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Pick n Pay removes Nussbaum's meat in listeria scare

TALI FEINBERG

Traces of listeria have been found in lamb and beef at Nussbaum's Kosher Butchery, according to Chief Executive Baruch Lurie on Wednesday. "Late yesterday afternoon, we received notification that our most recent microbiological results had been found to contain traces of listeria. To our knowledge, no one has been affected as a result," Lurie told the *SA Jewish Report* on Wednesday.

He was responding to questions after the raw kosher meat fridges at three Pick n Pay stores in Johannesburg were suddenly emptied with no explanation.

"We are still waiting for results on deli processed food (cold meats/sausages/polonies) and will inform the public as soon as we get them," he wrote. "There appears to be no risk to chicken, as these are sourced from a totally separate supplier. We have proactively removed all deli products pertaining to the batch in question from supermarkets as a precautionary measure.

"Nussbaum's Kosher Butchery was selected to supply Pick n Pay owing to our high health and safety standards. We are audited yearly by Intertek, and endeavour to comply with all national food safety requirements. Our cleaning and hygiene is outsourced to an international company – the best in the market place. To date, our equipment and environment has been cleared.

"We have proactively removed all deli products pertaining to the batch in question from supermarkets as a precautionary measure."

"Nussbaum's has served the community since 1936, and to date has never had any major health concerns regarding any of our products. With this in mind, we understand that issues like listeria raise legitimate concerns. There is no reason to be alarmed. We will provide comprehensive and ongoing information to you as soon as test results have been received by us.

"We would like to assure you that we take this matter extremely seriously, and are implementing additional measures above the stringent processes we have in place already."

It is unclear how the listeria arose at Nussbaum's, as the abattoir where the meat comes from, Chamdor Meat Packers, confirmed that all of its tests had produced clear results, and that it had systems at every level to ensure that it delivered a safe

product to the public.

Maxi Kosher Butchery confirmed that it was also externally audited, and all the results had come back clear. Moishe's Butchery said it only did internal audits, but it had all the necessary protocols and cleaning measures in place.

But after the meat shelves emptied and panic rose, there was a dearth of clear information from both the Beth Din and Pick n Pay. This demonstrated a vacuum in communication that the community has been needing since the Stan & Pete saga.

As consumers watched and waited for someone in authority to explain the mystery of the missing meat, they expressed their anger on social media and to the *SA Jewish Report*. "People have had enough of things always being swept under the carpet. Why are Pick n Pay and whoever else is involved so silent? Why can't they just tell us what's going on? Pick

n Pay Norwood told me it's not listeriosis. It better not be, because if any of us get sick, then what? G-d forbid! The Beth Din has said it's got nothing to do with it," said a fed-up kosher consumer, who spoke to the *SA Jewish Report* on condition of anonymity.

"Norwood told me the meat is fine, but I don't feel comfortable that I can return the meat and get refunded. Seems like we will never know what's really going on as usual," the consumer continued. "Trust and respect is being lost, big time!"

On Facebook, the rumours were rife that listeriosis was, indeed, the reason for the meat being removed, especially after users shared a photo from Norwood Pick n Pay Hypermarket of a sign saying, 'Dear customer, sorry for the inconvenience, our current meat supplier is erratic. Management.'

In response to a query from a consumer,

the Beth Din's Kosher Desk responded: "With reference to enquiries raised about food health and safety at certain butcheries, it is important to note that the Beth Din Kashrut Department is not a qualified health and safety regulator, and does not have the requisite scientific expertise nor the legal authority to make a determination in this situation. For more information, please speak to the relevant butcheries."

To this, one person wrote on Facebook: "As the arbiter of what is or isn't kosher, surely the Beth Din Kashrut Department has at the very least a moral duty to advise consumers of a significant health issue if it exists, and it is aware of it?" Others disagreed, saying, "It's not the Beth Din's issue at all. Certifying something as kosher is where their responsibility starts and ends. Don't think it's fair to expect them to carry this load too."

Continued on page 8>>

Israelis and an Iranian go for goal together

Israeli soccer player Tomer Hemed playing for Brighton & Hove Albion FC. See story on the meeting of the Middle East on English soil. Page 20.



Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
17:24	18:15	Johannesburg
17:50	18:44	Cape Town
17:07	17:59	Durban
17:27	18:19	Bloemfontein
17:21	18:15	Port Elizabeth
17:14	18:07	East London

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Fake explosive in Vereeniging mosque puts CSO on alert

JORDAN MOSHE

What was believed to be an explosive device was found at a mosque in Roshnee, Vereeniging, on Monday evening. It has been confirmed the device was fake and the suspect responsible is to appear in court on charges of carrying out a hoax.

“This incident is certainly concerning in light of what happen in Durban and Cape Town,” says Jevon Greenblatt, the Director of Operations at the Community Security Organisation (CSO). “While it wasn’t a live bomb, the suspect might have been trying to scare people, or test the system to see the response he’d get.”

He continues: “While we have no information about connections, if any, between all these incidents, we continue to monitor the situation closely. If mosques and malls can be targeted, so can shuls and other Jewish installations.”

It is understood that community members were praying at the Masjid Taqwa mosque. They noticed a man entering the building at about 18:30 and he left, leaving a bag behind. The suspect was arrested on Tuesday when he returned to collect his bag. The 36-year-old has yet to explain why he was at the mosque, or to account for leaving the bag.

The Roshnee neighbourhood watch subsequently handed the bag over to the security office, where the suspected explosive device was discovered. According to *Eyewitness News*, despite messages appearing on social

media saying there was a bomb, the police’s Fikile Funda says no explosives were found.

Says Funda: “We called in our bomb-disposal unit, and they confirmed it was not a bomb. It was a flask wrapped in Sellotape, and it contained Vaseline and an unidentified substance. It is not something that we can say constituted a bomb.” The bag was also found to

contain anti-ISIS reading material.”

The CSO says it has become popular worldwide to minimise suspected terror incidents by treating them as crimes. But, despite the move to downplay such incidents, it continues to take such matters seriously, and treat them as a threat, doing whatever is necessary to protect the community.

Community tense as Zimbabwe erupts in violence

TALI FEINBERG

As violent protests broke out in Harare, Zimbabwe, on Wednesday, members of the local Jewish community expressed their concern. “It is very, very worrying. Some of our people live within 3km of the results centre. We are totally disrupted in the city centre,” said Harare Jewish community leader Arnold Joffe. These community members could be reached if needed, but it was risky, he said.

Protests broke out on Wednesday afternoon, and by Wednesday evening, one protestor had been shot dead. Cars were set alight, while soldiers and police clashed with protestors.

MDC supporters were protesting after Zanu-PF won the majority of seats in Parliament, and the presidential election results were delayed. “This has angered unemployed youths, most of whom voted for [the MDC alliance’s candidate] Chamisa,” said the MDC’s Director of Public Affairs, Dennis Murira, in a WhatsApp to the *SA Jewish Report*.

“People here believe the army has stolen the

election. Youths therefore marched peacefully, calling for the release of the presidential results. The army then opened fire on unarmed civilians.” Murira sent photos of severely wounded protestors.

He believes that the violent protests are an expression of frustration. “The country desperately needs change. Please understand it is not a matter of which party wins, but a total winding down of endemic corruption.”

Writing to the *SA Jewish Report* from Bulawayo, Leah Louth said: “Right now we need to be holding the ordinary Zimbabweans in our prayers, as they take to the streets to find their voices - the same streets that were so peaceful and happy in November [when Mugabe resigned.]”

BBC Africa said that the youth of Zimbabwe wanted good governance, access to healthcare, and fair and decent work, to which expat Joey Hasson tweeted: “Powerful expressions of hope from the youth. But the old guard and their cronies are going to have to be cleared away before any of this happens, unfortunately.”

Torah thought of the week

Enjoy your wealth, just remember who is ultimately responsible for it

Parashat Ekev includes a reminder that we are indebted to G-d for all that we have. We are urged to remember that we owe

Him gratitude for all of our wealth and possessions, and thanks.

“You shall remember that it is the Lord your G-d who gives you power to obtain wealth”. (Deut 8:18)

Yet, how often in the midst of our well-built houses, surrounded by expensive gadgetry and sophisticated aids to comfort, do we forget by whose grace we have amassed it all. The tendency is to take all the credit oneself.

“Beware... when you have built and dwelled in fine

houses and your assets have multiplied that your success breeds conceit and you forget the Lord your G-d... and you say in your heart, my power and might have brought me this wealth.” (Deut 8:11-17)

Wealth can so easily lead to pride, and excessive pride interferes with the dialogue which should rightfully take place between a human being and his/her G-d.

The humanist slogan that “man is the measure of all things” encourages the unhealthy view that human power is unsurpassed and unlimited. We have certainly travelled far in the development of technology, but how far have we travelled in the field of human relationships?

British historian Arnold Toynbee wrote, “Humanism is the religion that appeals to man during the stage of his history when he has already become conscious of having won mastery over non-human nature, but has not yet been forced by bitter experience to face the truth that he is still not master of himself.”

It is just because we humans fail most miserably in our relationships with each other that we need to acknowledge a power beyond our own, a power that can assist us if we are prepared to make the effort to create dialogue and patiently seeking answers to our most

perplexing questions.

Parashat Ekev warns us against the negative consequences of unbridled materialism, but nowhere in Judaism is it taught that wealth is something we should spurn. The antidote to the negative consequences of wealth is expressed through Jewish notions of *tzedakah* and responsibility towards society in general. Where wealth is shared for the ultimate benefit of society and self, then wealth is surely a most positive blessing.

Judaism sees G-d as *Adon Olam*, the landlord of this planet, and humanity as His steward. An acknowledgement of our status as stewards, responsible to the master for every one of our actions, would serve to curb that over weaning pride which so easily arises from material success, but almost inevitably leads to catastrophe.

By all means, make use of the good things G-d provides, but never forget who is master and who is servant. Each one of us will be called to account for our handling of our personal wealth. May we not be found wanting.



Rabbi Hillel Avidan, Durban Progressive Jewish Congregation

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Limmud acknowledges it 'overstepped the mark' by inviting BDS supporters

NICOLA MILTZ

Limmud heard the community's ire, and disinvited three Jewish anti-Israel presenters to its annual conference in Cape Town next weekend following outrage from people claiming that the organisation had gone too far.

By removing the three, who are associated with Boycott Divestment Sanctions South Africa (BDS-SA), from the programme, Limmud has thrown open the debate as to who is kosher and who is not when it comes to community forums.

Limmud – an international Jewish cultural and educational organisation taking the form of an annual conference in various countries – is widely viewed as a highlight on the local Jewish calendar. It always offers a diverse, star-studded line-up of prominent local and international Jewish academics, cultural experts, business leaders, and political heavyweights. It is known to push boundaries and challenge people.

But this year, Limmud pushed the boundaries too far. When the Cape Town programme was released last week, members of the community were angered by the inclusion of three BDS-aligned speakers: Heidi Grunebaum, Mitchel Joffe Hunter, and Jeremy Phillips.

Heidi Grunebaum is an academic, social activist, and associate professor doing research at the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape. She is a member of a minority group called SA Jews for a Free Palestine.

Jeremy Phillips is a postgraduate law student at the University of Cape Town (UCT), and an active member of the UCT Palestine Solidarity Forum on campus. This organisation has been campaigning for an academic boycott of Israel.

Mitchel Joffe Hunter, who has presented at Limmud in the past, also supports SA Jews for a Free Palestine, and the Palestine Solidarity Alliance.

The community's response was swift and fierce, as people expressed their disgust on various platforms including social media platforms such as WhatsApp groups, Twitter, and Facebook. Radio talk show host Howard Feldman's phone lines were flooded with angry callers on his Morning Mayhem show on *Chai FM*.

Johnny Copelyn and Judge Dennis Davis speaking at Limmud Cape Town 2017



In a letter to the organisers of Limmud, a shocked and irate Gary Nathan said it was "totally unacceptable" that Limmud would give these people a "platform, recognition, and legitimacy", and went so far as to accuse those responsible of failing Limmud and the Jewish community.

He said: "The speakers support organisations that are clearly anti-Semitic, blatantly anti-Israel, and their arguments are based on lies and half-truths."

Failing to disinvite them would send a signal to the community and "future generations of Jews" that their arguments were "legitimate".

"We will send a message to our brothers and sisters in Israel, who are on the front lines defending our country with their lives, that we have abandoned them."

He was not the only one to express their disapproval.

Adina Roth, the National Chairperson of Limmud SA, told the *SA Jewish Report* that Limmud "had overstepped the mark" and that the pressure to disinvite the three speakers was unlike anything Limmud had experienced before.

"Our community finds itself in a difficult time in relation to Israel. The community feels Israel is under scrutiny and under attack by the wider media and in this context, Limmud has strived to create a space where dialogue is still possible across a range of opinions. At the same time, we are aware the actions of BDS-SA are often perceived and experienced

as inflammatory, intolerant, and anti-Semitic. The association of these presenters with BDS-SA was too much for our community right now.

"We heard the community's cry, and it led to the very painful decision to cancel the speakers. We agonised for days over this."

The Cape Town Limmud is being held at Herzlia Middle School Campus from 9 to 11 August. The venue is a change from previous years where it took the form of a sleepover outside the city. Called "Limmud in the Hood" it will take place over four days, and includes 18 international speakers and more than 140 sessions.

As soon as the programme was released, the school was flooded with calls from angry members of the community in response to the three speakers.

Geoff Cohen, the Director of Education at United Herzlia Schools, said that Herzlia had a reputation of being open and inclusive, but the school drew "a certain line in the sand" when it came to who it allowed to address its staff and students.

"We have a tick list that works well for us. It consists of four questions: Do you believe Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish state? Do you believe in a two-state solution? These two questions should elicit a 'yes' response. Do you believe Israel is an apartheid state? And do you support BDS? The last two should elicit a negative response."

The three speakers told the *SA Jewish Report* this week that they wanted the Limmud conference

to conclude its sessions before commenting.

Said Grunebaum: "Limmud is a precious and immensely important space. I would like to honour that. I would prefer to wait until after the [conclusion of the] 2018 edition of Limmud before I share my reflections."

In 2009, Limmud's conference was mired in controversy with the visit to South Africa of Israel Defence Forces Legal Adviser, Lieut. Col. David Benjamin. His visit came fresh on the heels of the war in Gaza dubbed Operation Cast Lead.

"We heard the community's cry, and it led to the very painful decision to cancel the speakers. We agonised for days over this."

