer status badges, lambasted Israel in what he described was a "hate fest for Jews".

What struck Krengel as particularly disturbing was the lack of attention given to

other major international atrocities, conflicts and human rights violations in Africa and the rest of the world. "These seemed to be side issues," he said. "The commission barely touched on the problems in Morocco and the Western Sahara; and it briefly touched on Swaziland's King Mswati III.

"Not a word about the Libyan slave trade, or the civil war in Syria, or the Rohingya persecution in Myanmar, or the coup in Zimbabwe, or the instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Instead, it was clear that every speaker was there purely to make sure the downgrade happened."

Only a handful of the 34 speakers in the hall

of about 150 people touched on other issues, he said.

The last to speak, former president Kgalema Motlanthe – "the only ANC heavyweight present" – demurely gave some balance by saying that the "Israeli-Palestinian issue is very complicated". He also asked about policy relating to South Sudan, but it was brushed aside.

Krengel said commission chair Molewa and International Relations and Co-operation Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane appeared "happy and comfortable" while all this was unfolding.

Continued on page 27>>



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Israel exposes terror ties between SA and Iran

STEVEN GRUZD

South Africa is believed to be used by Iranian intelligence “as a significant area in locating, recruiting and operating agents against Israel and the West Bank”, according to an investigation by Israeli intelligence agency Shin Bet.

Israeli daily *Haaretz* reported recently that Shin Bet said it had arrested 29-year-old computer engineering student Mohammed Maharamah, from Hebron, who was “recruited into Iranian intelligence by a relative, Bahar Maharamah, who resides in South Africa”.

This emerged when a terror cell in the West Bank was bust in November.

How serious is this issue? Why is this information emerging through the media, and what’s at stake for the Jewish community?

When Mohammed Maharamah visited South Africa in 2015, Shin Bet said he met agents from Iran’s capital, Tehran. His assignments against Israeli targets allegedly included recruiting a suicide bomber, planning shooting attacks and establishing a computer shop as an intelligence-gathering post. Israeli authorities arrested him and two other suspects in November 2017, charging them with espionage and terrorism.

Says terrorism analyst Hussein Solomon, senior professor of political studies and governance at the University of the Free State: “This incident doesn’t surprise me... there has been accommodation of networks between local and foreign jihadis in South Africa for years. We have groups like Hamas operating here, people in the Palestinian diaspora are here – some for economic reasons, others certainly for other reasons.”

Solomon contends that, according to Iraq’s ambassador, about 300 South Africans fought in Raqqa, Syria. The CIA found the suspect allegedly responsible for bombing the American Embassy in Tanzania, in Cape Town.

Daniel Ackerman, who has studied Islamic extremism in Africa, says: “Terrorist networks require three factors to operate in a country: ungoverned or poorly monitored territories, a stable financial system, and relatively good transport infrastructure. This allows individuals to be trained, financed and moved around with relative ease and discretion.”

Jevon Greenblatt, director of the Community Security Organisation (CSO) in Gauteng, said his

organisation had not been able to independently corroborate the Maharamah allegations. Without a specific threat to the South African Jewish community, CSO will not activate extra resources, but monitoring continues.

Jasmine Opperman is a director at the Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium, headquartered in Florida, US and has 19 years’ experience in South Africa’s intelligence services. She shares her thoughts on why



this latest story unfolded through the media. It followed soon after US President Donald Trump’s announcement that the US recognised Jerusalem as Israel’s capital – and the subsequent ANC conference resolution that government should downgrade its embassy in Tel Aviv to a liaison office.

Firstly, she contends: “This is more than a subtle warning that if South Africa continues relations with Iran – we know that there’s close diplomatic, economic and military co-operation between them – Israel’s intelligence services do have information available on what is happening on South African soil, and is willing to release it.”

Secondly, she asks why this crucial information was not passed on to the Shin Bet’s South African counterparts to investigate. “This tells me that there is ineffective co-operation between the intelligence services in countering violent extremism” – a point foreign diplomats repeatedly make to her.

Thirdly, Opperman says: “In South Africa there is a historical footprint of recruitment. Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State are active and trying to recruit and spread their propaganda. One expects our State Security Agency (SSA) to investigate this as a matter of urgency.

“One must ask whether the details of this case have been liaised to SSA. Will it undertake an investigation?”

Solomon suggests why this may not be the case. The country’s spies are so busy fighting

factional political battles and digging up dirt on potential opponents that they are not performing their core function of keeping the country safe from terrorism. There is a profound lack of trust in, and between these institutions.

He says: “We know for a fact – from books like Jacques Pauw’s *The President’s Keepers*, for example – that South Africa’s intelligence services are politicised and criminalised, therefore the trust doesn’t exist. Instead of our intelligence services focusing on these [extremist] groups, what they are doing is focusing on the enemies of President Jacob Zuma, spying on journalists and judges, and trying to keep the president out of jail.”

Hence, foreign intelligence agencies don’t trust our agencies and won’t share critical information, leaving South Africa increasingly exposed. Solomon doubts any action will be taken because of our security services’ incompetence and indifference.

Greenblatt says Israel contends that an Iranian-inspired attack in Johannesburg was foiled in 2012, and there was beefed-up shul security in 2014 on the High Holy Days thanks to a tip-off. The infamous Thulsi twins, Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee (23), remain in custody for allegedly planning terror attacks, including scoping out King David Linksfield school for such purposes. Greenblatt says: “We believe that an attack in this country is very possible... We are concerned that it’s just a matter of time before something, G-d forbid, happens. There is no doubt that there’s an element within the Muslim community that is radical, and open to recruitment.”

He adds that BDS, often dismissed as innocuous, “opens up the door to the next level, which is joining an outfit like al-Qaeda and actually carrying out an attack. So, we can’t discount the influence of organisations like BDS in starting off the process of radicalisation.”

Opperman reflects how both Israel and Iran are wooing African states. “Having Pretoria on its side at United Nations and African Union level is paramount to Iran trying to overcome its isolation.” Iran leverages its historical support for the anti-apartheid struggle to boost its soft power and commerce.

Pretoria seems to turn a blind eye to the activities of violent extremists, hoping they will

leave the country alone if they can fund-raise, train and recruit here. Recent terror attacks in London, Manchester, Paris and Brussels illustrate the dangers of ignoring or neglecting disaffected, angry populations.

Opperman says: “Let’s call a spade a spade. The Jewish community will always be seen as an ideal target.”

Says Greenblatt: “Security isn’t a knee-jerk reaction when something, G-d forbid, goes wrong... The likes of the Thulsi twins can walk into any shul or shopping centre at any time. CSO works every day to educate the community to see the reality of potential threats.

“Preparing our community is not only the responsibility of the CSO but of every community member and organisation,” says Greenblatt. He emphasises the need for good physical security, the right procedures and appropriate personnel, “so we never have to regret not having done something”.

Nelson Kgwete, spokesperson for the department of international relations and co-operation, wrote the following reply to SA Jewish Report when asked for official comment: “The South African government is not involved in any way in any conflict involving any number of states in any part of the world. We believe in peaceful resolution of conflicts. Any person with knowledge of any criminal activity taking place within South African borders must furnish law enforcement authorities with details of such crime/s.”

SA leaders oppose embassy downgrade

>> Continued from page 2

“The ANC should not take a radical position on a conflict, but should rather seek to open channels of dialogue and discussion.”

Swartz also noted recent comments by Nkosi Bishop Phakama Shembe, a key leader of the Shembe Church, who has affirmed the need for South Africa to support Israel.

“Our duty as South Africans is not to choose the path of boycott and disengagement, but to assist in whatever way we can,” Shembe was quoted as saying in the SAZF statement.

Meanwhile, in an open letter to Ramaphosa dated January 10, African Christian Democratic Party leader Kenneth Meshoe said he felt “utter disappointment at the announcement of the embassy downgrade”.

“Downgrading the South African embassy will not serve the broader interests of our people here at home, but only the narrow political interests of hateful Hamas and the Palestine Liberation Organisation; organisations that continue to dream about annihilating Israel from the face of the earth,” said the opposition party politician.

In his letter, Meshoe characterised Israel as “a democratic country that has so much to offer to South Africa” and said the move would “disqualify South Africa from playing any mediatory role in any future peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians”.

“To be a credible mediator, one has to be seen to be neutral in any conflict. The haters of Israel should not be allowed to use the ANC to make South Africa look like we are haters of Israel.”

He said the downgrade “will neither be in the interests of South Africans nor of the Palestinians that the ANC is allegedly trying to help”.

In October, Inkosi Mangosuthu Buthelezi characterised the Inkatha Freedom Party, of which he is president, as a “friend of Israel”.

During a visit in August by Israeli ambassador Lior Keinan to the opposition party’s parliamentary caucus, Buthelezi said there was “concern” over the “way in which the ruling party of South Africa and, consequently, our government, has taken sides against Israel”.

“We cannot see that this is either just or beneficial to a resolution,” he added.

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Cyril remains *shtum* on embassy downgrade

STEVEN GRUZD

Like a Liquorice Allsorts packet, there was something for everybody in Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa's first major speech, in his capacity as newly elected president of the ANC, at a rally in Buffalo City, East London. Business, labour, civil society, government, investors and the poor could all draw hope from it.

Celebrating the 106th anniversary of the founding of the ANC on January 8 1912, the January 8 Statement has become an annual opportunity for the party's National Executive Committee (NEC) to celebrate, honour its stalwarts and emphasise the party's policy priorities.

How would Ramaphosa perform – and what would he say about foreign policy, especially the ANC's December resolution calling for the downgrading of South Africa's Tel Aviv embassy to a liaison office to signal disapproval of Israeli policies?

On the Israel matter, the written copy doesn't mince words: "We are of the firm view that downgrading the South African embassy in Israel to a liaison office would help send a strong signal."

Except, he never actually said this.

In fact, he skipped foreign policy altogether, save for briefly mentioning BRICS – (the acronym for the five emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) – and cementing ties with Kenya, with President Uhuru Kenyatta in attendance.

Journalist and author Carien du Plessis, who braved the Buffalo City heat to attend the celebrations, says: "It's hard to tell whether he left out the foreign policy stuff because of time (his speech was about 75 minutes long; it was hot and people were getting bored), or whether it was a strategic move."

"Activists from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement said this omission didn't alarm them, as Ramaphosa had previously expressed his support for the people of Palestine."

Aditi Lalbahadur, an analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs and a speech writer for former president Thabo Mbeki, said: "It's interesting he didn't say it. It speaks to the disjuncture between ANC policies decided at conference and how they are implemented at government level." Frustrated ANC officials have questioned who actually makes South Africa's foreign policy.

Political analyst Ebrahim Fakir concurs. "You'll notice that, unlike other January 8 statements, he said nothing about 'our wholehearted support for the Palestinians', and didn't restate the two-state solution. He had limited time and focused on other, domestic, important things."

"I think they realise that going into a hasty downgrade, without putting in place any alternative measures to keep trade, diplomatic and other relations going, will be economically detrimental in the short term. If you have other arrangements in place, then you can downgrade for symbolic reasons."

According to Fakir, "it was a 'holding' speech".

"Remember, it's a statement of the NEC ... Given the divisions in the ANC, Cyril was able to put his personal imprint on the speech despite the constraints."

Examining January 8 statements over the past decade is like a bad curry repeating on you; many turgid pages waffle on about party unity, ideology, organisational renewal, anniversaries, policy achievements and fallen comrades. On foreign policy, they perennially pledge solidarity with Cuba and Western Sahara, and call for peace in Africa's many conflicts. But the shifting rhetoric on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict speaks volumes.

Anti-Zionist language progressively ratchets up. From 2010 came this call: "[The ANC] calls

for finding lasting, just and humane solutions to the Israel-Palestine question. We firmly believe in a two-state solution." In 2013, the NEC said: "We remain unequivocal in supporting the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination" – while still punting two states.

In 2015, the NEC said it "pledges its ongoing solidarity for the people of Palestine" and that the ANC would "play a constructive role in finding a lasting resolution to the conflict".

The party's tone alters in 2016: "We support the isolation of businesses on the UN List that operate in the occupied territories in Palestine. We reiterate that we discourage travel to Israel for ANC leaders, members and representatives

for business and leisure purposes."

Last year's statement continues along those lines: "The people of Palestine continue to suffer in their rightful quest for self-determination, and the ANC pledges its ongoing solidarity and support for their just cause. We reiterate that we firmly discourage travel to Israel not related to fostering peace in the region."

Say what you like; the ANC sure does support its friends.

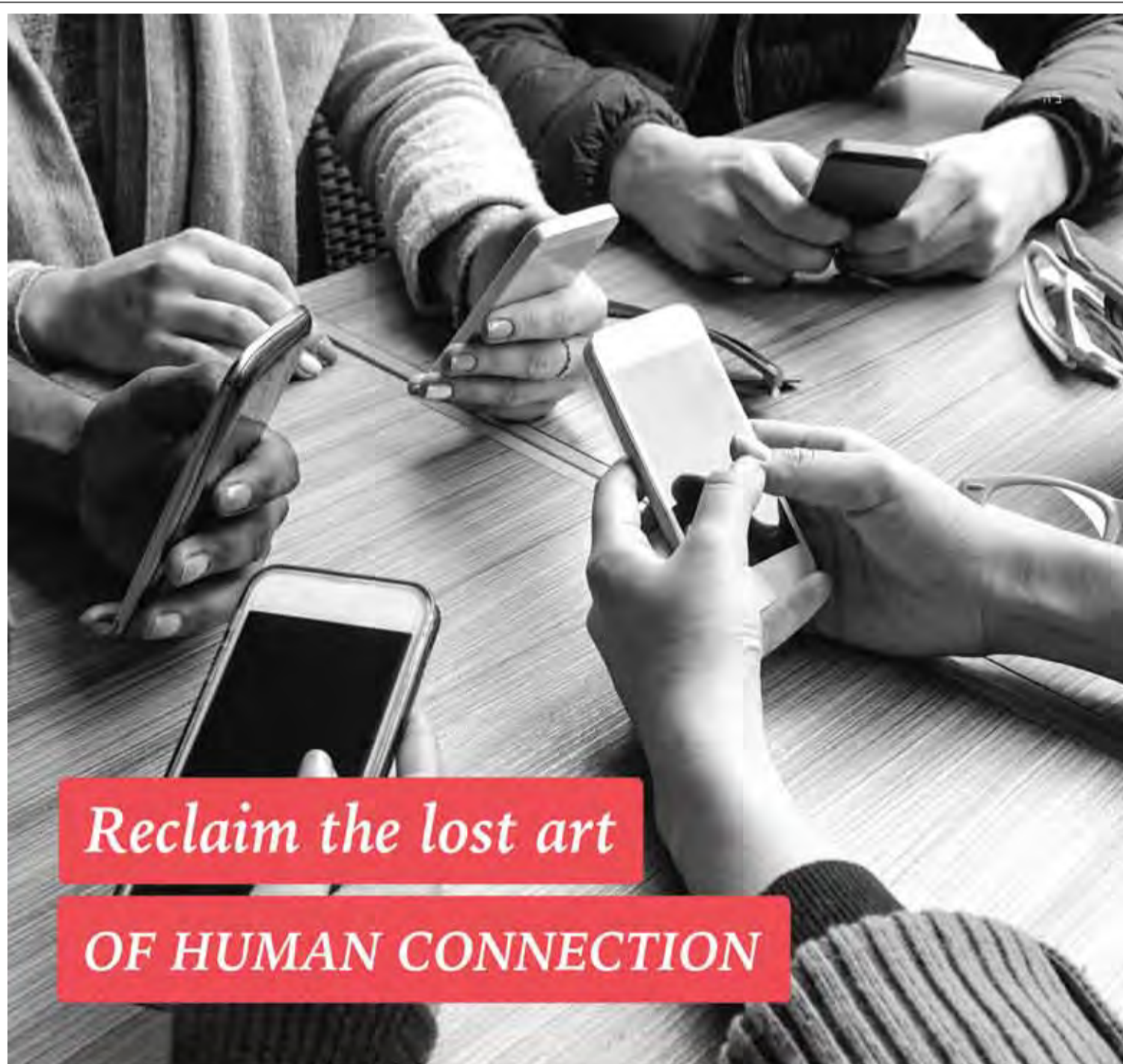
Du Plessis isn't convinced this round is a win for Israel supporters "unless we know for sure why Ramaphosa didn't say the actual words in his speech, and why he didn't mention the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cuba, etc. by

name too. I'm sure [Israel supporters] were happy the words didn't pass his lips, but the resolution is still in the statement and is the ANC's policy intent. So, in that sense, they're still losing."

According to Fakir, BDS has a Pyrrhic victory; its supporters have the resolution of 5 000 ANC delegates, but have never translated party resolutions into government policy for more than a decade.

Which means there's wiggle room. After all, the controversial Protection of State Information Bill still sits on Zuma's desk, unsigned into law.

Nu. The struggle continues.



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South African Jewish Report

Just asking for true democracy

Happy New Year to all of you! As so many of us have spread the word on social media, it is 20-Chai, which can only be positive. For those who don't know what I am talking about, 18 is the numerical value of chai (life). So, 2018 should be a year of greatness, energy and pure life force.

We have had a great start to what is potentially a phenomenal year – there is so much hope and anticipation around the new ANC leader Cyril Ramaphosa's reign. The rand is in a much healthier position than it was towards the end of last year and generally, things are looking up.

However, as upbeat as we may be about the future of this country, there are serious issues concerning South Africa and its relationship with Israel that don't augur well for the immediate future.

Let me explain: At the end of last year, we were concerned about the potential decision by the ANC to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel to a liaison office.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) did what it believed it needed to do to show why the downgrade was a bad idea. It put a great deal of work into showing what the impact and implications such a downgrade would have.

The Zulu king, religious leaders and other influential people told the ANC not to take this step for numerous reasons. (See page 2.)

But at the end of the day, they all might as well not have bothered. The decision was a slam-dunk on December 20 at the ANC's elective conference.

It appears that no space was accorded for hearing our opposition to the proposed downgrade, nor for listening to other alternative views. The opinions given were one-sided and vicious against Israel.

It was evidently clear this was a result of "BDS state capture". Following the announcement that the ANC had chosen to downgrade the embassy, there was no talk in the media about how the decision was made. It was simply a fait accompli.

Presumably, the country was not meant to know how undemocratic and ugly this scenario was. Presumably, we were meant to just accept it.

Fortunately, Zev Krenzel – who has been a Jewish communal leader for many years and has always had the best interest of our community in mind – was there. With guest-status only, he watched what was clearly a putrid show of disregard for any opposition to the downgrade.

All the work that the SAJBD had done was not even there to throw out the window. (See the full story on page 3.)

The SAJBD and Jews who were involved in trying to stop the downgrade feel totally betrayed. If the ANC had given all sides a fair hearing and then made a conscious and well researched decision, so be it. But this did not happen.

I believe the ANC of old would be ashamed of what happened.

There are many in South Africa who disregard BDS as being full of hot air and nothing to be concerned about. I beg to differ, with December 20 serving as a clear example of just how manipulative (and powerful, in that) the BDS movement is.

Its members managed to persuade many powerful people in the ANC leadership that Israel is all bad. They have somehow got the ANC to disregard all the countries where human rights abuses are rife and focus all their international attention on this tiny country in the Middle East.

Those who made this decision haven't given any time or effort to being fair and actually seeing what goes on in Israel.

Israel is not perfect, but it is not even close to the portrait that BDS and those anti-Israel figures paint.

It is time that the powers-that-be in South Africa stop listening to this constant indoctrination, go with an open mind to Israel, and see the situation for themselves.

Truth is, as I have said before, downgrading the embassy will not harm Israel. Israel doesn't need South Africa. It will harm South Africa more, particularly the local Jews and Christians.

You may ask just how it will affect us.

To be honest, I am not au fait with the exact financial, social, economic and other effects. Much has been said, but much of it seems to be conjecture.

But even if there isn't a hugely tangible impact on South Africa, it will bear down heavily on our psyche as Jews.

Our relationship to Israel is a religious one, which is deeply embedded in our sense of identity and belonging. It is not about right or wrong as such; it is about Israel being a Jewish state that was founded because of Jews needing a homeland, a place that would never turn on them.

South Africa is our home, but surely what harms us as Jews is also relevant and important to our government. We appeal to it not to give in to the pressure to downgrade, without first doing genuine research. Do things in a democratic way – in the way that will make us all proud.

