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Culture of anti-Semitism in the Western Cape is concerning

NICOLA MILTZ

Suspended ANC Western Cape provincial chairperson Marius Fransman will soon learn his fate with the imminent release of a report into allegations of anti-Semitism arising from comments he made more than five years ago.

SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) national chairperson Wendy Kahn said the outcome of the Fransman case would establish a principle that political leaders should be held to account for making inflammatory comments against faith and ethnic communities.

Kahn explained that there was “growing concern” that a culture of anti-Semitism in the Western Cape was being allowed to fester and grow. She felt strongly that closure in the Fransman matter would go a long way to address these concerns.

“Generally, the ANC and the government condemn all forms of hate, including anti-Semitism. The problem arises when it emerges in the Western Cape,” said Kahn.

Fransman was the ANC Western Cape chairperson and deputy minister of international relations and co-operation when the SAJBD made its complaint against him to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) in March 2013.

The Board’s complaint was over numerous “offensive” comments, made by Fransman in various public appearances, which had violated Jews’ rights to equity and human dignity.

The SAJBD approached the commission only after several requests to Fransman’s office to meet to discuss his statements received no response.

In a radio interview broadcast by Voice of the Cape on 26 February 2013, Fransman condemned the DA for allegedly giving building contracts – which he said had previously been held by Muslims – to Jewish businessmen. The SAJBD said Fransman’s remarks

“clearly intimidated” that in his view, the Cape Town Jewish community was unfairly benefiting economically at the expense of the Muslim community.

The Board said his statements amounted to “inciting mistrust and resentment between sections of the South African population”.

Mary Kluk, president of the SAJBD, said at the time that pitting one religious community against another for vote-catching purposes was deplorable under any circumstances. She added that it was particularly unacceptable when coming from a high-ranking member of government.

According to the Board, instead of apologising for his remarks

and retracting them, Fransman compounded his original offence by accusing the SAJBD of being “disloyal to South Africa”. In one newspaper report he is quoted as saying: “The Board should be more patriotic and should ask itself whether it represented South African Jews or the Israeli government.”

The SAJBD questioned why he was bringing Israel into the fray. According to the Board, despite numerous conciliatory meetings between the two parties, Fransman continued making derogatory statements about the Jewish community. He also denied he was trying to garner votes from the Muslim community and accused the

Board of “nose-picking” instead of concentrating on more important issues.

Fransman, who is openly pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel, told the Cape Town Press Club on 10 October 2013 that ethnic division in Cape Town was a reality if one looked at property and land ownership. He claimed that the reality was that 98% of the land and property owners were white and, in particular, Jewish.

In December 2015, the SAHRC found in its preliminary investigative report that Fransman had indeed infringed the Jewish community’s right to dignity and said that he should apologise.

However, the final SAHRC report

“mysteriously” changed, according to the Board. The final one found that Fransman’s utterances did not constitute a violation of the Jewish community’s right to equality and dignity. It did not order him to make any apology, nor did it find him guilty of hate speech.

The Board suspected “political interference” by the SAHRC’s chairperson, Lawrence Mushwana, who has since been replaced. This about-turn was against the backdrop of several allegations by numerous affected parties of report tampering and high levels of senior staff turnover at the SAHRC at the time.

In court papers filed in December

Continued on page 8>>

Meeting of presidential minds

Photo: Ilan Ossendryver



Former US President Barack Obama and SA President Cyril Ramaphosa share a light moment during the 16th Nelson Mandela Annual Lecture, held at Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on Tuesday. They are closely watched, in the front row, by Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein and former president Kgalema Motlanthe and his wife, Gugu Mtshali.

Photo: Howard Sackstein

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UK chief rabbi tears into Labour over anti-Semitism definition

STAFF REPORTER

The Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom warned the Labour Party it would send an “unprecedented message of contempt” for British Jews by adopting a softened version of anti-Semitism at a meeting of its top governing body on Tuesday.

Labour has come under fire from UK Jewish groups over the past week for not including the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA’s) definition of anti-Semitism as part of the new code of conduct set to be approved by the party.

In a letter to Labour’s National Executive Committee, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis wrote: “It is astonishing that the Labour Party presumes that it is more qualified than all of the above and, in particular, the Jewish community, to define anti-Semitism.”

Labour’s version omits at least four points featured in the IHRA definition, including accusing Jews of “being more loyal to Israel” than to their own country; claiming that Israel’s existence is a “racist endeavour”; applying a “double standard” to Israel; and comparing “contemporary

Israeli policy” to that of the Nazis.

The definition features mostly examples of anti-Semitic behaviours that do not concern Israel, such as calling to harm Jews or denying the Holocaust or the Jewish people’s right to self-determination.



Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

“Adoption of Labour’s new alternative to the internationally accepted IHRA definition will send an unprecedented message of contempt to the Jewish community,” wrote Mirvis. “Other groups might also

legitimately ask if they will be next in having the prejudice they are subject to defined for them.

“This is a watershed moment. Those who vote for anything but the full IHRA definition will be placing themselves on the wrong side of the fight against racism, anti-Semitism and intolerance.”

Mirvis’s letter came just a day after 68 British rabbis signed an open letter decrying anti-Semitism in Labour and calling for the party to adopt the IHRA’s definition of anti-Semitism.

The party’s Jewish affiliate has also sharply criticised the softened version of anti-Semitism and warned that its adoption may put Labour in breach of the Equality Act, a key UK anti-discrimination law.

Legal advice from The Jewish Labour Movement argues that the party’s decision to adopt a softer definition of anti-Semitism than that used by the government means it treats Jews less favourably than other groups, *The Guardian* reported on Monday.

The 1999 Macpherson Report, an inquiry conducted in the wake of the racially motivated 1993 murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence, argues that each group has the right to define prejudice against it.

The Jewish Labour Movement argued that by removing key clauses from its definition of anti-Semitism, Labour rejects the rights of Jews to define perceived anti-Semitism, and thus discriminates against Jews.

A spokesperson for the Labour Party rejected the accusations of bias. Labour also denied it had created a new definition of anti-Semitism. – *Times of Israel*

Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
17:17	18:09	Johannesburg
17:40	18:35	Cape Town
16:59	17:52	Durban
17:19	18:12	Bloemfontein
17:12	18:06	Port Elizabeth
17:05	17:59	East London

Torah thought of the week

It’s up to us to build a better world

I jot down these thoughts, with mixed emotions, returning from an enriching South African Rabbinical Conference in our Holy Land.

It’s most uplifting to experience the vibrant rejuvenation of Jewish life after nearly two millennia of exile. Being one of thousands visiting the Kotel is a powerful feeling, yet Jerusalem is in a state far from the glory days that were – as is the case in Southern Israel, where rockets and incendiary balloons launched from Gaza are destroying the region and endangering populace on both sides of the fence.

This period on the Jewish calendar is one also filled with mixed emotions. On the one hand, this Shabbos is the 9th of Av, which is usually observed with fasting as the saddest day on the Jewish calendar commemorating many tragedies that befell our people.

However, one is forbidden to fast on Shabbos, so the mourning is postponed to Saturday night through Sunday evening. Our sages say that when Moshiach comes, Tisha B’Av will be transformed into a joyous festival. When it occurs on Shabbos, we experience a taste of this transformation, so halacha fully

permits luxurious eating, drinking and even rejoicing.

I’m confident that the Israel Defence Forces are currently combating the antagonists to defend our sovereignty. Equally important is our assignment. We must mobilise our spiritual warfare through prayer, charity and acts of goodness.

According to Jewish law, one is only allowed to destroy in order to build something greater and better than before. So, how could G-d have allowed for the temple’s destruction? Knowing this and seeing so many Jews at the Kotel reconnecting to their roots makes me hopeful for our resplendent future.

Yes, we still mourn, and yes, we are truly sad. But we are confident that things will get better – and fast (no pun intended).

There is an interesting custom that I heard some people had. As the sun descends toward the conclusion of Tisha B’Av, they go home and sweep the floor. Why? To prepare their homes for the arrival of Moshiach.

Indeed, the Temple’s demolition so long ago was only allowed by G-d to make way for an even better and

greater future. We can precipitate that utopian era of Moshiach with our Mitzvot.

So, what can we do? Plenty.

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Women: The acronym for “Neirot Shabbat Kodesh” is Neshek – Hebrew for weapons. Engage this mitzvah of lighting Shabbos candles, your spiritual arsenal, to defend our people and bring light and warmth into the world.

If you don’t yet have mezzuzahs, get them now, one for each doorway in your home and office. If you already have mezzuzahs, get for a friend or a relative.

While others engage in destructive weaponry, we can utilise our weapons of mass construction. What mitzvah will you do?



Rabbi Ari Kievman, Chabad Goodness and Kindness Centre

south african

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Dan Sevel’s death devastates Jewish and golfing community

NICOLA MILTZ

“He was a big guy with a big heart.” So say close friends of the late Dan Sevel, whose untimely death last week shocked the South African golfing and Jewish community.

Mystery surrounds the tragic passing of the much-loved sporting entrepreneur, who was Sun International’s sports marketing manager and the tournament director of the Nedbank Golf Challenge. Sevel, 41, died shortly after midday on Thursday, 12 July following a meeting at Sun International’s head office in Sandton. Police are investigating the unusual circumstances leading up to his death. It is believed – but not confirmed – that he leapt from the fifth floor balcony of the Sun International offices at Sandown Valley Crescent.

Police investigations are ongoing and reports of suicide have not been confirmed yet, said Sandton police station spokesperson Captain Granville Meyer. Meyer added that an inquest docket had been opened.

Meanwhile, loyal friends, colleagues and Sevel’s beloved family are clinging to his lasting memory and legacy as they grapple with his unexpected passing, which they say “came from out of nowhere”.

Heartbroken friends told the *SA Jewish Report* this week that they are reeling after the tragedy. “Dan never had a bad bone in his body. He was loved by everybody who knew him. It is hard to find a more kind, compassionate and humble man,” said close friend and former colleague Barney Girnun, the joint managing director of marketing agency MSC Sports, where Sevel worked for several years.

Sevel had also worked for six years in various positions at Sun International before leaving in 2007. He went back in 2015 as the sports marketing manager.

In that position, Sevel took over as tournament director of the prestigious Nedbank Golf Challenge event in 2016. He took over from Alastair Roper, who had retired after 20 years at the helm.

During Sevel’s tenure, the popular tournament at Sun City has, according to insiders, grown in stature. It is now part of the Rolex Series – the eight premium golfing events on the European Tour.

Friends described Sevel as “warm, caring, popular and happy”. He was passionate about golf, sport in general and sports development. There were no visible signs of his being depressed, say those who knew him well.

Girnun said that the sports-loving Sevel seemed in good spirits the night before his passing, and had been messaging and bantering with close friends on a WhatsApp chat group about England’s semi-final World



Cup defeat against Croatia.

Only a few days prior to Sevel’s passing, Girnun’s company had held a braai in his honour at the company’s new offices in Birnam, Johannesburg. “Dan was such a humble guy. He did things quietly in the background and always steered away from the limelight. He was happy at the braai and genuinely touched by the lunch we held.”

One friend, who wished to remain anonymous, said: “There was no indication anything was going on. Dan was his usual friendly self with his big, warm smile.”

Sevel had many friends and belonged to a WhatsApp group called the Breakfast Club – which included many school friends from their King David Linksfield days – which met regularly for breakfast.

Meanwhile, tributes poured in from around the world.

On winning the Scottish Open last Sunday, the multiple European Tour winner, South African Brandon Stone, paid a moving tribute to Sevel during a press briefing. He said: “I took a little look up on the 18th fairway there, saying this one was for all the boys back home that are going to be missing you...”

Golfing icon Gary Player said: “We are all saddened and shocked. He always seemed such a happy man, whose work for Sun International was simply outstanding. He was such a gentleman who undoubtedly will be dearly missed. Dan leaves a legacy of hard work and dedication.”

South African golfer Louis Oosthuizen

tweeted: “Our thoughts and prayers are with Dan Sevel’s family. RIP Dan.”

Legendary golfer and personal friend Ernie Els wrote on Twitter: “Devastated today! Dan our friend we going to miss you! Truly gutted!!”

Titch Moore, ten-time winner on the Sunshine Tour, said: “Dan Sevel, it was an honour to have known you. You will be truly missed.”

Said Merrick Bremner: “We have lost one of the finest men I have ever had the pleasure of meeting! Dan, you were larger than life, always smiling, laughing and just a joy to be around! An inspiration to us all!”