His visit resulted in several local human rights activists, including some members of the Jewish community, voicing their objections to him being given a platform at the conference. They pushed for Benjamin's withdrawal from the programme. Limmud stood its ground, saying that Benjamin would offer a first-hand perspective of the policy of the Israeli military, including its view of what happened during the three-week Gaza war.

This week, however, Roth said the pressure was overwhelming.

"We held our ground with the IDF legal advisor, even though there was a strong outcry from some of our Limmud constituencies. We were able to appeal to our Limmud principles of diversity in content and engagement through dialogue. In this instance, it was difficult because there was the same argument that the presenters came in the spirit of dialogue, of engagement. But, in the current context of our community, the extent of the vulnerability and pain is very strong, and the vehemence was so strong. We are a cross-communal organisation; indeed we are our communities. We needed to respond to that as well."

Raymond Schkolne, an active member of the Cape Town community, said Limmud was a wonderful organisation, a "broad tent" including all sides of the spectrum. He said he did not believe the speakers should have been censored.

"This week's developments will serve to further polarise the community, and this is not in [its] best interests.

"Let's not forget these are Jewish people that are on a Jewish journey. The common narrative is that we are under pressure as a community, so we have to unite and get into the laager and not be seen to be critical of Israel. But it is important to grapple with these issues, and to be critical where it's appropriate to be.

"It is not the Jewish way to alienate, exclude, and marginalise them, even vilify and demonise them. We are alienating the youth. Instead of finding ways of bringing them in, we are pushing them out."

Longstanding Limmud volunteer, Daniel Barnett, said he believed Limmud "handled the situation correctly and responsibly" by removing the speakers from the programme.

"The community must have perspective here. There are tons of Israel-themed sessions on the programme, none of which are on BDS. There is no communal organisation that offers such a diverse range of topics on Israel in such a congested space," he said.

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SA-born billionaire, who runs British Conservative Party, speaks out

SHIRA DRUION

South African-born businessman Sir Mick Davis was recently voted Britain's most influential Jew. While his views on Israel are controversial, he holds the position of Chief Executive of the Conservative Party, as appointed by Tory Prime Minister Theresa May.

At the moment, the Conservative Party is seen as the lesser of the two evils in England in the light of the anti-Semitic threat posed by Labour Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Just last week, the three British Jewish newspapers, *The Jewish Chronicle*, *The Jewish News*, and *The Jewish Telegraph*, all published the same editorial warning of the "existential" threat to British Jewry that a Corbyn government would pose.

Davis told the *SA Jewish Report* that the Labour Party's policies regarding Israel were cause for concern, and that anti-Semitic sentiment continued to infect Corbyn, and the thousands who shared his attitude.

"The current Labour leadership is failing the Jews of the United Kingdom, and its stance on Israel is confusing and at the same time troubling. It is sad to see that although there are many Labour MPs who have made it their life's mission to fight anti-Semitism and stand up for the legitimacy of Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people, it continues to fester," he says.

"It is indeed sad that today, so many Jews whose political home was Labour now feel estranged because the party's leaders do not stand up to anti-Semites, and at times legitimise organisations which promote anti-Semitic tropes and encourage BDS [the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement]."

As for anti-Semitism in the United Kingdom as a whole, Davis says: "Yes, of course there are incidents of anti-Semitism in the UK. And in some parts of the UK's establishment, it appears to be an institutional problem. But this country is not anti-Semitic.

"Jews have risen to the heights of society, and our community is admired for its resilience and contribution. I pay tribute to my friend Gerald Ronson who established the Community Security Trust to ensure that all Jews in the UK are safe, and that anti-Semitism is rooted out."

Davis, however, has had his fair share of criticism for his outspoken views on Israel which have challenged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies.

"Israel is at risk of becoming an apartheid state over its treatment of Palestinians," says Davis. "If she abandons a two-state solution for a one-state solution, she will be forced to choose between being Jewish or democratic, it can't be both.

"The policies and actions of the Israeli government can also affect Jews in the diaspora both positively and negatively, and have an impact on the Jewish identity and connection to Israel of young diaspora Jews. I fear that the occupation, and more specifically the apparent lack of will or vision to end it, is harming Jewish and Zionist identity. Then, as now,



Sir Mick Davis

many diaspora Jewish leaders share those concerns, as do many Israelis."

Davis, who hails from Port Elizabeth, studied at Rhodes University.

In this exclusive interview with the *SA Jewish Report*, he says, "I left South Africa at the end of 1997. The company I worked for undertook an Initial Public Offering in the London market, and listed on the London Stock Exchange as Billiton Plc. As its then Financial Director, I relocated to the UK as its financial centre and head office were in London from then on."

Sir Mick, as he is fondly known, has continued to make an impact at the highest echelons of society in business and politics, and has held a multitude of illustrious positions in the United Kingdom, including Chief Executive of Xstrata, Chair of the Jewish Leadership Council, and Chair of former Prime Minister David Cameron's Holocaust Memorial Commission.

When discussing his journey to his position in the Conservative Party, he says, "I am not 'in politics' in a classical sense. I have never sought elected office, and that is not a current goal. At the time of the global financial crisis, the UK's society and economy came under stress."

His impressive business acumen comes into play as he deals with the complex variables that come with the territory. "I believed that the policies of a conservative Government would offer more realistic and deliverable solutions to the challenges of the time. I became a donor to the party, and when I left Xstrata, I was asked to become its treasurer – chief fundraiser. After the 2017 general election, the Prime Minister asked me to assume the role of Chief Executive of the party, and rebuild its campaign and research capability."

Davis speaks with piercing focus about Zionism, and how he feels about being a Zionist in the United Kingdom. "I am full of admiration for Jewish communities around the world. My values as a Jew were born from being part of a vibrant Zionist and hugely connected community in South Africa.

"I will not pretend that when first entering, the community of Great Britain was not without its challenges. I have been blessed since then to have been part of, and in a small way to have contributed to this community's growth and emerging

vibrancy and vitality. Israel and its people will always hold a special place in my heart. They are robust, brave, innovative, and fearless in challenging convention. But, across the Jewish world, challenges and divisions are potentially becoming all consuming," he says.

His love for South Africa stands. He visits South Africa often, and continues to retain a patriotic sentimentality. "My wife Barbara and I have investments in South Africa, and are engaged in programmes in support of young people at risk, education, and of course programmes which underpin the Jewish community."

He is concerned about the current situation, but is emphatic that with the right procedures in place, things could improve. "The government under my old friend President Ramaphosa has many challenges to overcome. The previous regime did a great deal of harm, and the aftermath of its corrupt stewardship will be felt for a long time to come. The challenges of home ownership, education, and healthcare are capable of being met provided honest, pragmatic, and strategic interventions are made in good time.

His stance of standing up for what he believes in plays out in outspoken views on Israel. "The Israeli

government has a duty to ensure that the citizens of Israel are safe and secure, and the existential threats that they face are met and overcome," says Davis.

"Prime Minister Netanyahu deserves a lot of credit for having pursued this goal. However, the lack of progress on the two-state solution is an existential threat. While it is not Israel's sole responsibility to build the conditions which will over time create momentum for this goal, it is occupying land which in 1947 we agreed would be the Palestinian state. It is an occupying power. I understand full well the complexities, but the corrosive effects of this are beginning to challenge the modern Zionist goal of a Jewish and democratic state. It may well be that there is no partner to negotiate with right now – but there are so many opportunities to build the conditions for productive negotiations which are being neglected."

These sentiments have been echoed by philanthropist and ardent Zionist, Ronald Lauder, who has also spoken out against Netanyahu's policies. "The crisis is especially pronounced among the younger generation, which is predominantly secular," says Lauder. "An increasing number of Jewish millennials – particularly in the United States – are distancing themselves from Israel because its policies contradict their values."

British Labour Party looking into 250 complaints of anti-Semitic abuse

The British Labour Party is investigating more than 250 complaints of anti-Semitic abuse.

The Jewish Labour Movement turned over the complaints to the party, many of them appearing on social media and related to Margaret Hodge.

Hodge, a Labour legislator, confronted Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn after the decision earlier this month to adopt a softened definition of anti-Semitism, calling him a "f***ing anti-Semite and a racist", and urging him to quit the party. The party has warned Hodge that she will be disciplined.

A second legislator, Ian Austin, a supporter of Labour Friends of Israel whose adoptive father was a Czech Jewish refugee from the Nazis, also faces party discipline after saying in a radio interview that Corbyn had been "supporting and defending all kinds of extremists and in some cases, frankly, anti-Semites", and calling the Labour Party a "sewer".

Among the anti-Semitic social media posts attacking Hodge, some called her a "Zionist bitch", and accused her of being paid for her support by Israel. Other posts on pro-Corbyn Facebook groups are alleged to have drawn parallels between Israel and the Nazis.

An unnamed Labour source told *The Sun* tabloid that the majority of those reported for anti-Semitic abuse were not party members.

"We have now processed all 252 names, and identified those who are members of the party," Sophie Goodyear, the Head of Complaints

at the Labour Party, wrote to the Jewish Labour Movement, daily newspaper *The Independent* reported. "These individuals are now being dealt with through the next step of our procedure for complaints of anti-Semitism."

Labour under Corbyn, a hard-left politician who has called Hezbollah and Hamas his "friends" and who is fighting accusations of harbouring anti-Semitic sentiments, has come under intense scrutiny in the media over anti-Semitic rhetoric by party members. In 2016, an interparliamentary committee accused Labour of creating a "safe space for those with vile attitudes towards Jewish people".

Corbyn has maintained that Labour will not tolerate racist rhetoric by its members. Dozens were kicked out over anti-Semitic statements. However, the party has kept on many Labour members who Jewish community leaders said engaged in anti-Semitic hate speech. (JTA)



Jeremy Corbyn

Heartfelt grief for untimely passing of cycling legend Garen Bloch

NICOLA MILTZ

Olympic cyclist Garen Bloch was a legend, having won 16 South African national titles, set four national records, and being named Maccabi Sportsman of the Year (1994-1996). But this week, his close friends are battling to come to terms with his tragic death in a motorbike accident.

Bloch, 39, was laid to rest in Israel last week surrounded by his parents and siblings. He died on 21 July, after it is understood that his motorbike hit the pavement in Veldspaat Street in Polokwane, near to where he lived. He was renowned for track cycling, climbing to third in the world rankings at his peak.

Garen competed for Team South Africa in the 2000 Summer Olympics at the age of 22 in Sydney in the men's 1 000m time trial, and came eighth. He also came in third at the 1997 World Cup in the points race, and second in the 1999 UCI Track Cycling World Cup Classics.

Bloch had been living at the Meteffect Recovery Centre, working as a drug and alcohol addiction councillor. It was here that he won his own 12-year battle against drug and alcohol addiction, and turned his life around.

Bloch's passing has been described as all the more tragic following his Herculean recovery, which turned him into a valued member of the Polokwane community. He had been clean for three years and 33 days, said his partner, Michele Dix-Peek this week.

She said that Bloch had dedicated himself to giving back to the community and picking up the pieces of his fractured life, in which she saw him go from "cycling hero to drug addict and back to being a hero again".

"Garen had a profound impact on the community of Polokwane," said Dix-Peek, the owner of Meteffect Recovery Centre where the couple met several years ago. A passionate martial arts practitioner, he had recently opened a martial arts studio of his own, called Fight or Flight Dojo, and was teaching the discipline.

In an interview with the *Polokwane Observer* earlier this year, Bloch relayed his story of addiction and his inspiring journey of recovery in the hope that it would reach other addicts and motivate them to seek help. He described meeting Dix-Peek at Meteffect when he was at the lowest point in his life. She offered him a hug, and this somehow gave him the courage he needed to move on with his life.

Bloch's cycling achievements speak for themselves, but his dream of competing in the 2004 Olympic Games was shattered following a back injury which took him out of the competition. He took a break to heal, with the idea of training for the following Olympics in 2008. However, his hopes were further dashed when his injury worsened. This led to a period of darkness, said Dix-Peek.

At a memorial service held in his honour on 26 July, members of the Polokwane community and residents of Meteffect expressed their heartfelt condolences and sadness at his sudden passing. They heard stories of his impressive cycling days, and spoke of his passion for motorbike riding, martial arts, animals, and children.

"Garen loved martial arts, his dog, Asha, riding his motorbike, and helping people, especially children. I take comfort knowing that he died doing what he loved best," said Dix-Peek.

His passing came as a shock to those in cycling circles who remember him as being "in a league of his own".

"People said Garen was a genius on a bicycle," his cousin Carey Bloch told the *SA Jewish Report* this week.

"He was an unbelievable athlete, probably

one of the best cyclists South Africa has ever seen. He will be sorely missed and remembered for being a fierce competitor," he said.

Bloch was the younger brother of the well-known cycling champion and Olympian cyclist, Sean Bloch.

He started cycling after watching his brother compete in the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, believing he too could one day represent his country at the Olympics. He was 14 years old when his dad, Mervyn, bought him a bike.

According to those who knew him, he showed enormous talent from a young age.

"I remember him giving cycling idol, the late Alan van Heerden, a run for his money when he was only 15 or 16 years old, beating him

in the sprints with restricted gears as a junior cyclist in Germiston. Garen dominated the track," said Carey Bloch.

He said Bloch was "a quiet, humble guy who never blew his own whistle. His actions always spoke louder than words".

The family lived in Glenhazel, and he attended Yeshiva College and later King David Linksfield.

His lifelong friend, Jared Kahan, said of him: "I've known him through all his successes, achievements, hardships, and downfalls. He was a special man, born with pure, raw talent."

He described Bloch as "loving and caring – someone you could call anytime of the night

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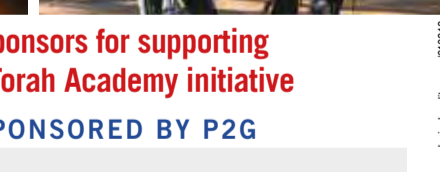
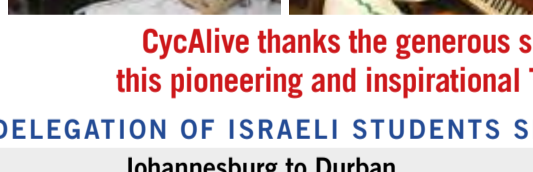
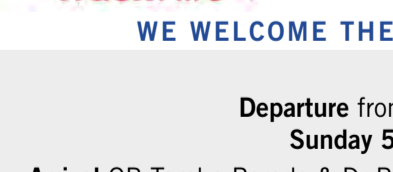


Garen and his partner Michele Dix-Peek



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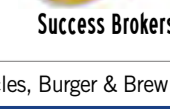
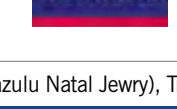
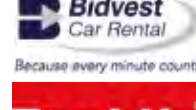
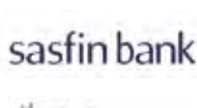
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South African Jewish Report

Gupta Minyan quotes have me unglued

I got a call earlier this week from a rabbi for whom I have huge respect asking me what it was like to be used by other journalists to promote anti-Semitism. I knew exactly what he was talking about and, as you can imagine, it was something I have been mulling over a lot over the past week.