Heres to a wonderful 20-Chai.

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor



Dateline: Middle East

The real impact of Trump's Jerusalem announcement



PAULA SLIER

Last Friday was the first time in weeks that I wasn't running away from teargas or taking cover behind a brick wall.

Ever since US President Donald Trump announced on December 6 that his country was recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital, Palestinians have been venting their rage in protests across the West Bank and Gaza. Twelve people have been killed so far in clashes with Israeli soldiers.

My usual Friday stakeout was at the Beit El checkpoint, between northern Ramallah and the Israeli settlement where the biblical story of Jacob's dream is believed to have taken place.

Without fail, after midday prayers, young men – their faces hidden behind scarves to stop them being recognised and to help protect them against the inevitable teargas – would march towards the soldiers.

It usually didn't take long before they started hurling rocks and stones at them. Sometimes immediately, sometimes after half an hour or so, the Israel Defence Force (IDF) would respond with rubber bullets and gas canisters.

"We hate Trump, we hate Israel," was the popular refrain as American flags were burnt and posters of Trump and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were trampled on.

The protests echoed around the world, from Turkey, Egypt and Yemen to as far away as Jakarta, Malaysia, Cuba, Ecuador, Chile and elsewhere.

As the third holiest site in Islam, any perceived threat to Jerusalem always strikes a deep emotional chord among Muslims.

But if one examines exactly what Trump said, he was, in fact, not changing the city's status quo. "We are not taking a position on any final status issues," he said in that now (in)famous 11-minute speech, but instead stressed that the city's future was to be decided by the parties involved – Israelis and Palestinians.

Trump was, in fact, only recognising a reality that exists on the ground, namely that Israel's government and ministries sit in Jerusalem.

To be fair, many countries that criticised Trump's announcement at the United Nations resolution that followed, not only recognise this reality, but also actively participate in it by holding meetings with the Israeli government in West Jerusalem.

Last Friday, I drove around the West Bank looking for trouble. There were a couple of die-hard youngsters burning a tyre in the Palestinian village of Burin, south of Nablus, where a 16-year-old boy had earlier died after being shot by soldiers. Aside from some clashes in Gaza, it was mostly quiet.

And so, as the protests now start to die down and less attention is paid to the furore on the streets, the real impact of Trump's declaration will slowly come to the fore.

Most Israelis lauded the US president's break from decades of US foreign policy. Netanyahu went as far as to call his speech one of the key milestones in the history of Zionism, alongside the Balfour Declaration, the founding of Israel and the liberation of Jerusalem.

But there's no denying it comes at a price. Trump, the businessman, knows this better than most.

What if, down the line, the American president puts pressure on Israel to accept concessions in a peace deal with the Palestinians? Netanyahu will be hard-pressed to say "no" after Trump went out on a limb for him. (It is worth adding, though, that many Israelis I speak with say they don't need Trump or the Americans – or anyone, for that matter – to "give" them Jerusalem as their capital).

Was Trump trying to fulfil an election promise – or did he perhaps just want to shake things up? Either way, his speech so infuriated both the Palestinian street and leadership that there's no appetite among them to think outside the box and respond to Trump's reshuffling of the deck of cards – if, indeed, that is what he was trying to do.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has rejected outright the American president's peace "deal of the century", calling it the "slap of the century".

The Palestinian leadership's old guard is perplexed and believes now that its decades-long approach of working with the Americans towards a two-state solution has failed. This is unfortunate for Israel because these were the leaders who ignored calls for violence from the street and stayed at the negotiating table. For them, the US has lost all credibility as an honest broker.

Where does this leave Israel? Who will, or can, replace Washington – Moscow? While the Russians might not even want the role of mediating between Israelis and Palestinians – not least of all because it seems doomed to failure – many would argue Israel was better off when the US was in charge of the negotiations.

Even more, Trump's statements have put America's erstwhile regional allies in a bit of a fix. Washington – and Jerusalem – need Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Cairo as part of their alliance against Iran. While these countries are happy to be part of such an alliance, they're in a difficult position when thousands flood their streets, outraged against Trump's remarks.

Arab governments will always respond to anything that's connected with Jerusalem – not least because, when necessary, it helps divert attention away from problems at home.

What's unfortunate for Israel is that Trump's comments have put the country in conflict with those in the Arab world to which it was moving closer.

Netanyahu ignored the global protests, as did Trump, and most Israelis were indifferent.

But at the end of the day, nothing has changed on the ground – and it is unlikely to – until Trump moves his embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. That will change the status quo and be in violation of UN resolutions.

But until that happens, those who are celebrating Trump's speech would do well to reflect on what he really said, and whether the fallout is worth it.

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



US President Donald Trump holds up a newly signed legislative bill, with vice-president Mike Pence looking on

Israel boycott lobby has captured foreign policy of the ANC and the state



The decision to downgrade relations overshadowed other international issues at the party's national conference

MZOXOLO MPOLASE

Much has been made this past year of the term 'state capture'.

In South Africa, it takes the form of the notorious Gupta family, who are alleged to control almost every aspect of decision-making by the executive branch and, consequently, have dominion over state owned enterprises such as Eskom.

However, another more subtle form of state capture has manifested in our country. It is not driven by corruption but by a knowledge deficit in government. This as populist rhetoric and policies become open to varying interpretations, hampering government policy implementation.

This form of capture enables those pulling the strings to elicit power and control over state entities. As a result, the government ends up delegating policy decisions to a specific entity – usually an interest group, a pressure group or a "consultant". The process relies on public servants and politicians to be the enablers of these policies. Usually, they are unaware of the capture.

This is evident by the ANC announcing in December that it would seek to downgrade the South African embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel. On the face of it, the decision was not unexpected – since 1994, the

governing party has had a fractious but stable relationship with Israel. However, on close examination, there are traces of capture, as evidenced by policy-making being delegated to an entity – in this case, the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) lobby group against Israel.

BDS has found fertile ground in South Africa. The country's apartheid history makes its people naturally supportive of oppressed groups around the world, particularly those whose suffering is the result of perceived Western imperialism. Additionally, Israel's insistence is on not only a two-state solution, but two states for two different peoples.

Some South Africans, not least those in the ANC and black South Africans, fundamentally reject the notion that differences can exist between two peoples, to the extent that a separate state is needed to accommodate them. For them, not only can several ethnic groups exist in one state, but also white, Indian and coloured groups can coexist with the majority black population.

Why the Israelis and Palestinians cannot have one state with guaranteed sociopolitical rights is a question increasingly being asked by South Africans. The outcome is that the majority black population is almost by default pro-Palestinian – if not anti-Israel – with Israel often cast as the sole culprit of the decades-long conflict.

Despite this, successive administrations of the ANC chose a more pragmatic path and elected to maintain full relations with Israel. The relationship, although challenging, was largely incident-free until the global BDS movement saw South Africa as a target for its increased anti-Israel activity.

Although there existed a tiny pro-Palestine – and, at times, anti-Israel – formal grouping, it was comprised largely of loose groupings of mostly Muslim South Africans. In 2009, the then newly formed BDS working group sought to expand its appeal beyond Muslim groups to influence the ANC and its trade union allies, as well as the student movement, churches and civil society.

Donations from the Muslim population, from the Palestinian embassy in South Africa and from a few other Sunni Muslim countries were poured into the BDS working group. The group would later rename itself BDS South Africa to increase its appeal to all citizens. The intention was to eventually alter South Africa's foreign policy towards Israel – with the severing of ties between South Africa and Israel to "send a message" being the ultimate goal.

Such a message was sent on December 20, when the ANC resolved to call for a downgrade of the relationship between South Africa and Israel.

BDS South Africa has, over the

years, convinced trade unions to disseminate its views and support international solidarity campaigns launched by the so-called progressive BDS movement.

South African youth movements do the same, often providing numbers for the constituency-poor BDS. In the process, the organisation has appropriated the liberation struggle phraseology of the ANC in order to operate without suspicion and to cast itself as a progressive movement endorsed by the ANC, and therefore the majority of black South Africans. This is despite the fact that Muslims, who are mainly Indian, do not vote for the ANC, nor have much appetite for social causes other than the Palestinian one.

The crowning moment came at the ANC's December elective conference – not because of organic change within the ANC, but because of an orchestrated charade controlled by BDS.

Even during the supposed intensive deliberation at the conference by the international relations commission speaker after speaker with non-voting delegate badges (BDS was apparently brought in as an expert on the matter) called on the ANC to downgrade the South African embassy in Israel.

All other international relations issues were cast aside. Nothing was said about South Sudan or other human rights violations anywhere

else – because international relations in the ANC are now all about overtures only against Israel and conceding to every Palestinian request".

Senior members of the ANC in the commission – including former president Kgalema Motlanthe and the hapless chair of the commission, Edna Molewa – were spectators at their own "policy-making platform" and marvelled at how the ANC had changed.

But some, such as the deputy minister of international relations, Luwellyn Landers – the most senior BDS operative in government and the rapporteur in the commission – ensured that BDS was bold enough to propose the decision to the ANC plenary, which promptly adopted it.

This matter goes far deeper than the ideological subscription of the ANC. The economy, the rights of South Africans with business interests in Israel, religious pilgrims and students, to mention a few, will suffer not only from an ANC that failed to apply its mind on this issue, but also from the permanent delegation of South African policy on Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to BDS – an unelected entity with vested anti-Israel and anti-Semitic persuasions.

• Mpolase is managing director at Political Analysis South Africa.
• This article has been edited and originally appeared in Business Day



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SOUTH AFRICAN ZIONIST FEDERATION

Anti-Israel blacklist not definitive

ILANIT CHERNICK

Central figures in key anti-Israel boycott organisations, including BDS South Africa, are to be blacklisted and barred from entering Israel.

However, Israel's decision to blacklist anti-Israel organisations will not be as definitive as it sounds, according to an official in Israel's strategic affairs ministry.

Last week, that ministry, in co-operation with the interior ministry, published a blacklist of such organisations, whose members will not be allowed into the country.

BDS South Africa was listed among the 20-plus groups. Strategic affairs minister Gilad Erdan said that in this, Israel was moving from a position of defence to that of attack.

"Boycott organisations need to know that Israel will act against them and will not allow [them] to enter its territory in order to harm its citizens," he said. "[Such groups] operate consistently, continuously and persistently against Israel by way of pressuring entities, institutes and countries to boycott Israel."

Erdan said the activities of these organisations were carried out by way of "false propaganda campaigns, aimed at undermining Israel's legitimacy in the world".

"Forming a list is another step in our campaign against the false propaganda of boycott organisations," he added. "No country would allow visitors who arrive to harm the country to enter it, and certainly not when their goal is to wipe out Israel as a Jewish country."

He said the list would be passed on to the interior ministry and the Border and Population Authority.

Asked how this resolution would be implemented, the ministry official told SA Jewish Report: "The registry does not include any names of individuals, only organisations."

However, he added: "The regulation is aimed at central figures in key boycott organisations and does not make any distinction between individuals on the basis of their country of origin, ethnicity or religion."



Palestinian hijacker Leila Khaled flanked by ANC top brass on a 2015 visit to SA

"Only those who demonstrate ongoing, consistent and significant action to promote the boycott against the state of Israel will be considered. Any decision on the matter will be subject to the external and security considerations of the state of Israel, with each case being judged on its own merits."

When pressed for more details on how they would be able to identify anti-Israel activists without a list, the source would not clarify.

However, he highlighted that the regulation would not affect those organisations or people who simply criticise Israel. So, people who stand up and speak at rallies – even rallies held by organisations on the list – and criticise Israel will not be affected.

The ministry representative specified that anyone who is banned will not be granted entry to Israel at any of its borders. This will make going to the Palestinian territories very difficult. The only other entrance is through Jordan or Egypt, and even then, visitors have to enter via an Israeli security checkpoint.

"It is important to note that all countries have the right to deny entrance to foreign nationals, and, in fact, do so based on various criteria. Israel, like all other democracies, will deny entrance to organisations and individuals working to undermine and harm Israel's national security."

BDS South Africa said this latest move by Israel was "a sign of the regime's increasing desperation and a reflection of the success of the BDS movement. If anything, with this blacklist and barring of people, Israel – like apartheid South Africa – is isolating and BDSing itself!"

In response to the resolution, the ANC Western Cape branch said the move "was an attack on South Africans" and the ruling party.

"The list singles out BDS South Africa, an organisation of South African citizens, many of whom are ANC members. In the ANC-led South Africa, many of our ministers and other senior government officials including MPs, premiers, mayors and others, are vocal, public supporters of Palestine and many have addressed BDS events."

On Monday, national director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies Wendy Kahn said: "We can agree or disagree whether a sovereign country has a right to determine its policies of admission, but to contend that Israel's decision not to welcome BDS activists into their borders is 'an attack on South Africans', is an ironic inversion of reality."

Kahn added that the "ANC's depiction of BDS South Africa as a 'peaceful human rights organisation' could not be further from the truth".

"The ongoing anti-Semitic incidents at BDS protests and activities expose their hatred for Jewish South Africans in South Africa," she said. "If anyone is attacking South Africans, it is BDS SA and the ANC Western Cape statement, which merely exposes their hypocrisy. It is time that they [the ANC] were concerned for all South Africans, not just the ones that conform to their narrative on Israel."

Joe Slovo: anti-Zionist universalist who fought for a just cause

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

A ceremony held by the South African Communist Party (SACP) last weekend at Joe Slovo's gravesite in Soweto to commemorate his life some 23 years after his passing, has stirred up memories. It has prompted reflections on a personality who had a huge impact on the country, but whose relationship with his own Jewish community before the transition to democracy has been characterised as being one of "mutual antipathy".

Slovo was SACP general secretary and a founding member of the Congress of Democrats, and served as minister of housing in former president Nelson Mandela's Cabinet until his death in 1995.

Born in Lithuania in 1926, Slovo immigrated with his parents to South Africa at the age of nine. He later contributed to the drafting of the Freedom Charter.

On a family visit some years ago to Abel, the north-eastern Lithuanian shtetl from which his family hailed, Howard Sackstein, who heads up Saicom and is the board chairperson of SA Jewish Report, came across a man who had turned his lounge in the "tiny little village" into a museum. On hearing that Sackstein was from South Africa, he asked: "Do you know Joe Slovo?"

"I knew that Joe came from the same shtetl as my family," Sackstein relates, "and I asked him: 'How do you know Joe Slovo?'"

It turned out that Slovo was employed by the Russians in the 1970s – when he had been in exile from South Africa – to go from

town to town in Lithuania to try to convince the people, who all opposed the Russian occupation, that they should be supportive of Russia and be good communists. So, in all these little towns, they all knew Joe Slovo from South Africa!

"It was just fascinating that even in Lithuania, people still remembered the man," says Sackstein.

Many of the Jews who came here were Bundists (a secular Jewish socialist movement), Sackstein adds, and when they arrived, they founded and joined the SACP. "This was a continuation of the anti-oppression attitude they had in Eastern Europe. Many of them thought this was a way to freedom."

Sackstein, who met Slovo on a number of occasions, describes his introduction of the sunset clause after the collapse of the Codesa 2 (Congress for a Democratic South Africa) negotiations as the "key element" that paved the way for the transition to democracy.

This clause proposed a coalition government for the five years following the country's first democratic election, including guarantees and concessions to all sides and the phasing out of the Afrikaans public service. "That allowed the negotiations to continue and many credit Slovo with having saved the negotiations and having allowed the transition to happen."

"Although he was an ideologue, he was a very practical man," Sackstein says.

"When you met him in the 1990s, he came across as anyone's zeida! The last time I saw him was in Rocky Street in Yeoville; he was just a little old Jewish man, which belied the huge impact he had on the country."

"I think a lot of people were very fond of Slovo, even though he was head of the SACP and integrally involved in Umkhonto weSizwe, the ANC's military wing [he was one of its earliest members, serving as its chief of staff] – because, at the same time, he was fighting for a just cause," Sackstein says.

David Saks, associate director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, agrees that Slovo was a "great pragmatist, or maybe it was his legal training. I think he

understood that a complete break from one power to the other was not possible. He knew you'd never get the white minority to agree to that and he knew that their fears and concerns had to be allayed.

"He was instrumental in negotiating that transition phase. Ideologically, he would've liked to have taken over and finally put into practice his communist ideals, but I think he did South Africa a great service during that time."

Slovo's relationship with the organised Jewish community was non-existent during the apartheid years; Saks describes it as one of "mutual antipathy".

"Slovo was not interested in Jewish causes – he was anti-Zionist, anti-religious, a universalist who saw no value in identifying as part of a small ethnic minority."

Paradoxically, adds Saks, ethnically he was very Jewish. "His Jewishness comes through in his autobiography in a very entertaining way. He embraced wholeheartedly this communist vision of a classless, non-racial society and he regarded with disdain the mainstream Jewish community, who were only looking to their own interests, their own safety. In fact, he was quite hostile."

From the Jewish vantage point, Slovo embraced the Soviet Union at the time that it was becoming the great

enemy of the Jewish people. "He was anti everything the Jews cared about, so they weren't interested in him either. Also, they were afraid to associate with the Jewish leftists because that got fingers pointed at the whole of South African Jewry by the nationalist government."

After Slovo's return from exile in the early 1990s, there was a different Jewish leadership in the board of deputies that embraced the changes quite sincerely, according to Saks. "Mervyn Smith was the chairperson at the time. He was a strong leader and a great believer in the new South Africa, and that Jews had to embrace it and be part of it."

"That's when the board went around meeting with all the people that they'd previously kept away from."

Slovo let bygones be bygones, he reflects, possibly in a further display of pragmatism. "There was a job to do in building South Africa, and the Jews were important. I don't think it was a warm relationship, but something was established."

When Slovo passed away in 1995, then chief rabbi Cyril Harris spoke at his memorial service in Soweto, an occurrence that would have been unthinkable in earlier times. "It was controversial in some quarters," Saks confirms, referring to "diehards" in the community who felt that one should not associate with communists.

For the board, however, it was a matter of great pride and made the Jewish community look good. "Rabbi Harris was a wonderful orator and a charismatic personality, and I believe that was one of his great moments," said Saks.



Joe Slovo



Focus on matric

Jewish schools' class of 2017 post admirable results

JORDAN MOSHE

There were 42 Jewish school matriculants out of the 96 top Independent Examination Board (IEB) achievers. This translates to a remarkable 43.75%, which means they contributed greatly to the IEB's 98.76% pass rate.

Having achieved 1 296 distinctions collectively, Jewish schools from across South Africa have maintained a 100% pass rate, as in previous years.

Although the department of education has lauded its 2017 pass rate of 75.1% – up from 72.5% in 2016 – the reality, as far as education is concerned, is far grimmer than the statistics would have us believe. Nic Spaull, senior researcher in the economics department at Stellenbosch University, assessed the true state of matric results in South Africa, and reached a bleak conclusion. "In 2017, there were only 401 435 passes compared to 442 672 in 2016 – that's a 9% decline in one year."

However, the IEB exams saw 112 130 pupils writing, with 88.5% of them having been eligible for a university degree, 8.96% able to study towards a diploma and 1.3% achieving entry at the higher certificate level. The respective results of the Jewish schools reflect the IEB's level of achievement.

Hirsch Lyons' 18 pupils from both the boys' and girls' schools wrote the matric exams, achieving a total of 71 distinctions, an average of 3.9 per pupil. In Maths, their average of 80% was above the national average, as was true for English, Science, Life Sciences, Accounting, IT and Business Studies.

The 15 matriculants from Torah Academy had a total of 41 distinctions, an average of just under three per learner. In all the exams written, 39% earned an A and 59% a B or higher. Some 87% of Hebrew students achieved an A, while 80% of Physical Science students obtained a B or higher.

At King David Linksfield, 163 pupils scored 532 distinctions, an average 3.26 distinctions per pupil. And, 16% of the pupils achieved a full house or more, 76.4% of the papers written resulted in a B and higher, and 91.2% resulted in a C and higher. A total of 162 pupils qualified for university entrance, and all pupils who were part of the educational support programme obtained a university entrance. A total of 154 distinctions were achieved by the 48 students at King David Victory Park, with a 95.8% university entrance pass rate and a 4.2% diploma pass.

At Yeshiva College, 94% of its 51 pupils achieved at least a single distinction, with 214 distinctions in total, which equates to 4.2 distinctions per pupil. In addition, 19.6% achieved eight distinctions each, and 25.4% achieved a full house of distinctions.

