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# South African Jewish Report

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## Verdicts bring closure to long saga of hate

NICOLA MILTZ

**T**he South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) has made it clear that anti-Semitism – even from political leaders – will not be tolerated in South Africa.

This message emanates from two overdue verdicts on cases relating to leaders in the Western Cape who made anti-Semitic statements.

Two political has-beens, Tony Ehrenreich, the former Provincial Secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu); and disgraced and suspended ANC Western Cape Provincial Chairperson, Marius Fransman, have been ordered to apologise to the Jewish community.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) laid complaints with the SAHRC against both men, and after many years' delay and a protracted legal process, the commission finalised both verdicts in the past week.

The verdicts are separate and unrelated, going as far back as 2013.

Both men have one month to say sorry in writing. So far, no sign of an apology has been forthcoming. Both men have yet to respond to calls for comment from the *SA Jewish Report*.

There has been a deafening silence regarding the recent verdicts from both the ANC and Cosatu, which have steadfastly insisted in the past that racism and bigotry of any kind will not be tolerated in South Africa.

Both verdicts come in the same week that President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed South African Jewry at Gardens Shul in Cape Town, in the same province where the ANC leadership has consistently brushed off recurrent instances of inflammatory language and anti-Semitic utterances.

Ramaphosa said, "We must be vigilant against all forms of intolerance including anti-Semitism." (See page 4).

In the case against Fransman, the SAHRC recognised that although his inflammatory and offensive comments did not constitute hate speech, they were hurtful to and impugned the dignity of members of the Jewish community.

In 2013, Fransman, then ANC Western Cape leader and Deputy Minister of International Relations, made a series of offensive and inflammatory public statements about the South African Jewish community. These included alleging that Jewish businessmen were unfairly benefiting at the expense of the black population in general, and the Cape Town Muslim community in particular. He accused the elected Jewish leadership of being disloyal to South Africa, and of trying to undermine economic transformation.

The SAJBD laid a complaint of hate speech against him in view of the fact that he was a public figure holding high political office.

In the Ehrenreich matter, the SAHRC found him guilty of prohibited hate speech, harassment, and of violating the Jewish community's right to dignity and equality. Ehrenreich made his inflammatory comments during the 2014 Gaza war.

On 13 August 2014, Ehrenreich posted a comment on Facebook calling for revenge attacks against the SAJBD, and other "Zionist supporters" in retaliation for the deaths of Palestinian civilians.

He wrote, "It's time for an eye for an eye against Zionist aggression... The time has come to say very clearly that if a woman or child is killed in Gaza, then the Jewish Board of Deputies, who are complicit, will feel the wrath of the people of SA with the age old biblical teaching of an eye for an eye."

Ehrenreich accused the SAJBD of being "complicit in the murder of the people in Gaza". He incited the South African population as a whole to carry out revenge

attacks against the board because of this. In using the expression "an eye for an eye", Ehrenreich further indicated that in his view, such attacks should take the form of violence, even of a lethal nature.

Wendy Kahn, the National Director of the SAJBD, said, "This is one of our most important cases, as Ehrenreich displayed pure incitement to violence." She said his comments were "incredibly irresponsible and dangerous, given the context in which they were said during a time of heightened emotions because of the conflict in Gaza. He made direct threats against the board, and he was in a position of authority inciting violence."

She said that although he was an ANC city councillor in Cape Town at the time, "the ANC Western Cape never sanctioned or reprimanded him".

Ehrenreich has steadfastly stood by his Facebook comment about the board, saying, "Let me state it clearly that I am

not anti-Semitic, and am not calling for violence against the Jews. My focus is against the Jewish Board of Deputies specifically for condoning violence against the Palestinians."

In reference to "an eye for an eye", he said, "This is to ensure that we take actions that are commensurate with the atrocities. The polite statements that have been made in South Africa thus far have not seen an end to the murders in Gaza. This, however, is not a call for violence, but is a call for more decisive actions in South Africa that would force the SAJBD to promote justice."

In its lengthy ruling, the SAHRC observed that even if a clear distinction had been made between the SAJBD and South African Jews in general, the statement would still have constituted a clear violation of the boards' rights.

The language of Ehrenreich's Facebook post in essence called for war against members of the targeted group, and

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## President gives assurances to the Jewish community



Photo: Guy Lerner

President Cyril Ramaphosa and Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein.  
See story on page 4



# Wendy Kahn among world's top 50 most influential Jews

JORDAN MOSHE

Wendy Kahn, the National Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), has been recognised as one of the world's top 50 most influential Jews by *The Jerusalem Post*.

Kahn, who was appointed SAJBD national director in 2006, is the first woman to hold this position since its inception in 1903. "I honestly have never felt undermined as a woman at the board, and have been privileged to work with many extraordinary elected and professional women," Kahn says.

Kahn also served for five years as one of the board's elected members, including holding the position of vice-chairperson of the Gauteng Council. Prior to her appointment, she was involved in the Jewish community, having attended Yeshiva College, and was active in Mizrahi, where she ran the He'atid leadership programme for 14 years

until it became the SA-Israel Forum.

She went on to study at the University of the Witwatersrand, and obtained a Post-graduate Diploma in Management at the university's business school. Her career began at Eskom. "Eskom became my real university, where I managed middle-management leadership development for five wonderful years," she says.

It was then that Kahn took up her role at the SAJBD. "When I inherited my office at the SAJBD, it was freezing cold and there was no electricity. I walked in and felt the glare of 100 men looking down at me from a wall of framed pictures.

"My first task was to remove the photographs and introduce bright South African art into my office." It was she who brought colour to the logos and work of the Board, cherishing the many different facets of our community, and embracing the diversity of our country.

Kahn has frequently taken the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement to task over its anti-Israel rhetoric, and has spoken against genocide, xenophobia,

and the abuse of women. Kahn has also spearheaded several campaigns aimed at encouraging members of the Jewish community to participate in South Africa's democratic processes.

Expressing gratitude for recognition by *The Jerusalem Post*, Kahn says, "I am so moved by the acknowledgement of the work that we are doing down here in the tip of Africa, especially in combating anti-Semitism and in exposing BDS hate. The very warm and heartfelt messages that I have received from around the world, and most importantly from my South African community, have been deeply moving for me."

Zev Krengel, the Vice-President of the SAJBD, said: "The recognition is unquestionably well-deserved. Wendy works tirelessly in the interests of both world Jewry and the local community here, and certainly has tenacity like no other. "This is a woman who works hard day and night, never lets anything important go, and fights the corner of Jewry. We are unbelievably proud of her, and I believe that this recognition couldn't have gone to anyone better."

## South Africans among Algemeiner's top 100

JORDAN MOSHE

King Goodwill Zwelithini, Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, and Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein don't have a whole lot in common. However, this week they were each named as one of the top 100 individuals who have positively influenced Jewish life over the past year. The American-based Jewish and Israeli news platform, *The Algemeiner* recently unveiled the list, known as the J100.

Our chief rabbi, the Zulu king, and African Christian Democratic Party leader Reverend Meshoe are listed among glamorous film stars, fiery politicians, Jews, gentiles, and acclaimed individuals from all walks of life.

According to *The Algemeiner*, "without the J100 – either individuals or the organisations they represent – Jewish life would not be of the calibre it is today.

"Despite the artificial, superficial, and sensational nature of any list, we sought to transform the information deluge of our times by using the list to shine a spotlight on

those gems in our midst, those people who are making a real difference in others' lives."

This type of list, the editors of *The Algemeiner* recognise, has inherent challenges.

"This list should not be seen as an endorsement of anyone or any entity and way of thinking. Rather, the people on this list are a reflection of the rich and broad spectrum of Jewish life, those who have positively contributed and helped shape the Jewish future."

In the "government" category, the King of the Zulu nation, Goodwill Zwelithini kaBhekuzulu, is described as a fervent advocate of co-operation with Israel. Zwelithini's effort to combine the revival of traditional Zulu culture with modern programmes in health and education is acknowledged, as is his commendation of South African Jews for building two state-of-the-art AIDS clinics in his kingdom. Zwelithini is also stated as expressing the belief earlier this year that Israel's

Continued on page 14 >>

### Torah Thought

## Home is Hashem on Sukkot

The most difficult question I have been asked about Judaism is, "Which is your favourite festival?" Ooh, I don't know! I love the traditions of Pesach: sitting with family and community members and speaking about Hashem's love for us and kindness in taking us out of Egypt, tasting matza, and singing *Dayeinu*.

But no, I love Shavuot more: staying up late into the night studying Torah, the warmth of the 02:00 coffee complementing the excitement of learning and teaching something new.

Actually, it has to be Purim: seeing how much joy the children get from dressing up and taking my daughter around with me to deliver *mishloach manot* (gifts of food and drink), and reading the wonderful story of

the Megillah.

What about Yom Kippur? Ah, the day of atonement, when Hashem in his compassion forgives me for all that I have done wrong, and I can start the year with a clean slate, proud of the person I have just become.

No, actually, it's Sukkot. After the pressure and intensity of the high holy days, Sukkot presents us with a chance to relax in joy. Rabbi David Aaron points out that the mitzvot of the day evoke a childlike joy in nature. We live in treehouses, we shake plants, we sing Hallel each day. And so, that's my final answer (until the next chag!). I love Sukkot the most.

On Sukkot, I bask in Hashem's protection, remembering that the walls that we put up around our homes and over our roofs are simply an illusion. Remembering that if we have a warm and loving home, we have everything, no matter if it's a palace or a modest room. If we have a warm and loving home that we share with the almighty,

then even a sukkah is enough for us.

On Sukkot mornings, I take out the lulav and etrog and shout with joy, "*Hodu Lashem Ki Tov!*" (Give thanks to Hashem), for he is good.

On Sukkot afternoons, I take a sleeping bag into my sukkah and curl up with a good book and a mug of hot chocolate, often joined by my six-year-old daughter who'll probably bring her own book, but drink my hot chocolate.

On Sukkot, there is enough time for everything. It's eight full days, and there's no rush. I experience shul in a different way, since although the service is long, the tone is light, and the worshippers are relaxed. Sukkot is the time of our rejoicing, and in Judaism, we rejoice most of all by sharing our joy with others, our family, community, and those in need. Sukkot is just around the corner, and I can't wait. *Chag Sameach!*



**Rabbi Sam Thurgood, Beit Midrash Morasha @ Arthur's Road**

## Shabbat and Yom Tov times

CL – Candle-Lighting, YTE – Yom Tov Ends

Shabbat Times

21.22 September / 12.13 Tishrei

Starts	Ends	
17:45	18:35	Johannesburg
18:24	19:16	Cape Town
17:33	18:24	Durban
17:53	18:43	Bloemfontein
17:55	18:47	Port Elizabeth
17:46	18:38	East London

Yom Tov Times

23.24.25 September / 14.15.16 Tishrei

CL	CL	YTE	
17:46	18:46	18:36	Johannesburg
18:25	19:18	19:18	Cape Town
17:35	18:25	18:26	Durban
17:54	18:44	18:45	Bloemfontein
17:56	18:49	18:49	Port Elizabeth
17:47	18:39	18:40	East London

Shabbat Times

28.29 September / 19.20 Tishrei

Starts	Ends	
17:48	18:38	Johannesburg
18:29	19:21	Cape Town
17:37	18:28	Durban
17:56	18:47	Bloemfontein
18:00	18:52	Port Elizabeth
17:50	18:42	East London

Yom Tov Times

30 September 1.2 October / 21.22.23 Tishrei

CL	CL	YTE	
17:49	18:39	18:39	Johannesburg
18:30	19:23	19:23	Cape Town
17:38	18:29	18:30	Durban
17:57	18:48	18:49	Bloemfontein
18:01	18:54	18:55	Port Elizabeth
17:52	18:44	18:45	East London

Shabbat Times

5.6 October / 26.27 Tishrei

Starts	Ends	
17:51	18:41	Johannesburg
18:34	19:27	Cape Town
17:41	18:33	Durban
18:00	18:51	Bloemfontein
18:05	18:58	Port Elizabeth
17:55	18:48	East London

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# Yom Tov tragedy: Orlianski's death leaves unanswered questions

TALI FEINBERG

Yom Tov was spent in the ICU ward praying and hoping for a miracle," says Daniel Witz, the son-in-law of 71-year-old Zalman Orlianski, who was critically injured in an altercation with an Uber driver over a parking space at OR Tambo International Airport, where he was collecting his family for Rosh Hashanah on Sunday. Orlianski passed away in hospital before Yom Kippur.

The family's lives were changed in an instant on Sunday morning, when "I was contacted by my brother-in-law that my father-in-law had just been assaulted at the airport and immediately rushed to get there and help my family," says Witz. "We then went to Arwyp Medical Centre in Kempton Park, where my father-in-law received urgent medical treatment. He was in critical condition in ICU with facial and head injuries. After fighting until the very end, he passed away on Sunday, 16 September. The funeral took place at West Park Jewish Cemetery on Tuesday.

The Uber driver, Tebogo Makhalemele, 30, from Daveyton, appeared at the Kempton Park Regional Court on Monday morning on a charge of murder, and applied for bail. In his affidavit, he pleaded not guilty to the murder charge because he said he had acted in self-defence, and that he had co-operated with police by handing himself over.

**"We heard from the [investigating officer] how [Makhalemele] continued to attack an elderly man, even when he was helpless. The applicant punched the deceased more than 15 times."**

Makhalemele also said that he was the breadwinner of his family, providing for his mother, long-time girlfriend, and seven-year-old daughter. He was self-employed as

an Uber driver, earning about R4 000 a month.