Last Thursday, amaBhungane, an independent investigative journalism team, put out its latest story on the Jewish businessmen who were associated with the Gupta-led corruption. They wrote it, and *News24* and the *Daily Maverick* ran it.

Now, let me preface this with the fact that I have always had huge respect as a journalist for Sam Sole and Stefaans Brummer, who started this team many years back when they were at the *Mail & Guardian*. They have done exceptional exposés and, I believe, through the work they did on “Guptagate”, they played a big role in bringing down former President Jacob Zuma. Their work is – as far as I know – above reproach.

That being said, when they used an editorial I wrote in November last year as glue for their story about those men we dubbed “the Gupta Minyan”, I felt extremely uncomfortable.



The glue was the fact that they were Jewish, and that the community had allegedly “shunned” them because of what they were believed to have done.

The story – written by Sam Sole – was titled “The ‘Gupta Minyan’ and the R647-million Transnet scam”. It began: “We went after a trail left by Gupta lieutenant Salim Essa. What we found was a group of Jewish businessmen who complain of being shunned by their community because of their association with the Guptas.”

And upfront, they used my quotes.

I don’t have a problem with people quoting what I write. If it was meant to be secret, or if I didn’t stand by what I write, surely I shouldn’t be writing it. What I wrote, I totally stand by.

However, when I wrote about the Gupta Minyan it was for the audience of the *SA Jewish Report*, not the mainstream media. I have no problem in lumping a group of businessmen who were connected together. That makes sense.

It was, however, inappropriate to highlight the fact that they were Jews. That fact was totally irrelevant. They were not associated with each other because they were Jewish, they were associated with each other because they had business dealings. Having said this, many of the people in the long and winding amaBhungane story were not even Jewish.

I asked Sole the following question: if the businessmen concerned were all Christian, would he have written about them as Christian businessmen or just South African businessmen? You can guess his answer.

He said he saw the Gupta Minyan as such a clever label (that I admittedly didn’t create), and using my editorial was too good an opportunity to miss. He reminded me that I had linked them – without naming them – in an editorial speaking about how the community had reacted towards them. He also reminded me that I was the one who pointed out that they deserved their day in court before we judged them. So, they happily used quotes from my editorial as they needed this glue.

Do I think amaBhungane or the article are anti-Semitic? No, I don’t. In fact, the article was quite sympathetic to the community, saying that we hold ourselves to a higher moral standard than most, which is why the community was so angry.

They also said that the community was right to hold the Gupta Minyan to account, etcetera.

There was nothing ugly in what was said about the community. In terms of what they wrote about the businessmen themselves, I believe that if they have done wrong and the judicial system is not doing much about it, it is incumbent on the media to ferret out the truth.

However, lumping them together as Jews is the problem. I don’t believe it was anti-Semitic on their part, as such, because they clearly have no understanding of who we are, or the impact lumping these businessmen together as Jews has on us.

But I believe that by virtue of them uniting the businessmen who they claim to be crooked as Jews, they are sending a message with a subtext that Jews are crooked. This is the problem I have with amaBhungane’s use of the *SA Jewish Report*’s editorial in their article

We do not like the rest of society to have a reason to point fingers at us because we do set that bar so high for ourselves. Also, there is enough anti-Semitism out there without fuelling flames by throwing us under the bus like that. We hardly need to give those who already dislike us false ammunition.

It is true that not every single Jew is upstanding and honest, but then the same can be said for any other community. But we do hold ourselves up to a higher bar and, because of that, there are very few Jews in jails.

Are we too sensitive? I don’t know. Would I have preferred they didn’t use that editorial? Definitely! Is this particular story going to have a huge impact on us as a community, I hardly think so.

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

Tamimi’s imprisonment a slap in the face for Israel

**DATELINE:
MIDDLE EAST**

Paula Slier



Seventeen-year-old Ahed Tamimi has become the poster child of the anti-occupation movement. She has been compared, among others, to Anne Frank, one of the most well-known victims of the Holocaust and Hannah Senesh, a Hungarian Jewish paratrooper captured and killed by the Nazis.

Tamimi describes herself as a freedom fighter. Since childhood, she has been involved in ongoing protests against the Israeli occupation in her village of Nabi Salih in the West Bank.

She made international headlines this week when she was released after spending more than half a year in prison, cementing her transformation from teenage activist into international icon.

Following her discharge, she met Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, and will reportedly be invited to South Africa by Mandla Mandela, Nelson Mandela’s grandson, to receive a special award for her “bravery, resistance and being a symbol of hope for millions”.

Turkish President Recep Erdogan phoned to commend her “bravery and determination to fight” and Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri, among others, tweeted his support.

But it is the Israeli government and Israel Defence Forces (IDF) who ironically and unintentionally played a role in her shooting to stardom.

It stems back to December last year, when a demonstration in her village turned violent. In an effort to subdue the roughly 200 protestors who were throwing stones at them, Israeli soldiers entered Tamimi’s house.

The army claims some of the stone-throwers were inside. But in the ensuing violence, the soldiers shot Tamimi’s 15-year-old cousin, Mohammed, in the head at close range with a rubber-coated steel bullet, badly wounding him.

Afterwards, Tamimi, her mother and cousin, approached two soldiers outside the house and started slapping, kicking, and shoving them. The soldiers did not retaliate. The incident was filmed by someone standing farther away, posted online, and soon went viral on various social media networks.

And herein lies Israel’s quandary. Had the soldiers retaliated – by hitting her or arresting her on the spot – the backlash and criticism against the army would have been much worse. In a preliminary enquiry into the incident, the IDF found that the “commander acted professionally by

not being dragged into [the use of] violence”.

But by not responding, the IDF’s pride was hurt and more importantly many Israelis were disturbed by the video of their soldiers being provoked with no punishment being meted out.

It sparked a furious debate inside the country in which leftwing voices argued that the soldiers should be commended for showing restraint.

But a former Knesset (Parliament) member remarked that he missed Elor Azaria, the Israeli soldier who served nine months in prison for killing a wounded Palestinian assailant in Hebron almost two-and-a-half years ago. Naftali Bennett, Education Minister and leader of The Jewish Home party added his voice, saying he hoped the girls would “end their lives in jail”.

Presumably this is why thirteen days later, the army arrested Tamimi, her mother and cousin, and charged them with assault, incitement, and throwing stones.

When pressed as to why it didn’t carry out the arrests at the time of the incident, the IDF said it could have “because they [Tamimi, her cousin, and mother] used physical violence, and because of the fact that they tried to interfere with soldiers carrying out their duties”.

Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman declared that, “those who harm our soldiers by day are arrested by night”. No doubt, his intention was to deter other young Palestinians who might consider following in Tamimi’s footsteps.

However, what he didn’t count on was that by trying to make an example of her, he unwittingly helped to turn Tamimi into a symbol of resistance.

The IDF didn’t help either. It distributed footage of her arrest to all media, who obligingly broadcast it. But what foreign audiences saw on their television screens and computer monitors was very different to what Israelis saw. Whereas Israelis saw their soldiers being provoked, foreigners saw a young woman who’d grown up under Israeli occupation fighting against oppressive soldiers.

It is this that Israel sometimes forgets. The international media landscape – as a rule of thumb – is more sympathetic to the Palestinian struggle, and Tamimi’s blond hair and light features resonate with many foreign audiences.

A picture will always be worth a thousand words, and a teenager who doesn’t wear a hijab or burqa and looks typically European will always evoke more empathy than a heavily armed Israeli soldier.

Regardless of how erudite pro-Israeli spokespeople are, and regardless of the accusations that Tamimi’s family has links with terrorism and stages protests, she is the most photographed Palestinian woman of the past five years.

Tamimi’s arrest and imprisonment ultimately did more damage to Israel’s international image than the initial video of her slapping a soldier ever could.



Ahed Tamimi

Give thanks for our freedom of religion – but don't take it for granted

OPINION

Wendy Kahn



I recently received an invitation from United States Secretary of State Michael Pompeo to attend the first ever Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom held last month.

For many years, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) has contributed to the US State Department's international report on religious freedom. It is an annual exercise where we reflect on threats to religious freedom in our country, as it relates to the Jewish community.

Our new democracy and internationally acclaimed Constitution protects religious rights in our country. It is something we applaud and appreciate. Bodies such as the CRL Rights Commission were established with a view to promoting and protecting cultural, religious, and linguistic rights in our country.

When I speak at international conferences and to local audiences, I share the manner in which our religious rights are upheld. This includes universities making provision for observant Jewish students to write exams at alternate times when they fall on *Shabbat* and *chaggim*. Our requirements for swift burial are accommodated. Even an election date was rescheduled away from Pesach so that 0.01% of the population could vote.

So, my experience in Washington last week was eye opening and sobering. For two days, I was exposed to individuals from countries where religious freedom is denied and forbidden.

I met people who are persecuted, living with hardship in countries that refuse to allow religious belief or practice. Their stories left me shocked and shaken.

In one of the sessions, Rabbi Arthur Schneier from the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, a Holocaust survivor and international religious freedom and human rights activist, spoke about his recollections of Kristalnacht. He cautioned that "those who burn books will go on to burn human beings". That is exactly what we heard about. In the zeal to silence other religions, gross human rights violations are being perpetrated around the world.

I met and heard the stories of people persecuted for their religious beliefs in China, Burma, Pakistan, Turkey, North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Bangladesh, Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and sadly many more. These were stories of horrific oppression, torture, and deprivation of rights, simply because they refused to turn their back on their religion.

On the first day, Presbyterian Pastor Andrew Brunson's daughter shared the story of her father, who had been incarcerated for the past two years in Turkey for refusing to abandon his Christianity. The following morning, we were greeted with the good news that he had been released from jail into house arrest.

Two young Iranian Christian women also shared their story. They were incarcerated in the Evan prison in 2009 for refusing to renounce their faith, alongside other minority groups. Following lengthily interrogation and torture, they were sentenced to execution. Refusing to distance themselves from their religion, they were

denied access to prison services such as medical care. They were repeatedly pressurised to turn their back on Christianity, with descriptions of the hanging they would be subjected to. Eventually they were released following international pressure, but were warned that they would be closely watched, and that their safety would always be compromised. They fled the country, writing a book, and speaking out on the abuse of minorities in Iran.

A woman from the Bahai community in Iran shared a similar story, presenting us with a long list of family members who had been executed, persecuted, imprisoned, tortured, and had had their property confiscated. Nadia Morad, a Yazidi woman, pleaded with the international community to intervene in the persecution of her community in Iraq. Today thousands of Yazidis still remain in captivity, and more than 350 000 are displaced.

Tahir Hamid told us of the persecution of the Uighur Muslim community in China, where many are detained in brutal "re-education" camps, subjected to constant surveillance, mosques are closed, and books burned in an attempt to force them to abandon their religion.

Reverend Johan Cao's wife told us about her remarkable husband, who had built numerous schools in China and then in Myanmar. He was arrested for his faith-driven work. He lost 60 pounds (27kg) in prison, and was refused contact with family or legal counsel.

We heard from a Sudanese pastor who was incarcerated for two years for preaching Christianity. He was starved and beaten.

Peter Bhatti shared the story of his brother Shahbaz, Islamabad's Minister for Minorities, who was assassinated in Pakistan for his Christian faith.

Human Rights lawyer Razia Sultana spoke about the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya community in Burma, where rape is used as a weapon, and basic rights are denied. More than 700 000 civilians have been displaced in this crisis.

We were heartbroken by the testimony of a young, female refugee from North Korea, who spoke of forced abortion, torture, and solitary confinement.

At the close of the event, the Dalai Lama left us with a powerful message on the importance of respect for all religions. I returned to South Africa humbled and sobered by the stories that I heard, and shocked at the ongoing persecution and deprivation of religious rights around the world. I felt grateful for Section 15 of our Constitution, which affirms our rights to freedom of religion in our country.

While we are privileged to live in a country that embraces diversity and religious freedom, we must continue to protect and fight for these values. Hate-filled rhetoric must be rejected and condemned, irrespective of the community it is targeted at. Any attempt to infringe on religious freedom, including attempts to sever ties with our biblical/religious/historical homeland, Israel, must be exposed and rejected with contempt.

I was touched by the words of one of the participants at the ministerial who said, "My faith is Christianity, but my religion is humanity." After listening to so much anguish and horror, it was a moving and poignant message for so many around the world.

• Wendy Kahn is the National Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.

Heartfelt grief for untimely passing of cycling legend Garen Bloch

>> Continued from page 5

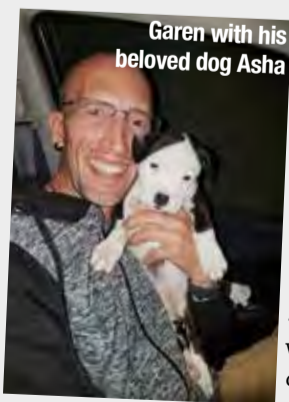
knowing he'd be there. His death is a huge loss, he had so much more to contribute to the cycling world and the community in general."

A moving letter addressed to members of the Capri Wheelers, a club Bloch belonged to for many years, said that Bloch would "certainly be remembered for his achievements on the bike. Yet, all his achievements and talent paled in comparison to the size of his heart. We truly believe that we never got to see him achieve his full potential, on and off the bike."

Janine Bloch, married to Carey,

said she would always be grateful to him for his compassion after her daughter fell ill with Guillain-Barre syndrome, an illness which causes temporary paralysis.

"Garen visited her every day in the hospital, massaged her legs, and helped her recover by doing exercises with her in our swimming pool when she got out of hospital. He was a major part of her recovery."



Garen with his beloved dog Asha

Mario Nell, a former South African professional track cyclist who won gold in the World Masters Games Scratch race in 2009 said of Bloch, "He was one of those guys who put in the hard yards and tried to win the right way. Whatever he did, he did it all out. He was a good person, and he is definitely going to be missed."

He is survived by his parents, Mervyn and Sandra, his brother Sean and sister Charlene Jacobs.

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Is anti-Semitism a problem at South African universities?

JORDAN MOSHE

Do we or don't we enrol our children in South African universities? This question is being discussed behind closed doors in homes where children have matriculated. Is anti-Semitism or racism in general going to make life too difficult for our children?