Regarding Herzlia High School's 93 matric pupils, 86 achieved university entrance passes, scoring 284 individual subject distinctions, an average of 3.3 distinctions per candidate. And, 45% of pupils achieved four or more distinctions, with all 15 pupils in the Educational Support programme having passed every subject.

Jewish matriculants have once again done their schools, the community, their parents and the country proud.

A word from the principals

"We are extremely proud of the amazing achievements of the class of 2017 – not only on account of their superb matric results, but also because they were able to accomplish this while spending the prime portion of each morning learning Gemora, Chassidus and Halocha. I was thus able to wave goodbye to them on their last day with a smile on my lips too, confident that we have equipped them with the tools and a roadmap to face the way ahead." – **Rabbi Yossi Chaikin, Torah Academy Boys' High School**

"We need to adopt a holistic approach when it comes to educating students, so that once they've completed their studies, they can be in a better position of adapting to any environment. So, to the matrics of 2017 – yashar koach and well done on your wonderful achievements. Each one of you has set and achieved goals. You have spent the past year not only learning, but also growing and maturing into the most wonderful young adults. Each one of you has made us proud in all areas of your development." – **Rebecca Sarchi, Torah Academy Girls' High School**

"Our students have grown into menschen, imbued with derech erez and a commitment to chesed and community. Ours is a focus on the holistic person: love for Torah, embodying derech erez, leadership and academic excellence. I personally feel that education is not only about the matric results and the content plus skills mastered, but also the development of a work ethic and a well adjusted personality ready to engage with the wide range of opportunities and challenges the world offers, and in developing our youth into true Bnei Torah, well adjusted Torah Jews, ready to create a Kiddush Hashem in all they do." – **Rabbi Steven Krawitz, Hirsch Lyons High Schools**

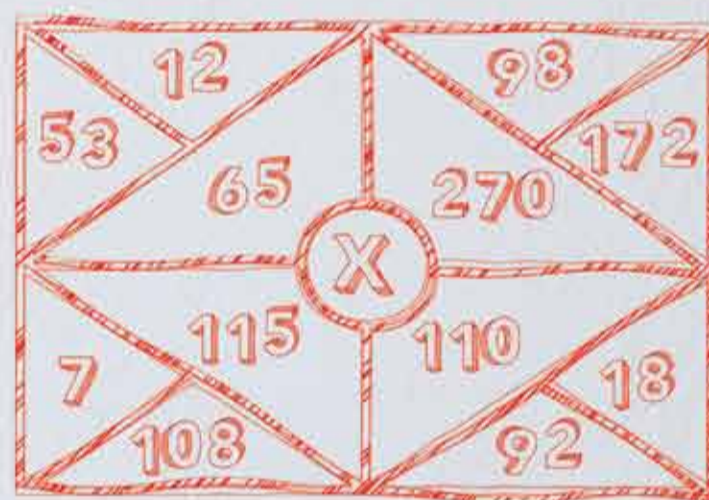
"The Herzlia matric results, the culmination of academic growth of 12 (or more) years of schooling, have once again been superb. This is testimony to the focused and determined work of pupils and the extraordinary dedication of the whole school community, particularly the teaching staff and members of the educational support team. It is also important to recognise parents' investment in, encouragement of

Continued on page 12



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HERZLIA HIGH SCHOOL – NSC

“The aim of education must be the training of independently acting and thinking individuals, who, however, see in the service of the community their highest life problem.”
 – Albert Einstein

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Joseph Forman: English, Afrikaans, Maths, LO, Hebrew, IT, Physical Science, AP Maths

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Dale Shargey: English, Afrikaans, Maths, LO, Accounting, Business Studies, Economics, AP Maths

SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



Jarred Fisher: English, Afrikaans, Maths, LO, Drama, IT, Physical Science

SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



Hannah-Rose Feishman: English, Afrikaans, Maths, LO, Drama, History, Visual Art

SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



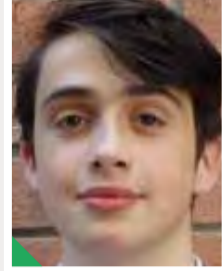
Isabella-Rose Miller: English, Afrikaans, Maths, LO, Drama, Economics, History

SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



Aviva Phillips: English, Afrikaans, Maths, LO, Economics, Physical Science, Visual Art

SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



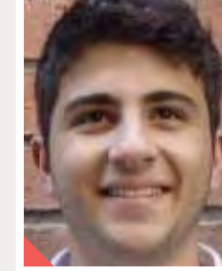
Cain Rademan: English, Afrikaans, Maths, Economics, IT, Music, Physical Science

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Jaron Cohen: English, Maths, LO, Economics, IT, Physical Science

SIX DISTINCTIONS



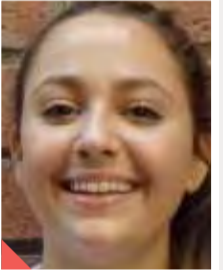
Roy Cohen: English, Maths, LO, Economics, IT, Physical Science

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Gregory Furman: English, Maths, LO, History, IT, Physical Science

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Jaime Locketz: English, Afrikaans, LO, Drama, Economics, Visual Art

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Avi Lurie: English, Maths, LO, Economics, IT, Physical Science

SIX DISTINCTIONS



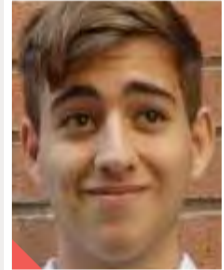
Joshua Miller: Maths, LO, Accounting, Business Studies, Economics, Tourism

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Melissa Moritz: English, Maths, LO, Drama, Economics, Life Sciences

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Edan Toledo: English, Maths, LO, Economics, IT, Physical Science

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Shaam Unterslak: English, Maths, LO, Business Studies, Drama, Economics

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Danielle Wilck: English, Maths, LO, Economics, Life Sciences, Physical Science

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Aaron Zetler: English, Afrikaans, LO, Business Studies, Tourism, Visual Art

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Jake Deats: Maths, LO, Accounting, Economics, IT

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Sam Goldberg: English, Afrikaans, IT, Life Sciences, Physical Science

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Adam Katzeff: English, LO, Accounting, Economics, Tourism

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



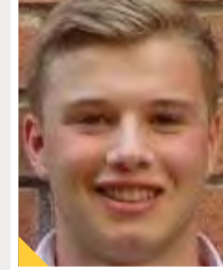
Ben Levin: English, Maths, Drama, Physical Science, Visual Art

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Jack Markovitz: English, LO, Economics, History, Visual Art

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Aaron Pincus: English, LO, Economics, Life Sciences, Physical Science

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Kayla Smith: English, LO, Drama, Economics, Life Sciences

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Dune Tilley: English, Maths Literacy, Design, Economics, Visual Art

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Jessica Alhadeff: English, Business Studies, Consumer Studies, Economics

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Jesse Lees: LO, Accounting, Drama, History

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Jake Maisel: English, Drama, Economics, History

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Jared May: English, LO, Economics, IT

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Ethan Radowsky: Maths Literacy, LO, Economics, Music

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



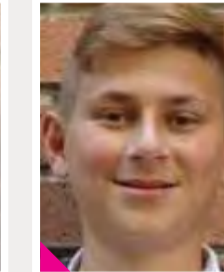
Jarryd Roup: LO, Accounting, Business Studies, Economics

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Joy Sacks: English, Hebrew, Drama, History

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Shaun Sagor: LO, Economics, Life Sciences, Physical Science

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Devin Sheinbar: LO, Accounting, History, Life Sciences

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Aaron Sherman: Maths, LO, Accounting, Economics

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Aaron Benjamin: Accounting, Business Studies, Economics

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Zach Israel: LO, Economics, History

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Gallia Rodger: LO, CAT, IT

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Zachary Solomon: LO, Accounting, Economics

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Jacob (Jack) Stein: LO, Design, Visual Art

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Philippa Taitz: Maths, Life Sciences, Physical Science

Striking a balance



Joseph Gerassi

In a world that's ever more competitive, where getting into a top university has become the only measure of success for many communities, young men and women face challenges that previous generations never encountered.

And, facing overwhelming expectations from parents, who want their children to be offered one of the limited places available at local or international universities, private schools have responded by placing even more pressure on their students to perform in the final matric exam. The adverse effect of all this on young adults cannot be underestimated.

The solution to this problem is obvious: less importance placed on high-stakes testing, such as matric, and a new focus on a broader definition of success. This would include the appreciation of creative and critical thinking skills, and the recognition of learners who might not be able to regurgitate facts but who can problem-solve and come up with innovative solutions to world problems.

Most schools recognise this and accept that a composite portfolio of work, demonstrating appropriate work skills, is more important than a list of grades that usually demonstrate little more than the ability to learn facts off by heart. However, governments and universities continue to place considerable emphasis on final high

school exams and results.

In addition, changing the system is not a foolproof way to ensure that students are not pressurised into having to perform. The changes suggested above would ensure that the skills required in the workplace of the 21st century are taught, and that students with diverse skills are afforded an opportunity to succeed by having their unique talents recognised.

Naturally, the pressure to perform would still exist, as students compete and are pressurised either to create the best portfolio or be seen as the most creative and critical thinkers.

This would still be a better system than the one we have at present.

Given that the pressure to perform will likely always exist, schools need to rethink how they prepare learners for their final two years of school.

Given that the pressure to perform will likely always exist, schools need to rethink how they prepare learners for their final two years of school.

Instead of concentrating solely on convincing them to perform academically, schools need to introduce support systems that will help students strike a healthy balance.

The stress that comes with having to perform is not just adversarial – a certain amount of stress is what enables us to reach our full potential. However, too much stress leads to burnout, anxiety and depression.

Brain scientist and molecular biologist John Medina says: “The more stress hormones swarm children’s brains, the less likely [children] are to succeed intellectually.”

As a headmaster with past and present experience of high-performing schools nationally and internationally, I have seen my fair share of stressed-out teenagers who have been excessively pressurised into performing academically.

Very seldom is this pressure self-imposed. It is placed on them by parental demands, community expectations and inter-school competitiveness.

Hence, it is imperative that we try to figure out how to push students hard enough to succeed, but not so hard that they crack.

A good starting point would be for schools to discuss the fact that students are pressurised beyond what is normal, and to follow up by implementing a programme that supports pupils emotionally through these difficult years.

Students need to feel supported by their school when they limit themselves to studying the prerequisite seven subjects. They shouldn't be made to feel that they are underachieving if they don't matriculate with eight, nine or even 10 subjects.

Such a shift could be supported further by introducing mindfulness and wellness programmes into the daily curriculum and encouraging students to participate in these.

While excellent results remain a fundamental consideration, students need to feel safe to fail. This can only happen if they are given multiple opportunities to edit and resubmit their assessments. This is,

OPINION

after all, how the real world of work operates.

The next step would be for schools to engage with parents on the issues raised here. Parents often need guidance in understanding how a teenager is wired. They need to understand how the pressure to perform today hardly compares to that of past decades, when parents were at school.

Parents also need to understand the harmful effects of pushing children to meet rampant expectations. Although it's their duty to ensure that their child is working hard and performs well, it is also their duty to look after their child's health and emotional well-being.

In light of this, parents should endeavour to recognise and nurture their child's strengths. Plainly put, if science is not where their talents lie, then support their love of art or music. This, in turn, parallels the ever-important need to set realistic expectations.

Unless one's child really enjoys all of his or her subjects, it's unhealthy for the child to be pressurised into attaining seven distinctions.

Finally, just as adults need time to relax and “play” in order to reduce stress, so do teenagers.

School has become a stressful experience for teenagers, especially in their final year. As educators and parents, we need to work harder at setting realistic expectations and striking a balance between pushing our children hard and pushing them too hard.

• Joseph Gerassi is the executive head of Redhill School

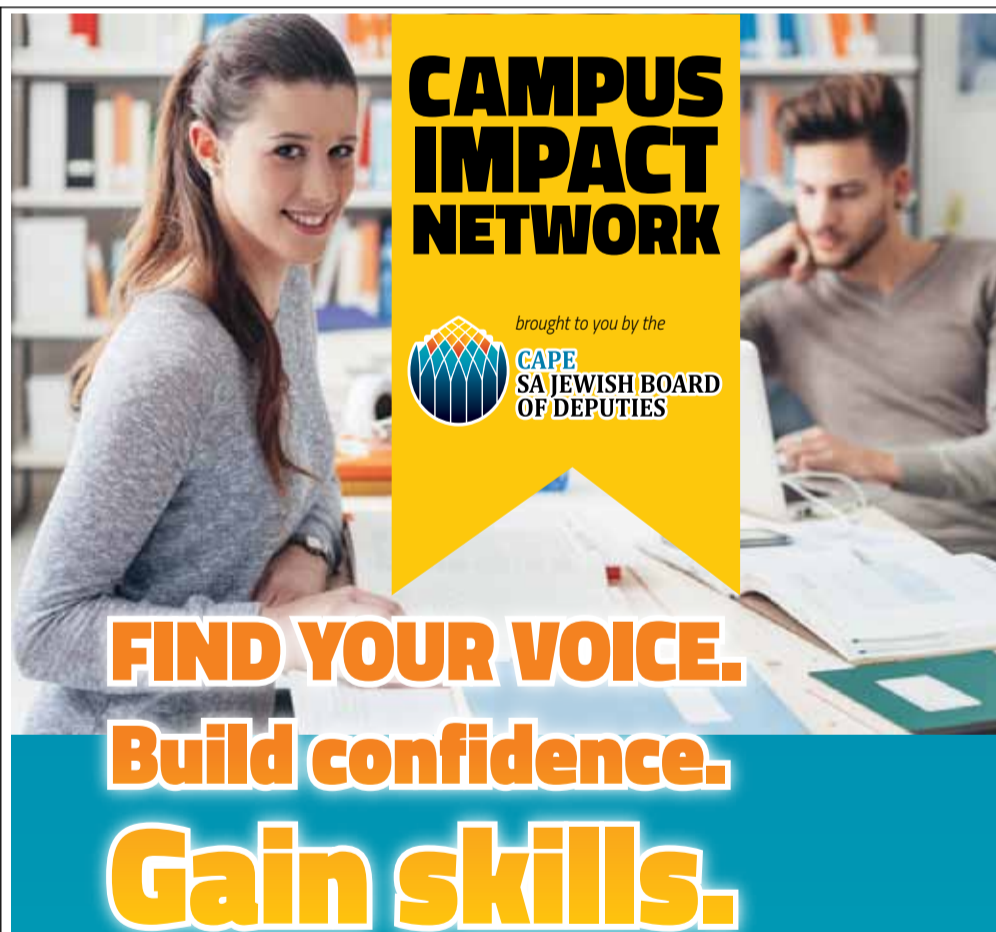
GRATITUDE HAKARAT HATOV* הכרת הטוב

Mazaltov! HERZLIA celebrates the success of our 2017 Matrics, both as a group and individually.

*Literally, *Hakarat Hatov* is 'recognising the good'. We express gratitude by being thankful and appreciative for the good in others and in our lives. We learn not to overlook things or take them for granted. We acknowledge a greater presence in daily miracles, cultivating a sense of wonder in the world. "Who is rich? He who is content with his portion." (Pirkei Avot: Ben Zoma, Chapter 4)

“If you will it,
it is no dream.”

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HIRSCH LYONS BOYS HIGH SCHOOL – IEB

NINE DISTINCTIONS

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SIX DISTINCTIONS

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Jacob Teeger: AP Maths, Accounts, Afrikaans, English, History, IT, LO, Maths, Physical Science



Avishai Bender: Business Studies, English, History, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science



Pesachya Glixman: Business Studies, English, History, LO, Life Sciences, Maths



Tuvia Goldfein: LO, Maths, Physical Science

HIRSCH LYONS GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL – IEB

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS

SIX DISTINCTIONS

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Batya Goldfein: AP Maths, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science



Gila Odes: Afrikaans, Consumer Studies, English, LO, Life Sciences, Maths



Micaela Tobia: Consumer Studies, English, Geography, LO

An open letter to the class of 2018

Dear Grade 12s

My name is Galit Milstein and I matriculated in 2017. I write this letter in the hope that my experiences will help those who feel anxious about the coming year.

It could also help make matric as productive as possible for you.

Matric is sometimes complicated and challenging. However, it can also be exciting, memorable and one of the best years of your high school career. Here are my tips on how to deal with the challenges and make the best of the year.

Firstly, finding out what type of learner you are is key to studying anything. Take the assessment to see whether you're a visual or an auditory learner, then log on to Google to research effective study tips for that particular style of learning.

Be resourceful. If you ask teachers for help, they are usually more than willing to explain, give you practice essays, go through past papers with you and sometimes give you the best advice about matric and life after school.

If you go for extra lessons outside school, make time to go through your work beforehand, or if it's closer to exam time, do a past paper before the lesson. It will make the most of the time you have with your teacher

and you can clarify anything you're having trouble understanding. If you do not go for extra lessons and you need help, ask a past matriculant for help, visit the Khan Academy website or search the topics you're struggling with on YouTube!



Other tips include setting goals and dealing with anxiety by consulting with a doctor or psychologist, or finding breathing techniques, or watching YouTube tutorials on effective stress management.

Never give up. If you get a poor mark for a subject in prelims, make the effort to improve it. Ignore the negativity, study hard and give it your all.

Practise by doing as many past papers as possible, and don't forget to stay active. Exercising regularly is great for your mind and body. It energises you and helps you get through the day/assignment/exam.

Staying positive is key. And, if you want to do well in maths, be disciplined. Dedicate one hour a day to practising maths. Do this now, at the start of the year, to build a strong foundation and help you pinpoint what you're having trouble with – with time before a test to fix the problem.

Best of luck
Galit

A word from the principals

>> Continued from page 9

and support given to the school and, of course, towards their own children. The statistics do not, however, tell the whole story. For many pupils who are part of our inclusive school, their matric results need to be understood in their specific context and we are often more proud of the triumphs that are more difficult to discern than the more obvious achievements." – **Marc Falconer, Herzlia High School**

"A small matric class of 48 students sat the National Senior Certificate Examination offered by the IEB in 2017.

This group featured a high degree of academic diversity, with many exceptionally strong candidates all the way through to a significant group of students that came to us from remedial backgrounds. At least 17 of the students had been granted special accommodations by the IEB in recognition of this. We are therefore especially proud of the achievement of 3.21 distinctions per candidate and 91.3% of all papers written resulting in 60% or higher in the examinations." – **Andrew Baker, King David Victory Park High**

"We are blessed to have such wonderful academic results from our learners – placing us among the top private schools in the country. This is achieved at Yeshiva College while our learners simultaneously embrace the challenge and calling of pursuing a dual curriculum. We are encouraged by how the values of our school are reflected in the commitment of our learners to Limudei Kodesh, in how they have achieved in general studies and how the synthesis of these two pursuits is reflected in the life choices which our matrics make as they move beyond their school tenure. The

class of 2017 stands out in its broad range of achievements – in the areas of public speaking, love of Israel, commitment to chesed, and as proud and passionate Yeshiva College leaders and role models." – **Denese Bloch, Yeshiva College High**

"King David High School Linksfield produced some of the top-achieving candidates in the country. Three of our students – Yakira Cohen, Alexander Furman and Amber Sandler – achieved an outstanding rating as they were within the top 5% of students in six subjects or

more, and scored 80% or more for Life Orientation. Two of our students, Adam Blumenthal and Gabriella Kinross, achieved a commendable rating as they were within the top 5% of students in five subjects and scored 80% or more for Life Orientation. And, 17 of our pupils have been placed in the top 1% of their subjects. These wonderful statistics are testimony to the hard work and commitment of the students, as well as to the expertise and dedication of the school's exceptional teaching staff. – **Lorraine Srage, King David High School Linksfield**

Not letting the biggest loss stop him

JORDAN MOSHE

Shane Bassin had what seemed to be the perfect life – until it all turned upside down when his father committed suicide. People told him nothing would ever be the same again.

But Shane, who was in Grade 8 at the time, was not the kind of person to sit back and feel sorry for himself.

"I didn't want to sit by as a victim," he says. "Playing the victim game gets you nowhere, and I believed that if I treated myself the way I had before, people around me would do the same."