European Tour winner Dean Burmester wrote: “So sad to have to say goodbye to one of the most inspirational men I have ever come across. What you did for South Africa and a lot of young professionals was amazing. Going to miss you, Dan.”

Cricketer Vernon Philander wrote: “Shocked by the news that this champion of a human being has passed on.”

The Killarney Country Club (KCC), of which Sevel was an active member, described Sevel as a “great man”.

“He was a loyal KCC member who gave generously to members of the club, those less fortunate than him and everyone he came in contact with. Dan was a true mensch... he had a positive impact on the lives of so many.”

Five-time European Tour winner Ross

Fisher added: “Very very sad to hear. Had the pleasure of spending time with Dan. Great man and fun to be around. Will be missed.”

Zack Byrd, a regular on the Sunshine Tour, said: “Devastated to hear the news out of SA with the death of Dan Sevel. He was a great person and a wonderful supporter to the game of golf. His smile will truly be missed on the Sunshine Tour.”

Golfer Branden Grace tweeted: “Very sad news to hear about Dan’s passing. His friendliness knew no bounds! He was such an incredible guy.”

Olympic gold medallist Roland Schoeman tweeted: “Incredibly saddened to hear about the passing of Dan Sevel. He always went out of his way to help me and many other sportsmen and women.”

In a statement, the Sunshine Tour said: “He was more than a friend. We will miss Dan Sevel dearly. Working with him on tournaments was always an exercise filled with smiles and laughter. Golf has lost a close ally.”

Sun International described Sevel as a “kind and caring soul who always aimed to please others”.

Sun International spokesperson Zoleka Skweyiya said Sevel’s death had come as a shock to everyone at the resort hotel chain. “Dan will always be fondly remembered by us as a gentle giant and a thorough gentleman,” said Skweyiya. “He always aimed to please others. Nothing was ever too much trouble for him.”

• *Sevel is survived by his wife Louise, his son Ben, parents Dave and Linda, and his sister Lauren.*

Shashi Naidoo denied access to Israel

TALI FEINBERG

South African celebrity Shashi Naidoo – who last month announced that she would go to “Palestine” on a BDS-hosted tour to “re-educate” herself – is scheduled to leave on Monday, despite being notified that she will be denied access to Israel.

Naidoo told the *SA Jewish Report* via WhatsApp on Wednesday afternoon: “After my meeting at the Israeli Embassy, I have been declined access!”

“I believe that flagging an individual, whose only intention was to push an agenda of love and light, is dubious,” she wrote. “I have said numerous times that I have no desire to be a political tool. My only hope was to meet the people, experience the land and give aid to those in need. It was never a BDS itinerary. I really am devastated.”

She later wrote: “I was moving to Israel to do

my Orthodox conversion. And now, nine months later I am not allowed entry.” Naidoo had been married to a Jewish man, Mark Sandler. They divorced in 2011.

Explains Israel’s deputy ambassador to South Africa, Ayellet Black: “Israel has passed a law that, like any rational sovereign state, it denies entry to those seeking to harm the country. A BDS-planned mission such as this obviously intends to do just that.”

Sources say that Naidoo planned to fly to the region with her mother and one or two other people on Monday, and hoped to enter the Jewish State through Jordan. Since the BDS press conference last month, she has been subjected to many hours of lectures by BDS stalwarts and has declined to meet with the South African Zionist Federation. She also cancelled a pre-arranged meeting with Israeli peace activists and famed ant-apartheid journalist Benjamin Pogrund.

Continued on page 4>>

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Why are bomb scares targeting Woolworths?

TALI FEINBERG

Out of the eight bomb scares that hit Durban last week, four of them were at Woolworths stores, which begs these questions: Is the company being targeted, and is it because of a more sinister agenda?

Disgruntled employees, customers or activists could be behind the scares, says Ryan Cummings, director of Signal Risk, an Africa-focused political and security risk-management consultancy. He pointed out that the history of Woolworths being targeted by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in the past, for importing Israeli goods, cannot be discounted. In 2014, a pig’s head was placed in a Cape Town Woolworths store in an act of intimidation.

Cummings thinks the bombs scares would be affecting Woolworths, as customers exercise heightened caution by possibly choosing not to go to their stores in Durban – but at the same time, they could avoid shopping centres as a whole.

This describes the catch-22 nature of the situation: that the random nature of the bomb threats means the public don’t know where they will appear next, but at the same time, the possibility that Woolworths is being

targeted adds to the confusion.

Jasmine Opperman, director for the Terrorism, Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC), says: “The problem is that there are no arrests to determine intent or motive. That this could be related to an anti-Jewish agenda is one possibility that we cannot ignore.” On the other hand,



she is not getting answers, even from reliable contacts, which demonstrates how tight-lipped the Hawks are being regarding the investigation.

When asked why answers are so scarce, Opperman feels that the investigators “do not know [who is behind the attacks], or they may have names of suspects but are still investigating, just like with the Ottawa mosque attack” – referring to an attack which took place in Verulam, KwaZulu-Natal, saw one person killed and two injured. A device planted on the scene was similar to the ones found over the last week.

“With the need to show success to the public, I do not see them holding back once they are apprehended. By keeping quiet, public fear and mistrust are just heightened.”

She points out that in the Thulsie case (where twins Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee Thulsie were apprehended on plans to commit acts of terror at Jewish institutions), “we see the State struggling to put evidence of terrorism to the court, so they could be taking extra precaution, if indeed these are terrorism cases. I do think they are playing it safe with investigations.”

Willem Els, senior training co-ordinator at the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria,

agrees: “The police are very silent on the matter and seem not to want to take the public into their confidence with reassuring information,” he told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“The situation is panning out to be less and less of a probable terrorist attack. For one, no organisation has accepted responsibility, as they normally do. It seems more and more like an extortion racket to me. Once again, due to the lack of any more information, we can only speculate. The challenge is that it remains a threat to the general public and shop owners as these devices may kill innocent people should they be

activated.”

The string of bomb scares began on 7 July, the day of the Vodacom Durban July horseracing event, when two devices were found under cars in the Berea area. Two incendiary devices caused fires in Woolworths stores, which were evacuated, and there was a further scare at a Spar.

Two hoaxes at Woolworths stores – the latest on Thursday – added to the fear and confusion that Durban is experiencing. On Saturday, the Kenilworth Centre in Cape Town was evacuated due to a bomb scare.

Jevon Greenblatt of the Community Security Organisation (CSO) says that the SA Police Service is looking at the threats being linked to extortion, “but I honestly cannot

say if this is true or just a way to keep everyone calm. I would say that people should be vigilant wherever they go.”

In response to a series of questions from the *SA Jewish Report*, Woolworths spokesperson Kirsten Hewett said: “We can assure the public that we take these incidents in KwaZulu-Natal extremely seriously and we are doing all that we can to ensure the safety of our people and our customers. Due to the sensitivity of the investigation, we are unable to divulge the additional protection and detection measures we have put in place in our stores.

“We continue to work closely with the relevant authorities, who are providing input and guidance.”

Shashi Naidoo denied access to Israel

>>>Continued from page 3

It is understood that the BDS-planned tour under the auspices of BDS-affiliate South African Council of Churches was carefully and deliberately orchestrated to ensure that Naidoo did not get a balanced view of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

Last month, Naidoo initially made headlines for receiving death and rape threats because she committed the “crime” of defending Israel on Instagram. Yet just two days later, she was at a BDS press conference. There, she said she wants to “re-educate” herself by visiting “Palestine”, which she would be

doing with the South African Council of Churches and the SA Jews for a Free Palestine.

At the time, the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and South African Zionist Federation released a statement, saying: “It took less than 48 hours for the BDS to do a complete turn-around over Shashi Naidoo... Indeed, the intention now is to set her up as a poster girl for the BDS movement.”

Israel clearly took notice of this, and the irony is that thanks to BDS SA, the girl who initially stood up for Israel will now no longer be able to go there at all.





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Bobroffs wanted by Interpol

TALI FEINBERG

Seeing the faces of Ronald and Darren Bobroff, the fugitive father-and-son attorneys, plastered on “Wanted” posters circulated by Interpol is a startling reminder that they have not been forgotten by South Africa’s law enforcement.

The posters are Red Notices – requests to locate and provisionally arrest an individual pending extradition. Interpol’s General Secretariat issues these at the request of a member country or an international tribunal, based on a valid national arrest warrant. A Red Notice is not an international arrest warrant, explained Tony Beamish on *Moneyweb* last week. The Red Notices were issued back in 2016, but it only emerged this week that they were issued.

The Bobroffs were partners in, and directors of, the personal injury law firm, Ronald Bobroff & Partners (RBP) in Rosebank, Gauteng. The Red Notices state that the Bobroffs are fugitives wanted for prosecution for fraud. The notices read for both individuals: “It is alleged that the suspect committed fraud in that cheques were made out to clients of the firm Ronald Bobroff and Partners Inc as if they were the beneficiaries of said cheques, when said cheques were, in actual fact, paid into their own or other family members’ bank accounts.”

The Bobroffs face a range of civil and criminal charges in South Africa, including illegal fee agreements, tax evasion, theft, money laundering and fraud. Since they fled South Africa, there have been multiple investigations, conducted by the Law Society, the South African Revenue Service, the Road Accident Fund, the Hawks and the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), which have amassed an estimated amount of ill-gotten gains exceeding R1 billion. The Law Society of the Northern Provinces (LSNP) said: “The most devastating finding was that the Bobroffs’ trust account had ‘lost its identity’. They had mixed their clients’ funds with their own.”

Ronald and Darren Bobroff and their families fled South Africa in 2016, the day before they had agreed to hand themselves over to the Hawks to stand trial on charges of fraud and theft. Ronald’s wife, Elaine, stayed behind and was arrested before being let out on bail, having to hand in her travel documents and report to the police station weekly.

It is unclear how or why the Bobroffs were let out of the country. They currently live in the upmarket Sydney suburb of St Ives. On social media, Darren Bobroff is not shy about his life in Australia, even posting a picture of the Sydney Harbour on 8 July. On Ronald Bobroff’s Facebook page, a South African Jewish community member recently asked him to “come back with your son to SA and stand trial”.

But it seems that he, too, is settling into his new life. *Moneyweb* came across a testimonial from New South Wales (NSW) barrister and law professor Peter Cashman, showing that Bobroff senior is intending to rejoin the Australian legal profession. Cashman wrote that he believes Ronald Bobroff to be “a person of integrity and passion with regard to the interest of victims of all forms of personal injury and medical negligence, and a lawyer who has devoted most of his professional life to serving the South African attorneys’ profession”. He also writes that Ronald Bobroff, notwithstanding his being struck off of the Roll of Attorneys in South Africa, will be “a valuable member of the [Australian] solicitors’ profession...”

NPA spokesman Luvuyo Mfaku told the *SA Jewish Report* that “the extradition process cannot begin until the investigation is complete”, and with a forensic report still outstanding, this may take time. “You have to ensure that when a person is extradited, they

will not face any other charges than the ones on the charge sheet,” he explained.

Despite all these processes in play, the Bobroffs insist on their innocence. On the website www.bobroffronald.com, they say they were “forced to flee South Africa in fear for their lives” and that they are “victims of a vendetta”.

Their local attorney, John Cameron, reminds readers that the NPA has had five years to close the case since a charge of fraud was first laid at the Rosebank Police Station in 2013. “To the knowledge of the Bobroffs, no extradition application has been finalised by the NPA – the only question that arises therefrom is why not, and the only inference to be drawn therefrom is that whatever criminal complaints of fraud that exist are without any substance and/or foundation,” he wrote in response to questions from the *SA Jewish Report*.

He said that the Red Notices do have consequences for his clients. Should they attempt to travel out of Australia, they face arrest and thereafter deportation to South Africa (essentially a type of extradition without due process).

He emphasises that “the Bobroffs continue to maintain their innocence” and they “hereby invite any of your readers to submit, in writing to our offices, instances where they have been defrauded by



Ronald and Darren Bobroff

them in order that they may then consider such submissions and to then, if necessary, react thereto”.

Furthermore, he adds: “All the Bobroffs request is that the Jewish community does not decide in the ‘court of public opinion’ that they are guilty of crimes of fraud before knowing all the correct facts [that] the Specialised Commercial Crimes Unit (SCCU), despite a passage time of five years, is strangely not prepared to disclose to them.”