During Makhalemele's bail application in Kempton Park Magistrate's Court on Tuesday, the state opposed bail. State Prosecutor Alex Nkosi said: "We heard from the [investigating officer] how [Makhalemele] continued to attack an elderly man, even when he was helpless. The applicant punched the deceased more than 15 times," Nkosi told the court," reported *Times Live*. Bail was denied and the case was postponed to 26 October.

Uber South Africa confirmed to the *SA Jewish Report* that Makhalemele had been one of its registered drivers, and offered condolences on Orlianski's passing. "It's heartbreaking that this has happened, and I continue to be in touch with the family," Uber South Africa Chief Executive Alon Lits told the *SA Jewish Report*.

In a further statement, Uber South Africa spokesperson Samantha Allenberg said, "This is incredibly sad news, our hearts go out to the family, and we will continue to stay in touch with them to offer our support. We trust that law enforcement and the judicial systems will do their best to ensure that justice prevails. We stand ready to help police with any additional information needed for their investigation.

"This violent and aggressive behaviour is completely unacceptable, and upon learning of it, we immediately removed the driver's access to the app," she said. "We have been in close contact with law enforcement to provide them with as much information as possible, which led to the suspect's arrest.

She said all drivers had to undergo Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) background screening by a third-party professional who leads the industry. An AFIS screening is when all fingerprints captured are checked electronically against the South African Police Service (SAPS) database. "Prior to this individual's deactivation and arrest, he held a valid professional driver's permit, and he had cleared all background



Zalman Orlianski

checks."

"The family are heartbroken by this terrible trauma," Witz said, "but the community has been unbelievable in offering support. It is not limited to the South African community. The family has been receiving strength from all over the world every second of every day since last Sunday."

However he feels that the airport has been less supportive: "The airport released a statement without consulting the family first, and since the incident occurred, no representative of the airport has reached out to the family."

He said that in his view, the airport's statement was "factually incorrect" after viewing the footage himself, and that "a witness from the incident confirms that airport security did not effectively separate the individuals, did not detain the suspect, nor attend to the injured man, and the witness [a bystander] was the only person assisting the injured man before paramedics arrived".

OR Tambo International Airport spokesperson Leigh Gunkel-Keuler

told the *SA Jewish Report* that its statement was "not a knee-jerk reaction", and that the airport had reviewed hours of video before releasing its statement. At the same time, she said, part of the scene was out of view of the footage.

"It appeared the conflict was resolved at one point, and then it re-ignited when the one man returned with his three passengers," she said. It was this moment when the altercation descended into chaos, and Orlianski was severely injured.

According to an OR Tambo International Airport statement shortly after the incident, "The airport security officer can be seen in the video attempting to separate the individuals and resolve matters throughout the altercation, which lasted about four minutes. Additional airport security officers arrived on the scene within five minutes. SAPS officers and paramedics arrived on the scene at about 10:35. The injured person was transported to hospital by paramedics by 10:39.

Airport management has provided the necessary video footage to the SAPS, which is investigating the assault."

National Police Spokesperson Vish Naidoo said it was "a typical case of road rage. A security guard was there and tried profusely to separate the two motorists, but one was extremely persistent and provoking."

He said that the police were taking statements from witnesses, gathering evidence, and investigating the facts. He appealed to journalists and the public to allow the investigation to proceed without jumping to conclusions or interpretations.

Orlianski and his wife Inna had been married for 34 years, and had three children: Isa, Jonathan, and Zvi, and two grandchildren. He left Lithuania at the age of 26, and moved to Israel before coming to South Africa in 1980. He built up a successful electrical engineering business that specialised in highly sophisticated automatic equipment like robotics, and he had an MBA.

"His entire reason for being was his family. He had incredible values and morals, he was a man of integrity, a loyal friend, and the most hard working, determined businessman, always loyal to his customers," says Witz. "He taught us about perseverance, forgiveness, leadership, hard work, and, most of all, he taught us about putting family first. He had a deep love for his religion, and was always willing to help out his community, and a fellow Jew."

His daughter, Dr Isa Orlianski Witz, said, "He is my world, I felt his love every day of my life. If there was a problem or a celebration, he could never get there quick enough. His presence, his energy, his infectious laugh, you could feel it as he entered the room. He fell in love with my mom the moment he met her, and he loved her wholeheartedly."

His son, Jonathan, said, "The hard-work ethic that my father demonstrated every day, he instilled in me, and I can only continue to honour him by facing any challenge. The most precious value in Judaism is life, and he loved life."

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# Ramaphosa calls for engagement on Israel – and help with SA's revival

TALI FEINBERG

"We must be vigilant against all forms of intolerance including anti-Semitism," said President Cyril Ramaphosa in a landmark address to the South African Jewish community on 12 September at the Gardens Shul in Cape Town. "We must respond to it with the same resolve as we do against any act or statement that seeks to demean any faith, gender, or ethnic group."

He later said, "We must recognise the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security with its neighbours... South Africa stands ready to help and participate in the peace process." It was just one of many points he made to allay the concerns of the South African Jewish community.

Ramaphosa spoke at the invitation of Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein, who said in his introduction, "Your victory is a rejection of the ghastly attempt at state capture for the personal enrichment of a select few."

Goldstein did not mince his words in describing the South African Jewish community's commitment both to this country and the Jewish

State. "We love and cherish the state of Israel – it is part of who we are. We cannot be separated from it," he said.

He pointed out that it was in South Africa's best interests to form strong ties with "the only free, democratic country in the entire Middle East, and to partner with the robust economy and technology of Israel to create jobs here. It is indeed in the interests of peace, and Palestinian national aspirations, for South Africa to retain an involvement... to downgrade [the South African Embassy in Israel] is to become irrelevant," to which the president nodded in understanding.

Equally, "We are loyal partners in the noble and holy endeavour to uplift, transform, renew, and reinvigorate South Africa," said the chief rabbi. "I would like to pledge our partnership with you in building this country."

Goldstein said that many members of the community had borne the brunt of the slow South African economy, and were under tremendous financial pressure. "As your partners, Mr President, we turn to you to direct the South African economy to a new cycle of growth."

Ramaphosa began by acknowledging that, "The significant contribution by the Jewish community to the development of our society is admired by many South Africans. Our history is punctuated with examples – both celebrated an unknown – who fought against injustice. They led from the front. Today, Jewish South Africans continue to play vital roles across a broad spectrum of human endeavour."

He emphasised that, "Our national call to action today is jobs, jobs, jobs, and jobs. As government, we are hard at work to create an environment in which enterprise can thrive and provide opportunities... We have embarked on an ambitious but necessary programme to stimulate both domestic and international investment of \$100 billion (R1.4 trillion) over the next five years. The investment is necessary if we are to expand our productive capacity as a country and generate faster and inclusive growth."

The president said that his government aimed to build a new generation of entrepreneurial South Africans who were able to establish businesses for themselves and employment for others. "The Jewish community is ideally placed to contribute to this effort, because many high-standing entrepreneurs in our country who are Jewish have contributed immensely to the creation of great companies."

Ramaphosa emphasised, "We have taken significant measures to end the scourge of corruption. The state capture commission is the spearhead of a range of interventions that will investigate the depth of criminality that has impoverished our society and economy. There must be accountability for those that have done wrong against the people of South Africa."

Regarding the land-reform debate, the president said, "It has inspired a lot of hope by a lot of South Africans, but it has also instilled a lot of fear among a number of South Africans who are current owners of property. We would like the land-



President Cyril Ramaphosa addresses the Jewish community at the Gardens Shul in Cape Town

reform process to unfold within the framework of our Constitution, and to be underpinned by the rule of law, and that it should be implemented in ways that broaden economic opportunity and social cohesion among all South Africans."

Looking back at South Africa's transition to democracy, he said there were four issues that were particularly difficult: language, education, the right to strike, and land. "We were able to find solutions for all, but the land question was a historic wound, and continued to fester. It needs further attention, and to be dressed, sutured, and healed permanently, through a parliamentary process that will provide clarity and certainty for landless South Africans, land owners, and investors alike."

"We must continue to play a constructive role in the quest for peace in the Middle East," Ramaphosa said. "The decision that was taken by the governing party about the embassy status is a decision that I'm sure has disturbed many Jewish people in our country. It is a conference decision, but let us continue engaging. Let us not walk away from each other. Yes, you all have affinity and a commitment and a loyalty and a continued bond with the state of Israel. As South Africans, we recognise, acknowledge and applaud you for that because that is your destiny. But you are South Africans as well, at the same time. That is what

we must recognise."

Commenting on the speech, political analyst Daniel Silke said, "President Ramaphosa is a highly credible messenger, and his comments will resonate well within the community. However, in terms of substance, the remarks were somewhat formulaic or generic, and offered little insight into finding the necessary political and economic solutions for the country."

"Ultimately, while his message of consensus building, fighting prejudice, and acknowledging the importance of the community in job creation are positive, the speech reflected the current muddled policy environment in which the ANC operates. Platitudes are always well-meaning – but platitudes are not enough to alter the current troubled state of the economy and polarised

political debates. The address – much like the rest of the South African *realpolitik* at the moment – reflects a state of policy 'limbo'. It is waiting for the outcome of the 2019 election before, perhaps, finding new and more effective ways to deal with the current state of unease."

But, Cape Board Chairman Rael Kaimowitz said the South African Jewish Board of Deputies was encouraged by the president's address, "which showed great statesmanship, fortitude, and sensitivity. His message that anti-Semitism must be rooted out along with all other hate and intolerance ties in with our campaign that there is 'No Place for Hate' in the Western Cape and South Africa. It was also timely, given the verdict by the Human Rights Commission in finding Tony Ehrenreich guilty of hate speech in the same week."

"Whilst our community is unsettled by the macro uncertainty in the country around the recession and the land issue, as well as the threatened downgrading of the South African Embassy in Israel, it was heart-warming to hear the president's recognition of the centrality of Israel to the community, as well as his commitment to a two-state solution, in line with the board's own policy."

## Swastika artwork 'not aimed at Jewish community'

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

An artwork featuring Nelson Mandela in a Nazi salute superimposed onto a swastika caused an uproar at the FNB JoburgArtFair at the Sandton Convention Centre earlier this month. Guests angrily demanded that it be removed, and because of this, the work was hung and taken down twice in one day.

Mandla Sibeko, the Director of the FNB JoburgArtFair, described the work – which had Nelson Mandela's image set on top of the Nazi flag, with the words, "unmasked piece of shit" written below him – as an "ambush performance". He said it "wasn't part of the scheduled programme of events", according to a statement released to the media.

In an interview with talk show host Eusebius McKaiser on 702 last Thursday, the artist, Ayanda Mabulu, explained that the work criticised the ANC and Mandela's legacy. "The ANC has failed our people. They are neo-Nazis. Our people are poor and hungry. The Nazi flag is

on the same wavelength as what the ANC has become."

He pointed out that, "Some Jewish people there [at the art fair] didn't understand that I was sympathising with them."

McKaiser asked Mabulu about the historical accuracy of depicting Mandela with symbols associated with the extermination of millions. He responded, "What Hitler did – he killed Jewish people. Black people are hustling every day, suffering because the people who were supposed to free them stuffed up. We are burning inside."

McKaiser pointed out that the comparison was factually unfounded, saying there was a fundamental difference between a party that didn't deliver, and a government that put people in gas chambers. Mabulu responded, "We are in an everyday, genocidal, Nazi-type situation as black people."

He was referring to babies dying at state hospitals, and the landless, jobless, poverty stricken situation most black people found themselves in today.

Continued on page 13>>

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# Hanekom invites Palestinian tourism minister on official visit

JORDAN MOSHE

Despite Palestine not being recognised internationally as a country, the South African government welcomed Palestinian Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, Rula Maa'yaa, to South Africa on an official visit earlier this month.

Maa'yaa was invited by South African Minister of Tourism Derek Hanekom. The office of the South African minister confirmed that the visit on 11 and 12 September was official, and included a bilateral meeting between the two ministers to discuss co-operation in tourism.

"The ministers will also sign a memorandum of understanding to express the strong ties of friendship and mutual support between the people of South Africa and Palestine," said Nurunessa Moolla, Chief of Staff for the Ministry of Tourism.

Given that Palestine is not defined by international law as a state, questions surrounding the true significance and motivation for this visit. Along with eighteen others, Maa'yaa was sworn into office by Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas on 2 June 2014. Since June 2007, there have been two competing governments in the Palestinian territories in the Middle East, one in the West Bank, and the other in the Gaza Strip led by Hamas.

Though the government of the West Bank is generally recognised as the official government of the

PA, Hamas has claimed to be the authority's legitimate government.

Although Hamas was elected and took over the Gaza Strip in 2007, Abbas dismissed the Hamas-led government, and appointed Salam Fayyad as Prime Minister of the PA. The move wasn't recognised by Hamas, resulting in the two separate administrations – the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, and a rival Hamas government in the Gaza Strip.

The reconciliation process to unite the Palestinian governments has made some progress over the years, but has thus far failed to result in re-unification.

Under these circumstances, what would Maa'yaa's true role be? According to analyst Nir Boms, while Palestine is not yet a state, the PA is considered to be a state in the making, and this has ramifications for the roles played by ministers.

"The PA is a member of many international bodies," said Boms, a research fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University, and at the International Centre for Counter Terrorism in Herzliya. "It sees itself as a state in the making, and does whatever it can to support that image. As such, it's no surprise that it makes efforts to engage in international relations with other countries which may recognise it."