Apparently, it worked. Shane became head boy of his school and did lots of community work. He scored seven distinctions and came in the top 1% in three subjects.

He recalls his primary school years: "I had a normal life. There were no challenges. I had everything I needed and I was perfectly happy."

He spent much of his time visiting terminally ill children at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto and doing other community work. As head boy of King David Primary School Linksfield and a Johannesburg Mini Council representative, Shane also performed well academically, and was determined to do well.

This changed when his father committed suicide in July 2013. "Suddenly, I was being told by everyone around me how my life was never going to be the same, how I would have to mature overnight and change the way I live. I didn't want to. I wanted to go on being normal. I didn't want to be a different person."

Shane threw himself into his community service with vigour, determined to avoid becoming a victim of his circumstances. He got deeply involved in working with the President's Award youth empowerment programme (serving as a member of its youth committee between 2014 and 2015, and as chairman in 2016). Shane believed that being involved in meaningful activities would allow him to see past the difficulty of his circumstances.

His CV lists a host of community service accomplishments in junior high school, including a vegetable garden project in Soweto, community service projects in rural South African villages and week-long trips to Nelspruit working with inmates of Barberton Maximum Security Prison. "I did those things for myself. Yes, my circumstances as a privileged Jewish pupil may have afforded me these opportunities, but I pursued them to improve myself, to do something that would enhance who I was."

However, Shane admits that he continued harbouring bitter feelings about his father's

death and used his involvement in community work to distract him from his emotions.

"I hadn't yet confronted how I truly felt about my loss. I wasn't thinking about acceptance or moving on, only about everything I was doing at the time. That's how I kept my mind from wandering back." In Grade 10 he found himself at a crossroads. "The chance to fall into the role of victim was still available to me. I could become helpless, question my circumstances and chase after sources of happiness that wouldn't last. Or, I could triumph over my reality and lead it in whatever direction I chose,

moving it towards something greater. I could look at others as a source of inspiration and as people who could help me move forward."

Shane drew on his memories of his father, bringing him to mind during his activities. "It was when the #BringBackOurGirls campaign – sparked by the 2014 kidnapping of more than 270 schoolgirls from their dormitory in Chibok, Nigeria, by Jihadist militant organisation Boko

Haram – was launched that I realised that my father was with me in everything I do. I decided then to commit myself to the campaign with him in mind, using him to guide me and my decisions. My pain and hardship had their reason, and they were given to me to help me progress."

This relationship with his father continued to inspire him through matric, a year in which Shane accepted his loss and began to look towards the future.

Continuing his community service, Shane was elected head boy and captain of the swimming team, and continued to excel academically.

"Matric is a year in which you start building your future. I missed school days to be involved in things that motivated me to work and invest in myself, believing that they would help open the door to my future."

These 'distractions' clearly exposed Shane to the inspiration he needed to excel in matric. He now plans to use what he learned when he studies accounting at the University of Pretoria this year.




























Looking back over last year, he says: "Matric is not a monster. You can't go in having been influenced by what other people told you about it. It is stressful, but it's an amazing year in which you launch yourself into your future, overcome your limitations and learn to have a mind of your own. "Make it your own, and expose yourself to the right influences.

I'm looking forward to moving into this new chapter in my life, and I know my father is going to be a part of it."

Shane Bassin



KING DAVID VICTORY PARK – IEB

NINE DISTINCTIONS  Jordan Arenstein: Afrikaans, English, French, IT, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths	NINE DISTINCTIONS  Jared Greenstein: Afrikaans, English, IT, Accounting, LO, Maths, Music, Physical Science, AP Maths	EIGHT DISTINCTIONS  Gila Dove: English, Hebrew, isiZulu, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Danielle Bortz: Afrikaans, English, Dance Studies, Hebrew, History, LO, Life Sciences	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Daniel Flowers: English, Geography, History, LO, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Alexa Novick: English, Hebrew, History, isiZulu, LO, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Julia Stenz: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Rachel Weisz: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, History, LO, Maths, AP English
SIX DISTINCTIONS  Gina-Lee Ellis: Afrikaans, English, Dramatic Arts, History, LO, Life Sciences	SIX DISTINCTIONS  Jemma Sundelson: Hebrew, isiZulu, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science	FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Jessica Allschwang: History, LO, Business Studies, Dramatic Arts, Maths Literacy	FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Micaela Dermeik: Business Studies, isiZulu, LO, Life Sciences, Maths	FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Jason Gellman: Business Studies, English, LO, History, Life Sciences	FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Jared Joselowitz: Geography, History, LO, Maths, Physical Science	FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Jessica Kaplan: Afrikaans, English, LO, Life Sciences, Visual Arts	FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Jonathan Sidi: Dramatic Arts, Geography, History, LO, Maths Literacy
FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Daniella Steiner: Hebrew, History, LO, Maths Literacy, Visual Arts	FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Samuel Strous: CAT, English, History, LO, Maths Literacy	FOUR DISTINCTIONS  Joshua Molin: Business Studies, Geography, History, Maths Literacy	FOUR DISTINCTIONS  Leanne Urdang: History, LO, Life Sciences, Visual Arts	THREE DISTINCTIONS  Erin O' Hagan: History, LO, Maths Literacy	THREE DISTINCTIONS  Georgia Stoller: Dramatic Arts, LO, Maths Literacy	THREE DISTINCTIONS  Kayleigh Wasserman: English, History, LO	TWO DISTINCTIONS  Justin Blem: Geography, Maths
TWO DISTINCTIONS  Alexa Friedman: Business Studies, LO	TWO DISTINCTIONS  Jordan Heyes: LO, Life Sciences	TWO DISTINCTIONS  Leigh Kruger: English, LO	TWO DISTINCTIONS  Gideon Mendelowitz: History, LO	TWO DISTINCTIONS  Devin Morris: History, Life Sciences	TWO DISTINCTIONS  Jordan Sapire: LO, Maths	TWO DISTINCTIONS  Gabiella Sitsakis: Dance Studies, Maths Literacy	ONE DISTINCTION  Rachel Hasson: Dramatic Arts
ONE DISTINCTION  Tristen Haverly: LO	ONE DISTINCTION  Sarah Horshid Zada: Maths Literacy	ONE DISTINCTION  Brittany Lurie: LO	ONE DISTINCTION  Emma Stein: LO	ONE DISTINCTION  Dena Zeff: LO			

Educating tomorrow's leaders by equipping them with the life skills to master the challenges posed by an ever-changing world.

Our experienced and nurturing staff are positive role models for students as their school journey progresses and they are able to successfully develop their own leadership skills.

– King David Victory Park

 Consistently ranked among top performing schools.	 Second highest through-put at Wits University.	 Renowned for superior theatre performances.
1% Students ranked in top 1% of all IEB candidates every year.	 Project Innovation, focusing on entrepreneurship in a digital age.	 Highly successful debating society. (One of the strongest teams in the country.)

ABBOTTS COLLEGE

Not letting illness get in her way

JORDAN MOSHE

While many teenagers are adept at devising ways of bunking school, Leigh Ambrose's goal was to be at school as much as possible. When you are spending so much time in hospitals, an entire day at school to learn and be surrounded by school friends feels like a gift.

Leigh – who is one of a triplet – was diagnosed with leukaemia in 2005 at the age of six. She underwent radiation treatment in July 2005 of that year, and chemotherapy from March 2005 until October 2008. Her illness meant she had no choice but to miss many days at Crossroads School in Victory

Park, Johannesburg. In fact, for a while she seldom managed to complete a normal school day.

Because of the time she missed, Leigh was kept back a year. This, she says, created a wedge between her and her triplet siblings Bev and Mark, both of whom grew closer to her older siblings, Shiann and Brendon, and left her feeling left out.

"I felt some resentment towards my siblings, because they were all getting on with school and spending time together without me. But my parents were extremely supportive, and therapy also helped me deal with the challenges."

Leigh says she is proud of the fact that



Leigh Ambrose

she maintained a strong sense of self and independence despite her difficulties. "I was often bullied at school for being different, for being the girl who was absent all the time and was so apart from everyone else. But I learned how to be independent, and with the support of my parents, I managed."

Leigh was 11 years old when she went into remission. She then moved to King David Victory Park in 2012 for to attend high school.

Although she had completed her course of radiation therapy in 2005, she says its lingering effects took a toll on her memory.

"As soon as I had completed my treatment and got into the higher grades, I noticed it was hard to memorise the larger content of the work. I couldn't understand why I found it so hard to remember the work until I was in Grade 10, when my mom explained to me what was causing it.

"Until then, I found it very difficult to prepare for exams, and I was still being bullied by the boys in the grade for being different."

Leigh refused to let this get in her way, and she blossomed in senior high school. While she chose business studies, geography and drama as matric subjects, it was in the extra-murals that she excelled.

She took part in sports and cultural activities, and also got involved in school theatrical productions. The lead roles that she assumed in one-act plays, along with her participation in soccer, tennis, netball and swimming, helped to quell her stress and boost her confidence.

She landed parts in King David's productions of *Fiddler on the Roof* and *A Chorus Line*, as well as served and was captain of the tennis team in matric. Along the way she made wonderful friends and maintained her connection with her closest friend since Grade 1, Daniel Olivier.

Leigh says she wasn't overly stressed by the demands of the matric year. "I got a bachelor pass and I'm going to study foundation phase teaching. I'm relieved it's over and that I got a varsity pass. But overall, matric was not as terrible a year as many expected."

Leigh recalls: "Of course, I felt left out when my siblings started varsity a year before me, and I was the only one still in high school. But if I've learned something, it's that you need to be yourself at the end of the day, and make your own path. I've made it through high school, but also through life."

*"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."
– Eleanor Roosevelt*

CENTURY CITY

NORTHCLIFF

SEVEN DISTINCTIONS

ONE DISTINCTION



Binyamin Shulman: English, Maths, LO, Dramatic Arts, Geography, Life Sciences, Physical Science

Dean Tal Gottlieb: LO

KING DAVID SCHOOLS

RESULTS WORTH CELEBRATING
211 King David students across both King David High School Linksfield and Victory Park achieved a cumulative 686 distinctions.

- 100% Pass rate
- 98.6% achieved University Entrance
- 16.6% of our students achieved 7 distinctions or more
- 44.2% of all papers achieved an A
- 91% of all papers achieved a C or higher
- 6 learners on IEB's Outstanding & Commendable List
- 9 distinctions from 5 learners
- 8 distinctions from 5 learners
- 7 distinctions from 25 learners
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THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

Netanyahu 'confident' US embassy will move to Jerusalem within a year

JOSHUA DAVIDOVICH

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this week praised a series of recent moves by US President Donald Trump and expressed confidence that the US would relocate its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem within a year.

"My confident assessment is that it will move much faster than people think, within a year from today," he told Israeli reporters on a flight from New Delhi to Gujarat during a state visit to India.

Last month, US secretary of state Rex Tillerson said that relocating the embassy to Jerusalem would likely take at least three years or more.

Trump promised to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in a December 6 speech in which he also formally recognised the city as Israel's capital.

His controversial decision sparked protests in some countries and was rejected in a non-binding UN General Assembly resolution. The recognition was welcomed in Israel, and Guatemala has since announced it will follow the US in moving its embassy to the city. Arab foreign ministers are set to meet on February 1 to discuss steps against Trump's recognition, the Arab League said earlier this month.

Netanyahu also lauded the Trump administration as the first to "challenge" the UN aid agency to the Palestinians. A day earlier, the US had announced it would withhold \$65 million (R797 million) of a \$120 million (R1 470 million) contribution to the UN relief agency for Palestinians, UNRWA, this month.

Netanyahu reiterated his view that aid to the Palestinians should pass through the

UN's main refugee body, UNHCR, rather than UNRWA, and said he had suggested to the administration that it divert its contributions.

Israel accuses UNRWA of helping to perpetuate the Palestinian narrative of Israel's illegitimacy by granting refugee status to the descendants of refugees, even when they are born in other countries and have citizenship there, conditions that do not apply to the refugees cared for by UNHCR. The population of Palestinian refugees thus grows each year, even as other refugee populations in the world shrink with each passing generation.

UNRWA counters that it is caring for a population that is scattered in several countries in the region, but is not served either by Israel or those countries, which refuse to grant them or their descendants citizenship, and that its definition of refugees reflects that reality.

The US notified UNRWA of the cut in a letter on Tuesday that also made clear that future US donations would be contingent on major changes by UNRWA.

"We would like to see some reforms," said state department spokeswoman Heather Nauert, adding that changes were needed in the way the agency operates and is funded. "This is not aimed at punishing anyone."

Nauert said the US believes there needs to be more "burden-sharing", a regular Trump complaint about multilateral organisations dependent on significant contributions of US cash.

In his comments, Netanyahu also praised the Trump administration's position on the Iranian nuclear deal. The US president said last week that he would not recertify the pact unless its terms were changed.

Netanyahu says \$500m Israel-India arms deal back on the table

JOSHUA DAVIDOVICH

A massive missile deal between India and Israeli defence contractor Rafael is back on the table, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday, as he wrapped up his third day of a state visit to the subcontinent to foster closer economic ties.

Netanyahu's visit came shortly after Rafael Advanced Defence Systems had confirmed that Delhi backed away from a \$500 million (R6.1 billion) agreement to purchase Spike anti-tank missiles, casting a cloud over the trip.

"They are reauthorising the Spike deal," Netanyahu said as his plane took off for Mumbai from Ahmedabad, where he spent the day with Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

Netanyahu said the details were being worked out, raising questions as to whether the final agreement would be as large as the cancelled weapons deal.

But the prime minister insisted that the outlook on the deal was "very positive".

Netanyahu announced the news as the centrepiece of a series of achievements during his five-day trip to



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

the Asian giant.

There was no immediate confirmation from Delhi.

The prime minister had brought 130 Israeli business leaders with him to India, including representatives from Rafael, in the hopes of boosting business ties, holding a series of summits meant to ramp up trade.

Israel and India trade some \$5 billion (R61 billion) annually, with the majority of the deals in arms and diamonds.

• Times of Israel staff and AFP contributed to this report.

ABBAS SETS STAGE FOR SUCCESSOR TO TAKE ACTION ON ISRAEL

DOV LIEBER

Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas has spent much of his political career safeguarding the status quo with Israel, despite popular Palestinian opposition to the current relations.

Sure, the PA leader has issued impassioned threats to overturn agreements: He has threatened to suspend security coordination with the Jewish state countless times, and warned on numerous occasions he would dissolve the Oslo agreements that secure Palestinian recognition of the state of Israel.

But his repeated failure to act on his fiery rhetoric anchored a sense that, however furious, Abbas would never follow through on his threats.

Then came his now-famous speech this week, which underlined that the 82-year-old PA leader's 13-year reign may be nearing its end. Abbas himself casually remarked that his speech might be the last time the Palestinian leaders see him at that forum.

But in his ostensible swan song and ensuing Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO's) central council resolutions, the ageing Palestinian leader has set the groundwork for his successor to uproot existing agreements between the PA and Israel.

The will and consensus of the Palestinian leadership based in the West Bank, has shifted drastically over the past two years.

In 2015, when the central council – the second



Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas

highest decision-making body in the PLO – last met, it decided to suspend security co-ordination with Israel. The decision was never implemented.

Two years later, on Monday, the central council voted not only to renew its decision to end security co-ordination with the Jewish state, but also recommended the Palestinian leadership suspend recognition of Israel altogether until it recognises the state of Palestine, cancels its annexation of East Jerusalem, and stops settlement activity.

The council also declared that the Oslo agreements, the basis for co-operation between Israel and the Palestinians, "no longer stand", arguing Israel had not kept its side of the deal, thus relieving the Palestinians of their side of the bargain.

In backing these decisions, Abbas created the tools to dismember the status quo he has so diligently protected.

The consequences of annulling the Oslo accords and suspending recognition of Israel are not clear.

Neither the Palestinian leadership nor the Israeli government have laid out a vision for what a post-Oslo world would look like.

The Oslo agreements created the PA, which is responsible for running much of daily life in the West Bank. The PA is the accepted Palestinian body through which Israel works to co-ordinate on security, joint economic interests and the distribution of resources such as electricity and water.

How any of this can function outside of the Oslo paradigm remains an enigma.

Moreover, Abbas is the last surviving Palestinian leader of the generation that created the Palestinian national movement and controlled the PLO since the 1960s. As a result, he has enjoyed political clout to both fend off public pressure for drastic measures and suppress rivals.

But whoever fills Abbas' shoes will likely not enjoy such veto power. They will know that their peers support rolling back the Oslo agreement.

Should Abbas' successor want to carry out those measures, he or she will have the legitimacy to do so. But if he or she opposes them, doing so will be more difficult in a post-Abbas world.

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In Delhi's 'mini Israel', the premier's visit elicits a collective 'Netanya who'?

JOSHUA DAVIDOVICH

The cashier at the restaurant in Delhi's Main Bazaar drag, the restaurant that advertised "Israeli" food like hummus and shakshouka, ran to grab a copy of the Hindustan Times when I told him I was from Israel.

As he excitedly leafed through the pages, I braced myself for him to show me a story about Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arriving today. Instead, he proudly held up a full-page story about Delhi Chabad Rabbi

Akiva Soundry, who runs a Jewish centre just across the overpriced, overlit and overcrowded tourist drag, where falafel is as common as aloo paneer.

"Do you know him?" he asked.

Aside from the Israeli Embassy and the hotels where Netanyahu, his wife, entourage and business delegation are staying, the Main Bazaar has undoubtedly the highest concentration of Israelis in the bustling city. Here, the yellow and green tuk-tuk rickshaws zoom past signs with Hebrew writing at terrifying speeds, and you're as likely to hear Hebrew, German or English as you are Hindi, especially among the shopkeepers trying to draw the tourists in.

Yet, while Israelis are an ever-present part of the shopping strip, lined with cheap textiles stores, Jalebi-wallahs selling their sticky treats and touristy guesthouses, the arrival of one very important Israeli to the city with a population count of 21 million seemed to pass without much more than a blip.

Viqram Sheikh, a loquacious Hebrew speaker who insisted he was a Delhi-born Muslim – saying he had picked up the language from the backpackers that inundate the area – had no idea Netanyahu was in town. But he was pleased to hear the premier was looking to expand business ties nonetheless.

"Inshallah, of course I hope he brings more business. Why



Photo: Nati Shohat/Flash 90

not?" he said, leaning on his sign advertising "Sheikh's leather goods" in Hebrew. "We are all the same. I am Mizrahi and you are Ashkenazi."

An Israeli backpacker, who declined to give her name, but said she was nearing the end of her "long" trip here to decompress after her army service, also had not heard that the prime minister was visiting.

"Bibi who? Oh, Netanyahu," she said, a sign that she had been away long enough to forget her home country's politicians.

Netanyahu has played up the importance of the trip – the first by an Israeli premier in 15 years – to boost business and diplomatic ties. But while arms sales between the countries have grown, the relationship has been marked by a personal bond between the

prime minister and his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi. That union was on display during the lovefest between the two when Modi visited Israel in July, and was unmistakable as the two warmly embraced at the airport when Netanyahu arrived in Delhi on Sunday, January 14.

While Modi's visit was heavily covered in the Israeli and Indian press, Netanyahu's trip isn't generating the same amount of buzz, and one cannot help but notice that the gaggle of reporters (including me) is somewhat smaller than on his other trips.

In the massive metropolis of Delhi, what is important in one corner does not necessarily register in another. While in some areas the Israeli delegation presence was felt, thanks to heavily armed soldiers patrolling a

wide area around the hotels where Netanyahu and company were staying, and Israeli flags on some flagpoles, in the rest of the city, rickshaws continued to swerve around beggars and shanties without realising that the symbols resembling the Magen David and swastika on their sides held deep meaning for a delegation making a rare visit to another corner of their fine conurbation.

Mustafa, a textile seller in the Main Bazaar, said he had noticed the Israeli flags, but had not realised why they were here.

"Maybe you can tell the prime minister to come to my shop tomorrow," he said, possibly only half joking.

Another vendor on the drag, Isaac Chowdhury, tried to sell both Netanyahu and me bus tickets to Agra, when I told him the Taj Mahal would be the next place visited after Delhi. Even if he couldn't make a sale to either of us, as we were scheduled to fly there, he still expressed hope that business ties would flourish.

"It's very good," he said absentmindedly, scanning the bustling walkway for his next mark.

As I haggled with a rickshaw driver later in the night, he asked me where I was from.