SHABBAT CHAZON 20-21 JULY AND TISHA B'AV 21-22 JULY
WITH RABBI HANOCH TELLER
INSPIRATIONAL STORY-TELLER, FILMMAKER & AUTHOR OF 28 BOOKS



SHABBAT NACHAMU 27-28 JULY
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FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

THE JEWISH JOURNEY FROM TISHA B'AV TO ELUL

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south african

Jewish Report

May your choices reflect your hopes...

“Part of being optimistic is keeping one’s head pointed towards the sun, one’s feet moving forward.” It seems so fitting to start my editorial with a quote from South Africa’s late president and icon, Nelson Mandela, who would have been 100 this week.

I start with this because I am concerned about the negativity in our community. I believe that negativity breads negativity and it is not helpful to us – in fact, quite the contrary. Also, while there are real issues at stake, we are in a far better situation than we have been in the past. There are so many wonderful things happening in this country and community.

What I find astonishing is that there are some people who almost feed on our negativity and fear for our future.

An ex-South African man contacted me recently in the hope that I would publish his letter lambasting the Chief Rabbi for not insisting South African Jews make aliya. This man – who I will not name – said he made aliya 41 years ago and now wants all South African Jews to follow him.



He insists we are in such dire straits that we are on the verge of a holocaust. He exaggerates the situation in South Africa to such an extent that I don’t recognise the country he is talking about.

What’s more, he accuses the Chief Rabbi of not scaring us into leaving because it would render him jobless. Seriously!

I politely told him that the *SA Jewish Report* prides itself on keeping our readers abreast of what is really happening in this country and that, compared to Jewish people in Europe and even the US, we have very little anti-Semitism, etcetera.

He responded by telling me that “it is obvious I know very little about the real situation”, citing fearful letters he received from his South African friends. They were so despondently negative, finding any little negative factual morsel and blowing it out of all proportion. This is what negativity can do to a person and a community.

I couldn’t help thinking about the scenario of many ex-South Africans who have emigrated to Australia and their favourite Shabbos table conversation piece being how terrible South Africa has become. Some ex-South Africans love to run South Africa down because they have left and life is not greener on the other side. It is tough.

So, to make themselves feel better about their decision, they feed on and pick up every unfortunate incident in South Africa and make a meal of it. That way, they can believe moving to Australia wasn’t such a bad idea.

Now, don’t get me wrong: Not all emigrants do that and not all ex-South Africans are bitter about South Africa, but there are a number who are.

I know how easy it is to get negative and believe things are bad, bad and even worse than that.

But they are not.

Yes, the economy is not as it could be. Yes, we have a serious crime problem.

But we got rid of a corrupt president and now have a true leader at the helm. We live in a democracy. As for anti-Semitism, compared to most countries, we have very little. And what we do have, the Board of Deputies goes hell for leather to ensure that those at fault know they can’t mess with us. (See page 1.)

We do have an anti-Israel problem that stretches deep into the ruling party, but we also have massive support from South African Christians.

We live in a beautiful country, where there is freedom of expression, freedom of religion and a free press. The media in this country tells it like they see it, and whether it is showing a president up for who he his or exposing another corrupt official, it is allowed. It is difficult to openly destroy a country if there is a free press.

I am concerned that South African Jews are worried and negative about being here. I am concerned that as a newspaper, we may have added to that by telling things as they are. But it is our job to highlight the problem areas, and we perhaps we don’t always highlight the good that is happening around us quite as much. Mea culpa!

I would never try to dissuade people from making aliya or emigrating, but if you plan to do it, do it because you have a genuine reason to be somewhere else. Don’t run from here because the truth is, you take your problems with you.

I recently bumped into someone I was at school with and I wondered why I hadn’t seen her in years. She said she and her husband had emigrated to England and had spent 15 years there before coming home. “Our life there was decent. We made a few friends and we eventually both had good jobs. We hardly saw our children and when we did, we were so busy trying to clean the place and get ready for the next day that we didn’t have any quality time with them.”

But that wasn’t why they returned. It was about coming home to people who they had a real history with, to people who knew you when you were a child, to their people. “We came home to family and friends who enveloped us as we stepped off the plane.”

Of course, we need to deal with our problems and not hide our heads in the sand. We need to be a part of South Africa’s solution, and there are so many people in our community who are. I so often find those people are not fearful because they are working towards the betterment of this country. They are the solution and are not looking for reasons to leave, they are looking for reasons to stay.

As Madiba so aptly put it: “May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears.”

Shabbat Shalom!
Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

How kite flying turned into all-out warfare

**DATELINE:
MIDDLE EAST**

Paula Slier



It was less than three years ago that a wave of stabbings engulfed the streets of Israel – particularly Jerusalem and the West Bank – prompting many to refer to the flare-up in violence as a “knife intifada”. Now, it looks like a “kite intifada” is on the cards.

It is ironic that Israel has some of the world’s most sophisticated air defence systems, but it hasn’t been able to stop these kites – a relatively simple phenomenon of kites dangling burning cloth or embers – from being flown into Israel.

It’s reminiscent of when Palestinian militants first started using Qassam rockets in the early 2000s. The “homemade bottle rocket” took the Israeli army by surprise, especially as it was something that could be made in a kitchen.

The great Israel Defence Forces (IDF) struggled to contain the threat of what is effectively sugar, smuggled or scavenged TNT, along with potassium and urea nitrate – both widely available fertilizers.

It was only much later that it deployed the “Red Alert” early warning system, made up of advanced radar, which detected rockets as they were being launched. Since March 2011, the Iron Dome has entered the fray, intercepting rockets before they can hit their targets.

Now again, like in the early years of the Qassam rocket, Israeli military figures are scratching their heads over how to stop kite and balloon warfare. While the IDF Chief of Staff Gadi Eisenkot is against firing at the teenage flyers, many in the political echelon support it.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has ordered the IDF to stop the firebombs – reportedly giving Friday as the deadline. This raises concerns that if it doesn’t happen, another Gaza war could be on the cards.

Kites have long been a big deal in Gaza. Seven years ago, Palestinian children set the world record for flying the most number of kites at one time. The ones they built had slogans on them calling for a lasting peace with Israel, in which Palestinian children could live in safety and security.

The message today is very different. The kite flyers have admitted to stumbling upon the idea. Wanting to provoke Israeli soldiers, they say they attached a burning rag to a one-dollar kite and were delighted when it fell on the other side of the border and started a fire.

This incendiary kite flying is relatively new to Gaza. However, over the past few months, thousands of kites and balloons – about 20 a day – have landed in Israel. They have been attached to firebombs and Molotov cocktails in order to inflict maximum damage.

According to the Israel’s foreign ministry, more than 400 fires were started on Israeli farmlands and nature reserves, destroying more than an estimated 7 000 acres of land and costing more than \$2 million (R26 million) in damages. A huge number of wildlife have been killed and experts say it will take many years, if at all, for the ecosystem of plants, predators and prey to fully recover.

Not all the kites have caused fires and there haven’t been any fatalities on the Israeli side. Nevertheless, they’ve certainly put psychological stress on the communities living in southern Israel. They’ve in turn increasingly put pressure on the Israeli government to do something.

For the first time since the phenomenon started, Netanyahu visited the southern Israeli city of Sderot on Monday.

Until now he’s been more focused on the country’s northern border, where he’s trying to prevent Iran from establishing a permanent military foothold in Syria.

Netanyahu is wary of escalating tensions on the Gaza border. However, last weekend more than 200 rockets and mortars were fired by Islamic Jihad and Hamas. Israel responded with its largest airstrike in the coastal strip since 2014. In a rare admission, Hamas said it had sent the rockets and mortars to deter Israel from more attacks.

Also known as Operation Protective Edge, that 2014 war started this month four years ago. Still, Israeli residents on the border find themselves living in as precarious a situation now as then.

At the time of writing, a ceasefire brokered by Egypt between the sides is holding, but tensions are high. The United Nations special envoy says an all-out war was narrowly averted. Jerusalem insists the kite flying must stop for the truce to sustain itself. However, Hamas earlier threatened that if the kite flyers are attacked, they’ll “go back to rockets”.

For this reason, the Israeli military urged the Cabinet “not to cross the line: not to try to kill the organisers, lest it trigger a general escalation on the border”.

And so Israel has drafted civilian drone enthusiasts as army reservists and instructed them to fly their remote-controlled aircraft into the kites. The army has also deployed a number of companies along the Gaza border to monitor the skies and quickly put out the fires.

The good news is that their effect is being felt. In recent weeks, there has been a steady decline in the size of the areas damaged by ensuing fires.

But just like with the Qassam rockets, a long-term effective means to stop the kites has yet to be found. As for the balloons, they are flown from deeper inside Gaza, often at a height of more than a kilometre, and are hard to spot with the naked eye before landing and starting a fire.

Then there’s the added problem of how the international community and media judge any Israeli response.

The recent six-week “Great March of Return”, in



which more than 130 Palestinians were killed in protests along the border, is still seen by many in the global community as a “disproportionate” Israeli response to “unarmed” Palestinian protesters. That is despite all Israeli arguments to the contrary.

There will be little to no sympathy if the IDF now kills children flying kites and balloons because of some fires near the Gaza Strip. It will also be seen as immoral.

When Jerusalem finally gets a handle on the “kite intifada”, there will no doubt be something new in the pipeline that will terrorise the Israeli public. The cycle will continue for as long as the two million Gazans feel compelled to search for desperate measures to break the decade-long blockade imposed on them by Israel and Egypt. And, for as long as they search, Israelis will continue seeing their response as another form of Palestinian terrorism.

Why are our diplomats and ministers repeating the anti-Semitic lie?

OPINION

Milton Shain



Political commentators have been justifiably outraged by Julius Malema’s latest salvo against South African Indians. The Economic Freedom Fighters leader has essentialised a group of people and ascribed to them racially prejudicial attitudes. Generalising in this way can only be dangerous. Surprisingly, only one person has, to my knowledge, commented on an equally ugly statement – this time, alluded to in a report in the *Sunday Times* (“Tensions over downgrading SA’s embassy in Israel,” 17 June) in which it was claimed that South African diplomats have warned against our government downgrading its ties with Israel because “a large part of the global economy was in Jewish hands and the implementation of the [ANC] resolution [to downgrade ties] might not bode well for South Africa’s bid to attract global investment”.

Roshan Dadoo, in a letter to the *Sunday Times* (1 July), is surely correct to note the anti-Semitic nature of the comments attributed to the diplomats. It is extremely disturbing to know that this sort of thinking still has currency, especially among educated people trained to build bridges and defend our interests. Surely, diplomats are not unaware that they are plugging into an old canard that

had ugly and murderous consequences? They should know that Jews number less than one-fifth of 1% of the global population and can hardly be described as controlling “a large part of the global economy”.

This is sheer fantasy and echoes the worst of European anti-Semitism in the 19th and 20th centuries: Alphonse Toussenel, editor of the anti-Semitic journal *Phalange*; Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, who called Jews the “enemy of mankind”; Edouard Drumont, editor of the Jew-hating *La Libre Parole*, and Julius Streicher, founder and publisher of the virulently anti-Semitic Nazi newspaper *Der Stürmer*.

South Africa’s radical rightists of the 1930s and ’40s also feared the “cosmopolitan” Jew, who they alleged was pulling the global financial strings. Fascists such as Louis Weichardt, the leader of the Greyshirts, played on the idea of Jewish power rooted in financial control, as did the burgeoning National Party under DF Malan in the late 1930s.

If quoted correctly, our diplomats have bought into this world of fantasy and are voicing ideas found in the discredited *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, an infamous fabrication concocted by the Tsarist secret police in the 1890s.

Based on a French political satirical pamphlet compiled in the 1860s against Napoleon III and a German anti-Semitic novel, *Biarritz*, written by Hermann Gödsche, the *Protocols* claimed that Jews had been plotting the destruction of Christendom and its replacement with a totalitarian utopia controlled by Jews.

Initially, the *Protocols* was relatively

obscure. However, in the wake of the Russian Revolution and fleeing White Russians during Russia’s civil war, its noxious ideas percolated into the West. Notwithstanding their exposure as a crude forgery by the (London) *Times* in 1921, the *Protocols* attracted enormous readership. It spread throughout the English-speaking world, including South Africa where, in the famous “Greyshirt Trial”, they were deemed a fabrication by the Eastern Districts Local Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa.