The simple answer from all those we have asked is that there is no real threat to South African Jewish students, despite some vitriolic statements posted on social media.

Anti-Semitism is not unheard of, but our children are not at any real risk on campus.

According to Jewish lecturers at Wits University, anti-Semitic incidents are uncommon in their personal experiences. "I can say that I have never been aware of any overt anti-Semitism," says Judith Katzew of the law department. Her opinion was echoed by Sharon Milner, associate professor of psychology. "Anti-Semitism is not something I've ever experienced in my work at Wits," she says.

...where remarks made on social media about Jews or Israel are concerned, we may witness sudden spikes, but they do dissipate and may not reflect common sentiment amongst non-Jewish people.

In fact, the opposite is true, says Milner. "Wits administration makes a concerted effort to promote tolerance on campus amongst all people," she explains. "Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib is incredibly responsive to the concerns of the Jewish community and is very active in ensuring that the campus is a place that accepts all people and that no one is discriminated against."

While this may be the case among staff, incidents experienced by students seem to paint a different picture. According to some Jewish students, experiences involving Holocaust denial and the praising of Hitler have occurred in recent years.

"On a social media group some time ago," says one student, "there was a guy who denied the Holocaust, saying it was 'the biggest lie of the century'. He spat out anti-Semitic rhetoric and glorified Hitler publicly on the group, with support from other students. They called Hitler a good leader. They denied the gas chambers, denied six million Jews having been murdered, and denied the waves of anti-Semitism that occurred afterwards throughout Europe."

He relates another incident. "In my first year of university, students whom I considered my friends denied the Holocaust and called it a big lie. We got into an argument and when I said that the Jewish people would not allow themselves to be massacred again, they started denying it. One girl, who was dating one of the guys in the group and was a good friend of mine, just sat at the table and said nothing. I upped and left."

This may seem unsurprising, considering the incident which saw student leader Mcebo Dlamini say, "I love Adolf Hitler", on Twitter in 2015 and subsequent statements of a similar nature. However, it is worth noting that this latter incident occurred at the height of Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), when other students reported they'd experienced unpleasant incidents too.

Another student recounts: "In a tutorial during IAW, the tutor started discussing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) and Israel and apartheid, even though this had nothing to do with what we were meant to be talking about. He was asking everyone to share their opinions on it and everyone started bashing the Jews and Israel. Someone said that the way that Israel is treating the Palestinians is just to get back at people who hurt them in the Holocaust and they are treating them worse."

"I am the only Jew in that tutorial and as I am religious it was pretty obvious that I am Jewish, and I felt very attacked and hurt by what was being said."

Even lecturers have conceded that this kind of aggressive expression does occur when the topic of Israel comes up. "There is an upsurge in incidents during IAW," says Milner. "When the subject of Israel comes up, when graffiti appears across campus against Israel and its supporters, the issue becomes personal and students feel uncomfortable and perhaps fearful."

Katzew says the same. "I am concerned that Jewish students may be intimidated and silenced when issues around Israel emerge."

Professor Adam Mendelsohn, director of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town (UCT), says the flare-up of such incidents within the context of IAW should not serve as an indication of overall anti-Semitic sentiment. "During the course of IAW," he says, "students allied with Israel feel challenged and faced with open confrontation. As discomfiting as anti-Israel expression may be, issues relating to anti-Semitic outburst haven't been observed."

He adds that while occasional complaints of incidents read as anti-Semitic have been recorded at UCT, nothing overtly anti-Semitic has happened in recent years. "Sadly, unfair and aggressive remarks are said of Israel. Still, there is a sense that groups such as the Palestine Solidarity Forum and BDS are deliberately careful where anti-Semitism is concerned. They know that there is price to pay for

is concerned. Price is certainly a polarising figure, and people have criticised him on many bases. Yet no overt anti-Semitic means no comment, poster or graffiti has been used against him."

Mendelsohn says that where remarks made on social media about Jews or Israel are concerned, we may witness sudden spikes, but they do dissipate and may not reflect common sentiment amongst non-

a decade ago was unheard of. Groups such as Chabad on Campus are in the public view, while students are making public shows of their Judaism and are displaying confidence in their presence. Such examples counter views that things are getting worse.

"Identity politics at university ensure a certain freedom, and Jewish students are able to express themselves almost without thinking about it. While we may



A stolen and vandalised Israeli flag was illegally hoisted at Jameson Hall, UCT during Israel Apartheid Week this year

discrimination of this kind.

"While we may not know the feelings which lie in their heart of hearts, they are careful about making certain statements, and there is thus a striking absence of overt anti-Semitism even during this event."

Speaking more broadly about anti-Semitism at UCT, Mendelsohn says that even with during UCT vice-chancellor Max Price's decade-long tenure – he vacated the post at the end of June – the campus remained fairly untainted by anti-Semitic comments or incidents. "There isn't any significant anti-Semitism issue at UCT," he says, "although there would have been ample opportunity for it over the last decade. Max Price is certainly not shy of his Jewish identity, and it would be almost unsurprising if people used this aggressively."

"However, there has been a conspicuous absence of resorting to anti-Semitic rhetoric where he

Jewish people.

"In a study we ran last year, we found that attitudes towards Jews among black people feature very little deep-seated hostility. Of course, with the recent occurrences on social media platforms, we need to ask how to interpret this social media flurry. While there are some anti-Semites operating online, who excite others to use their rhetoric, the general nature of social media involves moments of outrage and overstatement, and then a dissipation. A week later, users have moved on, and are looking for their next target."

"This happens on social media, and there is therefore little reason to expect that this will happen on university campuses."

Therefore, he suggests, there is no reason to expect radical changes on our campuses where anti-Semitic expression is concerned – perhaps even the opposite. "We are seeing an assertiveness of Jewish presence that

expect social media flare-ups against Jews or Israel occasionally, this is a new reality. It's part of the greater picture of social media of people making intemperate remarks. However, this won't translate into something on campuses."

He concludes: "Ideally, university campuses are models of openness for identity expression. In reality, we know that worldwide trends suggest this is not always the case – the policing of speech and intolerance of identity politics creep into many spaces."

"But while I will stress that university freedom does not suggest a golden age for Jewish students, they can still feel confident in their identities and feel safe in the knowledge that there are elements of current university environments that support their expressions as Jews that were not allowed in past."

Pick n Pay removes Nussbaum's meat in listeria scare

>>Continued from page 1

In response to questions, Rabbi Dovi Goldstein of the Beth Din Kosher Department confirmed that the Beth Din had no role or authority in ensuring food safety at kashering facilities. Furthermore, it could not be responsible for informing the community on food safety, as it was simply not its area of expertise.

"The Beth Din Kosher Department is not a qualified health and safety regulator and does not have the legal authority to make a determination on the food-safety issues raised by Pick n Pay," he said.

Dr Juno Thomas, the head of the Centre for Enteric Diseases at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases, explained that raw meat was not usually tested for listeria because it would be cooked above 70 degrees, doing away with the risk. Thus, by default, the listeria found in Nussbaum's beef and lamb was not a serious health concern. However cooking meat rare still posed a slight risk.

Chicken is usually fully cooked, so it is not tested for listeria, and even if it is found in chicken, it is not seen as a crisis.

She explained that since the national listeriosis outbreak, many retail stores were introducing independent external audits of their suppliers to check hygiene and food-safety practice. If there was a lapse in hygiene or food safety, a retailer might recall products as a precautionary measure to "cover themselves", but this did not mean they had necessarily tested the meat or found an organism. This may have been what happened this week.

Indeed, Pick n Pay spokesman Janine Caradonna said, "We conduct internal audits with suppliers at their premises which must comply with our own specifications. Our food technologists visit suppliers that pack under the Pick n Pay brand to verify their systems, monitor results, and check quality compliance to specification. The results of our latest audit

were not compliant with all our specifications, resulting in our immediate decision not to stock these products until such time as we are satisfied with compliance.

"Meat will now be kashered under the supervision of the Johannesburg Beth Din at the Norwood store, and those that will receive this new supply are Norwood, Fairmount, and Gallo Manor. Norwood is the first store that will have full stocks of kosher meat, which is sourced from an audited abattoir that is monitored by SAMIC [the South African Meat Industry Company] and our technologist. We always seek to provide our customers with the highest quality products, and all must conform to our standards with no exceptions."

• Nussbaum's has asked that if anyone wants to return and be refunded for meat they bought between 16 to 22 July, they can email baruch@nussbaums.co.za to arrange it.

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From education to activism, Max Price leaves a remarkable legacy

TALI FEINBERG

It is the end of an era, as Dr Max Price leaves the University of Cape Town (UCT), where he has been Vice-Chancellor for the past 10 years. Though he concluded his tenure last month, this dynamic doctor and educator left an indelible mark on the university, having achieved so much in such a short time.

Price has taken the university through a tough and fascinating period.

Behind the scenes of what was often a scenario of high drama, Price worked to improve UCT from every angle. Under his tenure, the university grew 25%, with 6 000 more students than when he began his tenure ten years ago. Research output more than doubled, and fundraising trebled. “We raised nearly a million rand every day,” Price says. Much of this goes towards scholarships for poor and lower middle class students.

Price also introduced new teaching initiatives, and incentivised leadership and volunteer programmes to produce well-rounded graduates. He facilitated a number of new institutes, from the School for Design Thinking to the Nelson Mandela School of Governance, and his Vice-Chancellor Initiatives focused on schools improvement, climate change, crime and violence, and inequality.

Selecting him for the position of Vice-Chancellor a decade ago, he says, was “an unusual choice”, but he was put forward as a “transformation candidate”, emphasising that “you don’t have to be black to enact transformation. It can and should also be the job of whites”.

Price found the biggest challenge in this arena to be the subtle, institutional culture of stereotyping, discrimination, and alienation – “micro-aggressions that are so unconscious and pervasive, they are the most difficult to eradicate”.

For example, some of the art at UCT portrays scenes of black misery or white power. While an exhibition would explain the art was created in the context of condemning the effects of apartheid, simply adorning the walls of public spaces with these artworks could make a black student question if they belong there. In meetings, it is often white males who lead discussions. The implicit message is sometimes that “excellence has a colour – and that colour is white”.

This is why Price was not surprised when the Rhodes Must Fall protests began – he had raised the issue of the Rhodes statue before then, but it was not seen as urgent. He understood that the “pride of place” of the Rhodes statue on the campus could misrepresent the values of the institution and the need for a more inclusive environment.

He is proud that the questioning of such symbols has spread from UCT across the globe. For example, in the United States, universities and colleges have questioned their association with slavery. However he is also quick to point out that the violence and vandalism that

Max Price



followed with the Fees Must Fall movement crossed a line, and must be condemned.

Price believes his path has been influenced by Jewish values. “I attended King David Schools, but I was Reform, which put me in conflict with the prevailing Orthodoxy there,” he recalls. However, this did not lead him to turn away from Judaism, but rather to delve deeper into it to access a tradition of questioning the status quo.

Furthermore, the progressive Jewish values of egalitarianism and social justice really appealed to him. Seeing his rabbi, Arthur Super, speaking out against the National Party’s racist policies showed him that “Judaism required us to reject apartheid”, and he did just this in student activism.

Both Price’s parents came to South Africa from Europe, his mother escaping from Germany in 1936, and both losing relatives in the Holocaust. This also had a profound impact on him, with his parents reminding him to speak out against discrimination and oppression.

He studied medicine at Wits University, and was exposed as a young student to Baragwanath

...the South African Jewish community has become “more inward-looking and isolated, and this is a mistake. I encourage South African Jews to embrace active citizenship.”

Hospital and Alexandra Clinic. “Coming from a sheltered suburb, seeing the conditions that people lived in was a real shock,” he recalls, further motivation to join student politics.

He became President of the Wits Students Representative Council in 1977, and while organising the first anniversary commemorations of the Soweto Uprising, he was arrested and detained in solitary confinement at John Vorster Square for 12 days. Although he was not physically harmed, he describes the experience as frightening and formative.

His involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle led to him being barred from working with black patients, as the authorities feared it would provide more opportunities for his activism. He spent three years in

England on a Rhodes scholarship at Oxford University, before returning to work in rural hospitals, training nurses in primary healthcare.

At Oxford, Price made the surprising choice of completing a Politics, Economics, and Philosophy Degree. “I know most people would expect a doctor to do a post-graduate, career-related qualification, but I found that I was ill-prepared to participate in political debate with other activists – I had little education in history, politics, economics, and so forth.”

The degree gave him a more extensive education, which he says turned out to be very useful in future leadership positions. This decision also had a profound impact on Price’s views about education, and many years later at both Wits University and UCT, he put in place a number of programmes to produce more well-rounded cohort graduates.

A further qualification followed in Public Health at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine with a focus on health policy and economics, and Price then joined the newly established Centre for Health Policy in South Africa in 1988. Its primary focus was to envision post-apartheid

health policy, since the health system had been fragmented and distorted by the apartheid system.

In 1994, he headed a ministerial commission on financing healthcare. “But then, ironically, with the Mbeki government’s AIDS denialism, I found myself in opposition to public health policy. I was a participant in one of the TAC [Treatment Action Campaign] court challenges to the government – so the activism continued, but in a different way.”

In 1995, while on sabbatical at Harvard, Price was approached to apply to be the Dean of the Wits Faculty of Health Sciences, and was appointed. “It was an unusual choice, as deans of medical schools are usually senior specialist clinicians that have risen up the ranks, and I was only 40 and from public health. I think my appointment was to make a decisive break from the past.” This he did.

In 1997, the faculty made a submission to the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) and also held an internal reconciliation process, inviting black alumni to express how they had experienced training as doctors under apartheid. At the end of the process, a sculpture was erected to mark an apology, and pledge by the faculty, in an act of healing and moving forward.

This process, so unique amongst institutions at the time, foreshadowed the challenges that defined Price’s tenure as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, which was – as mentioned – also not an obvious choice.

Now that his Vice-Chancellorship has come to a close, Price will take a sabbatical in England with his wife, Professor Deborah Posel, and will be writing a book about his time as VC.

He feels that over time, the South African Jewish community has become “more inward-looking and isolated, and this is a mistake. I encourage South African Jews to embrace active citizenship”, he concludes.

Israel's Home Made wows Durban

NICOLA MILTZ

Award-winning young Israeli filmmaker Shira Meishar said her eyes were opened to a whole new world during her visit to South Africa for the recent Durban International Film Festival.

“It is an amazing country, with incredible people,” she told the *SA Jewish Report* this week, shortly after showcasing her award-winning short film *Home Made* at the festival.

“I have learnt so much here,” she said with reference to the number of international film makers and industry players present at the festival.