"Israel," I told him.

"Ah, you might not know this," he replied, "but your prime minister is visiting."

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Bomb planted at West Bank holy site is detonated safely

JUDAH ARI GROSS

Army sappers detonated a cellphone-operated explosive device that was apparently planted by Palestinians at the entrance to the Joseph's Tomb holy site in the city of Nablus early on Tuesday morning, January 16, ahead of a visit by approximately 1 000 Jewish worshippers, the army said.

There were no injuries or significant damage caused by the controlled blast, and the pilgrimage to the shrine continued as planned, an Israel Defence Forces (IDF) spokesperson said.

The 1 000 or so worshippers were escorted to Joseph's Tomb, believed to be the burial site of the biblical patriarch, by IDF soldiers, border guards and Israel police officers, the army said.

According to the military, as the group was leaving the area, local residents began to throw rocks at the troops and the buses, causing no injuries but some light damage to the vehicles.

One of the rioters was arrested, the army said.

Elsewhere in the West Bank, IDF troops arrested 10 Palestinian suspects in pre-dawn raids. Two illegally owned guns were confiscated by Israeli soldiers in the town of Silwad, northeast of

Ramallah, in the central West Bank.

Pilgrimages by Israeli or foreign civilians to the Joseph's Tomb holy site are frequent catalysts for violence. In the past, Nablus residents have attacked the groups visiting the site with rocks, Molotov cocktails and rifle fire.

As a result, those interested in visiting the site require a military escort.

The left wing B'Tselem rights group has condemned the routine practice, saying: "Israel has preferred the interest of Jewish worshippers over the rights of the Palestinian residents, their security, their safety and their daily routine."

In August, two Palestinians were shot and wounded by Israeli troops, who were providing protection to Jewish worshippers visiting Joseph's Tomb.

In October 2015, Palestinian rioters set fire to the holy site. It was restored and re-opened a few weeks later.



Jewish men pray near the compound of Joseph's Tomb

Air Force appoints first female commander of aviation squad

JUDAH ARI GROSS

For the first time, a woman is to command an aviation squad, the army announced on Tuesday, 16 years after Roni Zuckerman became the first Israeli female fighter pilot.

The major, whose name cannot be published for security reasons, is to be promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel and will head a squadron of Israel Air Force (IAF) transport planes.

"She will be the first female pilot to have this position and this rank," the army said, referring to the major only by the first Hebrew letter of her name: "Tet".

Although other female officers have reached this rank and commanded squadrons, no pilot has ever been in charge of an air-based IAF squadron before.

"In addition, Major "Mem" was appointed to command the [air force's] operational command and control unit and will be promoted to lieutenant colonel. She will be the first female air traffic controller to reach this rank," the army added.

In November, the air force appointed its first female deputy commander of a fighter jet squadron to serve in the air force's Spearhead Squadron, which flies F-15 fighter jets out of the Tel Nof air base in central Israel.

The military also announced last year that IAF chief Major General Amikam Norkin had appointed two other women to deputy commander positions in the military's drone squadrons.

While women flew fighter planes in the 1948 War of Independence and 1956 Sinai War, they

were eventually booted from the programme (as well as from other combat positions in the Israel Defence Forces).

In 1993, Alice Miller asked to try out for the IAF's vaunted pilots' course, but was rebuffed. She then turned to Israel's High Court of Justice, which ruled that she should be allowed into the programme. However, Miller was eventually dropped from the course, after being deemed medically unfit.

In 1998, five years after Miller's request, and five decades after Israel had its last female aviator, Sheri Rahat graduated from the pilots' course, becoming a navigator for the F-16 fighter jet, but not technically a pilot.

Three years later, Roni Zuckerman, a granddaughter of Zivia Lubetkin and Yitzhak Zuckerman, two leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, graduated as Israel's first fighter jet pilot.

Despite those strides, the overwhelming majority of fighter pilots in the IAF are still men, mainly because of the physical fitness requirements.



Major 'Tet', the air force's first female aviation squadron commander

African countries demand an apology from Trump

NEWS AGENCIES

A group of 54 “extremely appalled” African countries have demanded that US President Donald Trump retract and apologise for his reported denunciation of immigration from “shithole” nations.

After an emergency session to weigh up Trump’s remarks, the group of African ambassadors to the United Nations said they were “concerned at the continuing and growing trend from the US administration towards Africa and people of African descent to denigrate the continent and people of colour”.

They added that they were “extremely appalled at, and strongly condemn the outrageous, racist and xenophobic remarks by the president of the US, as widely reported by the media” and demanded a “retraction and an apology”.

Earlier, the African Union (AU) continental body told Associated Press it was “alarmed” by Trump’s comments.

“Given the historical reality of how many Africans arrived in the US as slaves, this statement flies in the face of all accepted behaviour

and practice,” AU spokesperson Ebba Kalondo said. “This is particularly surprising as the US remains a global example of how migration gave birth to a nation built on strong values of diversity and opportunity.”

African governments quickly found themselves in an awkward position. As top recipients of US aid, some hesitated to jeopardise it by criticising Trump, especially as his administration has sought to slash foreign assistance.

“Unless it was specifically said about South Sudan, we have nothing to say,” said South Sudan’s government spokesperson, Ateny Wek Ateny. But the ANC called Trump’s comments “extremely offensive”. Deputy secretary-general Jessie Duarte said developing countries do have difficulties, but the US also had millions of people out of work or without healthcare, and “we would not deign to make comments as derogatory”.

DA leader Mmusi Maimane called Trump’s comments “abhorrent”, adding: “The hatred of [former president Barack] Obama’s roots now extends to an entire continent.”

African media outlets and the

continent’s young, increasingly connected population also rebuked Trump.

“Well, that is the perfect definition of racism,” said Kenyan entrepreneur Wangui Muraguri..

While 40% of the world’s poor live in sub-Saharan Africa, according to the International Monetary Fund, the region also has billionaires, reality shows and a growing middle class.

Some quickly decided to own Trump’s vulgar language or do some tit-for-tat.

“Good morning from the greatest, most beautiful ‘shithole country’ in the world!!!” tweeted SABC2 anchor Leanne Manas.

“As someone from South Shithole, Trevor is deeply offended by the president’s remarks,” tweeted US-based local comedian Trevor Noah, host of The Daily Show.

In Kenya, East Africa’s economic hub, political activist Boniface Mwangi pleaded: “Please don’t confuse the #shithole leaders we Africans elect with our beautiful continent.”

Trump’s comments highlighted months of concern about his lack of focus on Africa, including unfilled ambassadorial posts in

US President Donald Trump



Photo: Mike Lawrie/Getty Images/AFP

key countries such as South Africa, Egypt, Congo and Somalia. A list maintained by the Washington-based American Foreign Service Association shows that eight such posts are vacant.

Trump has expressed negative opinions about the continent in the past. “Every penny of the \$7 billion (R89 billion) going to Africa as per Obama will be stolen – corruption is rampant!” he tweeted in 2013.

The US president is hurting himself at home and abroad with his latest comments, some Africans said.

“He has not only insulted Africans, he has also insulted African Americans,” said Sylvester

Odion Akhaine, associate professor of international relations at Lagos State University in Nigeria. “Internationally, such language will deepen the isolation of the US, a country that is already losing its global prestige.”

As outrage spread, the US government’s own Africa Media Hub tried to put out the flames.

Without directly referring to Trump’s statement, it tweeted that the “US remains committed to working together with Africans to realise the promise of a more peaceful, more productive, more prosperous 21st-century Africa. US deeply respects the people of #Africa and values its partnerships with them.”



Photo: Yossi Zamir/Flash 90

2017 a bumper year for Israeli tourism

A total of 3.6 million tourists visited Israel in 2017.

This figure, an all-time record, represents a 25% increase over the previous year, the Israeli business daily Globes reported, citing tourism ministry statistics.

The largest number of tourists – close to 700 000 – came from the United States. Tourists from Russia represented the second-largest group, with some 307 000 tourists. They were followed by France, with 284 000, Germany with 202 000 and the United Kingdom with 185 000.

Some 59% of the tourists were visiting Israel for the first time, according to Globes. A quarter said the purpose of their visit was religious or a pilgrimage; 24% said they were visiting relatives and friends; and 23% said they were planning on touring and hiking. Just 6% came with an organised tour package.

Jerusalem was a destination for 78% of tourists in 2017, followed by Tel Aviv-Jaffa at 67%, the Dead Sea at 49% and Tiberias and the Galilee region at 35%.

The tourism ministry reported that in 2017, tourism contributed some \$5.8 billion (R72 billion) to Israel’s economy. (JTA)

Missing tourist may have ‘Jerusalem Syndrome’

SUE SURKES

A British tourist who went missing in the Negev desert in November may be suffering from religious delusions known as “Jerusalem Syndrome”, the UK’s Daily Telegraph reported this week.

Police initially thought Oliver McAfee, 29, had got lost while cycling across the desert, but recent discoveries indicate he may have retreated into the wilderness deliberately.

Earlier this month, hikers walking the Israel National Trail near Mitzpe Ramon found McAfee’s wallet, keys and laptop, and handed them over to police.

Since then, search and rescue teams have discovered a trail of pages torn out from the Bible weighed down by stones, as well as handwritten scriptures and references to stories, including Jesus’ fasting in the desert for 40 days and 40 nights, according to the report.

Police have also found what they described as a “chapel”, a circle-shaped clearing in the sand that had been flattened by a bicycle tool near the town of Mitzpe Ramon.



Oliver McAfee

Raz Arbel, the leader of the volunteer search team, told the Daily Telegraph: “He seems to have been doing all kinds of ceremonies that we don’t really understand.”

Dr Moshe Kalian, the former district psychiatrist for Jerusalem and an expert on Jerusalem Syndrome, said although he had never met McAfee, the reports suggested that he was involved in “some kind of religious experience in the desert” that sounded like the syndrome.

Jerusalem Syndrome is the name given to religiously themed delusions or psychosis triggered by a visit to Jerusalem. The condition can affect visitors who have shown no signs of mental illness previously, and usually resolves upon departure from Israel.

Each year, about 50 tourists are reported to experience Jerusalem-themed mental problems.

McAfee, a gardener from Essex, had been depressed before leaving Britain, cycling through Europe, visiting Mexico and ending up in Israel in late October.

Originally expected back in Britain on December 1, he was last seen November 21.

Seinfeld under fire over visit to West Bank ‘military camp’

YAAKOV SCHWARTZ

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld is taking heat from fans after photos of him on a West Bank “anti-terrorism” course were posted online earlier this week.

The Caliber 3 training facility, located near the settlement of Efrat, south of Bethlehem, posted the photos of Seinfeld on its Facebook page with the message: “Finally, we are allowed to tell you! Jerry Seinfeld and his family were in Caliber 3. During their visit to Israel last week, they came to us for a special and exciting activity with displays of combat, Krav Maga, assault dogs and lots of Zionism. It was great.”

Seinfeld put on two

performances in Tel Aviv in December and toured Israel with his family.

After the training facility’s Facebook post, however, Twitter erupted with a violent backlash against the comedian.

“I can never unsee Jerry Seinfeld gleefully posing with a machine gun at an IDF [Israeli Defence Force] fantasy camp,” posted culture writer Eric Thurm.

In response to the criticism, Caliber 3 removed the photos from its page.

Caliber 3 began in 2003 as a camp for professional security personnel, such as police. Since 2009,

the programme has also become an attraction for tourists.

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AN ANSWER IN TWO WEEKS

NEW SHEBA CANCER TEAM CUTS DIAGNOSIS TIMES BY 80%

Almost all of us have heard or used the expression, “You can die waiting for the results...” A new unit in Sheba Medical Center aims to make that a thing of the past. Not only is Sheba now providing the latest in lifesaving treatments, the new Diagnostic Oncology unit is ensuring that the process is streamlined to start treatments. For some aggressive forms of cancer, a swift start to treatment can be the difference between life and death.

Oncologists are all too familiar with the painstaking process that patients are subjected to when their general practitioner utters those dreaded sentences, “You might have cancer. You’ll have to undergo a battery of tests to determine what you have.”

Based on the current medical bureaucracy in Israel, USA, UK and beyond, the arduous process including, blood tests, biopsies, MRI’s and CT-scans could take up to at least three months. And if G-d forbid, a person does indeed have cancer growing inside their body, the race against time becomes a critical factor.

Recognizing the need to drastically streamline the process in order to get a diagnostic response and a treatment regimen in place in a much more efficient manner, Dr. Damien Urban, who heads the Oncology Department at Sheba Medical Center’s Cancer Center, has created a revolutionary concept, The Rapid Cancer Diagnostic Unit.



Dr. Damien Urban and his team at Sheba’s Rapid Cancer Diagnostic Unit.

will be the future of medicine in general. I created this unit, which is unique to Israel and has yet to be developed in most Western countries. I have seen specific Rapid Breast & Lung Cancer operations, but nothing regarding across the board cancer testing. With my new unit, I can cut the process from 3 months to 2 weeks! The patients are referred straight from their doctor to Sheba and we do all of the testing using the most advanced technology inside the hospital.”

Dr. Urban, who made Aliyah from Australia in 2005, was spurred to formulate an advanced diagnostic unit based on the grueling cancer testing process he had seen, while tending to cancer patients in Australia.

“The Rapid Cancer Diagnostic Unit’s ultimate goal is to help patients overcome the devastating, time consuming bureaucratic process involved in the diagnostics and treatment of cancer. Though we are only at the initial stages of this project, where we are seeing about 4 patients a day, we are working to develop this to the point, where we could handle as many patients who need our services during the week,” said Dr. Urban.

The rapid diagnosis benefits all aspects of cancer treatment. Medical costs are also reduced by the shortened need for services. “This unit will eventually have the ability to save hospital admissions or days spent in the hospital based on

the diagnosis. It will also enable patients who are diagnosed with cancer to see an oncologist more quickly so they can get the treatment they need, which also has a positive psychological effect.”

CANCER IN ISRAEL

Cancer is the No.1 cause of death in Israel.

26% of deaths in Israel are due to cancer





29,000 Israelis are diagnosed with cancer each year.

“The mental trauma of waiting for results over a three month period can have a devastating effect. It literally freezes people in their daily lives, so we are trying to overcome this process with the creation of the Rapid Cancer Diagnostic Unit,” revealed Dr. Urban.

Dr. Urban developed a unique approach to help ease the experience of cancer diagnosis for patients. “Diagnostic Oncology is a totally new form of medicine that is being developed and

SHEBA – ISRAEL’S LARGEST MEDICAL CENTER

Sheba is the beating heart of Israeli medicine. Every year, 1 in 5 Israelis are treated at Sheba. Sheba’s world-class innovation and medical research are changing the face of modern medicine, in Israel and around the world. With an emphasis on patient care and integrated medicine, Sheba is doing more than treating illness ... it is changing lives.

-  Sheba treats **1.5 million** people per year.
-  Sheba’s staff of **8,060** includes **1,425** doctors.
-  Sheba performs **260,000** diagnostic imaging exams per year
-  Sheba conducts **1,600,000** lab exams per year

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SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Shane Bassin: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Geography, Hebrew, LO, Maths	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Georgia Bryer: Accounting, Afrikaans, Business Studies, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Adam Blumenthal: AP Maths, English, IT, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Aharon Cohen: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, History, LO, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Alex Cohen: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, History, LO, Life Sciences, Maths	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Adam Feldman: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Joshua Hertz: AP Maths, Accounting, Afrikaans, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Jenna-Lee Israelsohn: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science
SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Tammy-Lee Katz: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Geography, Hebrew, LO, Maths	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Jemma Kerem: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Gabriella Kinross: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Tamar Lewis: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Hannah Miller: Afrikaans, English, Geography, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Amber Sandler: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Carly Soicher: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Amanda Swirsky: Afrikaans, English, Geography, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science
SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Omri Temkin: Accounting, AP Maths, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Devin van de Laar: Afrikaans, English, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science, Visual Arts	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Riquel Weinstein: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science	SIX DISTINCTIONS  Rebecca Barnes: English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science	SIX DISTINCTIONS  Carly Borer: Accounting, English, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science	SIX DISTINCTIONS  Kayla Borowitz: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, History, LO, Music	SIX DISTINCTIONS  Jade Feinstein: English, Geography, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths Literacy	SIX DISTINCTIONS  Yakira Gischen: Afrikaans, Consumer Studies, English, Hebrew, History, LO
SIX DISTINCTIONS  Shira Goshier: Dramatic Arts, English, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science	SIX DISTINCTIONS  Talya Katz: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences	SIX DISTINCTIONS  Caylee Knopfmacher: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, History, LO, Maths	SIX DISTINCTIONS  Brenna Reichenberg: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths	FOUR DISTINCTIONS Mira-Emma Diner Benjamin Dorfan Talia Gabay Nina Gersohn Cassidy Haefner Brittany Hurwitz Adam Kaplan Samuel Luntz Michael Mayer Mira Mendelow Kira Miller Joshua Prissman David Russo Candice Sassen Mai Sayag Hannah Selsick Angie Sevel Adam Silberman Justin Stone Shannon Woolfson Shannon Zulberg	THREE DISTINCTIONS Yaakov Carno Rachel Dave Jarred Davis Savannah Gogoski Elijah Greenhill Kayla Hersberg Ryan Horowitz Leora Kacev Erin Kahn Saige Levy Michael Meyer Gabriel Sher Bianca Silver Talia Simon Jake Solomon Joshua Spark Dylan Stein	TWO DISTINCTIONS Jordan Ber Jenna Blumenfeld Samuel Brozin Jess Dworcan Brannan Elin Zahava Eschur Ariella Harris Jordan Heller Ricci Lee Hetz Aaron Kretzmer Tasha Mervis Ahdí Sananes Cameron Taitz	ONE DISTINCTION Brad Blechman Ariel Blumenfeld Aaron Cohen Geena Cohen Ciara Cronson Jordan Delvecchio Caylin Firer Reece Friedlander Benjamin Gavronsky Sarah Godley Gabriella Katz Alon Klitzner Tamryn Lutz Caylee Milner Jason Miltz Tayla Norman Galya Raff Sheina Ruch Jamie-Rose Seid Nechama Sher Daniel Sinek Jasen Smaller Samuel Swanepoel Levi Symon Zachary Tobias Sydney Wohlman David Wolman Shira-Lee Zlotnick
FIVE DISTINCTIONS							
Keely-Shaye Boon: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, History, LO	Ricky Jayes: Accounting, AP Maths, IT, Maths, Physical Science	Benjamin Moyal: Accounting, English, French, Geography, LO					
Kiara Cowen: English, Geography, History, LO, Maths Literacy	Tali Kadish: English, Geography, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences	Jesse Nathan: Accounting, Business Studies, English, Geography, LO					
Joshua Harth: Afrikaans, Hebrew, IT, LO, Maths	Saul Kamionsky: Afrikaans, Business Studies, English, History, LO	Julia Rosenzweig: Dramatic Arts, English, History, LO, Music					
Tali Hirsh: Afrikaans, Business Studies, Consumer Studies, LO, Life Sciences	Dylan Kilov: Accounting, English, LO, Maths, Physical Science	Brittany Seligmann: Accounting, Dramatic Arts, English, LO, Life Sciences					
Kayla Hosiosky: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths	Shannon Mendel: English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Physical Science	Franki Silverman: English, Geography, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences					
Kelly Hurwitz: English, Hebrew, History, LO, Maths	Liora Michaels: Afrikaans, Business Studies, English, Hebrew, LO	Benjamin Tenzer: IT, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science					

EDEN COLLEGE DURBAN

TWO DISTINCTIONS

Aidan Francis:
Art, LO

THEODOR HERZL
PORT ELIZABETH

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Isabella Liss: English,
Afrikaans, LO, Dramatic
Arts, History

From learning difficulties to five distinctions

JORDAN MOSHE

Jonathan Sidi was an introvert during his time at Crossroads School, but overcame this, as well as his learning difficulties, to obtain five distinctions in matric. "I knew what it felt like to be scared of unlocking my true potential," he explains. "I was afraid to bridge the gap and go for it. Eventually, I made the leap.

"You're always your own biggest critic. The limitations we place on ourselves can only make us unhappy."

Today, Jonathan exudes self-assurance and warmth, which is totally at odds with the portrait he paints of his past self. "I was an introvert in every way. As a child, I was often bullied and preferred the company of adults. I was painfully shy and reserved, and social anxiety kept me from branching out."