The *Protocols* publication was translated into many languages. Thirty-three German editions appeared before Hitler came to power. The mythological *Protocols* rapidly became a standard text in the arsenal of anti-Jewish propaganda. Ultimately, they served, in the words of the historian Norman Cohn, as a “Warrant for Genocide”.

To this day, the *Protocols* is widely available, particularly in ultra-right wing circles and the Arab world.

Our diplomats, it seems, share this long-standing anti-Semitic fantasy. One wonders if they – and our International Relations and Cooperations Minister Lindiwe Sisulu – recall the dressing-down a former deputy foreign minister, Fatima Hajaig, received from former president Kgalema Motlanthe after she had told a rally in Lenasia in 2009 that “Jewish money” controlled America and most Western European countries.

Her conspiratorial thinking appears to constitute part of the fabric of our foreign service.

If reported correctly, our diplomats and ministers may need to avail themselves of the fantasies driving anti-Semitism, and especially the ideas that drove the *Protocols*.

• Milton Shain is emeritus professor in the department of historical studies at UCT.

• This article was first published on *Times Select*.

Chabad to bring joy with Chanukah in July

In a world that seems to be facing so much darkness, now is the time...

In a world that seems to be facing so much darkness, now is the time for us to light up the world. Our country needs it, Israel needs it, the world needs it.

Whilst at times we may feel powerless, there is a way in which we can actively make a difference.

Light has the innate power to dispel darkness – particularly the light of Chanukah candles.

We have, therefore, undertaken to get a Chanukah menorah into every Jewish South African home, where every Jewish family in South Africa will be a participant in the movement to generate light and dispel the darkness.

The campaign is simple: every Jewish household will register at Chanukah.org in order to receive a free Menorah.

That is all it takes for us to make a difference to our country, and indeed, the world. – Rabbi David Masinter

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Will recyclers lose their income with the new rubbish law?

JORDAN MOSHE

Huddling together in the dark, a group of men sit on a traffic island waiting for the dawn. With hoods drawn closely to their faces against the winter cold, they sit surrounded by refuse and try to keep warm.

To them, this is a night like any other, and is simply part of their job. When morning comes, they will walk from house to house to earn their income, but they are not begging. They are looking for plastic bottles.

These are men who rely on their collection of recyclable waste to make a living, and their lives have recently been made even more difficult.

“If we don’t sleep here, we won’t find anything in the morning and will have no money to take home,” says Sylvester Khumalo. When 20 two-litre bottles are worth less than R5, every single item counts.

Affiliated with local recycling initiative Hugo’s Greenhood, Khumalo is one of a group of men who walk the streets of Glenhazel almost daily, collecting material they can recycle. These men have a routine – they know when residents put their bins out and when they should start collecting. But unless a recently instituted by-law is practised sensitively, they could lose their only source of income.

At the beginning of this month, going green went from being a lifestyle choice to a legal requirement for the residents of Johannesburg. Plans were announced in June by councillor Nico de Jager, City of Joburg member of the mayoral committee (MMC) for environmental and infrastructure services, to make efficient waste disposal a compulsory part of city living.

Put into effect by a programme called Separation at Source, the laws mandates households to set aside glass, paper, metal and plastic. Officials have said that every single residence – be it house, complex, suburban estate or township – will be made to recycle. Comprehensive routes for collection have been established, bags for recycling will be distributed, and no home will be ignored by the refuse collection team.

Of the 800 000 households in the city, 300 000 will receive designated plastic bags to start mandatory recycling. According to the city’s waste management entity Pikitup, residents’ need to change their perspectives to make it work.

According to news site TheSouthAfrican.com, De Jager explained that residents who do not comply will soon face penalties. He said: “It’s going to be a project that we phase in, but over the next six months, we will be looking to give out penalties to residents who aren’t compliant.”



Mlungisi Mabaso and Sylvester Khumalo

Concerning the impact this will have on informal recyclers, both Pikitup and De Jager maintain that the new recycling policy will strive to include those who rely on recycling as a source of income.

Pikitup’s managing director, Lungile Dhlamini, has given his assurance that there will be no negative impact on recyclers with this programme, responding to fears that they would be left without waste to reclaim. However, it was stressed that the estimated 6 000 recyclers must organise themselves into groups so that they can better engage with them.

This is not enough, say the recyclers. They say that if Pikitup carries out collection in certain areas on particular days, they (the recyclers) may miss out on their opportunity to gather any recyclable material. “There are particular days when we go to some homes,” says Khumalo. “If Pikitup is going there before us, people put their rubbish out early, it gets collected a day before we come, and we get nothing.

“We now need to sleep close to some homes

so that we can get there in the morning before Pikitup does. If we don’t do this, we won’t have any money for food or anything for our families. We need them to know when we collect and to consider us.”

According to one of his colleagues, the meetings proposed by Pikitup are not worth attending. “I don’t know of anyone that goes to the meetings they offer,” says Mlungisi Mabaso. “I do my collection, take my things to recycle and earn my money.”

He and others stressed that recyclers can often be fiercely territorial and even aggressive, making the need for them to service a particular area on their terms vital. “We don’t go to the dumps. Ever.” Says Mabasa. “If you go there, the collectors there will kill you. That is their place.”

According to Sharon Ruben of Hugo’s Greenhood, turf wars are just one among many issues facing the recyclers. Meeting with these men on Tuesday evening on a local traffic island, Ruben discussed the grim reality that they face and stressed just how dependent they are on their work.

“This island is their motel for the night, open and freezing,” she says. “We are living in 2018 and people are forced to spend the night like this so that they can earn a living honestly. They wait here for morning so that they can collect refuse in time. Recycling is a billion-dollar industry and these men are playing their part, but they’re not seeing any profit from the city.”

Lisa Lowenthal, the founder of environmental and social upliftment group SkeemSaam, agrees. “Recycling efforts like theirs save Johannesburg over R700 million a year. They are helping us. Pikitup wants compliance and it just makes them richer. We need to show these collectors some sensitivity and work according to a schedule that gives them consideration.

“If we operate according to the schedules dictated by big companies, these people will miss out. This new law can help them only if people are sensitive to their needs and their schedules.”

In this vein, Ruben and the collectors of Hugo’s Greenhood outlined two simple requests to consumers: Separate recyclables and be mindful of their schedules. “It’s good that people will now have to separate their recyclables,” says Ruben. “It makes a huge difference to these men, who won’t have to rummage through waste to find something they can recycle. It really doesn’t take much to

separate your rubbish.”

As for mindfulness, the men expressed their gratitude to residents of Glenhazel, roughly 60% of whom they say are recycling. Still, they stressed how important it is for people to put these recyclables out in time for them to collect, before the rubbish is collected by waste disposal services.

Their collections are carried out in Killarney, Rosebank and Houghton on Mondays; Houghton, Waverley, Norwood and Orange Grove on Tuesdays; Glenhazel on Wednesdays; Sandringham and Glenhazel on Thursdays; and Bruma, Cyrildene and Observatory on Fridays.

“If residents, Pikitup and us collectors have the same schedules, it would be perfect,” says Khumalo. “People put out their recyclables, we collect and then Pikitup comes afterwards. That works for everyone.”

Ruben added: “These are men just trying to put food on their tables. We need to do more, and the separation of our rubbish and bearing them in mind when we take it out is really not asking much.”

Culture of anti-Semitism in the Western Cape is concerning >>Continued from page 1

2016, the SAJBD said it was “clear that the SAHRC acted unlawfully and irrationally in altering its findings and recommendations in the preliminary report. The SAHRC’s findings and recommendations on human dignity were completely altered and no explanation was provided.”

The SAJBD’s associate director, David Saks, said this week: “It was against this that the Board launched a review application, which the SAHRC did not oppose, and which led to the current preparations for a revised finding by the SAHRC now being awaited.”

At the time of Fransman’s utterances, Kahn said there was a “deafening silence” from both the ANC and the government. She told the *SA Jewish Report* this week that there seemed to be a “culture” of anti-Semitism in the Western Cape which she felt “very strongly about”.

She made reference to several instances of alleged anti-Semitic comments emanating from political leaders in the province. These included comments made by ANC Member of the Provincial Legislature (MPL) Sharon Davids some months ago that Western Cape Premier Helen Zille was “in love with the Jewish mafia” and that Jews were to blame for the Cape’s water crisis. Davids’ comments were further aggravated by ANC provincial secretary Faiez Jacobs, who attempted to justify the hate speech, said Kahn.

To date, Kahn insists, the ANC has not publicly or formally condemned and distanced itself from Davids’ and Jacobs’ comments. Neither had it distanced itself from inflammatory comments made by Tony Ehrenreich, the then ANC Cape Town city councillor who made a threat to SA Jewry. He said: “An eye for an eye – the time has come to say very clearly that if a woman or child is killed in Gaza, then the Jewish Board of Deputies, who are complicit, will feel the wrath of the people of South Africa with the age-old biblical teaching of an eye for an eye.”

No ANC member or government official condemned this clear incitement to violence, said Kahn. The case is still with the SAHRC.

On 9 November 2016 the ANC found Fransman guilty of two counts of misconduct. His ANC membership was suspended for five years.

While Fransman has been sitting in the political wilderness ever since his suspension, he may find himself making headlines again with the imminent findings of the SAHRC report.

Meanwhile, the SAJBD calls on the ANC nationally and in the Western Cape to show that it is genuinely committed to fighting racism in whatever form it arises.

MOST SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS ARE ENTITLED TO EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION IS THAT SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS WITH ASHKENAZI HERITAGE ARE OF LITHUANIAN DESCENT AND THAT ONLY THOSE WHO ARE ABLE TO PROVE THEIR ELIGIBILITY FOR LITHUANIAN CITIZENSHIP ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN A EUROPEAN PASSPORT. THE FACT IS THAT MOST SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS DO QUALIFY FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP, WHETHER THEY CAN PROVE THEIR LITHUANIAN LINEAGE OR NOT, AND MOST SOUTH AFRICAN JEWS OF SEPHARDIC HERITAGE ARE ELIGIBLE FOR EUROPEAN PASSPORTS TOO.



Adv. Avi Horesh has in depth knowledge of the applicable legislation and in his experience, the majority of South African Jews have ancestors who were illegally deprived of citizenship. As their descendants, these Jews are eligible for European citizenship which will result in their obtaining a EU passport.

Adv. Avi Horesh is a leading Israeli lawyer who specialises in the field of European immigration and citizenship. He has in-depth knowledge of the applicable legislation and advises that the majority of South African Jews have ancestors who were illegally deprived of citizenship, and accordingly, their descendants are eligible for European citizenship, which would result in their obtaining a EU passport. Horesh explains that many South African Ashkenazi Jews of Lithuanian origin have been refused Lithuanian citizenship because their heritage is actually Polish. They would accordingly be entitled to Polish citizenship and an EU passport.

In addition, many Sephardi South African Jews of Greek, Moroccan or Turkish origin, amongst others, are entitled Portuguese citizenship, and an EU passport.

Ashkenazi:

Adv. Horesh advises that eligibility for a Lithuanian or Polish passport depends on the city from which your grandparents (or their parents) hailed. After WWII borders in Europe changed, resulting in the countries in which cities were found changing. The adjacent map of Poland and Lithuania illustrates that cities such as Vilnius, which was a polish city until 1939, is now a Lithuanian city. The resultant effect for descendants of Jews who were born in Vilnius is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined, but an application for a Polish passport may very well be successful.

Sephardi:

Descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are most likely eligible for a Portuguese passport. If applicable, Adv. Horesh is able to obtain an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which an application for Portuguese citizenship can be made and will most likely be successful. Adv. Horesh currently resides in Israel,

but has spent seven years in Poland, and is recognised as a leading lawyer in the field of European citizenship. He has a full understanding of local immigration laws.

Living in Israel — a four-hour flight from Warsaw and Vilnius — provides Adv. Horesh with quick and easy access to Poland and Lithuania. Accordingly, he is able to work closely with local professionals who assist him in tracing documentation required for successful applications for European citizenship.

In addition, and as a result of his close ties with Portuguese authorities to date he has a 100% success rate with applications for Portuguese citizenship.

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SA Jews have a tremendous role to play, says Stephen Koseff

JORDAN MOSHE

Optimism in the global economy has dropped worldwide, and South Africa is no exception, says Stephen Koseff, CEO of Investec Group South Africa. “Policy uncertainty, fluctuating markets and tight budgets are among the problems we face, and things don’t seem to be getting any easier,” he told an audience of mostly business people at a Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society (JWBS) breakfast on Tuesday.