As it has done over the past 38 years, the festival – hosted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s Centre for Creative Arts – brought film lovers and filmmakers from across the globe to Durban this year for a feast of cinema for ten days, from 19 to 29 July.

“It is a big event attracting so many people from so many countries,” said Meishar, “I also met people from local communities who responded so well to my film.”

Home Made is 13 minutes long, but it effortlessly captures a lifetime of emotions in a masterful short space of time.

The provocative narrative stars award-winning Israeli actress Evgenia Dodina. It was released in

2017, and went on to win the award for best script at the Tel Aviv Student Film Festival 2017. It also won first prize for best film at the LongShort Festival in Tel Aviv in 2017. The film has been screened at festivals in Canada, Switzerland, and the United States, among them the prestigious Palm Springs International Short Film Festival, according to Meishar.

The film is about a woman who is supposed to be going home to her partner to celebrate her 50th birthday after a long day’s work at a restaurant.



However, she lands up staying a little longer to serve dinner to a passing stranger and a little boy.

While in South Africa, the Jerusalem-based Meishar, 26, held a screening of the film at the Luthuli Museum outside of Durban, which she said was one

of the highlights of her and film editor Tamar Ben Baruch’s trip.

Said Ben Baruch: “The students at Luthuli Museum were so excited to see us and engage with us. They enjoyed the film, and asked so many meaningful questions about it.”

Meishar said she thought the students wouldn’t understand the essence of the film, with its nuanced references to the intimacy shared between strangers. “I was so wrong. They got it,” she said.

Both experienced the warmth of the local community, and the eagerness of some people to engage with them about Israel, its politics, and lifestyle. They had many meaningful interactions.

“Many people we came across had never spoken to Israelis before. It was interesting for all of us to engage. They didn’t reject us, and were open and interested in what we had to say,” she said.

The two spent shabbat with the Cape Town community in Sea Point, which they described as very special.

The Durban Film Festival, they said, focussed on women’s rights and violence against women, which they found interesting.

Festival Manager Chipu Zhou said they had “book-ended” the festival with films that told stories about women, their strength, and their resilience.

Continued on page 18>>

Trailblazer Ray Katz an icon for activism and leadership in SA

TRIBUTE

TALI FEINBERG

She was a lawyer at a time when there were few female advocates in South Africa; a struggle activist and student leader; a community worker and a teacher in the townships; a style icon; a mother and a grandmother, but little is recorded about the life and times of Ray Katz.

Thankfully, her daughter, Amanda Jermyn, is changing that. She recently began writing a book about her mother, who passed away on 17 July at the age of 89 in Westport, Connecticut – a lifetime away from Lithuania, where she was born in 1929, and Cape Town, where she grew up and made a major impact on society.



Back row: Katz's grandson, Adam; daughter Amanda; Amanda's husband, Isadore Jermyn; Katz's grandson, Michael. Front row: Katz's granddaughter, Eva; Ray Katz, and Amanda's daughter-in-law, Marie Hains.

"My mother's involvement in student politics was motivated by a strong sense of justice that she'd had from an early age. She always felt strongly about correcting injustices, such as those under apartheid, and this was definitely in the spirit of *Tikkun Olam* (healing the world)," Jermyn told the *SA Jewish Report* from Longmeadow, Massachusetts.

"Her passion for law was also motivated by a strong sense of justice, and I know that by the age of 14, she had already decided to become a lawyer." Indeed, at the start of Women's Month, Ray Katz' life is another example of why women are celebrated as change-makers and leaders in South African civil society.

Born Ray Kriger, she came from a family that held women in high regard – her mother Riva was also a trailblazer who spoke five languages and placed an enormous emphasis on education for her children. Ray's sister, Anne, was admitted as one of the first female chartered accountants in South Africa, and Ray as one of the first female advocates.

She was born in Rokiskis, Lithuania, and immigrated with her family to Cape Town at a young age. "At Wynberg Girls High School, my mother excelled academically, graduating at age 16. She became a prefect, and was a role model for many students. Hedy Davis, who attended the school many years later, told me she was advised by Miss Currie, the headmistress at the time, to 'take a leaf out of the book of the finest Jewish pupil the school had ever had. No one with more talent had ever been at the school,'" writes Jermyn.

Her mother excelled at her law studies, and received the class medal for constitutional history. She was also awarded the Bertram Gesundheit Scholarship for the most promising law student in the last two years of her degree.

In addition, she was deeply involved in student life and activism at the University of Cape Town (UCT). She was elected to the Student Representative Council, became treasurer of the Law Society, and was elected Head Woman Student. Together with Zach de Beer, she founded the Liberal Party at UCT and became its Chairperson.

"As the Publicity Director of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), my mother started the NUSAS Loan Fund Scheme, which was intended for poor black students who were unable to pay university fees. As she did not want to say it was for black students, she stipulated only that the funds be given to students in need. It remains operative to this day. Of this time in her life she wrote, 'Those were halcyon days,'" says Jermyn.

Later, Katz worked in night schools teaching black students who wanted to obtain their school-leaving certificates. Classes were held in a church hall in Retreat because white teachers were not allowed into the black townships. "The government eventually closed the night schools in about 1951, claiming that students and teachers were using them to spread anti-government propaganda. The Nationalists also believed it to be in their best interests to keep blacks uneducated," recalls Jermyn.

Her mother was an attractive, vivacious woman who wore stylish clothes, many of which she designed herself. She got engaged to Robert Katz during the final year of her law studies, and they were married in the Gardens Synagogue on 17 December 1950, just a few days after she finished her law exams.

After being admitted to the Bar as an advocate, Katz started her own practice in criminal law. "As there was no place for a woman lawyer to put on her robes in the court building, she changed at her brother's chambers, and had to walk through the city to the court in her robe.



At a National Union of South African Students gathering in Cape Town. The photo includes Jan Smuts; Nobel Prize winner Sydney Brenner; politician Zack de Beer; anthropologist Philip Tobias and Ray Katz

Women were also denied access to the court law library, so my mother had to buy books she could otherwise have borrowed. Before she began to practice, the Chief Justice called her into his office to tell her how to dress. Needless to say, male barristers did not receive this demeaning 'advice,'" recalls her daughter.

"While she felt accepted by her male colleagues at the university, some of them changed their attitude once she was admitted to the Bar and became their competitor in the practice of law. Attitudes towards women lawyers have since changed, but at the time, my mother was very much a pioneer in her field. With her energy, charm and astuteness, her love of family and hospitality, her moral integrity, and sense of justice, my mother is an inspiring role model for our entire family."

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ANC stalwart sets his sights on Hout Bay

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

"I'm more afraid [of speaking out] now than I was in the old days, because we seem to be killing each other in the ANC." These are the words of Rivonia trialist Denis Goldberg, who gave a brief address at a winter soiree presented by the Denis Goldberg Foundation and the Hout Bay Ingoma Choir at Groot Constantia on 26 July.

Goldberg, 85, who has inoperable lung cancer, said that he was "tired of politics, tired of fighting", and so was dedicating himself to raising the R6 million needed to fund the building of House of Hope, a centre dedicated to uplifting young people in the suburb.

The foundation aims to build bridges through arts and culture for the benefit of the young people of Hout Bay on land that was promised by the Western Cape government. It will also provide a space for after school and holiday programmes, including those focused on improving IT literacy.

Goldberg is one of the two remaining Rivonia trialists. The other is 93-year-old Andrew Mlangeni. He recalled fellow trialist Govan Mbeki – whose son, political economist Moeletsi Mbeki, was present at the event –

relating to him that in 1947, he had gone into the can, and seen a book on the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. "That set him thinking, and led to his understanding that racism must lead to the gas ovens or the equivalent.

"He said in conclusion that he was an African nationalist, and believed in the liberation of the people of South Africa. However, he said he could never be a racist because that would mean becoming part of the extermination experience of the Nazi era. That was a great lesson for me, and for Nelson Mandela, who in 1940 was virulently anti-white, anti any kind of politics. [Mbeki] convinced him [otherwise].

"We come from a long tradition of people who have wanted to make South Africa a country for all its people," Goldberg said.

He recalled that at the conclusion of the Rivonia Trial, eight of the 10 defendants who were on trial for their lives were sentenced to life imprisonment. Goldberg, then aged 31, received four life terms. "But," he quipped, "my name is Goldberg, so I knew I'd get a 75% discount – one life sentence and not four!"

After the sentence, his mother, who had not heard the judge, had shouted, "Denis, Denis, what is it?"

"It's life ... and life is wonderful!" was Goldberg's reply.

"Life is wonderful, you know, I really believe it," Goldberg said at the fundraiser, "because we live in a country where a finance company [sponsor K2 Capital] can join with a guy of my reputation – a terrorist – and people of such diversity can join together for good wine, good food, and building a House of Hope.

"When you reach the autumn of your life (maybe the start of winter!)," Goldberg wrote in the programme notes, "you reflect on your life and what you leave behind. At a personal level, I'm not done yet! My hope is that this will be the capstone of my life.

"I've seen how art and creativity can bring people together. Creating a beautiful space for this to happen... will be my lasting contribution to the future of Hout Bay, which has been my home for so long. It is a place and community that has given me so much joy, peace, and fulfilment after a lifetime filled with a lot of happiness, but also far too much sorrow and solitude," he wrote.

Goldberg thanked Tanya Blacher, the founder and manager of the Hout Bay Ingoma Choir that

Denis Goldberg



her husband and children. "She arrived, and decided she had to do something for the benefit of the community of Hout Bay," Goldberg said.

Ingoma was formed in 2017 as a social enterprise and upliftment project in the aftermath of devastating shack fires and subsequent unrest in Imizamo Yethu, an informal settlement in the area.

From shtetl to Gulag: a saga of survival

MIRAH LANGER

Mordechai Perlov's memories of his escape from a Soviet Union Gulag during World War II are as vivid as if it happened yesterday.

His is a true story of survival, not just of himself, but of those members of his family that he could rescue.

Perlov, now aged 92, recounted his experience recently at the Jewish Life Centre at Chabad of Strathavon in Sandton. Perlov was in conversation with Michael Kransdorff, who offered historical context to Perlov's personal description.

Born in 1926 in the shtetl of Rasein in Lithuania, Perlov's family were part of about 5 000 Jewish residents, who made up about 40% of the town's population.

His family owned a timber and flour mill. As such, Perlov describes having grown up with a "silver spoon in my mouth". His home was a "little palace", he attended Hebrew school, and even got to complain about having to take piano lessons.

Communists, they nationalised our business, and evacuated us from our home."

Perlov, his parents, and siblings – a younger brother, Yakov, and sister, Tova – were separated, staying with various grandparents.

By June 1941, their situation had become worse: "Stalin and Hitler were doing deals between them, and Stalin became aware that Hitler was planning to invade Lithuania."

A week before the expected invasion in June 1941, the Perlov family were deported by Communist officials. "They knocked on the door at midnight, and told us to pack a few belongings."

They were taken to a train station, and loaded onto cattle trucks that travelled to Kotlas in Northern Russia.

Here, the prisoners were put on a barge that travelled to Syktyvkar, the capital of the Komi Republic.

While some had jewellery or foreign money, and could bribe the guards to let them disembark at this town, the rest, including the Perlovs,

For food, each family was given a pot of "a few leaves of cabbage and hot water".

Further food was rationed according to whether prisoners could work or not: "Those who were able to work got 500g of bread a day, and those who were incapable of work got 300g of bread."

Yakov, Mordechai's younger brother, was 12 at the time, but presented himself as older in order to get extra rations.

The conditions were near impossible. In winter, there were three hours of sunlight, and temperatures dropped to minus 40 degrees.

Outside in summer, the swarms of mosquitoes were so thick, "you couldn't see the man next to you".

When eventually there were no more trees to chop, Perlov and his brother were relocated to a different temporary camp. His sister and parents, who by then were ill and weak, were forced to remain there.

The conditions at the new camp were "the nearest to what you call hell", says Perlov. He decided he would try to escape rather than die in that place.

He and Yakov made it out on their second attempt, walking for three days to their parents and sister.

"I will never forget it," he recounts of their arrival back at the family's barracks. "I opened the door, and there both my parents are lying dead on the bed, and my sister Tova is lying in between them, sobbing ...

"I didn't even have enough time to cry."

Perlov's parents, like about a quarter of those sent to the Gulags, died of hunger and disease.

It took Mordechai and his brother three to four days to be able to dig a sufficient space in the frozen ground to bury their parents.

Perlov became adamant that he would fight for his freedom.

Teaming up with a friend from kindergarten called Yitzak, as well as two Polish-speaking Lithuanians, the

group escaped, returning to the town of Syktyvkar.

By means of various schemes and plans, the four found ways to survive. They managed to pass themselves off as Polish. By then, Stalin had promised to release all Polish prisoners of war in the Gulags in exchange for the Polish army's assistance against the Nazis.

Yet, Perlov's only thought was to save his siblings.

He hired a guard with a boat to go and bring them back. However, the guard returned empty handed as Perlov's aunt refused to believe the story of Mordechai's escape.

Undeterred, Perlov sent the guard back again – this time with instructions to kidnap his siblings. While his brother proved too big to "capture", Tova and Mordechai were reunited.

Shortly thereafter, Perlov, under the guise of being a Polish prisoner of war, was due to be sent to the Ukraine.

He was advised to put Tova, then about ten, into a Polish orphanage in the interim. Since she could not speak Polish, "in order not to reveal her identity, she didn't speak at all".

When the war ended, Perlov travelled from the Ukraine to Lodz in Poland.

Here he met up with Zionist organisations and decided to make Aliya. But, first Perlov needed to get Tova back. At the time she was in a Catholic orphanage in Lodz, and the institution's management refused to release her, saying she was to become Catholic.

So, using a ladder leading up to the window of the orphanage near where Tova slept, Mordechai kidnapped his sister for the second time.

Over the coming years, both siblings made their way to Israel.

Perlov later joined the Haganah, and was amongst the troops who marched on Yom Ha'atzmaut in 1948.

It was an invitation to be a pole holder at the wedding of family based in Johannesburg that brought Perlov to South Africa.

In the 1950s, he settled here, working in his uncle's business, the Crystal Bakery in Doornfontein, before later starting a successful sock manufacturing company.



Perlov family

He learnt English via a Dale Carnegie course, got married in 1959, and went on to have three children.

Mordechai and his brother Yakov were eventually reunited in the 1990s, meeting in Israel.

A few years ago, a cousin began to write a book about Perlov. Poignantly, it was only then that Perlov revealed his Gulag experience to his children.

Perlov who was celebrating his Hebrew birthday on the day of the talk, proudly goes to gym every day.