Jonathan left King David Victory Park for Crossroads School in Grade 1. He overcame educational barriers posed by his ADHD and mild dyslexia, and returned to King David in Grade 5. However, he was still an

introverted loner and his progress through primary and junior high school was defined by his ongoing isolation.

When he reached Grade 10, he decided to confront his insecurities and come out of his shell. "I realised then that there was nothing to be gained from being self-conscious about my barriers. There was no shame in facing challenges, and I could make decisions that would make my life better. I could now choose my subjects, create new friendships and become involved in more activities than I had before," he says.



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76,4% of the papers written resulted in a B or higher

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Jonathan Sidi

"I was able to put myself into a place where I fitted best and create circumstances suited to my personality."

He came to realise that by cutting himself off from the world, he had denied himself multiple opportunities. So, when choosing subjects for senior high, Jonathan opted for geography, history – and drama. "Drama really brought me out of myself. My biggest regret was that I had not been involved in the school plays when I was in Grades 8 and 9 as I had missed out on opportunities," he says.

However, he certainly made up for this by becoming involved in the debating team and assuming the role of Perchik in the school's production of *Fiddler on the Roof* in 2016. He took the beliefs of this character to heart and, instead of seeking to stir up revolution in Czarist Russia, Jonathan led a revolution within himself by committing to giving it his all in his matric year.

"I was never a straight A student, but I peaked in matric. I was not limiting myself anymore, but I also believed in doing the best I could without putting any unnecessary pressure on myself.

"In creating expectations, I had to be true to myself and remember that there was a bigger picture to everything."

Although he got his five distinctions, he remains committed to this bigger picture. "Now that school is over, I have the opportunity to gain a better understanding of myself. School is very structured, and you always know what's coming next. But now I have the opportunity to explore who I am and what I want to devote myself to."


To this end, Jonathan has resolved to spend the year ahead engaged in activities that will enable him to broaden his horizons. "Before I go to university, I'd like to take up an internship, travel or perhaps even write the Scholastic Assessment Test to give me more options for the future. I am leaning towards the humanities."

On his matric, he says: "I exceeded my expectations of myself in matric. I was cautiously optimistic about my final results, but I had done what I could, and I was unable to do anything about the outcome. Matric involves a lot of tears, stress and extremely late nights, but in the end it's all worth it."

CRAWFORD SCHOOLS™ SANDTON – IEB

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS  Maya Thandi Bortz: Accounting, AP English, Dramatic Arts, English, History, isiZulu, LO, Maths	EIGHT DISTINCTIONS  Temima Sarah Rachbuch: AP Maths, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Arielle Menasce Traub: AP Maths, English, History, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science	SEVEN DISTINCTIONS  Jaymee Rebecca Gobetz: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, History, LO, Maths
FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Ayalah Schleider: English, Afrikaans, History, LO, Music	FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Holly Jade Picker: Design, History, LO, Maths Literacy, Visual Arts	FIVE DISTINCTIONS  Yarin Neuhaus: AP English, Dramatic Arts, English, History, LO	FOUR DISTINCTIONS  Georgia Mia Keschner: Business Studies, English, LO, Maths Literacy
FOUR DISTINCTIONS  Jonathen Sidney Sundy: Business Studies, IT, LO, Maths	THREE DISTINCTIONS  Jayden Colin Aaron: History, LO, Maths Literacy	THREE DISTINCTIONS  Sean Jacob Terespolsky: English, History, LO	TWO DISTINCTIONS Hannah-Claire Iris Frack: LO, Maths Literacy ONE DISTINCTION Adam Fleiser: LO Dean Aaron Rayd: LO Joshua Wolpe: Maths Literacy

CRAWFORD SCHOOLS™ LONEHILL – IEB

THREE DISTINCTIONS

Eden Ben-Attar: History, LO, Visual Arts

CRAWFORD SCHOOLS™ LA LUCIA – IEB

SIX DISTINCTIONS

Eden Levi: Afrikaans, English, Geography, LO, Life Sciences, Maths

CRAWFORD SCHOOLS™ NORTH COAST – IEB

ONE DISTINCTION

Joshua Bemister: Business Studies

CRAWFORD SCHOOLS™ PRETORIA – IEB

ONE DISTINCTION

Luke Beckwith: Maths Literacy



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YESHIVA COLLEGE – IEB

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Jessica Goldblatt: Afrikaans, English, French, History, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Erin Jaches: Accounting, Afrikaans, Business Studies, English, LO, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Adam Lazer: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Saul Marks: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Ophir Melchior: Business Studies, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Adam Melnick: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Amitai Meyerowitz: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Benjamin Palay: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths

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WITH THESE SPECTACULAR ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE



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Mazel tov!

Passionate Commitment to Talmud Torah and Chessed

51 Wonderful Learners
100% Pass Rate
214 Distinctions

2/3 of class going to learn in Israel

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4,2 distinctions per learner

25,4% achieved a 'Full House' of distinctions

A+

10 learners attained **8** distinctions each

IEB

3 Learners on the **IEB Outstanding & Commendable Achievement list**



EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Joshua Shapiro: Accounting, Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths

EIGHT DISTINCTIONS



Gilad Urdang: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science, AP Maths

SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



Aaron Berkman: Afrikaans, Business Studies, English, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science

SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



Talia Bolel: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science

SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



Galit Milstein: Afrikaans, Dramatic Arts, English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Hannah Midzuk: English, Afrikaans, LO, Life Sciences, Maths, Physical Science

SIX DISTINCTIONS



Alexa Rapp: English, Afrikaans, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Tamir Bender: English, Hebrew, LO, Life Sciences, Maths

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Daniella Jaffe: Consumer Studies, Dramatic Arts, English, LO, Maths Literacy

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Asher Levin: Accounting, English, LO, Maths, Physical Science

YESHIVA COLLEGE – IEB

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Tal Sauer: Consumer Studies, Dramatic Arts, English, LO, Maths Literacy

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Yochanan Kay: English, Hebrew, LO, Maths Literacy

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Ariella Lazarus: English, LO, Life Sciences, Maths

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Kevin Lichtenstein: Business Studies, English, Hebrew, LO

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Dinah Poyurs: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Gabriel Riesenber: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Galia Ronthal: Afrikaans, English, Hebrew, LO

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Ami-Lee Selikson: Consumer Studies, English, LO, Life Sciences

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Yonatan Wolberg: English, Geography, LO, Life Sciences

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Shira Attia: English, LO, Life Sciences

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Liat Biddle: Dramatic Arts, English, LO

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Talia Bregman: Consumer Studies, LO, Maths Literacy

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Michal Chipkin: English, Hebrew, LO

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Ilana Eidelman: English, LO, Maths Literacy

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Daniel Friedland: English, Hebrew, LO

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Kara Gordon: English, History, LO

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Abraham Hodes: English, Hebrew, LO

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Shira Katz: English, Hebrew, Life Sciences

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Rachel Lager: English, Hebrew, LO

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Talia Urdang: English, History, LO

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Aharon Zagnoev: English, Hebrew, LO

TWO DISTINCTIONS



Aharon Kangisser: CAT, LO

TWO DISTINCTIONS



Galya Kangisser: Dramatic Arts, English

TWO DISTINCTIONS



Aaron Sachs: CAT, Geography

TWO DISTINCTIONS



Sara Shor: Business Studies, Dramatic Arts

TWO DISTINCTIONS



Joshua Trope: Geography, LO

ONE DISTINCTION



Darren Kozinsky: LO

ONE DISTINCTION



Ilan Meltz: Maths Literacy

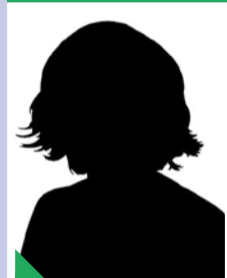
ONE DISTINCTION



Adam Moritz: Maths Literacy

TORAH ACADEMY GIRLS – NSC

SEVEN DISTINCTIONS



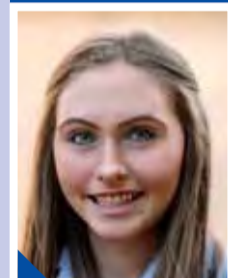
Keren Netzer: Afrikaans, LO, Maths, Physical Science, Hebrew, History, Life Sciences

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



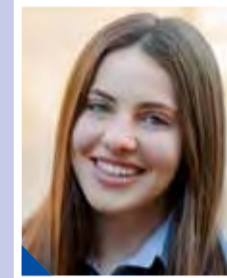
Tamar Korzia: Afrikaans, LO, Hebrew, Life Sciences

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Alexandra Rosendorff: LO, History, Dramatic Arts

THREE DISTINCTIONS



Ester Zwick: English, LO, Hebrew

THREE DISTINCTIONS



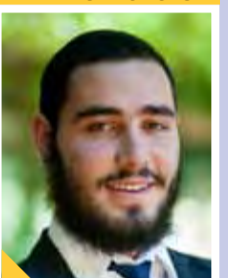
Talia Abrahamson: English, Afrikaans, LO

TWO DISTINCTIONS

Li Rosendorff: LO, CAT.
Elishva Chiger: Maths Literacy, LO
Adi Barouchi: Hebrew, LO

TORAH ACADEMY BOYS – NSC

FIVE DISTINCTIONS



Pinchas Katz: Afrikaans, LO, Hebrew, CAT, Life Sciences

FOUR DISTINCTIONS



Betzalel Chaikin: LO, Hebrew, Physical Science, CAT

TWO DISTINCTIONS

Menachem Mendel Zlotnick: LO, Hebrew



Mazeltov to the class of 2017 who excelled at a full Torah curriculum alongside their matric studies

41
total distinctions

2.73
distinction average per pupil

39%
of written exams achieved an A

58%
of written exams achieved a B or higher

100%
pass rate

every single student achieved at least one distinction

87%
of Hebrew students achieved an A

80%
of Physical Science students achieved B or higher

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– Dr Seuss

New school, new language, new country

JORDAN MOSHE

High school is challenging for everyone, but throw in being a foreigner, knowing no one and being unable to speak English, and it becomes a whole lot harder. Believe it or not, those weren't the only hurdles that Ophir Melchior, an Israeli, had to get over when he arrived at Yeshiva College.

Yet Ophir came up trumps, bagging eight distinctions in matric.

Ophir recounts his experiences of arriving in the middle of the school year in 2012: “I arrived to start the third term, right after finishing Grade 6 in Israel. Because of the difference in the school year between



Ophir Melchior

Israel and South Africa, those in my age group were in the middle of their Grade 6 year. After speaking to the principal, my parents decided that it would be best that I jump half a year and start high school [Yeshiva College starts high school in Grade 7] with people who are older than me by a year or more.”

That only made things harder for Ophir. “At first, things were difficult and I wanted to return to what I knew best and where my family and friends were; to a place where I could speak the language properly.

“South African society is also very different, so it took time for me to adjust to things like not being as independent as I had been. I couldn't take a bus whenever I wanted and had to rely on my parents to drive me around. I was spending time either at home or school and not really anywhere else. I was suddenly quite confined.”

Ophir speaks warmly about the kindness of the community and his classmates. “I remember coming to school for the first time, just a few days after arriving in South Africa. Pupils from all grades came up to me to greet me, and those in my class helped me with whatever I needed.”

However, he battled to communicate. “Despite all the help, the first few weeks of school were tough because of the language barrier. At the end of Grade 7, I did not write most of the exams,” he says.

“Still, those first few months of school gave me the best foundation I could have wanted in terms of the people I met, the friendships I made and the English I was starting to learn.”

As he progressed through high school, Ophir adapted to his new environment, finding his place among his classmates. “At the start of Grade 8, I already had a much better grasp of English and I understood the school system better. So, I felt like any other student, writing all the tests like everyone else. Of course, my English wasn't perfect yet, and extra time in exams and tests helped a lot. The teachers and learners were always willing to help, and thanks to them, I was finally like an ordinary Grade 8 pupil.”

Ophir and his family had originally planned to return to Israel in 2016, as his father had been sent to South Africa for four years. So, Ophir was meant to leave in the middle of Grade 11. However, his father was asked to stay longer, and he ended up staying for matric.

By then, he says, everything became a lot more demanding and there was a lot more pressure on scholars to work hard and do well.

“By that stage I felt like any other student, and despite not having the greatest vocabulary, which only affected me when I had to write English essays, I received many compliments that my English sounded perfect.

“I even found that in English exams I usually did quite well, thanks to the help of my English teacher.

“I worked hard during those last years and it paid off.”

With his eight distinctions, Ophir is returning to Israel with his family where he plans to go to a yeshiva for about a year before going into the army.

But leaving won't be easy and there is a lot he will miss, especially his friends.

It is hard to watch a child struggle. It is harder not knowing why.

seek*

What if you could know the cause and extent of a child's learning struggles and find out how to intervene effectively?

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The introduction of an assistive device? An alternative way of doing school? Therapy? A reading programme?

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- *poor Mathematics results*
- *protracted hours spent on homework*
- *disruptive or withdrawn behaviour*
- *failure to follow instructions*
- *falling behind peers scholastically*
- *anxiety and fear of failure*
- *school refusal or task avoidance*
- *poor grades and low motivation*
- *social problems*

Notwithstanding poor instruction, challenging home circumstances or a breakdown in the teacher-child trust relationship, there may be cognitive, esteem, emotional and perceptual reasons for the difficulty.

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Principals of SA's Jewish schools slam proposed scrapping of IEB matric exams

JORDAN MOSHE

Principals of South Africa's Jewish schools are dead set against doing away with the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) matric exams to standardise all matriculations.

Nevertheless, Gauteng's MEC for Education, Panyaza Lesufi, wants to see the separate and different exams brought to an end. This could, in effect, lead to the scrapping of the IEB.

Lesufi wants all matric students to write the same examinations, saying the character of the two exams gives an impression that the IEB is a difficult exam for the rich and the National Senior Certificate (NSC) is the weaker one for the poor.

"All children deserve a quality education," he told the SABC earlier this month. "There is no way that a small, privileged group of people must write an examination and a majority must write a different examination. When we release results, we must say that this is the last time. All

our children are going to the same universities. This thing of having two examinations, IEB and NSC ... must come to an end."

He insists that a single independent body be urgently established to set exams for all matric students. Those in support of Lesufi have proposed the creation of a statutory and autonomous Exams Body, or that the National Examinations Unit be transferred to the IEB.

Anne Oberholzer, chief executive of the IEB, disagrees. "The IEB is more useful to the country by remaining an independent body, providing credibility to the curriculum and the NSC qualification. It is worth noting that the administration of examinations is not the issue in respect of performance of learners," she says.

"The department of basic education is best placed to understand what the issues are in its various schools and to find appropriate solutions for them. Many of the problems at South Africa's schools are not educational by nature – they are economic and, possibly,

political. The IEB would happily participate in any national drive where it has a role to play. Many IEB schools run educational outreach programmes or twin with neighbouring state schools, sharing resources and materials."

The principals of Jewish schools echo her sentiments. "It would be a sad day indeed if the IEB were not able to offer assessments as a truly independent body in the educational landscape of South Africa," says King David High School Victory Park principal Andrew Baker. "The IEB is an assessment provider and is accredited by Umalusi, the quality council for general and further education and training, to offer assessments for the NSC qualification."

Marc Falconer of United Herzlia Schools expresses his frustration. "South Africa has one of the poorest education systems in the world. More than 70% of Grade 4 pupils are illiterate and innumerate – the highest tested rate for any country on the planet," he says.

"Our government matric exams – whatever the pass rate – do not prepare the average pupil for tertiary study. The university dropout rate of pupils who've qualified to study further is in excess of 67%. More than 60% of Grade 6 maths teachers cannot pass a Grade 6 maths paper. All of this, in spite of a very high percentage of the GDP allocated to education. Clearly, something is not working," says Falconer.

"A focus on the IEB – which covers about 10% of South Africa's schoolgoing population – is a political distraction from the real issues that, year on year, produce pupils incapable of further study, employment or the ability to rely on their own entrepreneurship.

"The option to choose independent education is also protected by the Constitution."

Denese Bloch, principal of the Yeshiva College high schools, expresses similar views. "As much as a uniform exam is a praiseworthy idea, it remains egalitarian. If such an exam were created, it would have to be set at the standards of the IEB, and not at the levels which cater for the lowest common denominator in education," says Bloch.

"The exclusivity of the IEB is an unfortunate necessity because if we don't produce people who will excel at university, can we honestly say that they are truly educated? Our country has no lack of intellect, but lacks good education practices at every level. Until these are addressed, how can the IEB be done away with?"

Bloch insists: "It is clear that the government cannot be trusted with education, as it has failed to deliver on its earlier promises made time and again. Education is elementary – it grows the country and its people. Our country does not lack desire nor infrastructure but the correct quality of education and work ethic among educators themselves.

"Education consists of layers, all of which the IEB addresses. If this expertise is put to use to inform the creation of a potential uniform exam, then perhaps there is room for discussion."

The South African Democratic Teachers' Union seems open to learning from the IEB. The union says many independent schools are well resourced, have smaller numbers of pupils in classes and, most importantly, the active involvement of parents in their children's learning. The union's general secretary, Mugwena Maluleke, says there needs to be greater political will to effect positive change at public schools.

Our Country's Keepers

RABBI RAMON WIDMONTE

Jacques Pauw's book, *The President's Keepers*, can leave readers either despairing or infused with hope, humility and a sense of being challenged to emulate a new league of moral heroes.

I thought long and hard about reading this book. What would it tell me: that our president is corrupt? I knew that. That he is exceptionally, venally corrupt? I knew that too. That he is enabled by a bacterial colony of slimy, gravy-encrusted cronies? Ditto.

The title of the book was depressing too. Unlike Cain, who indignantly declared: "Am I my brother's keeper?", but was a very poor help indeed, South Africa's President Jacob Zuma has a host of underlings who have kept him very well ensconced. All of this is common knowledge.

But what was not common knowledge, until the publication of Pauw's book, were the stories of a host of unco-ordinated, unlikely heroes who have gone through hell and back again to fight for what is right.

That sentence sounds so trite in our jaded, postmodern age. Who "fights for what is right" today?

I thought to myself: "These guys must have had an ulterior motive for opposing Zuma. There is always an angle!"

Except when there isn't. Except when people actually believe in wrong and right. These people are committed police officers, civil servants, intelligence agents, lawyers and judges, who feel their vocations to be much more than just jobs: they see themselves

as agents for all of us citizens, fighting corruption and evil on our behalf.

When I began reading the book, I initially felt overwhelmed and discouraged, as I expected would be the case. Then as I read on, I began to feel humbled, daunted and challenged.

I began to allow myself to be astounded by the courage, morality, commitment and guts of a long list of people who fought the rot at great personal cost. I realised that these people could be something out of Hollywood, the Bible and children's stories – except for the fact that they're real.

And they are not the high-profile warriors we all love – not the Pravin Gordhans,

Nhlanhla Nenes, Mcebisi Jonas, Glynnis Breytenbachs and Thuli Madonselas. They are anonymous.

And then I allowed myself to feel dwarfed by them – and challenged by them.

Would I have the courage of former South African Revenue Service deputy commissioner Ivan Pillay to walk into the lion's den, again and again, to demand that the president pay his taxes? Would I hold my own party to account for its unpaid taxes? Would I be prepared to have my name smeared, my reputation ruined? Would I be prepared to lose my job?

Could I be a Johann van Loggerenberg, a Kobus Meiring, a Paul Engelke, a Gene Ravele, an Anwa Dramat, a Shadrack Sibiyi or a Johan Booysen? Would I be prepared to have my life, and that of my family, threatened?

And then I allowed myself to realise what this book means for me and for our country.

For me it is a dramatic gauntlet. These people are a challenge to every small act I perform that enables corruption. Every South African is offered the opportunity to be part of the problem or part of the solution.

Do I pay the bribe to get out of the traffic ticket? Do I hide my income or declare it? Can I hide behind the cynicism of "everyone does it" if some don't? If these women and men can endanger their lives so that I and my fellow South Africans can live free lives; if they risk it all, can I not do a little better myself?

South Africa is probably the only country in the world with a fully documented, publicly available list of qualified, capable civil servants in a variety of spheres who are truly, empirically incorruptible. Tried and

tested. The people mentioned above, and others, have been tested in a crucible of bribes, threats and public humiliation; and they have passed with flying colours. What country wouldn't want such a list?