Boms said that when the United States recently announced its decision to close the Palestinian

mission in Washington, the PA announced that it would try to find other means to deliver consular services to Palestinians in the country.

As Boms points out, however, it is challenging to deliver consular services to people of a state which does not formally exist. This, he says, is where people such as Maa'yaa play a role.

"The Palestinians need to find ways to offer and advance services which recognised countries offer, and by appointing ministers such as Maa'yaa, they can address such issues."

As tourism minister for the West Bank, certain historical sites fall under Maa'yaa's jurisdiction, and she may engage with countries like Jordan to establish travel agreements between the two locations. However, she does not have the power to issue visas.

Still, the question of how to view the minister's visit to South Africa is slightly more complicated. "When a foreign minister is invited to any country, particular protocol and procedures apply," said Boms. "This situation is unusual, but I expect the protocol applied would be very similar. However, I'm not sure what Maa'yaa can bring to the table where international agreements are concerned, as she doesn't really have the power to give these effect. Her agenda is therefore difficult to gauge."

He continued, "The procedures



Rula Maa'yaa

followed really depend on the host country. South Africa can therefore accord her the necessary recognition if it so chooses. The PA naturally seeks such engagement and recognition, aiming to show that it is an internationally accredited player."

Still, Boms stressed that in reality, there was nothing earth shattering about this potential recognition, as it wouldn't change anything on the ground. "Her role is probably still limited to the symbolic realm," said Boms. "As a de facto official, she may establish networks of connections and engage in dialogue, but hers is a symbolic position at the end of the day."

Others differ, however. According

to John Stremlau, visiting Professor of International Relations at the University of the Witwatersrand, the invitation issued to Maa'yaa suggests that the South African government is making a concerted effort to increase its engagement in the Middle East.

"The new government of South Africa under Ramaphosa is in an awkward position," he said. "Since he spoke out against the violence on the border earlier this year, and recalled the ambassador in Israel, he has not taken much further action of late. The invitation issued to Maa'yaa may signal that the Ramaphosa administration wants to engage with the Palestinians, and to hear their voices."

Like Boms, he said that the international legal ramifications of this matter were irrelevant. "This can still be a politically significant move," said Stremlau. "Because Trump has almost outsourced his foreign policy on the Middle East to Netanyahu, neither of them are real addresses for dialogue for certain players. Certain countries are turning directly to the Palestinians to resolve issues in the region, and the invitation to Maa'yaa may be a manifestation of this."

He concluded, "There is a keen interest in, and passion for the Palestinian plight, amongst the ANC. The party's commitment to the cause is real. Ramaphosa seems to be using whatever avenues he can to engage with them, and so this move really does make sense."

## Most Jews of Polish and Lithuanian origin are entitled to EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT

A common misconception is that South African Jews of Ashkenazi heritage are of Lithuanian descent, and that only those who are able to prove their eligibility for Lithuanian citizenship are able to obtain a European passport. The fact is that most South African Jews do qualify for European

citizenship, whether they can prove their Lithuanian lineage or not, and most South African Jews of Sephardic heritage are also eligible for European passports.

**Ashkenazi:** It is important to understand that until 1918, all of Eastern Europe was divided between three empires: Russia, Prussia, the Austro-Hungarian empire. Neither Poland nor Lithuania existed until 1918.

At the end of WWI, the territory was divided, and countries like Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and others were born/reborn. Only then did residents become citizens of these countries. As a result, people who, for example, were born in Riga (nowadays Latvia) could actually be Lithuanian or Polish.

Horesh advises that eligibility for a Lithuanian or Polish passport depends on the city from which your grandparents (or their parents) hailed.

Horesh says many South African Ashkenazi Jews of Lithuanian origin have been refused Lithuanian citizenship because their heritage is actually Polish. They would, accordingly, be entitled to Polish citizenship and a EU passport.

After World War II, the borders in Europe changed, resulting in cities changing

nationality. The resultant effect for descendants of Jews who were born in Vilnius, for example, is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined, but an application for a Polish passport may very well be successful.

**Sephardi:** The descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are most likely eligible for a Portuguese passport. If applicable, Horesh is able to obtain an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which an application for European citizenship can be made and will most likely be successful. Portuguese citizenship enables one to enter the United States without the need to apply for a visa.

In addition, Horesh is filing many applications for descendants of Sephardi origin who arrived in South Africa from Greece, Turkey, and North Africa. Descendants from other countries in the Middle East – even Holland – are also potentially eligible.

Horesh resides in Israel, but has spent seven years in Poland, and is recognised as a



leading lawyer in the field of European citizenship, with a full understanding of local immigration laws.

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

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

**Horesh is available to discuss your specific details. He is often in South Africa, and can meet you in person to discuss your specific needs.**



Destroyed Warsaw, January 1945



Avi Horesh

citizenship, whether they can prove their Lithuanian lineage or not, and most South African Jews of Sephardic heritage are also eligible for European passports.

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

I will be in Johannesburg from 4 until 15 October and in Cape Town from 18 until 29 October. My South African phone number is +27 64 745 5273 • Email me on [adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com](mailto:adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com)



## South African Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

# Let go of that pent-up anger and hatred!

**S**hana tova to all our readers! By the time you read this, Yom Kippur will have come and gone, although we are putting this newspaper to bed just hours before the start of the fast.

This is an auspicious and thoughtful time, one that always feels quite momentous. It would have to be, considering it is a time of deep reflection and decision-making for us, and G-d decides who shall live and who shall not.

It is also a time when we consider the good and bad in our lives, and how we want to live. We spend time in shul, specifically listening to our learned rabbis for pearls of inspiration.

This past weekend, I was fortunate to spend quality time surrounded by my nearest and dearest, and the subject of Rosh Hashanah sermons came up.

I mentioned that I was moved by something my rabbi had said about creativity being a gift that should be used to benefit the world, but that it was not always used that way.



He had spoken about larger than life, moral, and value-based issues, which seemed so appropriate. However, not everyone had that experience.

Two friends said they were upset that their rabbi's sermon was a political rant about the Israeli-Palestinian situation. They felt quite frustrated about it, because they said he had spoken as if they all agreed with his political views, when they didn't. But more than that, they were upset that their time in shul, when they wanted to think about more lofty and spiritual things, became a time for a one-sided, hate-filled political tirade.

I chose not to ask which rabbi they were talking about or which shul they attended because it didn't matter. In this job, I have been fortunate to get to know a great number of the most astonishingly learned and wise rabbonim, and I would hate to think that they were referring to any one of them.

However, it left me thinking about what it is we want or expect to hear from our rabbis, and whether it is the place of rabbis to talk about politics in shul.

The truth is, politics is life. When we are upset about our government over land-expropriation laws or higher petrol prices, that's politics. You can't escape it.

However, when we go to shul – particularly over the high holy days – we go to pray and get spiritual inspiration. We expect to get some food for thought about how we can do things better.

While there are many South African Jews who vehemently dislike Palestinians, and many others they call their enemies, do we need to be incited toward further hatred or disapproval in shul?

I don't believe so. If it is a political sermon about seeing the good in others and trying to find peace and building bonds between nations, then I see the point. That is about lofty and moral issues that are political.

But we have enough hatred and ugliness in our lives. I don't believe shul is the place to be adding to that.

I would love our high holy days to erase the hatred and pent up anger that we all hold to a greater or lesser degree. I am not sure if this problem is particularly South African, but it is a national dilemma nevertheless.

This is so damningly clear in the tragic death of Zalman Orlianski this week. I know everyone is looking to blame, and the person who beat Orlianski so badly that he died as a result of his wounds deserves the punishment he will get. However, this tragedy started with people fighting over a parking space, and ended in death.

What on earth could have been so bad that the man lost his temper to that degree that he could do that to another human being? At what point did he lose his ability to see the humanity in Orlianski? And, how is it possible that a parking spot became that important?

Road rage? No, simply rage. So many of us walk around with rage welling up in us at any given time, and it doesn't take much to spark it.

It is so desperately sad that people in our country are like this. That same anger is in each one of us.

We are angry about so many things. About Cyril Ramaphosa talking in shul without a kippa. About the guy in the car in front who is driving too slowly. About the teacher who gave your child too much homework. About a waiter in a restaurant that brought the wrong order. About the rabbi who gave a politically charged sermon on Rosh Hashanah.

The point is, whatever we may feel, none of it is worth getting into a rage about. And so, if we achieve one thing over the high holy days, let it be that we start to see the good in others rather than only the bad. Let's take that rage and punch a punching bag, dance it out, or go for a run, or a swim. Take it somewhere it cannot hurt someone else. Let us slow down and breathe, instead of giving life to our rage.

Don't let Zalman Orlianski's death be in vain. Let his death be a lesson to each and every one of us that anger, fury, and hatred is never worthwhile. It harms rather than heals. It devastates rather than helps.

Let's work on this, and try and make the year 5779 a year of calm, peace, putting aside rage and hatred.

**Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach!**

# Thirteen years after the Gaza evacuation, what has changed?

**I**t nearly tore Israeli society apart, while for me, it remains one of the most distressing stories I've ever reported. This week, thirteen years ago, Israel completed its unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and four northern West Bank settlements.

For five long weeks, Jew stood pitted against Jew, Israeli soldier against Israeli civilian as the Israel Defense Forces evacuated 21 settlements in the coastal enclave. It was home to about 1.3 million Palestinians and 8 000 Israeli settlers.

Egypt had controlled Gaza until 1967, when Israel seized it (along with the West Bank) in the Six-Day War. Thirty-eight years later, Israeli military rule in the strip ended.

Over a two-day period, Israeli soldiers went from house to house asking residents to leave voluntarily. After the deadline passed, thousands of troops entered the strip to forcibly remove the hundreds of families who'd remained, buoyed by thousands of non-residents who'd come to support them.

I remember standing in Neve Dekalim, the largest settlement in the Gush Katif block, where a group of teenagers had barricaded themselves inside a synagogue. Crying, their prayer shawls flailing in all directions, they lay prostrate on the ground with their legs and arms clawing into the furniture. It took four soldiers – one soldier per limb – to disentangle them, and drag each distraught protestor onto an awaiting bus.

A line of female soldiers had cordoned off one end of a road where they stood with their arms linked together to prevent anyone from getting through. I can still see one of them crying, unable to wipe away her tears as they dripped slowly and quietly down her face. I had to turn away.

Nearby, a group of male soldiers was knocking on the front door of a house that was suddenly opened by a young mother who threw herself at them, banging onto their chests and sobbing, begging them not to come in.

And so, the scenes repeated themselves...

Months later, I would return to the same spot, and while interviewing a Palestinian politician in Khan Younis city, I looked through the barbed wire of his living room window onto the remains of where those settlements had once stood. By then, there was just one big pile of rubble.

About 3 000 homes were destroyed by the soldiers as they withdrew. The synagogues, most of the greenhouses and infrastructure, such as pipes, were later razed to the ground by rioting, jubilant and looting Gazans. Palestinian police had been unable to control the thousands who'd flocked there.

Today, some of those former settlement streets are still visible in the sand dunes. A former basketball stadium is the main hall of the College of Sports at Al Qsa University's south campus. Erstwhile agricultural fields are now used by Hamas for military training. An amusement park has also been built in the area.

Then Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, whom the settlers accused of betraying them (he had cut the inaugural ribbon at some of their settlements), had hoped the move would bolster Israel's security. He believed it would jump-start the peace process

**DATELINE:  
MIDDLE EAST**

*Paula Slier*



with the Palestinians.

Chief of Staff Dan Halutz said at the time, "The disengagement decision holds hope for a better future. It transfers responsibility for the strip to the Palestinians who will be in charge of their destiny."

But the settlers felt differently. I first met former South African Michael Goldschmidt and his Israeli wife Rivka in their beautiful double story house in the Ganei Tal settlement, where they'd lived for 28 years. Michael grew amaryllis bulbs in his hothouses, and Rivka was a school teacher. They told me that when the soldiers had first arrived with evacuation orders, they'd offered them a glass of water, and then with an accusatory look, demanded that they answer the question, "How could you?"

They were among those who chose to drive out of Gaza voluntarily in their own vehicles "to retain a little of our dignity".

Weeks later, I met them again in Hafez Hayyim kibbutz, where we sat on the grass outside caravan-type houses they'd been temporarily provided with. Rivka told me that she couldn't bear to watch the television news, and had been informed by a neighbour that her house has been filmed going up in flames.

"Mark my words," Rivka insisted then, "Nothing will change. We were the human shields against the terror in Gaza. By removing us, the terror will reach closer into Israel. Does anyone in the world really think that by taking us out, this will solve the problem?"

Ironically, it wasn't only the settlers who disapproved of Sharon's plans. The Israeli left viewed the withdrawal as a way of stalling negotiations, and increasing Israel's presence in the West Bank.

It turned a sizeable percentage of the Israeli population against considering similar such withdrawals from the West Bank. It also did not address wider issues of occupation – Jerusalem continues to retain control over Gaza's borders, airspace, coastline, infrastructure, and the like. Thirteen years on, and in retrospect, it achieved nothing.

Evacuees received generous compensation, with larger families getting up to two million shekels (almost R8.5 million), but relocation and moving into new homes took a long time.

Today, all that remains of the community is a small museum near Machaneh Yehuda in Jerusalem. Very moving, it showcases remnants like the key to a synagogue, and the menorah from the last settlement to be evacuated, Netzarim.