He is looking forward to his next overseas trip in September, when he will travel to Israel to attend the wedding of Tova's great granddaughter!



Mordechai, Yitzak and Tova in Israel in 2016

"Life was good," he declares, adding that he did not experience any anti-Semitism during those years.

All this would change when Stalin occupied Lithuania in 1939. "Overnight, from being high up, we became very low.

"With the aid of some Jewish

continued their journey until they arrived at a Gulag, a forced labour camp, in the area. The prisoners were told they had been brought there to chop down trees.

In the barracks, one room was allocated to Perlov's family of five, as well as his uncle's family of four.

SHEBA MEDICAL CENTER DOCTORS TEND TO SEVERELY BURNED VICTIMS OF VOLCANIC ERUPTION IN GUATEMALA

BY STEVE WALZ

(Ramat Gan, Israel)-An elite medical team consisting of plastic surgeons, burn specialists and nurses from Sheba Medical Center's Israel Center for Disaster Medicine and Humanitarian Response flew to the Central American nation of Guatemala a few weeks ago to tend to the growing number of people who have been victimized by the eruption of the Fuego volcano.

The medical team, was summoned into action after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu received an urgent call for assistance from Guatemalan President, Jimmy Morales Cabrera. Members of the Sheba Medical Center team included:

--Prof. Elhanan Bar-On, Director, Israel Center for Disaster Medicine & Humanitarian Response

--Prof. Josef Haik, Director, the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Director of the Burn Center

--Dr. Gregory Trodler, Senior Anesthesiologist in the Burn Center

--Dr. Moti Harats, Plastic Surgeon, Burn Center

--Nurse Aviva Yona, Burn Center

The Israel Center for Disaster Medicine and Humanitarian Response at Sheba Medical Center was established in 2017 by Professor Elhanan Bar-On to lead the charge in preparing and responding to global humanitarian crises and emergencies.

The contingent, which included medical doctors and support personnel from other Israeli hospitals, assembled quickly and flew 24 hours to Guatemala

City, where they were greeted by Israeli Ambassador Moti Cohen and Guatemalan Ministry of Health officials. Without wasting a moment, they fanned out across several local hospitals, treating dozens of victims-men, women and children of all ages- many of whom were suffering from severe burns across their bodies and in the lungs (volcanic ash inhalation).

A significant number of these victims also lost family members during the violent eruption earlier this month.

Professor Bar-On revealed, "We were able in a short period of time to assemble a top medical team from Sheba and other hospitals with the support of the Israeli Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the local health authorities in Guatemala, who welcomed us with open arms upon our arrival. We are endeavoring to use all of the professional tools at our disposal to treat the victims of this disaster.





Professor Haik added, "The horrific scenes of devastation that greeted us, motivated the team to treat the severely injured victims. Some of them lost their entire family in the aftermath of the eruption. We have heard and seen the horrors. We are hopeful that the advanced medical technologies and medicine we have brought from Israel will enable us to treat and heal these innocent victims, many of whom are suffering from various types of burns."



Prof. Bar-On tends to a victim of the Guatemala volcano eruption.

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The trouble with Israel's Jewish nation-state law

OPINION

DAVID HOROVITZ

In an Army Radio interview this week, Israel's incoming opposition leader, Tzipi Livni, said she had repeatedly urged government legislators in the run-up to July 19's passage of Israel's new Jewish nation-state law to add in a single crucial phrase.

She had, she made clear, no objection to the text declaring Israel to be "the national home of the Jewish people". Quite the reverse. But to ensure that the law fully reflected modern Israel's founding principles, she argued, it also needed to include Israel's commitment to "equality for all its citizens". In the Declaration of Independence, she noted, Israel promises "complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex".

Few if any of Israel's Arab Knesset members would have voted for the Bill even in the form she wanted, Livni acknowledged – since rather than a Jewish and democratic state, they seek to designate Israel as the state of all its citizens. But had that "equality" phrase been inserted, most or all the rest of the opposition would have supported it, and the law would have garnered about 100 of the 120 Knesset members' votes, rather than squeezing through, as it did, by 62 votes to 55. How impressive such overwhelming support would be, she argued to coalition members, how resonant an endorsement of Israel's central principles.

Livni said coalition MKs derided her for her naivete. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu didn't want opposition support for the law. Rather, she said they told her, he wanted to send a message to the Israeli public that he and his coalition colleagues were the dependably nationalist defenders of Jewish Israel.

Echoing her assertion, Yohanan Plesner, a former Kadima MK, and today the head of the Israel Democracy Institute, charged on 29 July that Likud legislators had sought to create a picture of "patriots and non-patriots" by means of the law and its divided support in the Knesset. "The current legislation was politically motivated, as a precursor to an election campaign where Netanyahu and the Likud could create a situation of patriots and non-patriots," he claimed.

In the 10 days since the law was passed, the controversy surrounding it, rather than dissipating fairly quickly, as most controversies do, has intensified. Some critics consider the law to constitute the legislative codifying of discrimination, and therefore bitterly interpret it as the beginning of – or another slip in the continuing slide toward – the end of Israeli democracy.

Others share Netanyahu's declared assertion that it marks a positive "pivotal" moment in the history of the modern state, with the belated formalised legislation of Israel as the state of the Jews, and argue that Israel's democratic principles are already entrenched elsewhere in existing legislation such as the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty. This Basic Law establishes "the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu against a backdrop of the late David Ben-Gurion

democratic state" and provides that "there shall be no violation of the life, body or dignity of any person as such". While none of Israel's Basic Laws specifies "equality", this 1992 law is considered by some jurists to provide for it.

Until Saturday night, the most resonant objections to the law came from Israel's 130 000-strong Druze community. While several MKs from the Joint (Arab) List protested the law as discriminatory, vowed to seek international intervention, and even enlisted Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in their battle against it, their criticism made little impression on the Israeli Jewish mainstream; they are not Zionists.

But complaints of discrimination from the Druze, who fight alongside the Jews in the Israel Defence Forces and have paid a heavy price in lost lives in defence of the nation, were internalised and even endorsed by some government ministers. Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon (Kulanu) called the final wording of the law hasty and mistaken; the hawkish Education Minister and Jewish Home leader Naftali Bennett said the government had to find a way to heal the wounds it had inflicted on "our brothers who stand shoulder-to-shoulder with us on the battlefield and made a covenant with us". Both ministers called for the law to be amended. Netanyahu, who held a meeting on 27 July with Druze leaders, and another on Sunday, made no commitment to doing so.

As of 28 July, however, argument about the law had shifted into the familiar battleground of partisan politics. In a live television interview that night, Zouheir Bahloul, an Arab member of a Zionist political party, the Zionist Union, announced his resignation from the Knesset, branding the law a "drastic act... that

makes the Arab population officially, constitutionally outside the realms of equality in Israel".

The opposition's discomfort and division may be music to the ears of the Netanyahu coalition – and a welcome distraction from the central question of the law's threat to Israeli democracy.

Netanyahu, at the weekly cabinet meeting on 29 July, robustly insisted that criticism of the law, which he

called the "essence of the Zionist vision", was "nonsense". "The State of Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people, with full equality of rights for all its citizens," he said. "This is the meaning of the words 'Jewish and democratic state'," he said. "Does the fact that our flag has a Star of David invalidate the individual right of any Israeli citizen? Nonsense. This statement ensures that there will be no other flag. Does the statement that Hatikva is our national anthem detract from the personal rights of anyone in Israel? Nonsense. It says there will be no other anthem."

Except, of course, that those phrases – "full equality of rights for all its citizens" and "Jewish and democratic state" – do not appear in the Jewish nation-state law, despite the efforts of the likes of Livni and maverick Likud MK Benny Begin.

Netanyahu also rounded on his critics from the left, calling their objections to the law hypocritical. "Over decades, the opposition has preached to us that we must withdraw to the 1967 lines in order to ensure that Israel remains the national state of the Jewish people in which there is a Jewish majority in the state. Then suddenly when we pass a basic law to ensure exactly this, the left cries out in protest?"

The Knesset's new Jewish nation-state law is, inevitably, being appealed in the Supreme Court, which may find a basis to intervene, or may consider the law's provisions to be declarative and/or not contradictory to Israel's already legislated Jewish and democratic principles.

Enshrining in Israel's Basic Laws, the closest thing we have to a constitution, principles such as Israel as the "historical homeland of the Jewish people" with Jerusalem as its capital, the Star of David on its flag,

and Hatikva as its anthem, may well have been overdue. But in a country that, absolutely legitimately, grants automatic citizenship under the Law of Return to Jews, the equality of all Israeli citizens is a commitment that also requires the firmest establishment.

There is no contradiction in being a Jewish state that opens its doors wide to all Jews, and in being a democracy that stands for full equality for all who live here. Indeed, the capacity to reconcile those two principles goes to the heart of Israel; it makes Israel unique and rightly celebrated.

Those foundational principles must flourish together. Passing a piece of landmark legislation that needlessly and deliberately – as shown by the legislative process – omitted one of them is plainly harmful to Israel's reputation. Time will tell if it has practical implications, as a legislative cover for discrimination, but it is also, by dint of what it omits, potentially harmful to Israel's sense of itself and what we stand for.

Earlier iterations of the legislation did include references to Israel as a democracy. And three years ago, Begin drafted a proposed text of the law that stated: "Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people, based on the foundations of freedom, justice and peace as envisioned by the prophets of Israel, and upholds equal rights for all its citizens."

In its final, very deliberate wording, the law smacks of narrow political interest outweighing the national good. Rush-writing the nascent state's core principles 70 years ago, amid pandemonium and with war imminent, Israel's founders, patriots all, did a far better job.

• David Horowitz is the editor of the *Times of Israel*.

Zuckerberg criticised for refusal to remove Holocaust denial on Facebook

The Chairman of the United States Commission to Preserve America's Heritage Abroad has described Mark Zuckerberg's stance on not removing Holocaust-denial posts from Facebook as "dangerous".

Paul Packer, who was appointed to the independent government agency by President Donald Trump, sent a letter to Zuckerberg a day after the Facebook founder and Chief Executive told *Recode*, a tech news website, that he would not automatically delete Holocaust-denying posts.

In the interview earlier this month, Zuckerberg said that while Facebook would not remove a post denying the Holocaust, the social network would push it down the news feed to make sure the post did not go viral.

"[A]t the end of the day, I don't believe that our platform should take that down, because I think there are things that different people get wrong. I don't think that they're intentionally getting it wrong," he said.

Packer's letter in response, dated 19 July, was first obtained and published by news site *Axios*.

"By attempting to rationalise Holocaust denial, and by enabling anti-Semites to publish their abhorrent views freely on your platform, you have failed your users and the world at large," he said. "Furthermore, you have failed to uphold Facebook's own mission to 'give people

the power to build community and bring the world closer together'."

"Your comments were not only divisive, they were dangerous. Through your words and Facebook's policies, you have empowered those who would deny the undeniable."

Packer called on Zuckerberg to "meet your ethical obligation not to allow the further destruction and endangerment of our history by changing Facebook's policy immediately so that historical denial of the kind you defended is no longer allowed".

He invited Zuckerberg to join him on one of the commission's "many trips to countries impacted by Nazi brutality".

Packer, a former New York hedge fund manager, told *Axios* that he met senior Facebook executive Joel Kaplan this week in Washington DC to raise his concerns in the

wake of the letter. Multiple Facebook executives joined the meeting via video conference, *Axios* reported.

Kaplan told *Axios* that Facebook agrees that Holocaust denial is "abhorrent and offensive".

"That said," he pointed out, "we do not remove content simply for being factually inaccurate, whether it's about the Holocaust, any other world event, or anything else." (JTA)



Tackling taboos in novels about the Jewish community

MIRAH LANGER

Author and former journalist Marilyn Cohen de Villiers once failed a composition exam in Standard 5 because the teacher said she had “too much of an imagination”.

Is it any surprise, then, that she has now just published her third novel, *Deceive and Defend*?

In her storyline in this book, she manages to weave in issues such as incest, mental health, the judicial system, employment

Family, looked at domestic abuse, especially in religious communities. Her second, *When Time Fails*, investigated land reform and the apartheid legacy.

Cohen De Villiers says her intention with the first novel was directly linked to the Jewish community “to raise awareness within our community that abuse is not confined to ‘them’, the poor and the uneducated”. Since that book, her focus has expanded.

“*When Time Fails* has quite a strong Christian focus and I use this to look at how a particular community – the Afrikaners – have to reconcile their religious beliefs with changes to the political order,” she says.

Ultimately, explains Cohen de Villiers, “while *A Beautiful Family* and *Deceive and Defend* are set largely within the Jewish community, I think the social commentary in my novels could be applied to any middle-class community in South Africa”.

As a former journalist, Cohen De Villiers’ flair for factual research is the basis for her fictional forays. “I think that I will always be a journalist at heart... I do a great deal of research before I even start writing. The idea is to make my stories, my settings and my characters as real as possible.

“I hope this kind of factual realism gives my stories a richer texture than might otherwise have been the case.”

When it came to selecting the titles of the novel, Cohen de Villiers explains that *A Beautiful Family* did link to the subject matter. It was also chosen “because I thought it would feature near the top of any alphabetical list of titles”.

For the novel *When Time Fails*, she took a more symbolic approach. “For me, a striking feature of the eastern Free State landscape are the rows of poplar trees dotted about,” she explains. She used this imagery within the narrative, which is set on a farm in this area. Later, she discovered that poplars traditionally represent time – and, in the case of a character based on the farm who dies in their youth, indeed, the story was a case of “when time fails”.

As for the title, *Deceive and Defend*, “it just came to me”, she says.

The fascinating juxtaposition of South African identities that make up Cohen De

Villiers’ cast of characters is rooted in the author’s own life experiences. “I’m a Jewish Joburg girl. I was simply writing about my community, my people, my neighbourhood. Similarly, I drew on my ‘honorary Afrikaner’ status – having been married to an Afrikaner for 32 years,” she explains.

In fact, one of the heartaches for Cohen De Villiers is that her husband died shortly after she finished writing her second novel.

“I basically lost my writing mojo. I made a half-hearted effort to start writing book three back in 2016, but I didn’t have a clear idea in my head of where it was going.”

In fact, it was only an invitation to speak at the Jewish Literary Festival in Cape Town in June this year that spurred Cohen De Villiers on to complete her work.

Now that the third book has been published, she can spot her novels on the shelves of Exclusive Books. People approach her and tell her how much they’ve enjoyed reading them. “It’s a little surreal,” she says.