Can you imagine what South Africa would look like if these heroes, both named and nameless, were allowed to just do their jobs, let alone lead the country? It would be incredible; and that is a future worth hoping for. It is a future of which we can all strive to be worthy.

So, my thanks go to Pauw, Van Loggerenberg, Meiring, Engelke, Ravele, Dramat, Sibiyi, Booysen and all the silent heroes. Thank you for the hope. I pray to be more worthy of it myself and for our country to be worthy of it, too.

OPINION



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Israel lambasted over African refugee crisis

RON KAMPEAS

Ykealo Beyene's story is – up to a point – feelgood fodder for a Saturday morning talk at synagogue.

As a refugee from Eritrea, he sought out Israel for the refuge it promised and cannot stop talking about the kindnesses that Israelis afforded him once he arrived. He lived in Israel for eight years, earning a bachelors and a master's degree, and now lives in Seattle in the US, a leader of his community.

But Beyene's story, which he related in a speech on Shabbat morning at Ohev Shalom – an Orthodox synagogue in Washington, known for its politically involved congregation – hit a bump towards the end. That's when he brought up his mission, backed by the New York-based philanthropist Joey Low,

to stop Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government from deporting or jailing thousands of refugees from Africa.

Some 60 000 African migrants entered Israel prior to the construction of a barrier on its southern border with the Sinai Peninsula in 2012. Israel, which considers them economic migrants, not refugees from persecution, encouraged the Africans to leave by handing them cash – generally to the tune of about \$3 500 (R43 000) – and a plane ticket. About 20 000 have taken the offer, leaving nearly 40 000 in Israel, most living freely.

Earlier this month, Netanyahu said those who did not take the deportation offer would face arrest. Rwanda and Uganda reportedly are the likeliest destinations for deportees, although both governments deny it.

In recent years, the refugees have made their way to Israel from various countries, including Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia.

"As much as I love Israel, I do not want to conceal how deeply concerned I am about the recent move by the government to expel African refugees and asylum seekers in Israel to Rwanda," said Beyene (33).

Low (66), an investor who has donated millions of dollars to Israeli causes over the years, says convincing American Jews to pressure Israel on the issue is a long shot, but he is determined to try.

"You cannot do something like this in the name of Jews and Israel."

His parents were Holocaust-era refugees, from Germany and Austria, and they loom large in his advocacy.

Protests by American Jews against the planned deportation have been confined to Jewish groups that are

Yossi Abramowitz and his children protest against the deportation of African migrants

Pic courtesy of Yossi Abramowitz



not reluctant to criticise the Israeli government on policy issues.

Even these groups, fighting what they see as threats to immigrants and minorities in the era of US President Donald Trump, lack the clout to make this a priority issue.

"The American Jewish community can be moved on these issues," said Libby Lenkinski, vice-president for public engagement for the New Israel Fund, which funds groups that assist the African refugees in Israel. "But between that and making it a cause célèbre? There's some distance." Russel Neiss, a St Louis-based activist, is keeping a running list online of organisations that advocated for Sudanese refugees from Darfur in the mid-2000s – when it was a signature Jewish advocacy issue in the US – but that are silent now that Israel may expel Africans facing similar dangers. It is called "Never Again is a Lie".

"This is not something that should be particularly difficult in terms of standing up for what's right. It has never historically been a right or left issue," he said. "A dozen years ago, you had the Jewish community engaging in activities for many of the refugees who are in Israel right now. We haven't lived up to our own promises."

Low wants the Jewish establishment to get involved and, to this end, has brought activists from Israel and former refugees such as Beyene to meet with major players. He threatened to suspend his annual \$100 000 (R1.2m) donation to philanthropic organisation the UJA-Federation of New York unless it agreed to a meeting with Unitaf Israel, a network of day-care centres for refugees, which it did.

The reaction at Ohev Shalom reflected the scepticism that the refugee advocates would face among conventional pro-Israel Jews. Some congregants peppered Beyene with questions such as, "Why Israel?" and "What's wrong with Rwanda?", while others expressed genuine sympathy.

Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld, who invited Beyene to speak, said Israel had to answer for its actions. "It is not like the Israeli-Palestinian issue, however complicated that is, where there are two sides responsible. This is how to make sure asylum seekers are safe."

Netanyahu has cast the problem as a security threat, describing the 40 000 refugees as "illegal infiltrators."

Refugee advocates have decried the use of the word 'infiltrator', once reserved for terrorists, as racist. An Israeli official has been more restrained, calling them "neither refugees nor asylum seekers, but

rather economic migrants who have come to Israel in search of work".

Advocates for the Africans say the government vastly underestimates the number of migrants who would qualify under international law as refugees, noting that in other countries where Africans have found temporary refuge, 56% of Sudanese and 84% of Eritrean applicants have been given asylum. In Israel, it is less than 1%.

They also note that the countries from which the Africans arrive are genuinely beset not just by economic woes, but also by severe persecution on the basis of ethnicity and religious and political beliefs.

The advocates also question the rush to deport, asking: "Why now?" A border fence with Egypt that a previous government, headed by Netanyahu, erected in 2012 cut the rate of Africans seeking asylum to zero, Netanyahu often notes. The perception that crime festers where the refugees settle appears to be supported more by anecdotal evidence than by statistics. Advocates say their crowding in south Tel Aviv, already beset by poverty, demonstrates a failure by the Israeli government to accommodate the refugees across the country.

Africans who have taken the government's offer of cash and a ticket to destinations in Africa report that they are often left without documents and vulnerable to robberies, or worse.

Others note that Netanyahu has recently boasted about the inroads he has gained on the African continent. Mass deportations or the incarceration of Africans would cloud the business deals and visits to Africa that Netanyahu has made over the past two years, said Yosef Abramowitz, an Israeli activist campaigning on behalf of the refugees, who has also done business in Africa.

"There's no way they [government] are going to drag people out of homes in Israel and keep those relationships," he said.

The refugees do not seek permanent status in Israel, Beyene said, but the chance he was afforded: to apply for refugee status in a third country. That process is long and leaves Africans in Israel for years, advocates acknowledge.

Abramowitz and Low said that, should Netanyahu go ahead with the arrests and deportations, there were a cadre of Israelis ready to take to the streets.

But, said Low, he might not be there to join in. "If they start deporting these people I cannot see myself going back to Israel." (JTA)



Memorial to iconic Holocaust survivor Simone Veil

TALI FEINBERG

The South African Holocaust & Genocide Foundation (SAHGF) recently hosted an event to commemorate and celebrate the life and legacy of French Holocaust survivor Simone Veil. She was a former European Parliament president, France's former health minister, a lawyer and a women's rights activist.

The event was unusual for two reasons: because the South African Jewish community and the SAHGF have no direct ties to Veil, and it was one of the few memorials to her that took place outside of France.

"I was reading about the passing of Mademoiselle Veil on the morning of July 1 2017 [she died the previous day] when the phone rang," explained SAHGF director Richard Freedman at the Cape Town event. "It was Holocaust survivor Helene Joffe, asking that we do something to commemorate the loss of this extraordinary woman, and in so doing, honour all survivors," he continued.

The SAHGF worked with partner organisations to set up tribute events in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Their efforts were recognised by Jacques Fredj, director of the Holocaust museum in Paris, Mémorial de la Shoah, who travelled to South Africa specially for the occasion.

In his address, Fredj delved into Veil's history, describing her family as a typical Jewish French one – not observant, but having a connection to their Jewish history and culture. "They didn't go to synagogue, but had a feeling of belonging to a people," he explained.

The Nazi machine did not differentiate, and in 1944, Simone Veil (who was born Simone Jacob in Nice, France), a teenager at the time, was deported to the Drancy concentration camp with her family. Her father and brother died; they are last known to have been sent on a transport to Lithuania. One of her sisters, Denise, had been travelling at the time and joined the resistance, but Veil, her sister Milou and her mother Yvonne were deported to Auschwitz.

She was fortunate to be with her mother and sister, and they worked as slave labourers. In a documentary about her life, we see Veil discussing this with a fellow survivor, who says that she felt sorry for Veil having her mother with her there, and that in the concentration camp world, it was better to be alone.

But for Veil, her mother was her world, and when she passed away from typhus at Bergen-Belsen near the end of the war (probably at a similar time, and nearby to Anne and Margot Frank), Veil never really recovered. "Her mind was always at Auschwitz, even 20 years later," said Fredj.

But her grief also became her "driving force". She and her sisters survived the war, and she went on to marry, raise a family, study law and go into politics. It was then that she became France's health minister, the first elected president of the European Parliament and a member of the Constitutional Council of France.

Regarding this work, Veil says in the documentary that her parents would have been horrified at the thought of a united Europe. However, after her experiences during the war, Veil saw this as the only way forward.

She is best known for working towards the law legalising abortion in France on January 17 1975, facing abuse and fierce attacks on herself and her family as she worked to create safe healthcare for women in her country.

"She was a woman of strong convictions," said Christophe Farnaud, the French ambassador to South Africa. He was one of the many dignitaries attending the Cape Town event. "These attacks [at the time of the abortion law] were often anti-Semitic, which must have been very hurtful for her, but she did not back down."

Joffe, who survived the Holocaust as a child by hiding, and now lives in Cape Town, spoke about her admiration for Veil: "We felt like she was a member of our family. We were from the same region of France and went to the same place for summer holidays. We respected her fortitude, courage, love for humanity, elegance and forgiveness. We somehow thought she was eternal. She was a French Jewish woman and an icon in every way."

Veil faced much tragedy during her life, including the suicide of her son Nico and the death of her sister Milou in a car accident. Yet until the end, she remained strong, positive and deeply invested in her Judaism.

She died at home on June 30 2017, two weeks before her 90th birthday. She was honoured by a full military parade and a ceremony attended by France's President Emmanuel Macron. The words of the Kaddish are inscribed on her grave.

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Keeping the Partisan Song relevant for generations to come

TALI FEINBERG

Cape Town-born educator Eli Rabinowitz is a man on a mission. He's determined to continue the legacy of the Holocaust survivors and those who fought the Nazis as partisans through the Yiddish song *Zog Nit Keynmol* (Never Say), also known as the Partisan Song – teaching people its history, significance and inspiration. In this way, says Rabinowitz, he will ensure that it is not lost to history.

"Just as Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein has taken the local Shabbos Project idea to a global level, my vision for this project is to spread it throughout the world," says Rabinowitz, who is working to teach the song, known as the Holocaust survivor's anthem, to schoolchildren across the globe.

"On Yom Hashoah, many Holocaust survivors sing *Zog Nit Keynmol*. However, a decline in the number of survivors has meant that it is being lost to history," explains Rabinowitz, who lives in Perth, Australia.

"The motivation behind this, the 'Don't Give Up Hope' project, is to educate and give meaning to the Partisan Song... and to continue the legacy of the survivors and partisans."

The United Nations' designated annual Holocaust Memorial Day – January 27 – is fast approaching, and with this year's theme being The Power of Words, Rabinowitz hopes that young people can learn the poem in time to recite it on that day.

The project had humble beginnings right here in South Africa, when Rabinowitz was invited to present it to 1 000 students at King David High Schools, as well as to an online class hosted by Herzlia High School in Cape Town and attended by five schools in the former Soviet Union.

He used some "out-of-the-box" techniques in his presentation, including showing YouTube clips of the song in unexpected genres, such as heavy metal and Japanese.

Since then, the project has snowballed. The Holocaust Education Trust in the UK has suggested the Partisan Song as the single most important reading for UN Holocaust Memorial Day 2018. Also, Philip Maisel, a 95-year-old Holocaust survivor, has come on board to promote the initiative. He was a friend of Hirsh Glik, who wrote the poem, and was one of the first people to hear it.

"World ORT has said: 'The thundering, defiant optimism of *Zog Nit Keynmol* raised the morale of fighters against the Nazis, but it can



Eli Rabinowitz pointing out where part of the song is inscribed at Yad Vashem

also be an inspiration to new generations – if they know about it," says Rabinowitz.

To ensure that this emotive song and its stirring message are not lost, World ORT is supporting Rabinowitz in his passionate campaign to introduce it to learners worldwide.

Rabinowitz, who is also a filmmaker, says he is motivated to do this work because he realised that there were so many fields that could be covered in teaching the Partisan Song, from history and the Holocaust to poetry and music. "The contextual relationship between these is special. In addition, the contrast between talking about the Holocaust and a poem that represented hope, heroes and spirited resistance is something quite powerful."

He adds: "I wasn't that comfortable with poetry when I was at school at Highlands North Boys and Sea Point Boys in the mid to late 1960s, and this is my chance to make amends!"

In consultation with Mervyn Danker, a past principal of Herzlia, a free study guide has been created and is available on Rabinowitz's website. "The study guide is a lesson plan, enabling teachers and pupils to work through the Partisan Poem using a more structured approach. This plan can be used in history, English or Jewish studies classes," he explains.

"Related creative activities include art, creative writing, multimedia and singing."

Rabinowitz has worked to gather numerous translations of the poem. "I initially sourced about 13 translations on various websites. When I visited the UK in

ENGLISH LYRICS
Zog Nit Keynmol (Never Say)
 Never say that there is only death for you,
 Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue.
 Because the hour we have hungered for is near,
 Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble: we are here!

From lands so green with palms to lands all white with snow.
 We shall be coming with our anguish and our woe,
 And where a spurt of our blood fell on the earth,
 There our courage and our spirit have rebirth!

The early morning sun will brighten our day,
 And yesterday with our foe will fade away,
 But if the sun delays and in the east remains,
 This song as motto generations must remain.

This song was written with our blood and not with lead,
 It's not a little tune that birds sing overhead,
 This song a people sang amid collapsing walls,
 With pistols in hand, they heeded to the call.

So never say that there is only death for you,
 Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue.
 Because the hour we have hungered for is near,
 Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble: we are here!

June, I did some research and found several more, eventually compiling 23 language versions. I have now utilised a WordPress plug-in to translate the poem into 104 languages! Understanding the words is crucial to the strategy. We need people to read the poem in a language they understand, not just to sing it in Yiddish or Hebrew."

Rabinowitz urges community leaders to arrange for the poem to be recited on UN Holocaust Memorial Day next week, as well as on Yom Hashoah on April 11.

You can help, he says: "Support the Jewish studies learning programmes that have adopted this project; encourage your kids or grandkids to learn the Partisan Song; ask Jewish youth movements and the South African Union of Jewish Students to participate; attend Yom Hashoah commemoration ceremonies; and motivate your shul or community choir to sing the song."

Rabinowitz's ultimate vision for the project is for students around the world, irrespective of their background, to understand the meaning, significance and context of this song which, for 75 years, has been the anthem of the partisans, of those incarcerated in the camps and ghettos, and of the Holocaust survivors.

"The words... were written in the darkest times for the Jews of Europe. Standing up for what is right is something we hope our children are taught and will practise. The poem's message is still relevant today and resonates with our youth. We have limited time, with survivors now in their twilight years. I would like their legacy to be embraced by the next generation."

- To learn more and download the free study guide, visit www.elirab.me.
- Rabinowitz will be presenting his project in South Africa at the HOD in Johannesburg on February 4, at the Greenside Shul on February 5 and at the Cape Town Holocaust and Genocide Centre on February 7.

A compassionate hairy tale...

SUZANNE BELLING

When Sarale Shishler (11) visits people in hospital, she leaves feeling sad because she "can't bear to see sick people, especially sick children" and felt she "had to do something to make them feel better".

She recalled her older sister, Chayale, who is now studying at a seminary in New York, had cut her hair several years ago and donated it to make wigs for cancer patients who had lost their hair after undergoing chemotherapy.

"If she did it, I thought I could do something like that too," Sarale said.

Her mother, Rebbetzen Naomi, told SA Jewish Report: "She made the decision entirely on her own. For young girls, hair is a very important part of their looks, and we are very proud that she decided to follow in her sister's footsteps."

Sarale's hair was plaited in a big, thick braid, which will go a

long way towards making a wig. Sarale's father, Rabbi Ari Shishler of Chabad of Strathavon, is very pleased with his daughter's decision.

Rabbi Shishler was totally unaware of her decision until she presented him with the braid. He immediately posted a picture on Facebook, inquiring whether anyone going to Israel could take the braid to Zichron Menachem, which specialises in cancer patient support, especially for children.

He also set about talking to congregants who were going to Israel and could take the plait with them to wigmakers. One of them took it last week to this organisation, which supplies children afflicted by cancer with new hair.

Zichron Menachem was founded in 1990 by Chaim and Miri Ehrental after their oldest child, Menachem, died of leukaemia at the age of 15. He'd been diagnosed at two years old. The Ehrentals

soon realised there were few places they could turn to for support. Zichron Menachem (which means "Menachem's memorial") was created to change this.

It has developed into Israel's leading provider of support services to children with cancer and to their families.

"Sarale felt she wanted to help a child in Israel," said her mother.

According to Roni Hecht, spokesperson for the organisation, one of the first questions that kids with cancer ask is: "Will I lose my hair?"

Zichron Menachem collects hair from donors around the world to make much-needed wigs for children who have lost their hair during treatment.

Chaim Ehrental, Zichron Menachem's founder and chairperson, said hair was an important part of a child's identity. "A wig can raise a smile on the face of a child, a young woman or a sick woman



Sarale Shishler holding her plait

in her difficult and threatening confrontation with cancer."

Hecht told SA Jewish Report that hair donations were received from all over the world, particularly from countries with large Jewish communities.

"All donations are sent to the wigmaker. A good wig can consist of up to seven hair donations."

While Zichron Menachem initially gave wigs only to young cancer patients, over the past five years, any woman suffering from cancer has been able to get a wig of her choice, thanks to a joint campaign with Pantene hair product manufacturers and an increase in the number of donations.

At the time of this interview, Sarale had not yet returned to school, where she is starting Grade 5. "No one has seen me yet with my shorter hair. But I am hoping that when they do, it will encourage more girls to donate their hair."

SAUJS wins international award

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) won the Israel Engagement Award at the 44th annual World Union of Jewish Students congress in Jerusalem on December 31.

This award is given to the union or group of students who've organised a unique programme that connects Jewish students to Israel in an innovative and meaningful way.

The award acknowledges the great efforts SAUJS undertook during their 2017 #SeeIsraelForYourself campaign across university campuses. The campaign aimed to make Jewish students feel more comfortable on campus during the BDS's notorious

Israel Apartheid Week.

The campaign took the average student through a journey of exploration where they could see as much of Israel for themselves as possible. They used discussion stations on campus where SAUJS members were there to chat about contentious topics. They used this event to help people understand the complexities of the Middle East and the nuances of the conflict, allowing people to engage and be educated.

The award ceremony was part of a five-day event that gathered young, global student leaders from 35 countries. It is considered one of the most important annual events for Jewish student activists around the world. About 160 delegates



Rachel Raff (SAUJS chairperson 2018) and Yair Katz (former SAUJS treasurer 2017)

attended workshops and sessions, shared ideas and collaborated on how best to serve their respective student constituencies.

Sunday (January 21)

• Second Innings hosts Lindsay K Hunter, aka Paleo Bonegirl, on Rising Star Cave's Chamber of Secrets. Time: Tea at 10:00. The meeting starts promptly at 10:30. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres, 85 George Avenue, Sandringham. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors includes tea and light refreshments. Contact: Linda Fleishman 011 532-9701

lunch for men and women. Free transport available. More info: rak@chabad.org.za or 011 440-6600

Wednesday (January 24)

• Chabad House: New fascinating JLI course: Communication: Its Art and Soul with Rabbi Ari Kievman. Time: 19:15. Venue: Chabad's Goodness & Kindness Centre. Contact: www.jli.org.za, 011 440-6600 or jli@chabad.org.za

INTERNATIONAL UN HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Sunday (January 28)

• Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre hosts Dr Aliane Deme on the topic of West Africa and the Holocaust. Time: 17:00. Booking essential.

Contact shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za or 011 640-3100

• Cape Town Holocaust and Genocide Centre hosts the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust and the opening of the Janjaweed exhibition. Time: 18:00. Booking essential.