On that final day, soldiers and settlers prayed together in the synagogue, and then walked through the streets, carrying whatever they could.

"It was a national disaster," Maj Gen and politician, Uzi Dayan, insists. "In my opinion, this will go down in history as the sixth disastrous event of Tisha B'av [the destruction of the Temples]."



Jewish settlers cry before Israeli police remove them from the Neve Dekalim settlement in the Gush



# PART SOCIAL WORKER, PART DIPLOMAT, PART ANGEL OF MERCY

## SHEBA MEDICAL CENTER'S HUMAN ANTIDOTE TO SERIOUSLY ILL PALESTINIAN PATIENTS

BY KEN STEPHENS

Raied Baloum, Sheba Medical Center's, Liaison to the Palestinian Authority (PA), has one of the most fascinating and challenging jobs within Israel's medical bureaucracy.

From Sunday-Thursday, 52 weeks a year, Raied is swamped with requests from the PA's Ministry of Health to accept seriously ill men, women and children from Gaza and the West Bank for various treatments at Sheba Medical Center-Tel Hashomer in Ramat Gan.

While it's true that a number of hospitals in Israel treat Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza, Sheba is entrusted with dealing with the "toughest" medical cases, especially sick children from Gaza, many of whom suffer from genetic diseases and various forms of cancer.

Raied, who lives in Taibe (an Israeli-Arab city in Central Israel), had been working as a social worker who was graduated into this exacting position by Sheba's management in 2008. Since assuming the job, Raied deals with a multitude of daily hurdles, from reading the medical requests from PA doctors and health bureaucrats and deciding who can be treated at Sheba, to working with Shabak (aka Shin Bet, Israel's Security Agency) on security background checks for potential patients, who need to cross into Israel at various border checkpoints.

It's a non-stop task that constantly tests Raied's fortitude. "There are times when I have to block my cellphone number because of the sheer volume of requests to admit someone for treatment, which can be very emotional if you are speaking with a parent of a sick child, a ranking official in the PA etc. We really try and accommodate as many patients as possible from the PA, but not everyone can be admitted

because we have just so many beds and doctors available," Raied admitted.

Raied is assisted by two young Israeli Arab women, who help greet and process the paperwork for Palestinian patients. "Boring is not a word that you will hear around the office," one of them remarked. "There is never a dull moment."

Within Sheba's Safra Children's Hospital, 40% of all patients found throughout the various wards are from the Palestinian Authority. It is not unusual to see the mothers and grandmothers of sick children, who need long term care (mostly cancer and genetic diseases) in the playground areas inside and outside the Children's Hospital throughout the day. Raied is also responsible for making sure that these family members who must stay in Israel for weeks and sometimes months, are fed and provided with basic services (a room, laundry etc.) on the Sheba campus.

And then there are the split second decisions. "There are times when there is no more room in the hospital. Yet we will receive urgent, sometimes frantic phone calls from the PA to deal with an emergency case. It could be anything from car/bus accident victims to severe burns, heart attacks etc. Because I'm dealing with situations like this all the time, I know of at least 400 cases, where without emergency treatment from Sheba's medical staff, these people of all ages from the PA, would have died," Raied revealed.

There are many compelling stories that Raied can tell you about but he derives the most satisfaction from seeing the daily interaction between the Palestinians and Israeli Jews. "In many cases, the children might not have ever met a Jew before and as we know they have been



Raied Baloum





told some horrible things about the IDF soldiers... that they are monsters," he recalled. "Well, those perceptions can change quickly. On Purim or Chanukah, many soldiers from the IDF come to visit, speak to the kids and hand out candies to everyone. When one of the soldiers gave candy to one of the Palestinian children, he asked his mother, 'Why are they giving me candy?' These encounters are fascinating, emotional and important for both Jews and Palestinian Arabs. It's a bridge to peace. We even try and accommodate those children who are terminally ill to arrange either a trip to the beach or a nice park with their parents. These are the things that are not being reported in the mass media, which is a shame."

While the job can at times can be frustrating based on the complicated dynamics between Israel and the PA, Raied is proud of the fact that he has been directly responsible for providing a lifeline to those in need. He maintains cordial relations with the PA, Israeli authorities and of course the patients and their families.

Raied related, "I can honestly say with confidence that Sheba Medical Center's talented staff has treated tens of thousands of Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank over the years, where we have saved the lives of many, many children and adults. This gives me great satisfaction and motivation."

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# Will Iran be undone by domestic dissent?

STEVEN GRUZD

The wars in Iraq and Syria have greatly expanded the influence of Iran, in an arc from Tehran westwards to the Mediterranean coast. It has long supported and armed proxies like Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Hamas in Gaza, and poured invective on Israel. But Iran's biggest threat lies at home from its increasingly impoverished people.

These are the views of Dr Glen Segell, research fellow at the Ezri Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies at the University of Haifa in northern Israel. Segell has worked in Israel, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, South Sudan, and the United Kingdom, but his inflected vowels are unmistakably South African. He made aliyah the day after finishing matric at King David Victory Park in 1984.

Segell contends that Shia Islam (dominant in Iran) can be benign, contrary to popular portrayals.

"The greater threat is Sunni Islam," Segell asserts. "Those attacking shuls, schools, and soft targets around the world are Sunnis – there is no record of such attacks by Shias." He warns, though, that "almost 100% of terrorist attacks are 'lone wolf' operations that can come from anywhere and be inspired by anyone".

Nevertheless, the Iranians are spreading their brand of Islam actively, and with more success than any time since their 1979 Islamic Revolution. He explains how the Iran-Iraq war from 1980-1988 put the brakes on Tehran's ideological ambitions. The wars in Iraq and Syria, and the failed "Arab Spring" have given Iran an opening.

"In the 'Arab Spring', authoritarian regimes in Yemen, Egypt, Tunisia and Libya were toppled. The liberal youth who mobilised through social media had no effective means to govern. A failed state environment was created. Into the gap fell radical organisations who tried to take control. Failed states and fragmented states gave space to ISIS and Iran," Segell says.

Yet, there is growing discontent within Iran. Economic conditions are deteriorating, and the currency, the rial, is collapsing as emerging markets plummet. Sanctions bit hard, and their expansion as the Trump administration abandons the 2015 nuclear deal will hurt the Iranian people considerably.

A cold winter in January resulted in the biggest anti-regime protests in five years. Demonstrators sported placards that said, "Leave Syria! Give us education!" and "Forget Hezbollah! Give us health!"

This could be a turning point.

**"Those attacking shuls, schools, and soft targets around the world are Sunnis – there is no record of such attacks by Shias."**

"There is a greater possibility to depose the ayatollahs because of economic reasons," Segell says. "There is growing resentment of wasting Iranian money on these proxy wars. They are embattled, especially if Trump decides to turn up the heat. The key question is what would replace this regime? It may create another fragmented, failed state."

Segell does not view Israel's attention on Africa as being motivated by a particular desire to curb Iran's actions, but admits that Iran has much more to offer African states in terms of oil, goods, and access to markets. It has, as yet, not made substantial inroads into majority Sunni North African states.

Turning to Tshwane's solid ties with Tehran, he says the ANC's friendship with Iran runs deep from the struggle days, although Iran

simultaneously supplied the oil that fuelled the apartheid government.

Segell notes that South Africa has raised the possibility of Iran joining BRICS, the bloc of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The country has substantive business dealings in Iran, such as through telecoms giant MTN, and somehow, has managed not to offend Saudi Arabia, Iran's ideological arch foe. South Africa has aggressively championed Iran's right to develop nuclear technology for non-military use.

"It's in the interests of South Africa not to have sanctions and internal discontent in Iran. It's facing

both," Segell said. "South Africa should urge Iran to renounce its nuclear weapons programme, stop its missile programme, and offer greater benefits to its people. It can then move forward, be more respected in the world, and have better ties to Africa... It's not in the interests of South Africa to support a government that its people don't support."

Keep an eye on the Iranian street this winter, where the state is likely to attempt to crush popular resistance once again. South Africa could potentially use its leverage with Iran to persuade it to act responsibly, and bring much-needed stability to the Middle East.



Dr Glen Segell

## Former UK Chief Rabbi labels Jeremy Corbyn a 'dangerous anti-Semite'

TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF

Britain's former Chief Rabbi, Lord Jonathan Sacks, branded Labour Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn a dangerous anti-Semite in an interview published on Tuesday.

In a devastating critique of the opposition leader, Sacks accused Corbyn of giving "support to racists, terrorists, and dealers of hate, who want to kill Jews and remove Israel from the map". The Labour leader, Sacks said, uses "the language of classic pre-war European antisemitism".

Corbyn has been under mounting attack for his own allegedly anti-Semitic positions, and for failing to root anti-Semitism out of Labour, Britain's main opposition party.

The comments that sparked Sacks's denunciation were made by Corbyn in a 2013 speech at the Palestinian Return Centre in London, where Corbyn said of a group of British "Zionists", "They clearly have two problems. One is they don't want to study history and, secondly, having lived in this country for a very long time, probably all their lives, they don't understand English irony either."

In an interview with the *New Statesman* magazine, Sacks, who served as chief rabbi from 1991 to 2013, called those remarks the most offensive to have been made by a senior British politician for 50 years.

"The recently disclosed remarks by Jeremy Corbyn are the most offensive statement made by a senior British politician since Enoch Powell's 1968 'Rivers of Blood' speech," said Sacks. "It was divisive, hateful, and like Powell's speech, it undermines the existence of an entire group of British citizens by depicting them as essentially alien."

"We can only judge Jeremy Corbyn by his words and his actions," Sacks went on. "He has given support to racists, terrorists, and dealers of hate who want to kill Jews and remove Israel from the map."

Interpreting Corbyn's comment about "Zionists" as a thinly veiled reference to Jews, Sacks said: "When he implies that, however long they have lived here, Jews are not fully British, he is using the language of classic pre-war European anti-Semitism. When challenged with such facts, the evidence of which is before our eyes, first he denies, then he equivocates, then he obfuscates. This is low, dishonest, and dangerous."

Warned Sacks, "He has legitimised the public expression of hate, and where he leads, others will follow."

"Now, within living memory of the Holocaust, and while Jews are being murdered elsewhere in Europe for being Jews, we have an anti-Semite as the leader of the Labour Party, and her majesty's opposition. That is why Jews feel so threatened by Mr Corbyn and those who support him."

"For more than three and a half centuries, the Jews of Britain have contributed to every aspect of national life," Sacks noted. "We know our history better than Mr Corbyn, and we have learned that the hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews. Mr Corbyn's embrace of hate defiles our politics and demeans the country we love."

Corbyn's 2013 remarks, which resurfaced last week, have prompted a fresh wave of criticism of Corbyn, including from some Labour MPs. Corbyn last week claimed that he had used the word Zionist "in the accurate political sense, and not as a euphemism for Jewish people".

Sacks spoke days after a petition was launched by a British anti-Semitism advocacy group calling for Corbyn's resignation.

The Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA), founded in 2014, insisted that "Jeremy Corbyn must go." It urged Labour's legislators to act, noting that "only 52 Labour MPs [are needed] to propose a challenger, or Labour MPs could propose a vote of no confidence, or set up their own political party. We call on the Parliamentary Labour Party to take action."

The petition, which quickly gained thousands of signatures, was posted

to the change.org website on Saturday, the same day a Labour Party anti-Semitism campaign group filed a formal complaint against Corbyn over his 2013 "Zionists" speech.

The CAA petition railed against "events from Jeremy Corbyn's disturbing past" that "have trickled into the light".

Back when "he could speak his mind without fear of scrutiny, [Corbyn] blamed Islamist terrorist attacks on Israel; defended an appalling antisemitic mural; honoured a sheikh banned from the United Kingdom for saying that Jews drink non-Jews' blood; said that a Hamas terrorist whose life's work was the murder of Jews was his 'brother'; held a repulsive event on Holocaust Memorial Day in which Jews were accused of being the successors to the Nazis; tried to have the word 'Holocaust' removed from the title of Holocaust Memorial Day; laid a wreath at a memorial for the Black September terrorists behind the Munich Massacre; and now we have heard that he made euphemistic comments to suggest that Jews are somehow un-British and foreign to the ways of our country", it charged.

The petition garnered 5 581 signatures in its first 20 hours online.

It charged that Corbyn "over many years... sought to defend, honour, assist, and promote anti-Semites, and the context is that his actions have been consistent with those of an ideological anti-Semite. We had hoped that the Labour Party might at some point rise to the defence of British Jews by removing Jeremy Corbyn or by demanding his resignation, but the institutions of the once proudly anti-racist Labour Party are now corrupted and will not act."

Earlier on Saturday, Labour's internal anti-Semitism advocacy group, Labour Against Anti-Semitism, said it had lodged a formal complaint with the party against Corbyn for "anti-Semitism and for bringing the party into disrepute".

On Friday, *The Times of London* published an editorial calling Corbyn "straightforwardly anti-Semitic", and concluding that his comments should "render him ineligible for membership, let alone leadership, of a democratic party and for public office".

The 2013 Hamas-endorsed conference featured several controversial speakers,

including one who advocated boycotting Holocaust Memorial Day, and another who blamed Israel for the 9/11 terror attacks in New York.

The resurfacing of Corbyn's 2013 speech was met with a backlash from a number of Labour MPs and Jewish figures, with the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle* saying, "It's almost impossible to read this as anything other than a reference to Jews."

In a statement quoted by *The Guardian* on Friday, Corbyn said he had become "more careful with how I might use the term 'Zionist' because a once self-identifying political term has been increasingly hijacked by anti-Semites as code for Jews".