What’s next? “Ideas for my next novel are swirling around in my head. I’m pretty sure about the issue I want to tackle – I’m just not sure how to go about it yet. I’m doing lots of research.”



equity, media ethics and emigration.

All her novels centre on the Jewish community.

“I try to write what I call ‘issue novels’,” she explains. “They are novels that I hope will make people think about issues they may not have considered before. Or perhaps my stories will enable them to think about things from a slightly different perspective.”

Deceive and Defend is the completion of a trilogy that centres on a prominent, completely fictional, Johannesburg Jewish family, the Silvermans, and on characters who intersect their lives.

Each novel tackles a number of controversial issues. Her first one, *A Beautiful*

Top entertainers for Absa Jewish Achiever Awards

JORDAN MOSHE

The Absa Jewish Achiever Awards on 2 September will showcase some astonishing talent in our community. It will also feature spectacular entertainment that is guaranteed, not only to captivate, but to have people rolling with laughter.

“Our entertainment this year will not only be glittering and captivating, but also vibey and fun,” says Howard Sackstein, the Chairperson of the board of the *SA Jewish Report*.

Taking the mic as this year’s master of ceremonies, comedy genius Alan Committie is sure to infuse the evening’s atmosphere with a healthy dose of hilarity.

One of South Africa’s leading stand-up comics, character comedian, award winning actor, comedy writer, and theatre director, Committie is possessed of innumerable talents. For the past three years, this talented performer has been *Defending the Caveman* at theatres around the country to huge acclaim and even bigger houses. Committie took over this legendary one-man show, and it has been running in South Africa for the past 16 years,

racking up more than 680 performances.

While trying to control their guffaws and wiping tears from their eyes, attendees will also experience musical performances by virtuoso Ian von Memerty. Various descriptions as “the English dictionary definition of show-business” and “a confused eclectic”, Von Memerty has received 15 national theatre awards and has been nominated a further 17 times.

Von Memerty is best known as the presenter of the hit TV series *Strictly Come Dancing*, as a judge on *SA’s Got Talent*, and for his piano show, *A Handful of Keys*, which has played to more than 400 000 people in more than 1 400 performances. First launched in 1994, *A Handful of Keys* has travelled around the country and the world, racking up some extraordinary statistics: four continents, five casts, nine awards, 1 400 performances, and audiences of more than 420 000.

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Does Shashi Naidoo suffer from Stockholm Syndrome?

Our story so far: Shashi Naidoo, much loved South African model, posts positive Israel sentiment on social media. The reaction is swift and aggressive, with Naidoo receiving no less than ten death threats by supporters of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) cause, threats of rape, her address is posted on social media, and people start ringing her doorbell at 02:00.

Naidoo crumbles, and flanked by the BDS, gives a press briefing where she pleads ignorance about Middle East politics. At the same time, she undertakes a BDS “re-education” (whatever that means) trip to Israel. BDS leaders subject her to hours of lectures, and Naidoo cancels a meeting with anti-apartheid stalwart and Israeli peace activist, former *Rand Daily Mail* Deputy Editor Benjamin Poggrund, who offered to provide her with perspective.

The Israeli embassy meets Naidoo while she is still in South Africa, and informs her that she will not be allowed entry into the country because she is going with an affiliate of the BDS movement. Naidoo should have grabbed the opportunity and stayed in South Africa, having received the best “get-out-of-jail-free” card she could have asked for.

The embassy explained that she was more than welcome to visit the country not as a guest of BDS and its affiliates. A fact later endorsed by

an Israeli member of Parliament.

She travels to Jordan nevertheless. Unsurprisingly, she is denied access to Israel, and as a result, she is very sad. Very beautiful as well. Which makes the sadness seem all the more tragic.

So, she posts photos on Instagram proving how sad she is. There is no denying it. Shashi Naidoo is terribly sad.

Naidoo dejectedly returns to South Africa. Her “re-education” programme is now complete (whatever that means). Although she did not enter Israel, she has a deeper understanding of Jordan, at least. She tells Israeli journalists that the matter is now over, and she will not seek further media publicity upon her return to South Africa. Yet, she arrives in South Africa and immediately conducts a press conference. (She is still sad).

Her career not only recovers, but she has established herself as a household name. The TV interviews keep on coming. She posts a list of the nine things she learned on her flights to and from Jordan, appearing not to have actually learned too much.

It is clear to Naidoo on which side of the conflict the benefits are greater. It is also clear to BDS that the media will never hold it to account for the intimidation that she suffered. And, that freedom of expression is limited to the

Constitution alone.

Because nothing kills a conversation quite like a death threat.

An alternative view to the one above is that Shashi Naidoo is suffering from Stockholm Syndrome. The concept was coined in Sweden in 1973, when a bank robbery went awry. During the robbery, four employees were held captive in the vault of the bank for six days. During a stand-off, it suddenly appeared that the captives had established a bond with their captors. They seemed unable to recall that they had been held against their will.

In that case, it took less than six days to “re-educate” them.

The intimidation suffered by Naidoo is on the public record. She spoke openly of the death threats, of the loss of modelling contracts, and of the campaign to destroy her name, her brand, and her future. The assault on her was all encompassing, aggressive, and unrelenting. That she transitioned from supporter of Israel to supporter of BDS should be no surprise.

Her failure to meet Poggrund or anyone able to offer her a balanced view fades into the past.

What should be a surprise is that the BDS campaign has not been called out for what it was. BDS employed the same tactic when the Argentinian soccer team was meant to play in Israel recently. The Argentinian Foreign

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



Minister said that the BDS threat was “greater than Isis”, the families of the players feared for their lives, and that it was not worth the risk of standing up to them. They consequently cancelled the trip. And the BDS lauded and thanked them for doing so.

Another successful “re-education” campaign.

The harsh reality is that Naidoo was in a no-win situation. Had she not announced her trip at the BDS controlled press conference and travelled to Israel to see the country for herself, she would have done herself no good. Had she seen that Israel is a flawed democracy that grants full rights to its citizens, she would hardly have been able to say so. In fact, that position would have left her back where this all started, her supporting Israel.

And so, Shashi Naidoo made the seemingly inexplicable decision to travel with those who wished to “re-educate” her, and she came back sad, but fully committed to their cause.

That in of itself is pretty darn sad.

The Likud selfie: drawings that shout louder than words

TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin



Who would have thought a shocking picture of a woman being raped by then president Jacob Zuma would appear on the op-ed pages of a major South African newspaper? Not a photograph, but a drawing. What about an image in an Israeli paper showing Israeli leaders as pigs? That’s what political cartoonists like Zapiro – Jonathan Shapiro – and Avi Katz do in South Africa and Israel. They stab at peoples’ most sensitive areas to make a point. They have outraged people for years – and delighted many. And Katz was fired last Tuesday from his position at the *Jerusalem Report* magazine for his “pigs” cartoon.

For Zapiro, rape has been a potent image to depict South Africa’s “rape” under Zuma, based initially on accusations in 2005 that he raped a friend’s daughter, known as “Khwezi”.

In 2008, a Zapiro cartoon in the *Sunday Times* depicted Zuma preparing to rape “Lady Justice”, who was held down by major politicians, with one saying, “Go for it, boss!” And in 2011, a cartoon in the *Mail & Guardian* showed Zuma zipping up his pants, lasciviously, as an ANC politician held down a woman, with the words “free speech” draped over her body and Lady Justice looking on saying, “Fight, sister. Fight!”

Then in 2017, a cartoon in the *Daily Maverick* depicted the Gupta brothers robbing the country with corruption – again, Zuma was shown zipping up his pants gleefully as one brother prepared to rape a woman draped in the South African flag, held down by political figures. The caption read: “She’s all yours, boss!”

South African Jews find Zapiro’s unashamed anti-Israel depictions highly offensive. He has gone so far as to draw analogies between contemporary Israel and Nazism. In April 2002, he depicted

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon as similar to a Nazi leader when the Israel Defence Forces bombarded the West Bank town of Jenin after a wave of suicide bombings.

Rape for one, pigs for another. In Israel, Katz, a veteran cartoonist, rendered an image of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Likud legislators as the pig characters in George Orwell’s iconic book *Animal Farm*. The unflattering image derived from a photograph which appeared in Israeli papers of the Knesset members taking a congratulatory selfie to celebrate the passage of the controversial Nation State Bill. The cartoon’s homage to *Animal Farm* included the widely-known quote “All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others.”

In response, hundreds of outraged comments were posted on Katz’ Facebook page deploring his swine imagery – pigs are considered unclean in Judaism. Some compared his cartoon to anti-Semitic caricatures.

The cartoon was shared more than 2 800 times. “Crazy anti-Semite, filled with self-loathing...” commented one person. Another wrote that within a few months, the brouhaha about the Nation State Bill would recede, but Katz’s cartoon would remain forever. The writer went on to say it would become a new anti-Semitic Shylock image, like that from Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, to be exploited by Jew-haters. It would be uncontrollable, and enable hatred “of orthodox, of fat, of men, of Jews in general...”

Are Katz’s critics correct? In a statement, the Union of Journalists in Israel supported him, saying: “Causing harm to a journalist because he expressed an opinion, let alone when it was approved by his editors, is a dangerous step that must not be accepted.”

We are living in dangerously deceptive times, where the internet makes it easy to tar the cartoonist as the ultimate enemy. Love them or hate them, the job of a political cartoonist is to confront and make people think, and they will do that even by resorting to the most inflammatory images conceivable. It’s their job.

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

Brave journalist sets example for mainstream media

There is a strong perception in the community that the mainstream media has a bias against Israel. It seems journalists either don’t give the country the coverage it deserves, or focus only on the negative. When we consider the intimidation that those who come out in support of Israel face, it is not surprising that many people, including in the media, simply shy away from the topic.

One journalist, however, in spite of the fact that she might come under personal attack, continued to do what she does best: provide objective coverage of whatever event she happens to be covering. Nausheena Mahomed, a respected journalist, went to the South African Friends of Israel march in Pretoria last week. In preparation of a programme she would be doing for her show on Joburgtoday.tv, she posted images of the march onto her Facebook page.

Her post elicited some nasty responses. There were the usual attacks on the Jewish community, additional attacks on the Christian marchers, but she came under personal attack as well. And, there was an additional vehemence against Mahomed, based on the fact that she herself was Muslim.

It was expected that, as a Muslim, “she should know better”. It was evident that Mahomed was expected to take sides in the conflict, based on what other people believed the conflict to be about.

Mahomed was quick to call out the racism and anti-Semitism on the site, but this did not stop her own community from demanding answers from her. Clearly, they were hoping to bully her into submission. She was even told that she should “throw herself off the 15th floor”. She was continuously asked to state publicly where she stood on this issue. However, Mahomed refused to be intimidated.

She argued that a journalist’s role is not to reinforce what people’s perception of any given situation is, but to report the facts.

“Why must any journalist be confronted when covering marches or bullied into taking one position and denying the rights

of the freedom of others... We have our work to do! And that is reporting fairly, and allowing people to speak up and speak out and share perspective.... anyone in media who follows hardcore ethics in reporting without fear or favour offering every side an equal opportunity i guess will be hanged or subject to conspiracy theorists.... as a journalist i will defend this right no matter what! VIVA FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION. VIVA FREE SPEECH VIVA TO THE COURAGE OF ALL OF JOURNALISTS WHO REPORT FREELY WITHOUT

FEAR OR FAVOUR.” (sic).

There is a feel-good factor to this story. The fact that a Muslim journalist will defend her right to give a voice to Christians and Jews is a positive sign that this country has not been totally hijacked by those who hate.

In her words, “The Christian and Jewish communities should not be isolated and discriminated against because of bullies who in a democratic SA will conjure up all kinds of excuses to ensure their voices are not heard. Long live Free speech in SA! Freedom to Palestinians and peace to both Israelis and Palestinians. May the almighty bring peace to both sides, as he showered South Africa with his grace in peaceful resolution.”

I commend Mahomed on her brave stance. She has stood up for what she holds true, and is setting an exceptional example for the rest of the mainstream media.

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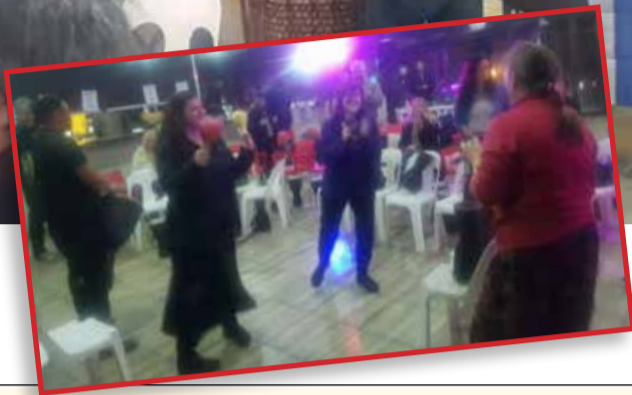
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Habonim celebrates holiday of love



Habonim celebrated Tu B'Av – the holiday of love – in conjunction with KasherWorld at an event in Glenhazel on 26 July.



ON A LIGHTER NOTE

In the interests of full disclosure...

SIMON APFEL

Rabbi Hanoch Teller is a master storyteller. Many of his stories are drawn from his own experiences. But on his recent trip to South Africa, he had one experience I doubt he'll be sharing anytime soon, which is why I feel duty-bound to share it myself.

Last Monday, the day after Tisha B'Av, I received an urgent message from a friend saying that the rabbi was desperate for a game of squash while he was in South Africa. Would I be able to meet him at the Zulberg family's private squash court?

Of course, I jumped at the opportunity, unaware that I was the seventh person this friend had asked. I rushed from work, knocked on the door of the house, went through the lounge and living room and down some stairs and around a long winding passageway. Suddenly I found myself bathed in fluorescent light, standing on a beautiful maple wood court deep in the bowels of Château de Zulberg.

The great rabbi was warming up, and greeted me with a wide smile and beaming eyes. I'm no championship squash player, but he knew I was doing him a solid. I then realised two things simultaneously. The first was that I was still in my work clothes. The second that there was no change room. A third, horrific realisation quickly followed...

Firstly, some background. As I said it was the day after the fast of Tisha B'Av, which is the culmination of the "nine days", a period of mourning for the ancient Temple in Jerusalem during which, among other restrictions, it's forbidden to do laundry.

I normally plan it to perfection and have just enough clothing to get me through the nine days. This year, however, because Tisha B'Av fell on Shabbat, the fast was pushed out to Sunday, with the result that the nine days were actually ten. Which is just an

extremely long-winded way of saying that on Monday 23 July 2018, for the first time I can remember, I wasn't wearing underpants.