However, he says, if we both South Africa and its Jewish community – assume the big role we are capable of filling, there may be hope yet.

Koseff, who is due to step down from his position at Investec in October this year, shared not only economic insights, but also outlined his own journey in the world of finance.

“This past Sunday marked my 38-year milestone of working at Investec,” he says. “When I became part of a bank which would one day become known as Investec, it had R1 million in capital to its name, and made R280 000. Today, it has over R3.6 trillion in assets, wealth management and its banking division altogether, and makes almost R10 billion. What a journey it has been.”

Hailing from Benoni, Koseff joined the company in 1980, only six years after it was founded as a small leasing and financing company by Larry Nestadt, Errol Grolman and Ian Kantor.

Having initially worked at Schwartz & Fine (which later became Arthur Andersen Inc), he qualified as a chartered accountant in 1975. From 1976 to 1980, Koseff worked as a professional assistant at Alex Baillie Koseff & Wheeler, and then joined Investec.



way it did just after the Rubicon speech in 1985. “We would have ended up going to the International Monetary Fund for money, and that is a terrifying thought.” The extent to which South Africa has suffered from financial corruption is incalculable, he says. “At a BRICS event I recently attended [BRICS being the group of five emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa], a minister said to me that we will never understand the extent of the damages the Gupta relationship caused this country.

Our international profile was shocking. I dreaded [then president Jacob] Zuma attending the G20 summit, fearful of what he would say. He walked off stage when a question was too challenging for him. “The confidence in our country suffered tremendously, and our ratings around the world plummeted.

“While we have improved, we still feel its effects, and some of those involved in that unhealthy relationship are still in the government. If President Cyril Ramaphosa had not replaced Zuma, I don’t want to consider where we would be now.”

On this note, Koseff is fairly confident in South Africa’s future. “If we can stabilise our financial policies and improve our growth rate, we can achieve so much,” he says. “Our current rate is

between 1.5 and 1.8. It should be 5%. Without this, we have no momentum. We are like the Investec zebra with a thorn in its foot: we can shuffle along, but we can’t run.

He continues: “Under Ramaphosa, the country can attract foreign investment and regain the confidence of investors. In many ways, he is like Madiba – he engages in dialogue and gives thought to process. For too long, the presidency just made decisions without thought. That’s a dictatorship.

“Yes, we have our problems: land redistribution, the proposed health insurance scheme, Eskom. All these need to be addressed. But rather than attacking the financial institutions, the government must see that Treasury and the banks are supporting pillars of the country and can help resolve these issues.

“Calling ourselves a developing country retards our growth. We are capable of development and need to move beyond our current reality. Education is in tatters, state bureaucracy is a problem, but there is hope. We are in the midst of a tough season, but that doesn’t mean the field is dead and offers no opportunity. Our banks are stable, and we have what to offer the world.”

According to him, the key is an emphasis not on statistics, but on people. “When it comes to finance, the key is to believe in people,” he says. “People are as important as the data. Companies today punt that data is everything, but people are at the centre, and their roles and needs must be recognised. We don’t live off society, but we live in it. It isn’t about the money or maximising profits. If society doesn’t work, it won’t be long until you don’t.”

Koseff concluded: “As Jews, we are feeling threatened here by anti-Semitism and wonder where we are headed. But we can work our way through it and have such a big role to play here. Society won’t acknowledge our contribution publicly, but be this as it may, they are aware of it, and we need to continue making a difference.

“We have so much to give our society and are capable of playing a tremendous role in moving South Africa forward.”

“We have so much to give our society and are capable of playing a tremendous role in moving South Africa forward.”

“After Kantor left in 1984, the three of us who were left always had the liveliest arguments,” laughs Koseff. “We had our opinions, like any good Jews. No matter where we found ourselves, we would engage in these vibrant discussions. I remember a meeting we attended – the three of us not only wore denim, but we fought and even threw chocolates at each other.

“But we did share a good relationship, no matter how shocked those people at that meeting may have been. Together, we bought a bank in London from Barclays, and others in Mauritius, Australia and Israel from the Rothschilds. When I look back and think of Benoni, I am always stunned by where we came from and what we are today.”

Koseff acknowledges that the economic reality we face is by no means encouraging. “I’ve lived through five economic crises,” he says, “and though I doubt I’ll see another one in my lifetime, we face big financial challenges almost daily. Eskom appealed for funds in February, and the banks were relied on to help. The government and the banks are intertwined – one can get the other into trouble so easily. If Eskom had defaulted, South Africa would have plummeted the

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Cross racial adoptions in Jewish families

MIRAH LANGER

“There are things that are put in your path in life, and you just pick up the ball and you run with it – this was one of them.” This is how Marcelle Fisher explains her family’s journey towards adopting Nhlanhla Leeat, now aged 14.

“My two older girls were very involved in the outreach programmes at their school, notably one at the Impilo institution, which helps orphaned, abused and neglected babies. They were there when Nhlanhla was brought in. She was five months old and my daughters bonded with her instantly,” explains the vivacious mother of five.

When Nhlanhla was 18 months old, the institution began looking at putting her in an orphanage. “Then my kids started asking me: ‘Mom, will you consider fostering her?’ I said: ‘Okay, let’s try...’

“It wasn’t anything I went to look for. It just happened. We decided as family that it was the right thing to do.”

At the time Marcelle said she didn’t have concerns over cultural differences, although in retrospect, she concedes it might have required more consideration. “But when you see this poor, innocent, abandoned little baby, you don’t think. The child needs a place of safety and if that’s what you can offer it, then that is what you have to do.”

Marcelle’s family is one of four Jewish families that the *SA Jewish Report* interviewed about their experiences in adopting across racial lines. While the parents, and, in some cases, other siblings are white, the adopted children are black. For the most part, these families requested to remain anonymous as they were afraid of victimisation. So, their names have

been changed to protect them.

Most of the families describe themselves as traditional, rather than religious. Yet they do position this aspect of their identity as key in terms of promoting ethical values, a sense of family unity and feeling a sense of connection to certain rituals and practices.

“I love being Jewish; I’m passionate about it... His culture is our culture,” explains Tanya, who along with her husband Brad, adopted Sam when he was just three months old. He is now a toddler.

Julie and her husband, Chad, adopted Aaron when he was a baby. Now he is a young boy who has forged close ties with his extended Jewish family. “I have a strong and big family here; we celebrate the main festivals and Friday nights,” says Aaron.

None of the families who spoke to the *SA Jewish Report* conducted an Orthodox conversion to Judaism for their children. Some chose not to do this because they wanted to allow their children some leeway in the future, particularly in terms of finding a partner at some stage.

Alice and William are married with two biological children and an adopted daughter, Dina, who is now a teenager. Alice explains that they “made a decision that we would not do a conversion because I think it is very different when you adopt trans-racially. We want her to have that choice and if she wants to *megaye*, we will support her.”

When it came to schooling, the parents had also thought very carefully about their choices.

Sam attends a Jewish nursery school – Tanya said that it was chosen because “it is a great school”.

As Sam grows up, Tanya says finding the right



school for him will be a case of “trial and error. I want him to go to a school where he doesn’t feel different.”

A similar sentiment is expressed by the other parents, who chose racially diverse schools. As Julie declares: “For me, it was more important that he went to a school where there would be mirrors for his identity.”

The families say that their social and family circles have embraced their children: “It seemed to bring out the best in people. People have their issues, assumptions and prejudices in theory, but when it comes to a baby, there is a natural response [of warmth],” observes Julie.

However, beyond personal contexts, racial difference has, at times, led to somewhat jarring and intrusive encounters with strangers. For example, William and Alice note that people have come up to ask whether Dina is HIV positive or the “maid’s daughter”.

Says Alice: “How can people poke their noses and say that? You would never go to a white mother and say that.”

At other times, people compliment them, seeing them as carrying out an act of charity, rather than of parenting.

This is also a limited understanding, suggest the couple, because “what we have got back is so much more than we have ever wished for. We see it as a huge privilege. It has been the biggest blessing in our lives.”

Marcelle says she has ensured that Nhlanhla knows she will always be supported in these difficult situations: “I have her back, and she knows it. So, she is quite secure in herself because we back her.”

The experiences of their children have often made the parents reflect on the nature of identity and difference as a whole.

Says Julie: “On one level, you are just a parent and you love your family like any other. But on another level, there are complex identity issues to process and you have to make space for them.”

Alice agrees, saying: “I don’t think we get how often she feels different.”

Referring to an article on trans-racial adoption, she reflects that while “a lot of people say race doesn’t matter, race only doesn’t matter to the people it doesn’t affect. So, it doesn’t affect us. We are not the ones who are getting

the questions or getting the looks – and she does get it.”

Tanya accepts that she cannot fully determine what role race will play as Sam gets older. “Everyone is different in their own way. We will deal with it as it comes.”

Ultimately, the core of each family is simple: Love.

Describing the first night that Aaron came home, Julie says: “It was amazing; we put him in the cot and he looked around. He had an expression that seemed to say: ‘This will be okay.’

“My hope is that he embraces the different elements of who he is, his ancestry, his legacy.”

As Tanya reflects on the “overwhelming” moment of “instant love” when Sam was first placed in her arms, she hopes that Sam will grow up to be “a good person, who treats everyone with equality and respect – and who can be himself”.

Marcelle says that over the years, her beloved



daughter “has realised she is a loved and wanted member of the family. She is my child; she just didn’t come out of my stomach.”

For Alice and William, what they have come to learn in parenting Dina – who spent some time in care before being adopted – is this: “You can’t undo the past; you can’t fix it; you can’t make it better. I think a lot of adoptive parents go into adoption, thinking: ‘I’m going to rescue this child and with enough love, I can fix their loss, their pain, their everything’ – and you can’t.”

Yet the bond they’ve forged now is of deep trust and a cherished connection. Alice describes the relationship between father and daughter: “Today, William is her closest person in the world and she is his closest person in the world. They are two peas in the pod. She is his absolute soul mate and vice versa.”

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Committed to protecting women in conflict zones

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Dr Orly Stern moves from one conflict zone to the other, attempting to fulfil her life’s passion of achieving equality for women. However, she has to concede that this is easier said than done in the largely patriarchal areas in which she finds herself.

A Capetonian, Stern holds an LLM (Master of Laws) in international human rights law from Harvard Law School and her special focus is protecting women in conflict. She shared her experiences on Sunday 15 July at the Mandela Day talk series put together by Mensch, a non-profit which works to build a community of change-makers.

She spent two years working in Iraq as a consultant. She describes this as “one of the most interesting experiences of my life”. Stationed an hour away from Mosul, she was dealing with the fallout of ISIS’s devastation of the country.

Working with the one and a half million Syrians and Iraqis in displaced persons’ camps, she was engaged in a humanitarian

operation with experts from around the world.

She worked in a “one-stop shop” centre where women could come if they experienced gender violence. “We would provide them with services such as social workers and psychologists – I was the technical specialist making sure that everything ran right and we weren’t doing more harm than good,” she related.

“I love looking at the women – they’re absolutely stepping up, caring for their families and communities.”

“The vast majority came because of domestic violence which spikes dramatically in these settings. “They had no family, no skills and were barely surviving on the aid. How do you help in a situation

where women are probably going to be worse off without their husbands?”

Women who had been in sexual slavery often came to the centre for help, presenting with psychological, gynaecological and stomach problems. “They would be incredibly private about that because of the great shame and stigma of having sex out of wedlock.

“Some families welcomed them back but others didn’t.”

But Iraq is just one of the many conflict zones in which she has worked. As an indication of her hectic work schedule, Stern returned to Cape Town from Mogadishu (Somalia) two weeks ago and was due to leave for Serbia on the evening of the day she spoke at the event. She was then scheduled to fly to Bulgaria next week. Other places



hard work emotionally,” she says. “You have to take care of yourself and I’m very conscious of that. I do yoga every day and I take holidays.

“You see the best and the worst in conflict zones,” she continues. “I love looking at the women – they’re absolutely stepping up, caring for their families and communities.

“I think (human beings) are crap and unbelievably inspiring.”

Her work in Serbia will comprise attempting to put in place measures to prevent humanitarian aid workers exploiting their beneficiaries, by, for instance, offering food in exchange for sex.

• Other than the talks, the Mandela Day activities included: an African dance class, a Cook-A-Thon, yoga and robotics for kids. All profits will benefit several organisations catering to the underprivileged.