The incident is the latest in a string of revelations detailing Corbyn's antipathy for the Jewish state, and highlights the widening gap between the British left and the country's Jewish community.

Claims of anti-Jewish prejudice within Labour have grown since Corbyn, a long-time critic of Israel, was elected leader in 2015. British Jewish groups have accused him of failing to expel party members who openly express anti-Semitic views.

The dispute recently boiled over after the party last month proposed adopting a definition of anti-Semitism that differed from the one approved by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, a move that was met with anger from Jewish groups and the country's chief rabbi.



Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks in the House of Lords



# Corbynites take a knock, but it could be a hollow victory

## OPINION

Milton Shain



“Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions, and religious facilities.” – Stockholm definition of anti-Semitism (2016)

For the past few months, Jeremy Corbyn and his party's attitude towards Jews has been under the spotlight. Accusations of soft-peddling on the question of Jew-hatred abound. Is this the case? Does Corbyn's decades old support for the Palestinians, and his visceral hostility towards Zionism make him a Jew-hater? Indeed, is the Labour Party itself soft on anti-Semitism?

Enter Dame Margaret Hodge, a Labour member of Parliament for Barking since 1994, a former minister, and the child of European Jewish refugees. “You're a fucking anti-Semite and a racist,” she bluntly told her leader during an altercation some weeks back.

Her outburst followed the refusal of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the Labour Party to adopt a widely recognised and inoffensive definition of anti-Semitism developed over several years by the intergovernmental International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), and presented in the Stockholm Declaration of 2016. The NEC was uncomfortable with the examples

of anti-Semitism included in the declaration, maintaining that they curtailed free speech.

The NEC's baulking confirmed a growing drift away from specifically Jewish concerns in the Labour Party. Even its Chakrabarti Inquiry into anti-Semitism and racism established in 2016 was dubbed a whitewash. Numerous other complaints have been dealt with leniently, including the infamous comment that Hitler was a Zionist made by former Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone.

**Jews remain concerned. A recent poll suggested that 40% would consider leaving Britain should Corbyn become Prime Minister.**

It is little wonder that the NEC felt uncomfortable with some of the examples of anti-Semitism outlined below in the Stockholm Declaration:

- Calling for aiding or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion;
- Making mendacious, dehumanising, demonising, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as a collective, such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government, or other societal institutions;
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed

by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews;

- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust);
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust;
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations;
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, such as by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour;
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation;
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism (e.g. claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterise Israel or Israelis;
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis; and
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Extreme anti-Zionists no doubt gag at some of the examples. Corbyn certainly did. But a flood of criticism, including explosive investigative revelations of his past actions, has resulted in his star – at least on this matter – waning. Photographs of Corbyn endorsing a mural in London that contained a grotesque anti-Semitic caricature, coupled with his celebration of Hamas and Hezbollah,

and his connections to Holocaust deniers, not to mention his presence at a wreath-laying ceremony for “terrorists” in Tunisia, revealed a murky past. He is no friend of the Jews. The final straw was a recording of Corbyn suggesting that Jews were alien to British culture. They had no sense of irony, he said.

Such essentialising is unacceptable. Two former Labour Party leaders, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, implored the NEC to accept the Stockholm Declaration in full. This was duly done at a follow-up NEC meeting, where Corbyn failed to get his way. However, he did manage to have a statement issued in which his party reserved the right to support full rights for the Palestinians, and the right to criticise Israel. A hollow victory for the anti-Corbynites one could say.

Jews remain concerned. A recent poll suggested that 40% would consider leaving Britain should Corbyn become Prime Minister. The Stockholm Declaration, in spite of widespread endorsement, remains controversial. Enemies of the Jewish state are unhappy with the examples of anti-Semitism included, claiming they are not part of the declaration. This, however, is not the case according to those who drafted it.

The Corbynites have taken a knock. One can be sure of that. One can also be sure that should the Stockholm Declaration ever become a subject of debate in South Africa, it will fail to gain acceptance. Hatred for the Zionist idea is simply too deeply entrenched at the tip of Africa.

• Milton Shain is Emeritus Professor in the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town.

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# EFF wishes SA Jews 'Good Yom Tov'

JORDAN MOSHE

On *erev* Rosh Hashana, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) extended good wishes to the South African Jewish community over the high holy days. This came just days after party leader Julius Malema insisted it was never his intention to upset the community with statements made previously.

The wishes were shared in a tweet, reading, "EFF expresses warm wishes to the Jewish community on the Jewish High Holy festivals. Happy Rosh Hashanah."

On 23 August, Malema claimed that Jews were training right-wing extremists to become snipers to kill blacks over land. In a private subsequent meeting with Zev Krengel, the Vice-President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), the politician insisted that he did not mean any harm to the community. He accepted it was a lone, maverick Israeli who was involved in training.

The EFF's Yom Tov message inspired an array of responses on Twitter. According to one user, the belief that the EFF takes issue with Jews is completely unfounded. "People don't understand that the EFF is not against Jews or Jewish religion," it said, "but against those that use the religion for their narrow self-interests at the expense of other religions or groups." Another wrote, "I deeply appreciate and thank you sincerely for your warm wishes for Rosh Hashanah."

Others were more sceptical, with one user commenting that the "EFF will say and do anything just to stay

relevant", another saying that the "EFF is just doing this for the sake of it", and another posting a picture of a flip-flop, suggesting lack of consistency on its part.

Others were more scathing, with comments such as, "This is another sign of a sell out by our most trusted Pan-Africanist movement. Like, really now, do u have the guts to send warm wishes. That is nonsense." Another wrote, "Probably got some money, so has changed his mind again."

Malema's efforts to differentiate between Jews and Israelis, and by extension religion and politics, in both his comments and the EFF's tweet were evidently lost on some users. The tendency to conflate the two was evident in many responses, including one which read "Aaaaaam so confused right now... are we not supporting Palestina anymore?" and another saying, "Guys this [sic] are not the original Jews they are fakes the synagogue of Satan, they are Jewish by convection not blood."

Still, the gesture was appreciated. According to Krengel, the tweet was discussed during the course of his earlier meeting with Malema, and was felt to be an appropriate way of making good on the politician's remarks. "I discussed it with him, and suggested that a message like this may be a good idea," said Krengel. "I'm sure he would've considered this option even if we had not discussed it. He was very open to the idea, and significantly chose to offer the wishes through the EFF's account and not his personal one."

Krengel went on to explain that the EFF

was, in fact, the first political party to extend such wishes, but was eventually followed by the Democratic Alliance, and subsequently, the ANC, the latter wishing Muslim and Jewish communities well over their respective holidays.

"The community needs to take this message at face value, and appreciate where it is coming from," he said. "I promise you that [UK Labour Party leader Jeremy] Corbyn did not send out such a message to the Jews of

London before Yom Tov. It is significant because it shows that the greater community of South Africa recognises the importance of these days. This is something the local Jewish community should take to heart."



Julius Malema

## Verdicts bring closure to long saga of hate

>> Continued from page 1

openly stated that they should "be murdered by their fellow South Africans in retaliation for acts taking place in another country". This was "deeply psychologically and emotionally hurtful in terms of Section 10(a) of the Promotion of Equality and Prohibition of Unfair Discrimination Act", and further constituted incitement to cause harm, which was prohibited by the Bill of Rights.

Milton Shain, the Emeritus Professor of Historical Studies at the University of Cape Town and an expert in anti-Semitism, said this week that the verdicts come at an important time in our political journey.

"It is appropriate that Marius Fransman and Tony Ehrenreich have been ordered to apologise. Far too often, we have seen senior politicians overstep the bounds of free speech, and move in the direction of hate speech. Both Fransman and Ehrenreich have done so.

"Language is important, and in a society steeped in a long history of racism, no one in our new democratic South Africa should be let off the hook for using inflammatory language. Sadly, we know of other



Marius Fransman



Tony Ehrenreich

instances where the ANC itself has turned a blind eye to hostile anti-Jewish speech. It seems Jews are an easy target.

"This ruling is timely, especially as the electoral season approaches. Political temperatures will rise, and the prospects for scapegoating will increase."

Responding to the verdicts, the board said: "We are pleased that the bodies that have been constituted to uphold South Africans' constitutional rights are delivering their mandate."

The SAHRC said that both men had a responsibility to conduct themselves in a

manner which is consistent with constitutional values.

Kahn told the *SA Jewish Report* that a substantial majority of anti-Semitic sentiment and/or behaviour was related in some way to the Israeli-Palestinian issue. "Consequently, in our representations to government and statutory bodies such as the SAHRC, the SAJBD has focused on demonstrating when and how anti-Israel activity, which falls within the ambit of freedom of expression, often overlaps into racist attacks on Jews, which does not."

David Hirsh who wrote the book, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism*, said, "The first hurdle here, which is considerable, is agreeing that some kinds of criticism of Israel are legitimate, while others may feed into, or draw upon, anti-Semitic cultures or ways of thinking.

The anti-Zionist movement may agree to this proposition in words, but in practice, it defines everything as criticism, and it finds nothing to be related to anti-Semitism."

SAJBD National Chairman Shaun Zagnoev believes that the Ehrenreich

ruling has provided a useful addition to existing case law that helps to clarify where the boundaries lie between freedom of expression and constitutionally prohibited hate speech.

**"Far too often, we have seen senior politicians overstep the bounds of free speech, and move in the direction of hate speech."**

"This sends an unequivocal message that there is no justification for propagating hatred and making threats against fellow South Africans, irrespective of one's political views [including on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict]," he said.

Zagnoev said the SAJBD would continue to pursue cases like this to their conclusion, regardless of how long it took.

Closure in both these cases might finally put an end to growing concern that a culture of anti-Semitism in the Western Cape has been allowed to fester and grow.



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# Downtown Joburg fire – when the rescuers need rescuing

NICOLA MILTZ

**A** moving photograph of two firemen taken at the recent devastating fire in Johannesburg is testament to the behind-the-scenes bravery and camaraderie of the members of Zaka – the community’s unsung heroes of relief work.

Zaka SA is a Jewish rescue and recovery organisation that unites communal teams involved in search and rescue, security, and burial. It comprises members of the Community Security Organisation (CSO), Chevrah Kadisha, Hatzolah, and Ezra, all highly skilled volunteers who work together to deal with complex situations.

When Hatzolah’s Medical Manager, Yudi Singer, 30, arrived at the burning Lotus Building in downtown Johannesburg two weeks ago, he was expecting to put his firefighting and paramedic skills to use, as well as hand out food to weary firefighters. Instead Singer, who is also a member of Zaka SA, found himself facing a different emergency.

He didn’t go rushing into the smouldering building to assist hardworking firefighters from the City of Johannesburg, Ekurhuleni, Tshwane, and the Airports Company of South Africa. Instead, Singer realised his skills would be better utilised in “rescuing” the rescuers themselves.

He noticed a firefighter slumped against the wall near the makeshift rehabilitation area. He quickly recognised him as Freddie Morukhu, the commander of the Northview Fire Station. Morukhu is Singer’s superior, and the commander at the fire station where he works. “The only word I can use to describe his appearance was broken,” Singer told his colleagues at

Zaka. Morukhu, one of the city’s most experienced and lauded firemen, who is the station commander for several stations in Johannesburg, had been battling the inferno for hours, said Singer. Three firefighters died after the fire broke out on the 23rd floor on Wednesday, 5 September. They were



Freddie Morukhu with Zaka volunteer and firefighter Yudi Singer

his men. His heart was broken. Singer automatically switched gear. “It was a case of the rescuers needing rescuing,” he told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“Tonight [Thursday 6 September] several of us [from Zaka and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies] went to hand out food and supplies to the firefighters involved in the structural fire in the CBD. Once there, it became pretty clear that there was probably a greater need for psychological first aid.”

When Singer got home that night, he penned some of his experiences. He wanted to share them with members of Hatzolah’s Crisis Response Unit (CRU), recently formed to offer psychological first aid.

Singer explained to his colleagues how he had sat with Morukhu on the pavement. He watched the tears roll down Morukhu’s cheeks as he recounted the traumatic events of the past 24 hours. Desperate to offload what he had witnessed and experienced, Morukhu shared what he had seen.

Other firefighters on the scene also expressed disbelief about their fallen colleagues, and anguish about how to handle three funerals emotionally.

“Morukhu kept speaking about how terrible he felt, and how he was dreading having to present the deceased firefighters’ helmets to the families. He didn’t know how he was

going to be able to console them,” said Singer.

Singer offered an empathetic ear.

“This grown man... experienced his worst day. He was struggling with planning logistics. He was absolutely shattered, physically and emotionally. He was physically too tired to stand or eat, and emotionally so drained. This is a man from whom I learn and

take orders, and here I was sitting, trying to assist him.”

That night, members of Zaka were alerted by the city’s disaster management teams that food and supplies were needed. Zaka is an international rescue and recovery organisation based out of Jerusalem with branches all over the world.

Many of the volunteers are doctors, paramedics, rabbis, and business people who can be called upon at any time when there is an emergency or crisis.

In South Africa, Zaka works closely with the heads of the province’s disaster management teams and with other nongovernmental organisations involved in crisis and relief management.

Daniel Forman, the head of Zaka SA, explained that Zaka was called in to help provide food for 100 firefighters. “Food is not our speciality, so we turned to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), who immediately jumped on board,” he said.