I'd already unpacked my bag, my shorts were lying on the top. If I'd opted not to get changed at this stage, it would have been painfully obvious and embarrassing that I was avoiding getting changed. I decided to take the plunge.

I took my sweet time over my shirt, but I knew I was just delaying the inevitable. The pants came off. Sometimes, there's some kind of coverage from the shirt, but alas, this wasn't one of those times. In my desperation to expedite the process, I missed the hole for the leg, and for a few mortifying moments, I was hopping around the court stark naked from the waist down.

At this point, Rabbi Teller ceased his warm-up and out of the corner of my eye I saw him look up to see what all the commotion was about. If I'd made eye contact at this stage, it would have been the end. Of everything. Ditto if I'd tripped and fallen on the floor. I steadied myself on the adjoining wall, and finished getting dressed.

If he'd noticed the horror show taking place on court, he didn't let on, and the game progressed pleasantly enough. Of course, he was awful, even for a beginner, but that was of no consequence, and at one stage I'd even recovered enough dignity and self-composure to offer him a few tips on technique. By the end of the game, we were getting on so well that I took the opportunity to ask whether I could interview him for a podcast. He graciously acceded.

We recorded Rabbi Teller the next morning, and now it was his turn to be opportunistic. He asked me whether I'd be keen for a follow up game that evening. I politely declined. I'd seen enough of him. More to the point, he'd seen enough of me.

Israel's Home Made wows Durban

>>Continued from page 10

Meishar said they learnt a lot about diversity, racial minorities, the LGBTQ community, and generally about women in this changing landscape.

Meishar studied at the Ma'aleh Film School of Jerusalem. *Home Made* is her graduate assignment.

Another one of her films, the 12 minute drama *Inside Outside*, which was completed in 2014 in the second year of her studies, was screened at the Manhattan Film Festival, the California Shorts International Film Festival, and Atlanta Shortsfest.

Her graduate documentary, *Hanna is Beautiful*, released in January 2015, has been shown at many film festivals worldwide, she said.

Meishar focuses on short films, a medium she

finds "challenging and exciting".

"It is like poetry where every word counts, except here, every frame counts, every camera angle and shot counts."

She has her eye on creating feature films, and is working on a script.

The Durban Film Festival is organised by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Centre for Creative Arts in partnership with the eThekweni Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal Film Commission, National Film and Video Foundation, and Durban Film Office.

"We loved the festival. It is the biggest in Africa, and the films were of excellent quality," said Meishar, who hopes to visit South Africa again soon.

Excellent gifts for a good cause

As time for buying special Rosh Hashanah gifts is almost upon us, it is worth noting the excellent and tireless work Cindy Polakow puts into as the voluntary head buyer for the Elise WIZO gift shop in Fairmount, Johannesburg.

Polakow and the shop's staff have put heart, soul and endless time and effort into turning the shop into what it is today. Elise currently has a superb range of Yom Tov gifts on display.

All funds raised by Elise are distributed among WIZO projects in Israel that support abused women, children, and youth at risk.



Cindy Polakow

Letters

PROUD TO BE SOUTH AFRICAN, ASHAMED TO BE A JEW

I feel proud to be South African, even elated. I had the privilege of attending the recent rally called for by the South African Christian community (supported and co-ordinated by the South African Friends of Israel and the South African Zionist Federation) to protest against the downgrading of the South African Embassy in Israel.

And what a privilege it was! I was surrounded by warmth and love. People travelled from as far as Limpopo to take part in the rally. There were old ladies – some even on walking sticks – and there were mothers with babies in their arms. Many of those I spoke to had never been to Israel, but they all told me it was their wish and prayer to do so.

For weeks now, Jews in South Africa have been feeling anxious. Not a Shabbos meal goes by without the conversation

moving to the subjects of anti-Semitism, the downgrade, and the anti-Israel bias displayed by our government and media. Discussion then centres on our leadership and its supposed inability to deal with the situation. The complaint is, without fail, that nothing is being done.

Yet, despite plea after plea from our leadership to support fellow South Africans in their attempt to stand for Israel, the Johannesburg/Pretoria Jewish community was conspicuous in its absence. Sure, it was a workday, and sure, it was hard for young moms with children. But 2 000 of our fellow citizens managed, and we didn't. I felt proud to be a South African, but was saddened and somewhat ashamed to be a South African Jew.

– Monessa Shapiro, Johannesburg

ANTI-ZIONISM IS JEW-HATRED

I will never come to terms with the sheer evil of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement and the likes of South African Jews for a Free Palestine, as well as those who support them like the African National Congress, South African Communist Party, and Congress of South African Trade Unions.

One must marvel at the hypocrisy of those who claim to be against war, but oppose the actions of only one side in a war – those defending themselves, not the killers of women and children on the other side. It also brings to our attention the fact that no other country in the history of warfare has gone to such lengths to avoid harming an enemy civilian population – especially the population of a group of people that has vowed to murder every Israeli down to the last child.

Col. Richard Kemp, a former commander of the British forces in Afghanistan, told the following to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva during Operation Cast Lead, "Based on my knowledge and experience, I can say this: the Israeli Defence Forces did more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a warzone than any other army in the history of warfare."

In his brilliant book, *Israel: Reclaiming the Narrative*, by Barry Shaw, the author asks

how Israel can be labelled a racist state when it airlifted thousands of Ethiopians to safety in Israel? And yet, nothing is done to stop violent incitement to genocide against Jews by Palestinians, including at officially sanctioned events with media coverage, and in children's education.

In another brilliant chapter, Shaw pens a letter to a pro-Palestinian human rights activist, asking him, "Why have you not expressed your outrage for other far more critical human rights disasters as I have done? I understand you like political adventurism, like flotillas to free Gaza.

Why have you not joined a flotilla to feed and care for the thousands of dying children in Africa? What is it about the Palestinians that gets your juices flowing over all other humanitarian tragedies? Could it be that you cannot incriminate Israel in human rights crimes perpetrated in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Burma, Russia, China, Pakistan, Turkey, Kurdistan, and Cuba, so these abusive regimes do not get you emotionally involved?"

Is it because Israel is the world's only Jewish state?

– Gary Selikow, Johannesburg

New leadership at King David Linksfield



King David High School Linksfield last week announced its newly elected Student Representative Council. They are: Rowan Sandler (head student leader), Levi Marx (deputy head student leader), and Michael Gamsu in the back row. Jared Mosselson, Rael Hanan, Ariel Kraitzick, Shei Silver, Adam Cohen, Jaiden Bank, Morgan Edelstein, Lorraine Srage (principal), Ava Cohen, Kayla Diamond, Skye Solomon, Rebecca Breger, and Jake Rosen in the second row. Noa Genish, Samara Rubinstein, Kayla Melnick, Leora Kuper, Tali Pantanowitz (head student leader), Talya Davis, Jaydan Friedman, Talia Sacks (deputy head student leader), Natasha Soldin, Liat Dayan, Dinah Hurwitz, and Kayla Cohen in the third row. Georgia Luntz, Hannah Prissman, Gabriella Dave, Jodi Benjamin, Eliana Lewus, and Kerren Berkman in the fourth row. In the front row are Joshua Burgin and Adam Zimmerman.

Sandton Sinai hears drumbeat of Africa



Grade Rs at Sandton Sinai Nursery School are learning all about South Africa, including making South African flags, African drums, and even an African traditional doll.

9 Days of KD'ness

The 9 Days of KD'ness campaign was recently launched at all King David Schools in the lead-up to Tisha B'Av, with the aim of encouraging small acts of kindness, caring and sensitivity to others – because even small acts of kindness bring light into the world.

The light follows the destruction of both the First and Second Temples, as well as a myriad other calamities that have befallen our people. Each King David pupil was



The Grade R Class at Rosabelle Klein Nursery School Waverley with their 9 Days of KD'ness cards

given a pack of kindness cards on which to write a personal message, with the intention to hand it out to others. In addition, each pupil was given Shabbas candles to light.

King David Victory Park's new leaders



The new leaders of King David Victory Park High School have been announced. They are Jenna Kaufman, Danit Krawitz, Nicole Kantor, Kira Fisher, Shalya Katzeff, Abigail Klug, Jozef De Aguiar, Jessi Wainer, Adam Danilowitz, Chad Rayd, Gregory Ber, Joshua Michel, Jamie Oliver, and Joshua Dove in the back row. Megan Kantor, Gabriel Ferreira, Thomas Stenz, Michaela Klug and Amber Pencharz are in the front.

KD High Linksfield has a practical way to assess pupils

While it is still the norm to assess pupils with traditional written exams, King David High School Linksfield has introduced a more creative and interactive alternative to examinations and assessments.

For the completion of their first semester of the elective programme, the Grade 8s and 9s got to bake, paint, profile, photograph, design, innovate and pitch.

Each elective has been divided into a six-month semester course, where pupils choose three electives per semester, allowing them the opportunity to select courses that are both appealing and challenging.

The electives are designed for pupils to use the content to develop skills which will enable them to become 21st century students. Assessments included biological experiments; technological 3D design; design, product development and marketing proposals; multimedia practicals, including pottery, photography and oil- and water-based painting; trouble shooting for sound production; educational board game design and creation; building working models; and FBI profiling on dictators

among others.

Pupils were given the opportunity to showcase the skills that they had gained in a practical, interactive yet educational way.

By teaching the pupils to plan, organise, work together in groups, create and articulate, they are equipped with skills that they will not only use for the rest of their schooling, but in their adult life too.



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Sunday (5 August)

Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW office 011 648 1053

Monday (6 August)

Tuesday (7 August)

- Second Innings host Silke Kaiser, the polygrapher on *Gotcha – The Mindset Of A Criminal*. Time: tea at 10:00. Meeting at 10:30. Venue: Arcadia. Entrance opposite Glenwood Lodge in Long Avenue. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors, includes tea and light refreshments. Contact: Linda on 011 532 9701
- The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre hosts a public presentation exploring *Issues of human rights for people with mental illness*. Time: 17:00. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. Free admission, donations welcome. RSVP dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za or 011 640 3100.
- The Union of Jewish Women hosts speech therapist Harriet Perlman on *The Homeless Writers Project*. Time: 10:00.
- King David Pre-Primary School Victory Park hosts *It's a Kind of Magic*, a one night only, not to be missed, magical evening of good food and fun. The programme features mentalist Gilan Gork performing his acclaimed *Smoke & Mirrors Act*, and comedian Claudine Ullman. Time: 18:30. Venue: Craighall Road; King David Victory Park High School Hall. Cost: R350. Contact: vpmarketing@sabje.co.za

Schwartzman calls foul at Anderson's jibes

JACK MILNER

Following Kevin Anderson's heroics at Wimbledon last month, when he fought a relentless semifinal against American John Isner, he was cheered as a hero by almost every South African.

Anderson showed incredible fighting spirit in a match that contained 99 games, 102 aces, and went for almost seven hours in a history-making display. The fifth set alone went on for 50 games (26-24). Even Isner was full of praise for the South African.

However, there is a tennis player who is not a fan of Anderson, namely Diego Schwartzman. Ranked No 12 in the world, he is the highest ranked Jewish tennis player on the tour, and at 1.7m tall, the Argentinian is also the shortest player on the men's tour.

As a result, he is affectionately known by the Argentinian Jewish community as *el Peque* (the small). He is known as the "mensch" of the tour by other Jewish players and coaches, and consistently says nice things about his opponents.

But he is not a member of the Anderson fan club, recalling the five-set match he had with the South African at the French Open a month back.

While everybody was praising the South African, the Argentine complained about Anderson's lack of respect during their match the previous month in which Schwartzman came back from two sets down to win in five sets. Anderson took a 6-1 6-2 lead, before Schwartzman clawed back to win the third 7-5. It was a case of



Diego Schwartzman

or if I did a bad choice (sic), he's always saying something. Always. Shut up!

"Every point. He's not respecting, you know. You've got to have some respect for the players. Because when I miss the ball, you need to be quiet. Not every point saying, 'Come on' ... Shut up!"

The umpire looked like she was trying to suppress her laughter, but gave a supportive nod to the Argentine when Schwartzman asked if she

was on his side. David versus Goliath, as Anderson stands 2.03m tall.

"You think I am not right? OK. You are with me? Thanks," he said. Schwartzman said he was intent on getting his revenge, following his third-set fightback, with another never-say-die effort in the fourth, which he won in a tiebreak to send the match into a deciding set.

It was a depressing development for Anderson, who against all odds found himself in a fifth set. He had served for the match twice in two different sets when he was 5-3 up in the third, and 5-3 up in the fourth.

The third and fourth sets lasted about two hours combined, but while Anderson wilted, Schwartzman found a new gear. He stormed home in the fifth to win 1-6 2-6 7-5 7-6 (7-0) 6-2, and advance to the quarterfinals, where he lost to Rafael Nadal.

He stormed home in the fifth to win 1-6 2-6 7-5 7-6 (7-0) 6-2, and advance to the quarterfinals, where he lost to Rafael Nadal.

Israelis and an Iranian go for goal together

Ignoring the political animosity between the two countries, an Iranian-born player made his debut alongside two Israeli players in the English soccer league on Tuesday evening.

Alireza Jahanbakhsh appeared for Premier League team Brighton & Hove Albion FC in a warmup match against OGC Nice, which the English team won 1-0.

Since 2015, Brighton & Hove Albion, known as the Seagulls, has also been the soccer home of Tomer Hemed, a Jewish Israeli, and Beram Kayal, an Arab Israeli. All three players were in the starting lineup.

Midfielder Jahanbakhsh, who joined the team last Wednesday, said he received a great welcome from the rest of the team.

Jahanbakhsh joined the Seagulls from Dutch team AZ Alkmaar for a club record transfer fee reported to be \$22 million (R290 million), making him the most expensive Iranian player of all time.

In 2015, when playing for Alkmaar, Jahanbakhsh refused to play against the Israeli team Maccabi Tel Aviv.

A spokesman for the player told *The New Arab* news site that Jahanbakhsh was excited about teaming up in the midfield alongside two Israelis.

"Alireza was young when Alkmaar played the Israeli team, and he was afraid for his future. It's not an issue when Iranian players play with Israeli teammates – only if they play against them," he said.

"At the end of the day football is a profession. I can tell you that Reza is very excited to play alongside a Jewish teammate."

Iran does not recognise the Jewish state, and bars its athletes from appearing against Israelis, but cannot openly ban players because it would breach international regulations.

Last summer, two Iranian players, Masoud Shojaei, 33, and Ehsan Haji Safi, 28, were supposedly banned for life after playing an Israeli team for their Greek club Panionios, but they were still included in Iran's 23-man line up for the 2018 World Cup. (*Times of Israel*)

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