Tracing the history of Jewish activism for social justice

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Jewish traditions of social justice activism are new in historical terms – not older than 150 years.

“There is no long history and tradition of practical Jewish involvement on behalf of the poorest, weakest and most vulnerable members of society.” So said Professor Adam Mendelsohn, associate professor of historical studies and director of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT). He was speaking at a Mandela Day event coordinated by Mensch, a group of Jewish people working to create social change for all.

Professor Adam Mendelsohn



all the more creditworthy and inspiring for being new. It’s an opportunity for Judaism to reinvent itself to value activism as well.

“These Jewish values are modern values that work in a modern world where notions of equality are important. Jews have an interest in creating an ideal society where there is tolerance for other groups; hopefully, there’ll be tolerance for them too. This explains Jewish politics today – advancing our own interests as a group by advancing an ideal society.”

Mendelsohn examined whether Jewish values had played a central role in Jews’ activism by analysing three groups who had been prominent in two of the greatest freedom struggles of the second half of the 20th century: the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and the civil rights movement in the United States. The motivation of these three groups ranged from giving explicit credit to Jewish values to the exact opposite – those who consciously rejected particularism.

As in the US, in South Africa, Jews had played a prominent and disproportionate role in advancing the struggle for human rights. Thirteen of the defendants in the Treason Trial were Jewish, as were five in the Rivonia Trial.

“They were also disproportionately involved in the legal defence of anti-apartheid activists,” Mendelsohn said. Similarly, half of the civil rights attorneys representing activists in the US South during the 1960s were Jews.

Regarding the first category of activists, those who specifically credited Jewish texts and traditions for their activism constituted a small group – in the US, they were mostly rabbis of the Reform and Conservative movements. “The prophets’ statements are injunctions to us to act” and “We cannot sit by when there is injustice in the world,” they said.

In South Africa, Reform rabbis Andre Ungar and Ady Assabi, as well as Orthodox rabbis David Rosen and Cyril Harris, used the same argument.

The second category of activists were professionals associated with Jewish organisations in the US, such as the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee and B’nai Brith. They credited the lessons of recent Jewish history, particularly the moral lessons of the Holocaust, saying:

“The Holocaust demands that Jews not be bystanders.”

“Why would Jewish groups become so involved in advancing the rights of another group?” asked Mendelsohn. “By tackling racism against African Americans, you are killing two birds with one stone, as the same people are likely to be anti-Semitic,” he said, suggesting Jewish self-interest as a motivating factor in supporting black civil rights.

“Many were altruistic, but beyond that there’s an advantage to Jewish rights by pushing for the advancement of African American rights,” he posited.

The third group of activists, the broadest and largest category, were Jewish activists in both movements who were unwilling to credit Jewish values for their activism. “Many were the children of immigrants who had been exposed to the radical strains of eastern

European politics,” explained Mendelsohn.

“Many were familiar with marginalisation. Many had been shaped by World War II’s urgent moral lessons too, with the new call for utopianism and defending the rule of law.

“Jewish lawyers in South Africa defending anti-apartheid activists almost never talk about Jewish values as their inspiration,” he added, mentioning the same phenomenon in the US in the 1950s and ’60s. “It was particularly true of those on the radical left, who consciously reject any talk of particularism. Talk of Jewishness was anathema to them.

“Instead, the emphasis is on universalism and a broader solidarity with working men and women.”

So, which of the three groups best reflects a long history and tradition of work by Jews for social justice? “None of them because that tradition doesn’t exist,” Mendelsohn concluded.

A culinary win for Achievers

JORDAN MOSHE

Despite the number of kosher restaurants in South Africa, kosher food often gets a bad rap. Words like oily, bland, second-rate, unappealing, unoriginal and expensive are used to describe it. When people think kosher, they may well consider eating something boring and unimaginative. However, this year’s Absa Jewish Achiever Awards aims to bring a culinary cabaret to those attending the event and will attempt to redefine kosher fare.

“When it comes to the food at this year’s event, we want it to be nothing short of the most spectacular meal served the entire year,” says Howard Sackstein, chairperson of the *SA Jewish Report*. “Each year, we take kosher caterers on a journey to provide a meal incomparable to anything that has been done before. We ensure that the culinary experience is unique in every way.”

Sackstein stressed just how seriously the quality of the food served is taken by the organisers. “Our demands for the highest standard possible has sometimes meant up to five or six tastings of dishes until both quality and taste are perfect. We want the best and we make sure it is nothing but.”

The lengths to which organisers go to secure the finest cuisine are great. “Our mission has

included buying recipe books from Nobu in London to achieve unique quality that is not considered standard here in South Africa. Nobu is perhaps the most famous Asian restaurant in London, and we want people here to know just how excellent food can really be. That is the standard we expect to deliver.”

Sackstein admits, however, that the search for the best kosher caterers in Johannesburg “has become more challenging with the disappearance of notable kosher caterers”.

He adds: “Also, finding one which can deliver 652 meals of the highest standard is far from easy. This is a tall order, but we know what we are looking for and cannot compromise.”

The search, therefore, is on. Says Sackstein: “We are determined to find a caterer that can deliver absolute perfection. We want this to be nothing short of the most remarkably memorable kosher meal, one that people will speak about for months to come.”

He concludes: “Over the years, we have set a standard of showing people that kosher does not mean inferior, boring or tasteless.

“There is no reason why we as a community should settle for anything but the very best quality, unique flavour and overall remarkable gastronomical experience.”

SA’s rabbis exposed to cutting-edge ideas during Rabbinical Conference

OWN CORRESPONDENT

About 40 South African rabbis have just returned from their annual Rabbinical Conference in Israel, where they focused on cutting-edge training in leadership, geopolitical affairs and modern halachic issues.

While throughout the year our rabbis give to their communities, this three-day conference – held in Israel to mark the Jewish State’s 70th anniversary – was to expose South Africa’s rabbinical leaders to experts in an array of fields sharing up-to-date developments in their areas.

“We heard from top geopolitical experts, journalists, leadership experts, psychologists and halachic experts,” says Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein. “As the country’s rabbinical leaders, we want to continue serving our communities with distinction, being the best we can be and sharing the incredible experiences and learnings we were fortunate to pick up on this trip.”

Rabbi Ron Hendler, who managed and co-ordinated the conference from beginning



Rabbis Sam Thurgood, Yochi Ziegler, Dani Brett, Zev Gruzd and Moshe Shnerb

to end, says: “We were privileged to meet with leaders in a variety of fields, and to be exposed to some of the world’s top rabbinical scholars and educators.”

The speakers included Israeli journalist and author Sivan Rahav Meir, who discussed the media; Supreme Court judge Neal Hendel, who explored the complex relationship between Jewish and Israeli law; and leadership expert Dr Simcha Liebowitz, who shared some of the secrets to building a strong volunteer culture.

Also on the bill, Major General Uzi

Dayan offered insights into Jewish history and modern-day peace and security challenges, while Dr Emmanuel Navon, an Israeli political scientist and foreign policy expert teaching at Tel Aviv University, gave the group the inside track on the complexities of the Syrian conflict, Russia’s role in the conflict, and the military and diplomatic implications for Israel.

For many, the highlight of the conference was the opportunity to engage with, and learn from, some of the world’s top halachic authorities, including Rabbi Osher Weiss (head rabbi at Shaarei Zedek hospital in Jerusalem), Rabbi Hershel Schachter

(Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University in New York), Rabbi Aryeh Stern (Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem) and Rabbi Professor Avraham Steinberg (a world-renowned medical ethicist and paediatric neurologist).

Israel’s Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi, Rabbi David Lau, was also among those who addressed the delegation, expressing his admiration for the South African Jewish community – whose warmth and unity he experienced first hand on a visit to the country in 2015.

“As the South African Jewish community, we are blessed with rabbis who see each other as colleagues, not competitors,” says Goldstein, “as teammates working together towards common goals.

“As the delegation returns to South Africa, we look forward to sharing the eye-opening and inspiring experiences of this trip with the entire community.”

The Zionist Luncheon Club’s last hurrah

DAVID SAKS

More than three quarters of a century after holding its inaugural lunch-and-lecture meeting, the Zionist Luncheon Club (ZLC) of the United Zionist Association (UZA) is coming to an end.

With its predominantly elderly membership having declined to just a handful of stalwarts, the decision to close up shop has been on the cards for a long time.

However, the venerable institution will have its last hurrah before leaving the communal scene. One more gathering will be held for present and past members, together with former speakers and other well-wishers, to reflect on what the ZLC has contributed to Jewish communal life in Johannesburg.

It will also pay tribute to those who made it all happen. The final meeting of the club will take place on Friday, 27 July – as usual, starting at 12:45 at Our Parents Home.

The then secretary of the UZA, Joy Freeman, is credited for having introduced these weekly luncheon club meetings with an interesting speaker and getting it off the ground. The club’s first meeting took place in March 1942, in the old Carlton Hotel, with attendees paying an entrance fee of half a crown.

Lunch back then comprised a hard-boiled egg and a cup of coffee. Many at the time seriously doubted that it would be possible

by the ZLC ranged far beyond issues relating to Zionism and Israel. In fact, the topics did not necessarily even have to have a Jewish angle.

The meetings generally provided a forum in which to report on and discuss matters of interest to the Jewish community.

Over the decades, its guest speakers included many of the stalwarts of Jewish communal life, drawn from both the professional and lay leadership. Among those remembered by Gloria Sherman, secretary of the ZLC over the past 20 years, are Solly Yellin, Eric Samson, Herbie Rosenberg, Bertie Lubner, Marlene Bethlehem, Isaac Reznik and the Honourable Abe Abrahamson. Some of these speakers had addressed the club on multiple occasions. Senior staff members of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies had also spoken frequently in more recent years.

On the imminent closure of the ZLC, Sherman said that while this was sad, diminishing attendances, combined with the declining state of health of several of the club’s leading members, had made it inevitable.

It was encouraging, she added, to reflect on how much the institution had managed to achieve and how it had been able to continue operating despite these challenges.

- Contact Gloria Sherman on 072 127 9421 for more information or if you wish to attend the ZLC’s valedictory function.



A meeting of the Zionist Luncheon Club, held circa 1980. From left: Julius Weinstein, Harry Hurwitz, Fay Weinstein, Mrs M Dagan, Consul General for Israel M Dagan (standing), Dr Israel Abramowitz

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Sacha Baron Cohen takes aim at pro-Israel conservatives

RON KAMPEAS

Sacha Baron Cohen is back, and he is taking aim at a strain of pro-Israel thought that has both delighted and unsettled many American Jews: the unconditional love engendered by the country among deeply conservative Americans.

In *Who is America?*, a show that made its debut on Sunday night on Showtime, the British Jewish comic returns with the shtick that made him famous – disguising himself in order to prank the famous and not-so-famous.

Having created Borat (a dim-witted Kazakh journalist) and Ali G (a dim-witted hip-hop journalist), Cohen now rolls out Israeli colonel Erran Morad, a purported terrorism expert. In Sunday’s show, Cohen as Morad dupes a few current and recent politicians, as well as gun rights activists, into supporting an initiative to arm toddlers.

The gun rights activists, Philip Van Cleave and Larry Pratt, endorse Morad’s “Kinderguardian” programme, as do some US government officials and former officials. (Van Cleave stars in a Barney-like instructional video in which he sings a variant of *Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes*: “Aim at the head, shoulders, not the toes, not the toes.”)

Florida Republic Matt Gaetz acquits himself well: “Typically, members of Congress don’t just hear a story about a programme and indicate whether they support it or not,” he tells Morad.

The entire segment appears to have taken advantage of the targets’ pro-Israel sympathies. Former congressman Joe Walsh told CNN that Cohen had fooled him into participating by telling him that he was “getting an award from some Israeli TV station because I’m a great supporter of Israel”. For a segment that did not



air on Sunday night, Roy Moore – whose bid for a Senate seat in Alabama fell apart over old allegations of soliciting minors – also said he had fallen for the Israel-award thing.

Walsh said he had been asked to read a story off a teleprompter about a four-year-old Israeli who grabbed a gun and subdued a terrorist. Walsh said he thought, “Well, this is kind of crazy, but it is Israel and Israel is strong on defence.”

Cohen apparently intended the segment to be an expose of zealous support for gun ownership, although it could be seen as an example of blind support of everything Israel. In real life, gun rights activists have frequently – and often erroneously – cited Israel as an example of a country with few restrictions on gun rights. In fact, restrictions on gun use and ownership in Israel are far-reaching.