Zaka and the SAJBD realised

when they reached the scene that more food was urgently required to feed 700 students, who had been evacuated from a nearby building for fear of smoke inhalation.

“There is an unbelievable impact when the community works together in a crisis situation. Feeding 700 people at short notice in a stressful situation was truly remarkable. Zaka alone could not have addressed this

need.”

A community member who wished to remain anonymous said, “We don’t hear about the way our boys work side by side. It’s incredible how they offer support beyond the Jewish community. It’s social cohesion at its finest. The community knows only half of what our guys do and how well trained they are. These are the community’s true heroes.”

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## Swastika artwork ‘not aimed at Jewish community’

>> Continued from page 4

In a sinister turn of events, Mabulu claimed that he had been followed and his car smashed after leaving 702’s premises, according to *The Citizen* newspaper.

“The work is meant to provoke,” said art commentator Robin Scher. “It doesn’t say anything profound. It is anarchistic. Writing a story about it won’t achieve anything other than to further the artist’s objectives.”

Scher said what was offensive for him about the work was not necessarily the use of the flag, but the work’s anger, hate, and self-involvement, which “we see so much of today”.

He added, “Freedom of expression carries the proviso that if someone does something that curtails another’s freedom, or displays something hateful that signifies the opposite of freedom, it creates an interesting conversation about whether it should be censored.”

His views were echoed by the Nelson Mandela Foundation, which said, according to *The Citizen*, “The Nelson Mandela Foundation... accepts that freedom of expression gives artists a creative licence which at times will result in work which is more or less disturbing. The work by Ayanda Mabulu which briefly was put on public display without due authorisation in our view goes beyond the reasonable limit. We find it deeply offensive.”

David Saks, the Associate Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, said the board was not involved in the fracas because, fundamentally, the artwork wasn’t directed at Jews or the Jewish community.

“Though the work isn’t aimed at us, it does use something we are sensitive about as a self-promoting

shock tactic. This is distasteful and offensive,” he said.

He pointed out that the artwork was more provocative than a Nazi flag flown in the backyard of a private house in Johannesburg a year ago, for example, because it was displayed in a public space. In the latter case, the owner was pressured to remove the flag by the board and local residents.

Saks said it was possible to use the swastika appropriately. After all, the symbol was “part of human heritage”. An example could be advertising for the musical *Cabaret*, set in 1931 Berlin as the Nazis were rising to power. And, the swastika could – and often is – used to make an appropriately strong point. But, in this instance, it was simply a case of “tasteless rubbish”.



Ayanda Mabulu’s painting

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# Recalling the sole Jewish voice in Afrikaans poetry

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

While Olga Kirsch has always been seen as an Afrikaans poet who happened to be Jewish, the time has come to claim her as a Jewish poet who happened to publish mainly in Afrikaans.

Kirsch is the sole Jewish voice in Afrikaans poetry, but the Jewish community has never really claimed her as one of its own, said Dr Egonne Roth. She was giving a talk on Kirsch's life and poetry, held under the auspices of the South African Jewish Museum and the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Cape Town on 13 September.

Roth has released a biography, *Olga Kirsch: a life in poetry*, to ensure that the poet is not forgotten, and to show why her work is important in South Africa and Israel.

Roth investigates Kirsch's role as an Afrikaans Jewish poet, and presents her as an example of a cross-cultural, multilingual, immigrant poet. Roth, who was affiliated to the department of English of Bar-Ilan University,

holds a PhD from the institution.

Kirsch was the child of immigrant parents. Her father came from Plunge, Lithuania, settling in Koppies, Free State, in 1915. Olga was born there in 1924.

She attended the Afrikaans-medium elementary school in Koppies, but her father sent her to Eunice Girls' High School in Bloemfontein because she wanted to study Latin. She also had romantic notions of hostel life from the English books that she had read.

After matriculating in 1941, the family moved to Johannesburg, where Olga enrolled in the medical faculty at the University of the Witwatersrand. This didn't work out, so she switched to Afrikaans and history.

Before she graduated with her first degree at the age of 20, she became the second woman to publish a collection of poetry in Afrikaans, titled *Die Soeklig*.

Her second collection, *Mure van die Hart* (1948), "confirmed her place in Afrikaans literature", Roth said. "It clearly positions her as a Jewish poet,

and brings her into conflict with the growing nationalism of the day.

"She took an outspoken, dynamic stand as a Jew" against the backdrop of the Ossewabrandwag, her brothers having been beaten up, and her father having had swastikas daubed on his shop.

One of the Jewish poems in the collection, *Die Wandelende Jood*, reads in part:

"G-d condemned his people to the fire, Machine guns, gas chambers and the grave. He gathered them into church and barn And with white lime and the flame punished them."

"Considering how little literature about the Holocaust was being published in 1948 anywhere in the world, this poem with its clear descriptions of what happened was truly unique," said Roth.

The last three poems in the collection were "brave", she said, in that they clearly stated Kirsch's position on rising Afrikaner nationalism. Referring to another poem, *Blockhouse*, which contains the line, "hate closed the doors one and



Dr Egonne Roth signs a copy of her biography of poet Olga Kirsch

all", Roth said, "Already in 1947/8, Kirsch saw clearly how people create an us/they scenario.

"This is for me the relevance of her writing. Many artists, but I think especially poets, often fulfil the role of a prophet, just as our Hebrew prophets were also poets."

At the end of 1948, Kirsch emigrated alone to Israel "driven by her desire to help her people become a people, and build a country in their historic homeland", in Roth's words. After spending three months at Kibbutz Ma'ayan Baruch, she met and married Dr Joseph Gillis, and settled in Rehovot.

In 1967, Kirsch published part of a long, epic poem, *Nevertheless*, in a Jewish journal in New York. The complete work, described by Roth as "an unknown jewel in the treasure of Holocaust literature", is published in the biography for the first time.

"Once Olga's younger sister, Janette, had given me this long poem... I knew I had no choice but to research and write this biography," she recalls. "I felt it had to be restored to Holocaust and Jewish literature.

"Once again, Kirsch's ability to

express, not just the personal, but also the universal, giving voice to not just the history of Israel, but also foreshadowing the future, is astounding," says Roth. Kirsch also wrote poetry in Hebrew.

Between 1972 and 1983, Kirsch published a further five collections in Afrikaans, in many of which her Jewish voice is clear, according to Roth. But in 1983, after her last collection received "solidly bad reviews", she accepted that she could not continue to write in Afrikaans, and that it was perhaps time to "come out of the closet" with her English poems. Death was a recurring theme in her work, beginning with the death of her father just after her thirteenth birthday. After the unexpected death of her husband in 1994, Roth says Kirsch wrote "a cycle of some of the most beautiful elegiac poetry I have read".

"Olga was devastated, and never fully recovered." She died three years later, but in the interim had written 77 poems to him – "beautiful, sad, sometimes erotic poems that reflect on every aspect of their glorious relationship".

## Anonymity has some Fringe benefits

SIMON SHEER

What happens when you take graffiti, pop art, film icons, cartoons, and high-fashion iconography and mash them up in the mind of a creative maverick?

The answer can be found at Daville Baillie Gallery, located in Joburg's trendiest new urban development, Victoria Yards. Or, at least it will be until 29 September, when you can catch the new exhibition titled *Don't Blink*, by the artist known simply as Fringe.

So, who is Fringe? The short answer is we don't know.

Rather than distract us with tales of his personal life, Fringe presents us with just a persona and the

Perhaps the transition from the sleepy comfort of the "Mother City" to the "City that Never Sleeps" inspired the themes of *Don't Blink*, which Fringe describes as "my analysis of life and its supremely fast pace. If we blink, we miss."

In recombining the popular forms of modern life, the exhibition seeks to celebrate, rather than critique. The tone is relentlessly upbeat. "I'm not suggesting that any of that is negative," Fringe says, "I'm just helping to capture life in my paintings, so there's a timeline or story being told across the works."

For all the works' contemporary symbols and methods, then, the exhibition harks back to early-modern painters, who made it their life's work to capturing a fleeting moment in time.

Probably this is no accident. There's a vein of nostalgia running through the exhibition. It's present in the gallery's vivid description, "*Don't Blink* is a mind bending journey through the characters and charades of youth, reminding us that, however old, we can all be happy children."

Of course, nostalgia doesn't simply emerge. *Don't Blink* is made compelling by the reworking of iconography and blending of techniques, the pleasure of recombining elements of pop influences and techniques. Nostalgia isn't really about recovering the past, it's about reimagining the present. In this case, we are encouraged also to imagine a brighter future. The work, Fringe insists, is designed to invoke joy.

The works' seductive surfaces, realised through careful technique, have attracted the attention of collectors. Following his debut solo exhibition at the Daville Baillie Gallery in 2017, Fringe has acquired a European agent, generating a buzz amongst international art buyers. This has allowed Fringe to take the plunge and move into producing art full time. "The weird thing is that I always worry that there aren't enough ideas spinning around in this head of mine, but somehow, I believe that a positive imagination is uncontained, and if I can bring a smile to my face, I know I can do it to you too."

REVIEW



An artwork from The Fringe exhibition

work. He explains, "My anonymity has allowed me to explore this even further, and to relay a message without knowledge of who the messenger is. In other words, I wanted people to focus on what was being said, and not on who was saying it."

As an audience, the anonymity also liberates us to form our own impressions and interpretations. Fringe is emphatic on this point. The meaning of the work that really counts is the meaning we, the audience, perceive or create: "Meaning is irrelevant. I want you as the viewer to attach a meaning. My works mean one thing to me, but that should not influence the viewer. I want everyone to draw their own conclusions."

The artist's persona also adds a nice layer of mystery to the exhibition. Is Fringe himself just another brand to be depicted in his own work?

But we are not wholly in the dark. Here's what we do know. Fringe was born in Johannesburg, and studied marketing in Cape Town. After a decade working in the Cape Town ad scene, he moved to New York.

## South Africans among Algemeiner's top 100

>> Continued from page 2

revolutionary water technology could "make our dams our source of life".

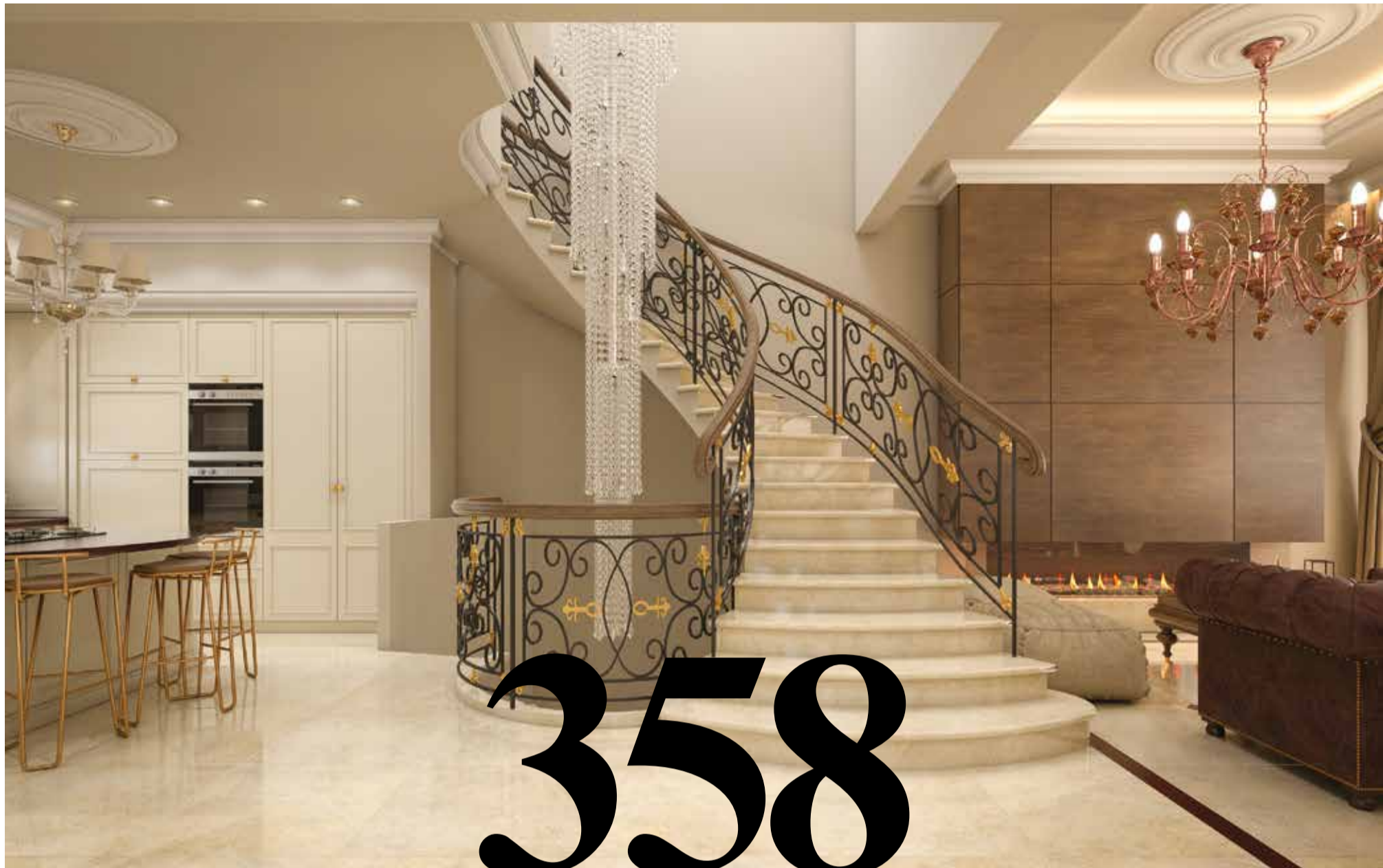
Meshoe has been hailed by South Africa's Jewish community for his energetic campaign to counter the slander that Israel is an "apartheid state". Meshoe is commended for having led an "ebullient, 5 000-strong demonstration in Pretoria expressing solidarity with Israel". His support for Israel is mentioned, as is his comment to the ANC that its bid to downgrade diplomatic relations with Israel could cost the party the votes of millions of pro-Israel Christians.