Contact Dianne on admin@holocaust.org.za or 021 462-5553

Monday (January 29)

• Durban Holocaust and Genocide Centre hosts the exhibition opening of the Schwab letters from the South African Jewish Museum in Cape Town. Time: 19:30. Contact Gugu on 031 368-6833

Monday (January 22)

• Chabad Seniors Club offers Memory Enhancement with Cynthia Liptz (OT), plus interesting classes and



Media & Communication Specialist



The South African Zionist Federation Cape Council, is looking to recruit a full time, experienced media and communication professional. This Cape Town based role is perfect for someone who is confident, outgoing and has the ability to network in communal, political and media spheres

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1. Proactively build, implement and maintain a Pro-Israel public relations & communications strategy
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3. Manage and grow a segmented database of the Pro-Israel community
4. Drive all online/offline media campaigns including research and commission of Pro-Israel content (articles, graphics, audio, etc.) across
5. Be a spokesperson for the organization and coordinate promotional events on Israel-related issues
6. Build and maintain active and productive relationships with journalists and media personnel

REQUIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

1. A relevant tertiary qualification (Journalism, Communication, PR) is essential as well as at least 3 years' experience and/or exposure in the media and communication fields
2. A communally-minded individual who has demonstrated passion for advocacy work and Israel.
3. Excellent written and verbal communication skills with advanced networking and relationship building capabilities
4. A self-starter who is able to work autonomously while being accountable to a team.
5. A proactive team-player who uses their initiative to ensure service and performance are always to a high standard.
6. A confident and outgoing individual who is comfortable being in the public eye and is able to manage difficult situations and personalities in a calm and rational manner
7. Online and social media savvy as well as experience of managing websites and email campaigns is essential.
8. Comfortable working across all spectrums of political opinions and religious affiliations while prioritising the best interests of the organisation.

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Letters

THERE IS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE IN THIS GREAT LAND

There is a joke that in a Jewish restaurant the waiter needs to ask if anything is okay. It is a pity where we have become embittered by anti-Semitism and complain a lot, especially here in South Africa.

This great country has overcome many challenges. There have been droughts and recessions, apartheid and revolution. The previous stalemate of the strongest army in Africa battling the majority of its people was peacefully negotiated. The world was surprised and inspired by our peaceful transformation. Expectations of a bloody civil war fell away. White fears of a terrible retribution were replaced by the grace and goodwill of the black majority. Afrikaans civil servants and government workers never abandoned their posts, enabling democracy to unfold even though they believed that they would be doomed under the new dispensation.

Other problems have since arisen. The future seemed dark with Eskom unable to keep the lights on, and emigration increased drastically as a result. But Eskom has solved its supply problems and now generates excess capacity.

Yes, the potholes are bad, but not as bad as those in other countries such as Canada, Italy and Paraguay.

A while ago, many predicted that our currency would fall to 20 dollars, when, in fact, it has improved.

The crippling drought in many parts

of the country was broken, though not yet in Cape Town.

Other problems remain: The economy is down and there is terrible unemployment. Racial tensions are simmering even if most blacks and whites live and work together peacefully. It would be tragic if isolated tensions were to spread across to the mainstream. Revenge breeds revenge and does not feed our children; it can instead destroy them. Many whites feel alienated and believe that they cannot get jobs; they don't realise that there is much more unemployment among their black compatriots.

In Zimbabwe, it was unfair for a few white farmers to own most of the land. But two wrongs don't make a right. The sudden expropriation of the land destroyed the economy and led to more than 90% unemployment.

We now have new leaders here and in Zim. Hopefully, they will manage to uproot corruption and reduce our terrible poverty in a sustainable, level-headed way. At least the social grants are helping many of the poorest in this great land. May more assistance be found for all, black and white. South Africa still has many untapped minerals that can be mined and create jobs. It is vital that investors come on board. There is also much unused land to farm.

**Martin Zagnoev
Johannesburg**



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Machaneh 2017 is over, but the memories will linger forever

More than 2 000 Jewish children and teenagers had the time of their lives at one of the three youth movement camps. They were at Bnei Akiva, Habonim or Netzer machaneh. Each youth movement offered something different, but all provided wonderful Jewish fun and learning.

Read the individual camp roundups on www.sajewishreport.co.za



Moslie to face possible extradition to Israel

OWN CORRESPONDENT

On Tuesday, the Randburg Magistrate's Court ruled that alleged Israeli mob kingpin Shay Moslie will face a hearing in March on his possible extradition to Israel.

This follows protracted legal wrangling over the legal validity of Israeli and local documents submitted by the state in support of the extradition application.

Moslie was arrested in Johannesburg on an Interpol warrant in October 2015 and has appeared in the Randburg Magistrate's Court several times since then.

He faces several charges of murder and conspiracy to commit murder in Israel. The alleged offences relate to Israeli gang warfare, with several members of Israeli criminal organisations being killed and having their lives threatened.

Moslie has denied any knowledge of any warrants for his arrest in Israel for these charges before he left the country in 2011.

Anton Katz SC, representing Moslie, argued that his client's arrest was an abuse of his rights and of the court process, as the Israeli request was based on the evidence of only one witness.

In addition, he said the Israeli documents were flawed, as the dates indicating when they were signed were incorrect – being several days after the court hearing at which they were submitted by the state in January last year.

Moslie's counsel also queried the admissibility of some of the evidence disclosed in the state documents.

The state was represented by advocate Deon Barnard from the office of the director of public prosecutions.

In an unusual move in such applications, Moslie was granted bail early last year, after these issues were raised. Bail is hardly ever granted in an extradition request based on such



serious allegations.

Since Moslie's arrest, some of the pending charges in Israel have been withdrawn.

Delivering judgment, magistrate Pravina Rughunandan said it was premature for her to rule on the admissibility of the evidence in question, as that was a matter for the actual extradition application or the trial.

She pointed out that an extradition application was not a regular judicial proceeding, but was unique (*"sui generis"*), and the rules applying to it were not the same as those in an ordinary judicial proceeding.

She did not accept that the state's documentation was fatally flawed and said it was in the interests of fairness and justice for the extradition application to proceed.

The matter will be heard in Randburg on March 26 and 27.

Moslie's bail was extended.

Moslie has been in South Africa for six years and has various business interests in this country. He lives with his wife and young children in Johannesburg.

Community Column

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Making our case to the ANC against an Israeli embassy downgrade

The new year is now well underway, with the beginning of the school year commencing this week. Once again, our Jewish day schools recorded excellent matric results. I congratulate our successful matriculants and wish them all success as they embark on the next stage of their lives.

The year 2017 also ended with the election of a new ANC leadership. While it is still early days, we are seeing a renewed sense of purpose at the senior leadership level, and are hopeful that this will lead to positive results.

Regrettably, the ANC electoral conference also saw the passing of a resolution to downgrade the South African embassy. In the months prior to this, the South African

Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) devoted extensive time and resources to carrying out a comprehensive evaluation of the possible implications of such a step. The SAJBD, by way of communication sent to our board president Mary Kluk, was invited by the ANC to give its input into the debate, and it was decided to provide the ruling party with as broad a range of relevant information as possible to assist it in coming to an informed decision.

In compiling our recommendation – subsequently published in a booklet of submissions from a range of stakeholders – no area where a downgrade might impact was overlooked.

There was, of course, the trade aspect, related to which was the question of what this country could gain from the technical expertise and know-how that Israel is willing and able to provide, such as in water management, agriculture, hi tech, communications and medical innovation. How might a scaling down of diplomatic relations impact on existing and future bilateral trade relations, as well as on

foreign investment?

To this end, we commissioned the Tutwa Consulting Group, an apolitical, academically accredited research body, to provide an analysis of the possible economic implications.

Next, we emphasised the religious-cultural importance of the Israel connection for Jews and a significant proportion of the Christian population. Here, we received extensive support for our position from, amongst others, the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities.

The potential psychological impact of a downgrade on the Jewish community was likewise factored in.

A third important area concerned the role that South Africa wishes to play in helping to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian question, something that a downgrade in relations would surely

undermine.

Through this extended process, in which we worked closely with other Jewish communal organisations, we were able to present a multifaceted case, arguing that an embassy downgrade was likely not only to undermine South Africa's own objective interests, but would do nothing to help – indeed, might even hinder – the cause for Palestinian statehood.

Naturally, we were disappointed about the outcome of the debate, particularly as in the end, what we saw was less of a genuine issues-based discussion than an outpouring of emotive, one-sided rhetoric. However, the issue is far from concluded.

As previously pointed out, the fact that the ANC has voted for a downgrade does not automatically mean that this will become government policy. We remain confident that we have made a cogent case against a downgrade, and will therefore continue to engage with government and the ANC, as well as with all stakeholder groups likely to be affected by it.



Above Board
Shaun Zagnoev

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

The dirty business of politics and friendship



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Amid the hot air sprouted by politicians during this December/January break, US President Donald Trump took the cake for something significant for South African Jews who consider themselves both Zionist and African.

This story goes back to January last year, when Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent the newly inaugurated Trump a warm message: "Congratulations to my friend, President Trump." Here was a man, said Netanyahu and Israeli rightists, who would unequivocally support Israel, including West Bank settlements, and was not afraid to stand up to the Palestinians and the Muslim world – a welcome contrast to his predecessor, Barack Obama. Conservative Jews, including South Africans, backed Trump, particularly among the Orthodox, hoping he would strengthen Israel's right wing.

He pleased them further last month by announcing that the US recognises Jerusalem as Israel's capital, upending decades of established US policy, and would begin moving the American embassy there. Delighted Israelis decided to name a planned railway station after him near the Old City. Photos of Trump standing at the Kotel caused Jews worldwide to think he was their friend.

But be careful who you call your friend. Michael Wolff, celebrated author of the bombshell new book *Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House*, exposing the White House's disastrous inner workings, has said in interviews that Trump is racist, xenophobic and sexist, views women in "as transactional a way as he thinks about everything" and is "aware of who is Jewish in a way that feels creepy", although not saying he is anti-Semitic. Trump denies it all.

Never one to disappoint, Trump dropped a new bombshell last week in a meeting with lawmakers at the Oval Office on immigration reform, calling African nations "shithole countries", provoking outrage worldwide. Netanyahu boldly declared recently that Israel

is "coming back to Africa", amid high-profile visits to African countries to strengthen ties. Does he have the courage to criticise his "friend" Trump for his comments about Africa? Trump is child-like, and one day when he is piqued by something Israel does, will use a similar slur for it.

What do conservative South African Jews think? Will they continue applauding Trump because he supports Israel and Jerusalem as its capital? Or will they broadcast disgust for his comments about their African home?

They cannot hide behind the notion that it is not their affair what the American president does in relation to other countries. Trump's words are gutter-level politics which dehumanise Africans. Jews have a long history of being dehumanised by such politics, prior to being attacked – by Nazis or others.

The African Union (AU), representing the continent's countries, condemned Trump. Will SA Jews stand with the AU, or refrain because some AU countries are anti-Israel? A group of 54 African countries at the UN denounced "the continuing and growing trend from the US administration toward Africa and people of

African descent to denigrate the continent and people of colour". Will Israel and Netanyahu support them against Trump?

At its recent national elective conference, the ANC resolved to downgrade South Africa's embassy in Israel. Jewish community organisations showed Israel loyalty by protesting and sending mass mailings to members. What about their loyalty to Africa? They may be Zionists, but they are also African.

A Jewish public statement denouncing Trump for insulting Africa could be appropriate. It might also gain credit for them in ANC ranks, or be an opportunity to agree, for once, with someone like ANC deputy secretary-general Jessie Duarte, who is no friend of Israel, but publicly denounced Trump.

Cavorting with people like Trump may serve short-term goals for Israel, as perceived by Netanyahu, but it generally comes back to haunt. Israel was built with the help of many Jews from those "shithole" African countries, including from South Africa.

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

A little more understanding

Some time ago, clothing store Zara marketed an item that looked like an overrun from the now defunct Auschwitz clothing line. Jews around the world were deeply offended that anyone could be so oblivious to their painful history. They were also perplexed because the item was really, really ugly. And so Jews protested and the product was removed. And no mannequins were harmed in the process.

And everyone was happy.

Contrast that with the H&M situation. H&M was wrong. It was as stupid as it was insensitive to market a hoodie worn by a black child with the word "monkey" imprinted on it. H&M is an international brand, and greater care needed to be taken to ensure that no one would be offended by any image. It isn't their first day in this business.

Condemnation, as in the case of Zara, was swift. H&M withdrew the brochure, apologised for its decision and everyone should have been happy.

But they weren't.

South Africa, and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) in particular, reacted violently, with the mannequins bearing the brunt of this tale. The question is: Why? Why would the H&M situation elicit a different response to that of the Zara one?

It is easy to explain the behaviour of the EFF as hooliganism or even political posturing and point scoring. There is no excuse for a political party, or anyone else for that matter, to break

the law. But that is a simplistic and knee-jerk response.

What is more important is to try to understand why it is that people reacted with such anger towards H&M.

I believe that the answer lies in the way in which the past has been dealt with for Jews of Europe versus the current situation in South Africa. The painful wound of the Holocaust is one that will never fully heal. The 1930s and 1940s in Europe will remain part of the Jewish consciousness forever. And no matter how far we travel from this horror, it remains with us.

But we have been allowed to deal with it. We have spoken, written, discussed and dealt with it. We have made movies and we have been compensated financially.

Germany has apologised and still has laws in place today to deal with the embarrassment of the history of their making.

One visit to Berlin, and a tourist will see how much part of current Germany this remains.

Contrast that with South Africa, where many painful and difficult conversations are yet to be had. People have not been compensated fully (Black Economic Empowerment has not achieved this) and the past has not been fully explored. When change did take place, the people of the country rushed to embrace so-called rainbow nation imagery. Although this is wonderful in theory, it was premature. The country, and particularly those who suffered, needed to go through a process of mourning that the

goodwill and the best intention denied them.

What this means is that, as a people who have suffered and have had to deal with the most terrible past, Jews are equipped and able to assist South Africans in dealing with theirs.

The anger that was unleashed by the H&M advert is an indicator that the matter is far from settled and that much more needs to be done to close this ugly chapter of South African history.

The EFF's behaviour was unacceptable. It is

THE INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



a political party and needs to uphold the law and respect the alternative legal processes that are available. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't have a little more understanding of just how painful and unsettled the past can be.

'We were played,' says Krengel

>> Continued from page 9

"I left saddened and disillusioned by the ANC," he said.

There was just "one lone voice" in the crowd who called for further investigations, but this wasn't explored. "If there were any other Israel supporters, they would have been drowned out and intimidated," he said.

Asked why he didn't raise his own voice in opposition, he said he wanted to see "how things played out first" and wasn't sure if he was allowed to have his say. "By the time the sixth speaker came up, I realised it was a bloodbath. I realised there was absolutely no point in speaking. I was the only man wearing a yarmulke, so if they wanted to hear my views, they could have asked. They didn't. It would have been like going to the Vatican and preaching the Koran."

After this, the international relations

committee presented what it heard to the ANC plenary, which made the final decision to downgrade the embassy to a liaison office "immediately and unconditionally".

Wendy Kahn, national director of the SAJBD, and Ben Swartz, chairperson of the South African Zionist Federation, said the two organisations had spent months engaging with the ANC, government and civil society. The board held a number of high-level symposia on the issue, always inviting government's participation and forwarding relevant findings.

It is uncertain whether the international relations commission considered any of it.

Meanwhile, Krengel said that although they had "lost this round", it wasn't a "train crash, it was more a bruising". He added that the SAJBD would discuss the way forward in the coming months.

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Eritrean refugee joins Israel's cycling team for 2018 Giro d'Italia

MELANIE LIDMAN

Israel's only professional cycling team recently signed an Eritrean refugee living in Sweden to the team, as they geared up to help host the start of the 2018 Giro d'Italia, one of the world's biggest bike races.

The move by the Israel Cycling Academy came as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was ramping up his bid to begin mass deportations of Eritrean asylum seekers in March.

Team general manager Ran Margalioth said the team's decision to sign Awet Gebremedhin, a 25-year-old Eritrean refugee, wasn't meant as a political statement, despite the current situation in Israel.

"Awet is a special rider, based on his personal story and his abilities," said Margalioth. "We are not a political movement, we're a sports team, and... we believe that sports is about connecting people," he said. "Everybody deserves a chance, regardless of where they come from. We are proud of Awet for being a part of us. It shows that if you work hard, you can get to the top of the sport."

Last week, government ministers approved a plan to imprison illegal African migrants who refused to leave Israel "voluntarily".

Netanyahu was also reportedly seeking ways to forcibly expel undocumented asylum seekers, to reduce strain on the prison system.

In reaction, hundreds of people protested in Tel Aviv's Neve Shaanan neighbourhood against the deportations. They clashed with a group of local residents in favour of the deportations, who accuse the African migrants of destroying the neighbourhood.

Gebremedhin was a professional rider on the Eritrean national team when he absconded during a race in Italy in 2013 and then escaped to Sweden to apply for refugee status.

During the 18 month-long process to receive refugee status, Gebremedhin stayed hidden in his friend's apartment, worried that he could be sent back to Eritrea if he went outside and was questioned.

Because he was unable to go outside or exercise, Gebremedhin sometimes almost starved himself in order to keep his body lean for racing.

In November 2015, he was declared a legal refugee. He spent three months collecting bottles, saving money from the deposits to buy his own bicycle so he could begin training again.

In 2017, Gebremedhin trained with an amateur team called Marco Polo, but the



Photo courtesy of the Israel Cycling Academy

team folded after one season.

Gebremedhin joined an Israel Cycling Academy training camp last month and accepted a spot on their development squad.

He was asked to join after a spot opened up on the roster when Turkish rider Ahmet Orken requested a release from his two-year contract, following political pressure over US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital last month.

"I still cannot believe it," Gebremedhin said. "I waited for this opportunity almost all my life and there were moments of darkness and despair when I almost lost any hope that this miracle could actually happen. But now, everything that I had to go through, it all seems worth it."

This is Israel Cycling Academy's first year competing at the Pro Continental level, which is the equivalent of a Division II team. Previously, the team had competed at a Continental (Division III) level since its formation in 2014.

There are 24 members from 16 countries currently on the team, including five Israelis.

The development team consists of 60 promising Israeli riders, all of whom are currently serving in the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) as soldiers, with a special dispensation for athletes that allows them three months of travel to international competitions each year during their service. Gebremedhin had been the only non-Israeli and non-IDF soldier on the development team.

The Israel Cycling Academy is under the

spotlight as Israel prepares to host the start of the Giro d'Italia, the world's premier cycling race after the Tour de France, from May 4 to 6.

The 196 riders will spend the first three days of the 21-day course in Israel, starting with an individual time trial in Jerusalem, before riding 180km in the Acre and Haifa area and 210km from Beer Sheba to Eilat. The cyclists will then fly to Italy for the remainder of the race, ending in Rome or

Israel Cycling Academy signed Awet Gebremedhin, a 25-year-old Eritrean refugee living in Sweden, on January 8 2018

the Vatican.

It is the first time that one of the three major cycling races – the Tour de France, the Giro d'Italia and the Vuelta a Espana – will have parts of the course in a location outside of Europe.

"I believe this Giro can become our breakthrough to turn this sport into a mainstream sport in Israel," said Margalioth.

Israel's first Velodrome, an indoor high-speed racing circuit where riders race on a specially sloped track that allows them to ride almost perpendicular to the ground, is expected to be completed in Tel Aviv's Hadar Yosef neighbourhood in September.

"This means a completely new Olympic sport will be open to Israeli athletes," said Margalioth.

Ahead of the Giro, the Israel Cycling Academy will be co-ordinating with a number of cities to run children's programmes and public races, including a special event at the annual Cycling Jerusalem ride around the city, which will take place a week before the Giro.

"We believe that we have a great opportunity to promote this sport so that kids will hunger to ride a bike," said Margalioth.

"We want to get people out of their iPhones and on their bikes."

Maccabi SA eyeing international games

JACK MILNER

Maccabi South Africa is planning to send sporting teams to three upcoming international events.

The first is the Maccabi Youth Games, which is to take place in Israel at the end of July. This event aims to bring 1 000 young Jewish sports people from around the world to Israel. It will take place over 10 days and appeal to Jewish youngsters born between 2002 and 2004. Only a select number of team sports have been included – Futsal, a variant of football, Netball and Rugby 7s. Applications are open for this event at www.maccabi.co.za.

South African sportspeople will also be competing in the Pan American Games, hosted by Mexico, and the European Maccabi Games, hosted by Hungary. Both events will take place in 2019, just two weeks apart.



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