David Frum, a Jewish conservative who writes for *The Atlantic* magazine, tweeted that Cohen “repeatedly takes advantage of people’s affection and respect for the State of Israel to deceive and humiliate them”.

Allison Kaplan Sommer, an Israeli American who writes for the liberal Israeli daily *Haaretz*, was critical, too.

“Yes, your satire was outrageously on point and Colonel Erran Morad was spot on,” she wrote on Facebook, addressing Cohen. “Still – bad enough that Israel gets demonised for the things it actually does – you have to go and make horrifying fake stuff up? Satire or not, I’m afraid the American public is going to be left with the impression that we are, in fact, gun fans when the truth is our gun control is a million times stricter than in the US.”

Another Israeli writer, Noga Tarnapolsky, thought Cohen’s blows landed on two worthy targets: “Sacha Baron Cohen deployed the weirdo fetishisation of Israel and Benjamin Netanyahu personally among right-wingnuts in an utterly clarifying way,” she tweeted. “How Bibi became a cult-like object for the gun rights people is beyond me.”

Cohen, for sure, is a shock comic. But he is also a satirist, and one intimately acquainted with Israel: He speaks Hebrew, grew up in a Zionist youth group and spent summers there. His mother was born in Israel and he has family there.

It appears on early evidence that Cohen’s target is not “pro-Israel” per se, or even “right-wing pro-Israel”, but a strain of Israel support that imagines Israel as its own distorted reflection – and not what it is. (JTA)

Justice Ginsburg celebrates her commitment to tikkun olam

SAM SOKOL

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg described how grateful she was for her Jewish heritage during a screening of a new documentary film about her life and career at the Jerusalem Cinematheque. The screening took place on Thursday, 5 July.

“The demand for justice, peace and enlightenment runs through Jewish history and tradition,” she said, describing how she is reminded of this fact every day when she enters her judicial chambers and is confronted with a poster proclaiming the biblical verse: “Justice, justice thou shalt pursue.”

“My room has the only mezuzah in the US Supreme Court,” she said, noting that “growing up Jewish, the concept of tikkun olam, repairing tears in the community and making things better for people less fortunate, was part of my heritage. The Jews are the people of the book and learning is prized above all else. I am lucky to have that heritage.”

In Jerusalem to receive a lifetime achievement award from the Genesis Prize Foundation, Ginsburg – who is as well known for her scathing dissenting opinions as she is for her lifetime commitment to gender equality – was feted by the Jewish state’s political and judicial elites.

In a speech honouring her American co-religionist at the award ceremony on Wednesday, 4 July, Israeli Supreme Court President Esther Hayut praised Ginsburg as a spokeswoman for the marginalised and ignored.

“Law is about justice, and the experience of injustice gives one profound insight as to what justice should look like,” *The Jerusalem Post* reported Hayut as saying. “Through her decisions, Justice Bader Ginsburg upholds the values without which democracy would be an empty vessel.”

Former Israeli Supreme Court president Aharon Barak made a similar statement, calling Ginsburg “one of the great legal minds of our time; an outstanding Jewish jurist whose fearless pursuit of human rights,

equality and justice for all stems from her Jewish values.”

Speaking at the ceremony, Ginsburg evoked the memory of Anne Frank, who questioned common gender roles in her famous diary.

“When I became active in the movement to open doors to women, enabling them to enter occupations once closed to them – lawyering and judging, bartending, policing and firefighting, for example – I was heartened by the words of a girl of my generation,” said Ginsburg, 85.

“I am a judge, born, raised and proud of being a Jew. The demand for justice, for peace and for enlightenment runs through the entirety of Jewish history and Jewish tradition. I hope, in all the years I have the good fortune to continue serving on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, I will have the strength and courage to remain steadfast in the service of that demand.”

Initially offered the Genesis Foundation’s annual Genesis Prize, which comes with a cash grant, Ginsburg said she demurred, worried that the presence of Israeli politicians on the selection committee would run afoul of the Constitution’s emoluments clause prohibiting government officials from receiving gifts from foreign powers. She said it was only after the



Benjamin Friedenberg interviews Ruth Bader Ginsburg

foundation agreed to create a new lifetime achievement award whose selection committee was apolitical that she relented and agreed to be honoured. The award later went to actress Natalie Portman, who declined to attend the award ceremony because of her political differences with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. (JTA)



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A RACE AGAINST TIME...

HOW SHEBA MEDICAL CENTER SAVED A SYRIAN CHILD'S LIFE

BY KEN STEPHENS

Amidst the horrific scenes of the civil war in Syria, there are always the “untold stories” of heroism and hope. This is one of them...

An American family that wished to celebrate their daughter's Bat Mitzvah at a private event on the Golan Heights inadvertently played an integral role in saving a critically injured Syrian girl's life a few weeks ago.

Professor Yitshak Kreiss, the Director General of Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer in Ramat Gan, was on his way to the Golan Heights to partake in the Bat Mitzvah celebration when he received an urgent phone call from the IDF informing him about a severely wounded 10 year old Syrian girl, who was the victim of an aerial bombing raid on a building by the Syrian Air Force in the embattled Dara'a region in Southwest Syria. The girl's sister was killed in the raid, while her brother was also injured and taken to another medical facility somewhere in Syria.

The injured, unconscious girl and her mother were driven to the border with Israel, where an IDF medical team quickly performed an operation to stabilize her. But the girl's multiple injuries were life threatening and it was determined that she needed to be immediately airlifted to Sheba Medical Center, where she could receive lifesaving treatment.

Kreiss, who prior to assuming his position at Sheba nearly two years ago, was the IDF's Surgeon General and was directly responsible for setting up the original “Good Neighbor” field

hospital along the Syrian border, quietly left the Bat Mitzvah celebration for a nearby airfield on the Golan Heights where a helicopter from the IDF's elite 669 Combat Search & Rescue Unit was summoned to fly the Syrian girl and her mother to Sheba Medical Center. Kreiss checked the girl's condition in an IDF ambulance before she was placed on the helicopter and alerted Sheba's Emergency Room staff in the Safra Children's Hospital to her arrival.

After a battery of tests and intensive treatments, the young girl, who is called “Malik”, was moved to the Intensive Care Unit in the Safra Children's Hospital, where she is recovering. The prognosis is “good” according to Dr. Itai Pessach, Sheba's Senior Pediatric Critical Care Physician, who is tending to Malik's injuries.

“She is suffering from multiple injuries, including severe head and chest trauma, burns, cuts and bruises. Though she remains in critical condition, we believe that she will live but face a long road to recovery,” Dr. Pessach revealed. Malik's mother, who came with only the clothes on her back to Sheba with her daughter, has been overwhelmed by what he has seen and heard in her first experience with Israeli Jewish and Arab doctors and nurses.





“This has been an emotional journey for me, Malik and my family. I am very happy, and pleased with the way we have been treated by everyone in the hospital and with G-d's help, I will be able to bring Malik back to our family in Dara'a, where my



Prof. Kreiss in the IDF ambulance with the severely injured Syrian child.

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husband is waiting for us with our son,” she said.

Kreiss added, “This is not our first experience in dealing with casualties of the Syrian civil war and the way things are developing on the border, I'm afraid it won't be the last. It was an ironic twist of fate that I happened to be on the Golan Heights celebrating

the happiness of a Bat Mitzvah girl and we hope to celebrate the rebirth of Malek's young life after our dedicated staff helps her recover. We are proud to be a hospital without borders and an oasis of peace in a turbulent region of the world.”

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23315 OLD FRIENDS YOUNG TALENT

Where to go to daven?

I have always been a bit of a talker. Which is why one of my earliest memories of shul is of being forced to remain silent while seated on a hard, wooden pew at the Yeoville or Berea Synagogue. It felt austere and unfamiliar, and I needed to entertain myself as the choir droned.

It was before the days of the eruv, which meant I could not carry any toys to shul. I recall being told repeatedly to stop swinging my legs as I attempted, in vain, to reach the seat in front of me. I also recall the relief that I felt when I heard the announcement to turn to page 81 in the blue Singer Siddur, because it meant that it was all nearly over. Those were very boring early days.

It didn't improve much for me. The most repeated line that I heard as a teenager in shul in the '80s was: "If you come to shul to talk, then where do you go to daven?"

I didn't want to be rude or anything, but I wanted to answer that surely prayer should be a little bit of a celebration. I wanted to say that we are told to serve G-d with joy and if this was happiness, then I didn't want to see misery. But I was still respectful back in the '80s. And so, I perfected the guilty look, spent a moment or two in respectful silence and then went back to talking.

There are those who naturally adore shul. I have never been one of them. And although I would

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



be classified as a "shul goer", for me there needs to be something else other than the service to encourage me to get there.

This is no small admission as we are deeply schooled and deeply guilted into believing that we are somewhat deficient as Jews, and more than somewhat shallow, if this is our approach to the service of G-d.

That said, I have little doubt that there are many more just like me and that shul attendance fluctuates,

Continued on page 20>>>

Which line turns pride in my culture into crushing others?

From here at the bottom of Africa, with South Africa's racist history still dominating its people's lives, Israel's nation-state bill – currently working its way through the Knesset – causes a chill to run down the spine of some lovers of Israel.

We have seen in South Africa how a people's drive to preserve their cultural identity – in the South African case, Afrikaans – can become an obsession with separateness from others. This can ultimately lead to separation between communities based on law.

Many items in the bill are quite reasonable. But vehement opposition to its initially proposed text homed in on a seriously objectionable clause. This was: "To allow a community, including one composed of a single religion or nationality, to establish its own separate communal settlement."

This could permit, based on law, the exclusion of Israeli Arab citizens, who constitute 20% of the population, from multiple Jewish settlements countrywide. It can also cause other groups with different identities to experience similar discrimination based on their religion, nationality or other criteria.

This is not South African apartheid, where power relationships and cultural issues were different. But enemies of Israel, and many friends, will see the trend as going in that direction – legalisation of racism and ethnic chauvinism.

Fortunately, there are enough sane voices in Israel in the judiciary, politics, and even the Likud and the president himself, who see the potentially terrible consequences of the trend towards this inward-looking mindset. This is not the Israel for which thousands of Jews fought, to have it turned into a place where separation of communities can be legislated based on religion, nationality and similar defining characteristics.

All of this is not to say that communities should not be allowed to nurture their own identities, which already happens in a positive way in numerous places and helps build a strong society. Democracy

TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin



has to be flexible enough to allow and encourage this. But to enshrine separateness in this kind of law opens potential deep chasms of division and is anti-democratic.

The fight-back from democratic forces resulted in a revision of the wording of the most problematic section of the bill to read: "The State views the development of Jewish settlement as a national value and will act to encourage and promote its establishment." This means that establishing Jewish settlements is not to be based on discrimination as a basic value, but on an authentic realisation of Zionism.

Zionism has often been called the "liberation movement" of the Jewish people. Like all liberation movements, it is idealistic, and interpreted in complex ways. But what happened to the universalist vision of Zionism and the state of Israel?

Critics of the overall thrust of the proposed bill protest that it relates only to Israel's Jewish nature, contrary to principles of Israel's declaration of independence. Israeli democracy is unmentioned, as is the spirit of equality that has attracted Jews worldwide to identify with it as a source of enlightenment to themselves and the world.

Jews have prided themselves on how Israel has sustained the diversity of its society and democratic vibrancy despite never-ending attacks on it. Other countries have reacted to such threats by becoming militant dictatorships.

It seems an abrogation of that vision to defend a bill such as this, which does not acknowledge the one-fifth of Israel's population that is not Jewish. Yet this is happening at the hands of an Israeli government.

South African Jewry is especially qualified, having lived for decades in a society where communities were separated based on law, to sound warning bells about the direction in which Israel is heading. Will anyone here do it?

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Communication is key is breaking down misconceptions

Early in its existence, the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) recognised the need to add a public relations component to its day-to-day functioning. As the Jewish community's representative spokesperson, it could not always keep a low profile, but sometimes needed to take a public stand on issues affecting it.

It also needed to build bridges and establish channels of communication with other constituencies and institutions, one of the most significant of which was the media.

Over time, the importance of the Board's public relations function has only increased, and in today's information-driven, media-dominated environment, it is all but indispensable.

The public relations role of the SAJBD is carried out by a communications department, headed by Charisse Zeifert. The purpose of the department is to educate the public about the Jewish community and its history and culture, publicise the good work Jews are doing in the wider society and, wherever necessary, respond to anti-Jewish attacks in the media.