Goldstein, who is said to be "revered across the Jewish world for his commitment to Jewish community life and education" is recognised for his courageous leadership of South African Jewry at a time of growing anti-Semitism and anti-Zionist extremism. Also,

his internationally acclaimed "Shabbos Project" is mentioned, and described as "an initiative that encourages South African Jews across different denominations to celebrate Shabbat together".

These South African personalities appear among cultural figures such as English actor Sir Ben Kingsley and Israeli singer Netta Barzilai, as well as religious personalities like former United Kingdom Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, and current UK Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mervis. They hold their own among political movers and shakers such as American President Donald Trump, Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales, and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The list even includes figures such as Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge; French punk-chic blogger Noemie Elicha; and Jack Ma, the Chief Executive of Alibaba Group.





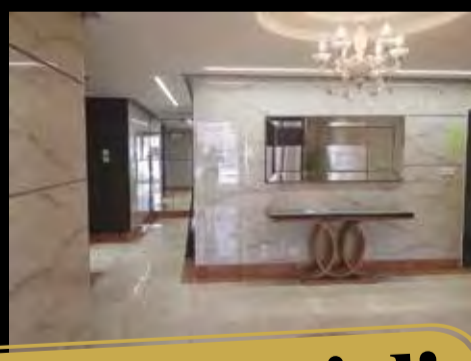
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## Kindness gets youngster to China on time

NICOLA MILTZ

**T**wo weeks ago, Lynam Ndawana was on the brink of losing her scholarship to study in China because she didn't have the money for the airfare to get her there on time to register.

Today, thanks to the *chesed* (kindness) of the community, she is navigating chopsticks and studying Mandarin Chinese in her dormitory at the Zhejiang University of Science and Technology. Ndawana, 20, left South Africa last Friday with her air ticket, passport, and a four-year student visa in hand, and successfully enrolled on time for her dream degree in computer engineering.

Her dream almost slipped through her fingers. At the 11th-hour, when all hope seemed lost, the community stepped in and saved the day. It was orchestrated by the kindness of *ChaiFM* founder and Chief Executive Kathy Kaler, who wrote a post on Facebook, which was shared several times, receiving dozens and dozens of comments from people eager to help.

On Wednesday, 5 September, Kaler was chatting to Ndawana's father, Casper Ndawana, a long-serving waiter at Michelo's Pizzeria in Glenhazel, while she was ordering her food.

The two have known each other for some time, and were discussing one another's children, when he told her about his pride and joy, Lynam. He explained that his daughter had received a scholarship to study at a Chinese university. It would be the first time a member of the family would have the opportunity to study for a degree.

He and his daughter had been through the rigorous online registration and visa application process, and had paid all the necessary costs involved on his waiter's salary. Funds had run dry for the air ticket. He explained that his daughter needed to register in three days (on 8 September), otherwise she would most likely forfeit her scholarship. He had run out of options.

Kaler immediately alerted her Facebook friends about the situation. Within two days, Lynam was frantically packing her bags and getting ready for the adventure of a lifetime. Travel League paid for her airline ticket, and the community's generous donations helped with various other expenses. Lynam reached China in the nick of time, and managed to register.

"I have no words to express my gratitude," Ndawana told the *SA Jewish Report* this week. "I can only say that it was an act of G-d how the Jewish nation came to my assistance. My wife

Lindiwe and I are ecstatic. We are overwhelmed how things suddenly turned in our favour."

In a Facebook gratitude post, Kaler said, "We all have challenges and sometimes life can feel like a hurdle race as we jump and overcome each obstacle ... But sometimes, it's not a hurdle we are overcoming. Our way can feel blocked by a wall. And this is where we need the help of others... to lift us on their shoulders... to help us over. And you did this for one young woman. You raised her on your shoulders, and helped her over the wall."

She continued: "To everyone who donated and shared the post, when you count your blessings, know with absolute certainty that you will be

counted among the blessings of Casper and his family. Your hopes for this young woman are sending her to China. You have changed the outcome of this situation and changed her life. It takes a village to raise a child, and I feel blessed to share a village with you."

There were numerous comments. David Katz posted: "We are all going through an extraordinarily rough time in South Africa. Goodwill has dried up, and *ubuntu* has disappeared with the challenges we face. The right medicine in these times is the tonic you have delivered. Go and help someone in greater need than yourself. Liberating."

Brenda Stern, who took Lynam to the airport last week, posted on Facebook that it had given people an opportunity to "do the mitzvah of *tzedakah* at this time before Yom Tov".

Ndawana said he and his wife speak to Lynam "almost daily". Even though there is a six-hour time delay, they make sure that they hear her voice and know how she is coping.

The scholarship pays for her tuition, but Ndawana is left with hefty monthly costs of food, electricity, and accommodation. His goal now is to save money so that Lynam can buy a laptop.

Ndawana describes Lynam as "brave and smart".

"She is target orientated, and when she sets her mind to do something, she goes out and does it. She is principled, wise, and intelligent. We are proud of her."

In a letter to the Jewish community, Ndawana said it was at his "darkest hour" that the community and others showed him love and support. "The way that you helped me is a clear demonstration of why you're a shining example in this world. You embody kindness, generosity, and much more."



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

Casper Ndawana

## ORT and King David join forces

JORDAN MOSHE

**O**RT South Africa and the South African Board of Jewish Education (SABJE) formed a new affiliation last week to transfer essential skills to King David School pupils. In signing the agreement with the SABJE, ORT SA has enhanced its commitment to bring unique tools to high school pupils, better equipping them for the realities of today.

ORT SA, whose motto is "offering skills to take people into the 21st century", is driven by Jewish values, and reaches people around the globe to help them acquire essential skills.

"ORT has been around for almost 140 years," says World ORT Chief Executive Avi Ganon, invited to South Africa specifically for this landmark occasion last week, which was attended by high-profile guests.

"Driven by Jewish values, it envisions bridging the gaps which divide people and prevent them from reaching for opportunities. Sixty-five percent of children in primary school today will work in jobs that don't yet exist. By

focusing on the skills which are relevant today, we can help prepare them to maximise the future ahead."

SABJE Chairperson Eli Ati and Ganon signed a memorandum which will result in King David schools becoming affiliated to ORT and its network, giving students access to an array of resources offered by ORT.

Said SABJE General Director Rabbi Craig Kacev, "This is an initial courtship which we hope will grow into something beneficial for both parties. It is both a privilege and a benefit to partner with an organisation like ORT, and it is certainly something from which students can only gain."

Israeli Ambassador Lior Keinan (himself an ORT alumnus) told the audience that agreements such as these are becoming increasingly important. "The world is moving with increasing speed towards a technologically driven future," he says. "The skills ORT offers are more crucial than ever. The organisation strives to give people the tools necessary to navigate new areas and solve new problems."



# Hotels check out, but they will never leave

HOWARD SACKSTEIN

Technology is changing everything, even how we shop, and the way we arrange or go on holiday.

In America today, shopping malls are empty, as people have moved their purchases online to companies like Amazon. So says Rom Hendler, the founder and Chief Executive of Israeli-based company InnoVel, which acts as an external innovation arm for international travel and hospitality corporations. He was speaking at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) of Pretoria University recently.

The same products are available everywhere. What differentiates your business is the experience your customers have, he says. Apple and Abercrombie are two examples of companies that have mastered the art of the customer experience, and shopping malls are becoming more like entertainment centres than places to go shopping. No industry is immune from change or eradication, and the hospitality market is also undergoing radical disruption.

This Israeli knows something about the hotel industry, having served as both chief marketing officer and chief information officer of the Las Vegas Sands, the world's largest integrated resorts company, and having participated in the opening of the iconic Marina Bay Sands Hotel in Singapore.

In the traditional hospitality model, the hotel industry was dependent upon three critical pillars, a distribution channel for sales to customers, a trusted brand that promised quality, and a premium location that was impossible to stay at otherwise.

All of these pillars have crumbled in the world of the new economy, says Hendler.

Today, Booking.com and Expedia.com are the

Marina Bay Sands Hotel in Singapore



two principal sales channels to market. Every hotel in the world is dependent on these two channels for distribution. It makes no difference if you are a five-hundred-strong hotel chain with tens of thousands of rooms or a single boutique hotel, your channel to market is now identical. This allows the small, niche, experiential hotels to compete very effectively against the large branded chains.

Booking and Expedia spend about \$2 billion (R30 billion) each year to drive travellers to their websites. The competition has moved from a battle between hotel brands to a battle between the two monster online digital booking agencies.

The second pillar that has disintegrated, says Hendler, is the idea of the hotel brand. A brand is a promise, often a promise of excellence and quality. In the traditional model, you could be guaranteed this experience only by selecting a Hilton, a Sheraton, a JW Marriott, etc. But that too has changed. Tripadvisor.com changed all of that. The idea that each guest reviews the property they have stayed at has guaranteed

quality against expectations.

Who today selects a hotel with a review of less than 8 out of 10? In truth, you look for a hotel within your price range, then you select those with only the highest guest-review rating. The brand no longer features in the choice of online consumers.

The final pillar to crumble is the idea that you can access the best locations only through a large hotel brand. The online sharing economy has changed that. Now, the guy with a one-bedroom apartment next to the Conrad Hotels is airbnb-ing his apartment out at a fraction of the cost of the hotel next door. The exclusivity of "position, position, position" remains. However, the branded hotel is no longer the only commercial entity renting out rooms at that location.

For big events like the Olympic Games, countries would build apartments or bring in cruise liners to allow for additional hotel capacity. Today, Airbnb offers capacity elasticity as and when big events occur.

Hendler questions whether the hotel industry

has a future in this digital era. His conclusion is that it does, but only if the hotel model changes to one offering unique experiences rather than mere hotel rooms. Hotels which know how to design these unique experiences will be the ones which survive.

We want the butler at the door with the bowtie and tux. We need the bakery downstairs with the smell of fresh baked bread wafting through the lobby. We are amazed at the ARIA Resort and Casino hotel in Las Vegas, where the LED screens which cover every inch of the lobby change ambiance during the day. We are also interested in the Marina Bay Hotel in Singapore, where only paying hotel guests are allowed into the infinity swimming pool on the 57th floor overlooking the city.

The hotel lobby will disappear, says Hendler. It's just a waste of space. No one wants to stand in line to check in. Almost no one ever checks out, they just walk out the front door.

Guests are driving the changes, and technology is helping. Pre-arrival guests are being sent check-in codes that work on their hotel doors. They arrive at a hotel and let themselves into their own rooms. Virtual reality and augmented reality will drive the guest experience going forward.

Even traditional hostels are morphing. Today, the youth hostel has changed into a cool "macpucker", with private rooms and large communal spaces for people to socialise and work on their MacBooks.

With technology driving the changes in the industry, Hendler and InnoVel are at the forefront of driving industry innovation. As he spoke, much of the capacity audience at GIBS took out their phones, logged on to their favourite travel website, and started altering their bookings for December.

## Most South African Jews of Sephardi origin are entitled to EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND, ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT

A common misconception is that South African Jews of Ashkenazi heritage are of Lithuanian descent, and that only those who are able to prove their eligibility for Lithuanian citizenship are able to obtain a European passport. The fact is that most South African Jews do qualify for European citizenship, whether they can prove their Lithuanian lineage or not, and most South African Jews of Sephardic heritage are also eligible for European passports.



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

**Ashkenazi:** It is important to understand that until 1918, all of Eastern Europe was divided between three empires: Russia,

Prussia, the Austro-Hungarian empire. Neither Poland nor Lithuania existed until 1918.

At the end of WWI, the territory was divided, and countries like Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and others were born/reborn. Only then did residents become citizens of these countries. As a result, people who, for example, were born in Riga (nowadays Latvia) could actually be Lithuanian or Polish.

Horesh advises that eligibility for a Lithuanian or Polish passport depends on the city from which your grandparents (or their parents) hailed.

Horesh says many South African Ashkenazi Jews of Lithuanian origin have been refused Lithuanian citizenship because their heritage is actually Polish. They would, accordingly, be entitled to Polish citizenship and a EU passport.

After World War II, the borders in Europe changed, resulting in cities changing nationality. The resultant effect for descendants of Jews who were born in Vilnius, for example, is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined, but an application for a Polish passport may very well be successful.

**Sephardi:** The descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are most likely eligible for a Portuguese



passport. If applicable, Horesh is able to obtain an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which an application for European citizenship can be made and will most likely be successful. Portuguese citizenship enables one to enter the United States without the need to apply for a visa.

In addition, Horesh is filing many applications for descendants of Sephardi origin who arrived in South Africa from Greece, Turkey, and North Africa. Descendants from other countries in the Middle East – even Holland – are also potentially eligible.

Horesh resides in Israel, but has spent seven years in Poland, and is recognised as a leading lawyer in the field of European citizenship, with a full

understanding of local immigration laws.