Of late, it has raised awareness about the recent serious incidents of anti-Semitism that have taken place in the country

We have been called upon over the years to respond to the anti-Israel bias which, unfortunately, permeates so much of what is being said and written on that subject.

Relationship-building with media professionals is critical to the success of the department. During her visit to Durban last week, Charisse met with nearly a dozen local editors and journalists, in the process building on the impressive network of important

contacts that she has put together over the years. Through such contacts, we are able to respond timeously to offensive media items, while also finding ways in which to promote the many positive aspects of what being a Jewish South African is all about.

Such regular meetings further provide valuable opportunities to find common ground and break down misconceptions about one another.

Contrary to what some people might feel, the average media worker is not reflexively hostile to Jews, Judaism or even Israel. As Charisse has consistently found, there is a genuine willingness to listen, learn and understand, and as far as possible, to strive to be balanced and accurate when commenting and reporting on the issues in question.

The SAJBD is now widely regarded as being the address to which the media turns when they are looking for Jewish comment on the issues of the day, not just relating to the Middle East or anti-Semitism, but also on topics of broader public concern, such as the proposed anti-hate crime legislation and problems of racism in South African society in general.

Sometimes our input is sought on more practical, mundane questions, such as what the Jewish view is on what to do about the growing shortage of space for burials or sex education in schools.

It all enables us, as a community, to be part of the national debate, rather than being perceived as being just another special interest lobby that only speaks out when its own interests are threatened.

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



Above Board Shaun Zagnoev



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Bet David reaches out to children in Alex

Bet David Progressive Shul community in Sandton celebrated Mandela Day by hosting children from the Alexandra Orphanage and Look and Love. These are two privately-funded projects in Alexandra township that offer a safe haven for children in need.

The children spent the morning at McDonald’s in Rivonia. And later, after fun and a delicious lunch, they went home with smiles and a goodie bag.



Pretoria pupil wins gold at Turkey’s science fair

DIANE WOLFSON

Pretoria schoolboy Joshua Sylvain de Miranda won first the prize and gold medal in chemistry at the Oğuzhan Özkaya Education-Karademir Science Energy Engineering Fair (OKSE2F) in Izmir, Turkey, recently.

De Miranda, a Grade 10 pupil at Tyger Valley College and a member of Bet Menorah congregation, was one of three South African young scientists who returned home with prizes after competing at the international science fair.

The fair brings together high school students from around the world to present their scientific and technological research projects and share their culture.

De Miranda was selected to exhibit at the OKSE2F while



Joshua Sylvain De Miranda
competing against 600 other participants at the Eskom Expo

for Young Scientists International Science Fair. Young high school scientists are invited to exhibit their research projects at the Eskom Expo in the fields of physics, chemistry, biology, engineering, energy, mathematics-computer and robotics.

De Miranda’s research centred on a flame retardant that would delay the spread of fires in informal settlements.

“Every year, we are impressed by the ingenuity shown by the participants at Eskom Expo,” said executive director Parthy Chetty said. “Their commitment to finding innovative solutions to society’s most pressing problems, such as sustainability, is admirable. Eskom Expo recognises and rewards their contribution to the global knowledge base.”

Temple Israel Cape Town’s contribution to Mandela Day

More than 100 people gathered at Temple Israel Shul in Green Point, Cape Town on Sunday 15 July for the shul’s annual Mandela Day activities. The Sandak-Lewin Hall was a hive of activity as more than 2 300 sandwiches were made, 450 sock and soap packs were packed and more than 30 blankets created. In the weeks prior to the big day, many loaves of bread, tins of jam, jars of peanut butter, socks, soaps and knitted squares were collected.

All these items were delivered to The Haven, Beth Uriel, The Salvation Army, Christine Revell Children’s Home, Loaves and Fishes and other such organisations.



The knitting team working on transforming the knitted squares into blankets

Knit Wits for Madiba make blankets for Mandela Day

KEVIN FRIEDMAN AND CAROLYN MASSEY

A group of knitters at Golden Acres in Sandringham, known as the “Knit Wits for Madiba”, handed over their 45 handmade blankets to the 67 Blankets project for Nelson Mandela Day.

Local project ambassador Kevin Friedman, who received the blankets, visibly moved by with this “outpouring of love”.

He said: “Walking into the room, which looked as if Joseph’s coat of many colours had come to life, was overwhelming. The blankets represent the physical manifestation of the outpouring of goodwill and good wool. This dynamic group of dedicated women sitting around a communal table embodies the Jewish values of *chesed*.”

Every participant in the 67 Blankets for

Nelson Mandela Day project benefits. The creative knitters have formed strong friendships while exercising their fingers against arthritis, socialising and fulfilling the highest degree of charity according to Maimonides, which is to give to the poor without knowing to whom one gives.

“This gift of a blanket from

one human being to another acknowledges our common humanity, which encapsulates the concept of ubuntu,” added Friedman.

The recipients of the blankets experience a day transformed by joy with the gift of a long-lasting, unique, warm, cosy and handmade blanket that was made with love and kindness.



The Goden Acre Knit Wits with their blankets

UJW holds a Mandela Day ice-a-thon

CINDY KREE

The Union of Jewish Women (UJW) Johannesburg ran a cupcake drive to commemorate Mandela Day. They collected more than 3 000 cupcakes, baked with much enthusiasm by members of the community. On Monday, 16 July, they were iced, mainly by children, at a fun Ice-a-Thon event held at Norwood Mall.

The beautifully decorated cupcakes, together with a note from each icer, were distributed on Mandela Day to both Jewish and broader communities. Recipients included UJW’s Friendship Club and Kosher Mobile Meal recipients, Sandringham Lodge, Arcadia, Silwood Lodge and Yad Aharon, as well as the Alexandra Disability Clinic, Children of Fire, the Childhood Cancer Foundation (CHOC), Riverlea Feeding Scheme, Fight With Insight, and UJW’s Alexandra Aftercare and Feeding Scheme.



Photo: Tana Guinsberg

Chloe Bergman

Golden Acres’ knitting group “reflects the real aspect of Mandela’s rainbow nation”, said Friedman. “One woman in this group is blind and still continues to share her love by creating these beautiful, warm blankets through the touch and feel of the wool, and the counting of stitches through the needles. Other members of the group help her with selecting the colours to ensure a stunning effect.”

Miriam Merkel, who is an ambassador for 67 Blankets, is also part of this dynamic group, which also includes Helen Holden and Myrna Jankelowitz. Members of the community are welcome to join in their knitting

circle, which meets every weekday afternoon. Other knitting groups meet all over South Africa.

67 Blankets was founded four years ago by Carolyn Steyn in response to a challenge from Zelda la Grange, Mandela’s former personal assistant, to knit 67 blankets for Nelson Mandela Day. Steyn set up a Facebook group where people quickly pledged to knit and crochet.

Each year, the organisation has grown in strength and now holds three Guinness World Records for the world’s largest blankets. The tireless love from the Golden Acres Knit Wits has been included in these records!

Over the past four years, more than 45 000 blankets have been distributed to needy recipients all over South Africa.

WIZO gives a needy child the gift of mobility

WIZO South Africa and Wheelchairs of Hope donated a paediatric wheelchair to El Roi Baby Home, which provides a home to babies and toddlers awaiting adoption.

WIZO South Africa has joined forces with Wheelchairs of Hope, a nongovernmental organisation based in Israel, which develops, designs, manufactures and provides these chairs, to bring 150 child-size wheelchairs to South Africa for children in need of help with mobility.

The two organisations presented one of the wheelchairs to Jack (not his real name), a child at El Roi with special needs on 4 July.

El Roi manager Nicole Gillette



says: “I fought hard for Jack to stay with us because I believe G-d has a family for him.” Prior to receiving the wheelchair, Jack who is nearly five years old and cannot walk due to neurological deformities since birth, had to be carried by staff or pushed in a stroller.

Walking in their grandparents’ Klerksdorp footsteps

When the Sacks family descended on Klerksdorp last Shabbat, they reinvigorated the shul and the community... albeit briefly.

Their great-grandparents originate in Klerksdorp, so they went for the weekend to get a taste of what their predecessors’ lives had been like. “They took over the shul and gave the existing members a lift by making the shul services lebadik,” said Marlene Waks of the Klerksdorp congregation.

It was Klerksdorpian Phillip Sacks who had hatched the plan for the trip, with the catalyst being his best friend, David Frame who still lives in the North Western town.

Phillip had arrived in Klerksdorp in 1956 with his two siblings, Mervyn and Linda, and their late grandmother, Lee. The patriarch of their family, the late Joe Sacks went there a year earlier to take up a business opportunity.

It was here that the family enjoyed great Jewish and country community life.

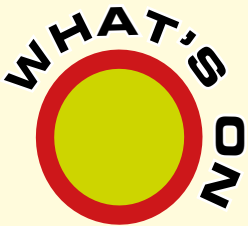
Phillip, who like most of the family left Klerksdorp, has kept close ties with the community. A call was made to his best friend of 60 years, David, to tell him of this plan to visit with the whole family.

They even spent Shabbos at their grandparents’ old home in Andrew Street, which is now a B and B.

The family was welcomed with open arms by the community, and the youngest generation of Sacks descendants led the davening and leining.

Around a special community brocha, they reconnected.

The current shul is a shadow of its beautiful predecessor that was opened on 11 September 1966. And the country community has aged and dwindled in size. But its members remain committed to keeping the light of Yiddishkeit and Jewish life burning.



- Sunday (22 July)
- Second Innings hosts a theatre outing to *Great Balls of Fire*, starring Jonathan Roxmouth. Show starts at 18:00; bus departs at 16:00. Where: Pieter Toerien Main Theatre, Montecasino. Cost: R170 per ticket; R120 per person for the transport. Book with Ros Berman on 011 880 6864 and Fay Smaller on 072 546 2573.
 - Jewish Genealogical Society of South Africa is hosting Adina Bregman nee Katz, who will talk about *Grinkishek: A Journey to the Place of Nat Bregman’s Birth*, emphasising the conditions of Jewish life in Lithuania and her research methods. Time: 19:30. Venue: HOD. Cost: R30, including refreshments. Contact: Hannah on 011 485 2188 or email igssa16@gmail.com
- Tuesday (24 July)
- HGC hosts a film screening of *The Story of Holocaust Survivor Lina Amato* by South African filmmaker Johnathan Andrews. Time: 19:00. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. Free admission, donations welcome. RSVP to dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za or phone 011 640 3100.

Letters

ISRAEL’S TREATMENT OF BEDOUINS SMACKS OF APARTHEID

I read in the *Financial Times* (30 June) that the Israeli government intends moving hundreds of Bedouins to make way for a new settlement of some 3 000 new homes on the West Bank.

This is similar to the activities of the South African racist apartheid government which we witnessed over a long period – including the removal of people from Sophiatown to Soweto, and the dumping of people from Pageview to Lenasia some 25km away from central Johannesburg. Many other forced removals took place.

What puzzles me is the fact that Israel does not own the West Bank, but merely occupies it.

This is most disturbing! – **Mike Feldman, Johannesburg**

BDS, STOP BULLYING WOMEN AND RATHER SPONSOR TRIPS TO ISRAEL

In June, two young women – model and media personality Shashi Naidoo and the DA’s health MMC, Dr Mpho Phalatse – were reduced to tears by the BDS and militant Muslims, and shamed and vilified in the full glare of publicity. They were forced to retract their perfectly valid and honest comments on Israel.

Instead of forcing them to do so, why don’t the BDS and militant Muslims offer to sponsor them to visit Israel and the West Bank, where they would be free for about 10 days – and this is imperative – to do their own thing, with no one tracking their movements and without any form of intimidation. Then allow them, on their return to South Africa, to again express

their honest response to their travels, without intimidation.

BDS and the militants will then surely not be happy with their findings and will regret their offer of sponsorship. Their bias, hypocrisy and outrageous lies about Israel and Jews boggles the mind.

Incidentally , why does the ANC not allow the recalled ambassador to Israel to express his truthful opinion – hopefully, without intimidation – of his term of office there? I’ll bet that this will never happen, purely because he would be out of office instantly and out of a lucrative job and pension. – **Fey Miller, Johannesburg**

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STAFF REPORTER

Maradona has been vocal in his support



Diego Armando Maradona

– Times of Israel

JACK MILNER

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