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

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

**Horesh is available to discuss your specific details. He is often in South Africa, and can meet you in person to discuss your specific needs.**

I will be in Johannesburg from 4 until 15 October and in Cape Town from 18 until 29 October.  
My South African phone number is +27 64 745 5273 • Email me on [adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com](mailto:adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com)



# Community in danger of becoming outrage addicts

We do love our moral outrage, don't we? Nothing gets us quite as warm and fuzzy as good 'ole fashioned, "how dare they!" does.

It unites fighting sisters, bridges generation gaps, and gets us talking to the aunt we have avoided since Mendy's Barmitzvah. Encoded somewhere in our Jewish DNA is the understanding that if we are able to shake our collective heads together in communal disgust, then things can't really be that bad, can they?

High up on the scale of shock, horror, and indignation is a personal affront by the community rabbi. Higher still is an insult by a politician who is perceived to treat the Jewish community differently to the way another community is treated.

An ideal sentence would be something like; "Can you imagine what would happen if he treated the Buddhist, Scientologists, or Mormons that way? There would hell to pay! That's for sure. Hell! For sure! I promise you that. Promise!"

Heads were shaking quite aggressively last

Friday on my morning show. The outrage followed the address by President Cyril Ramaphosa the evening before. Ramaphosa had spoken to Jewish South Africans from the pulpit of the Gardens Shul in Cape Town. It was a magnificent attempt to bridge the gap with a community which has been feeling very concerned about the situation in South Africa, and the attitude to Israel and Jews.

In a nutshell, Ramaphosa acknowledged the role played by Jews in the anti-apartheid struggle, and he expressed appreciation for the value the community added to all aspects of South African life. He also indicated willingness to play a part in the Middle East conflict, and asked Jewish business leaders to assist him with the South African economy. It could not have been more positive.

But he didn't wear a kippa. And according to my listeners, that was not on (so to speak). "Can you imagine", they asked, "if he had spoken in a Church of Scientology? Or in a Buddhist Temple? Or in a Mosque?" "I promise, he would have never have treated them this way. I

promise you that!" they intoned.

I didn't agree. In fact I could not have cared less if he wore a kippa or a burka, and I failed to connect to the outrage. He came to see us in our home to tell us he cared about us. That was enough for me.

As luck would have it, I was due to speak to the Chief Rabbi, the organiser of the event, later on in the show, and undertook to put the question to him. His answer was delightful. "The president was very happy to wear a kippa, and in fact, we brought one for him. The problem was that security protocol demands that any item of clothing needs to be checked thoroughly before he is able to put it on. And we didn't have the time. We needed to get the kippa to him the day before if this was to be done." The head of the president's security detail was very apologetic, but could not alter this rule. And so, the speech went ahead without the president wearing it.

I wondered if the shaking heads would be stilled. Some were, and I was thrilled to receive a message from a listener saying, "What a great

## INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



lesson this is for this time of year. Don't judge until you know the whole story."

I was momentarily overjoyed. That is, until the next message arrived, "Surely they should have planned it better, and arranged for the president's security to receive it the day before!" One could hear the indignation dripping off the SMS line.

It's not to say that I don't enjoy a good tut-tut from time to time. It's a wonderful, reaffirming feeling. But we need to keep a close eye on ourselves so that we don't become outrage addicts.

We need to make sure that we don't get hooked on moral indignation, and that we prefer joy and positivity over negativity and misery. "I promise we will be better for it. Promise."

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

## Curbing hate and delivering meals all in a day's work

Two long-running hate-speech cases were successfully brought to finality last week, when the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD's) complaints against two prominent Western Cape political leaders, Marius Fransman and Tony Ehrenreich, were upheld by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). A great deal of sustained effort by our professional staff went into achieving these outcomes, for which I thank and commend them.

In 2013, Fransman, who was then ANC Western Cape leader and Deputy Minister of International Relations, made a series of offensive statements concerning South African Jewry. This included alleging that Jewish businessmen were unfairly benefiting at the expense of the black population in general, and the Cape Town Muslim community in particular, and accusing the Jewish leadership of being disloyal to South Africa and of trying to undermine economic transformation. The SAHRC found that these statements impugned the dignity of the Jewish community, and directed Fransman to apologise.

The Board's case against Ehrenreich was based on a comment that he posted on Facebook in August 2014, calling for revenge attacks against the SAJBD, and other "Zionist supporters" whenever Palestinian civilians were killed. This included stating, "The time has come to say very clearly that if a woman or child is killed in Gaza, then the Jewish Board of Deputies, who are complicit, will feel the wrath of the people of SA with the age old biblical teaching of an eye for an eye."

The fact that Ehrenreich was at the time an ANC Cape Town City Councillor and Chairman of the Western Cape Congress of South African Trade Unions made his statements all the more shocking. The SAHRC found that the comments



### Above Board Shaun Zagnoev

constituted hate speech and harassment, and impugned the community's right to dignity. Ehrenreich was directed to furnish the SAJBD with a written statement apologising for his post. Should he fail to do so (as seems likely), we will take the matter up at a higher level. Such blatant threats and incitement against our community cannot and will not be tolerated.

Another uplifting initiative was the relief effort that we, together with Zaka, organised in the aftermath of the fire in the Johannesburg CBD. We were asked to assist only with supper for the firefighters, but on arrival, we were confronted with 700 students who had been evacuated

from their residence. They had no idea where they would be spending the night, no food, and some had exams the following day. At short notice, we were able to arrange hot meals for them. Our Facebook report on the initiative has, to date, attracted just less than 50 000 hits.

Lastly, we were delighted to learn that our dynamic National Director, Wendy Kahn, has been included in *The Jerusalem Post's* latest list of the world's "50 most influential Jews". We are very proud of Wendy for this well-deserved recognition of everything she has and is achieving for our Jewish community indeed, for global Jewry. She heads up a winning team because she unfailingly leads from the front, inspiring her colleagues to greater efforts by her own determined, tireless, and dedicated example.

With the year 5779 now underway, be assured that the SAJBD will continue to safeguard your civil rights, responding to incidents of hate against our community so that we can continue to live as proud Jews in South Africa.

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

entertainment, delicious holiday food, inspiration, and prizes to win!  
Time: 11:00. Venue: Chabad House Sukkah, 27 Aintree Avenue, Savoy. The party is free of charge. Booking essential for catering purposes. RSVP: 011 440 6600 or rak@chabad.org.za. Contact Rabbi Ari Kievman for more info, at 079 434 1293

• Hebrew speakers meet at 10:30, on the second floor of Beyachad, 2 Elray Street, Raedene.



## Ku Klux Klan makes a 'Trumpian' comeback



### TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

One puzzling aspect of this era is how to understand United States President Donald Trump. His administration has announced it will cut the last remaining channel of American aid to Palestinian civilians. This is the Conflict Management and Mitigation Program, which allows Palestinians – many of them youth – to interact with Israelis, through US funding managed by USAID.

The funds went to people-to-people exchanges, such as organising soccer games for Palestinian and Israeli girls, and bringing Israeli and Palestinian almond farmers together.

Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and White House adviser on the Middle East, believes increasing punitive pressure on Palestinian civilians will create maximum negotiating leverage when it comes to implementing a supposed US peace proposal. Other US political leaders say the decision to cut such funding indicates that Trump has failed at diplomacy, that you don't advance peace by cutting off programmes for tolerance and understanding.

If he is serious about his boast that he will be the man to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace after a century of conflict, why would he want to cut off interaction? Is it a boast he himself doesn't believe?

On the other side, Israelis are generally pleased with Trump. He has relocated America's embassy to Jerusalem and slashed payments to UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees), which they feel perpetuates the Palestinian refugee problem. He has also withdrawn America from Unesco (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), which has long been hostile to Israel, and has a positive relationship with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

To millions worldwide, however, Trump still appears the fool he has been painted to be – impulsive, over-sensitive to criticism, and racist. He has had a huge impact on global politics, using American power to confront

long-established status quos. He has changed the tone of political discourse, introducing racist elements with comments like the one in January when he called African states "shithole countries".

Will his flouting of established political protocol and withdrawal of America into an aggressive and nationalistic "America first" mind-set, ultimately lead the world to war?

Coincidentally, as he is withdrawing funding to improve understanding between Palestinian and Israeli children, his suggested racism is portrayed in a just released movie directed by Spike Lee called *Black Klansman*. It is a true account by a black undercover American policeman who infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan in the 1970s, together with a Jewish co-officer. The deadly racism of white supremacists, as a thread in American society, is starkly illustrated. The thread continues.

It led to a bloody clash in August 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, between white supremacists and counter-protestors, many of them black. It was widely reported in world media. Torch-bearing white nationalists carrying guns, wearing Ku Klux Klan headgear, and waving Confederate flags and neo-Nazi emblems, marched through the town.

A man rammed a car into counter-protestors, killing a woman. Trump did not denounce the white supremacists. He said there were "very fine people on both sides". He did not call for reconciliation between them and black Americans, or impose punitive measures on them. Black people say Americans who were quietly racist before, now feel emboldened to say it openly under Trump.

What has this got to do with Israel, Jews, and Palestinians? This is not a man searching doggedly for reconciliation between different people. Achieving an accord between Israelis and Palestinians has always required both a carrot and a stick to make the sides co-operate.

Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, favoured the carrot – he would never have cut Israeli-Palestinian interaction. Trump uses the stick, as if cutting contact will bring reconciliation. The real victims are the children, including Israelis and Palestinians, who won't have the opportunity to know each other.

### Wednesday (26 September)

• The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre hosts a public lecture by Professor Frank Schneider (Uniklinik RWTH Aachen, Germany) on *Psychiatry during national socialism: lessons in advocacy and reconciliation*. Time: 18:30. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. Free admission, donations welcome. RSVP dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za or 011 640 3100.

### Thursday (27 September)

• Chabad House hosts a Seniors Sukkos Party. All Jewish senior citizens are invited to join friends for a fun-filled Sukkos Party with live



## Baking bread and honouring memories

More than 80 women participated in a recent challah bake at Waverley Shul, sponsored by Helen Fraser in honour of her daughter, Hayley, whose *yahrzeit* is on *erev* Rosh Hashanah.



Said Fraser, the founder of Yad Aharon & Michael and the Nashua Children's Charity Foundation, "It is a very hard time for us, but Hayley's love and commitment to being a part of all the charity work that I have done over the years spurred me to do something in her name in the month of Elul." Fraser said she hoped to turn this into an annual event in memory of her daughter.

## Pine Street Shul slays opponents at Sandton Sinai quiz

The Pine Street Shul quiz team beat 17 other teams at the Sandton Sinai school quiz on 4 September, cruising to victory by 10 points. This was the school's first fundraising quiz, but this is the team's third win. They won the Yeshiva College quiz in 2016 and the Open Flame Quiz in 2017. One of the team members is a Sandton Sinai parent.

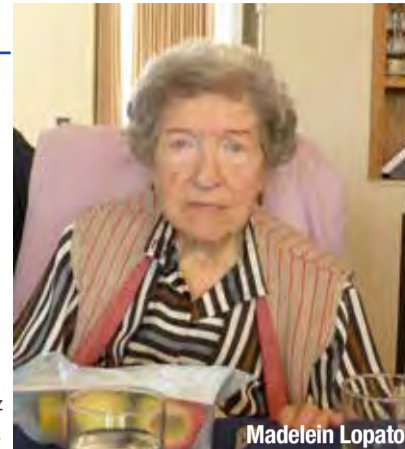


## Embassy hosts Holocaust survivors for Rosh Hashanah

DIANE WOLFSON

Sarit Keinan, the wife of the Israeli Ambassador to South Africa, Lior Keinan, recently invited a group of Holocaust survivors to a pre-Rosh Hashanah luncheon at their home.

Accompanied by Tali Nates, the Director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, as well as a few volunteers and second-generation survivors (the children of people who lived through the Holocaust), the group of 11 survivors was treated to delicious food and entertainment by the Heartbeat Clowns, the first medical clowns in South Africa.



Sarit said she was humbled and excited to welcome everyone, especially survivor Madelein Lopato, who was the oldest, having just turned 100. Bringing down the average age slightly were the ambassador's daughter, Gal, and Tali Kadish, the daughter of one of the volunteers.

Lior expressed joy in welcoming the family's first group of guests prior to Rosh Hashanah, and wished them Shana Tova for the year 5779. "The Holocaust was the most dramatic event in almost 6 000 years, and you [the survivors], are the ones who proved that even in the darkest times, the Jewish spirit will prevail, to win, and create new life," he said.

## Top 10 finalists of the Shimon Peres Israel Quiz 2018



Liron Krawitz, a Grade 8 pupil at King David Victory Park, came first in the Shimon Perez Israel Quiz 2018 finals held at the high school on 16 September. He won the grand prize of a family trip to Israel, including flights and accommodation. Krawitz emerged victorious out of 10 candidates in the final stages of the quiz, which included a tough three rounds of individual questions and debate.

## SA pupils win scholarships to Israel

Seven South African pupils from various Jewish schools have won scholarships for a high-school programme in Israel, allowing them to complete their studies in the country and graduate with an Israeli *bagrut* (internationally recognised matric certificate).

Daniel Hyman, Darren Morre, Kayla Lowenstein, Montana Edelstein, Talia Sitsakis, Tova Grunebaum, and Yonathan Turgeman have taken up the opportunity to finish high school at the Naale Elite Academy (high school in Israel), on a full scholarship, including



room and board. The programme is subsidised by the Israeli Ministry of Education and Jewish Agency.

The Naale Group

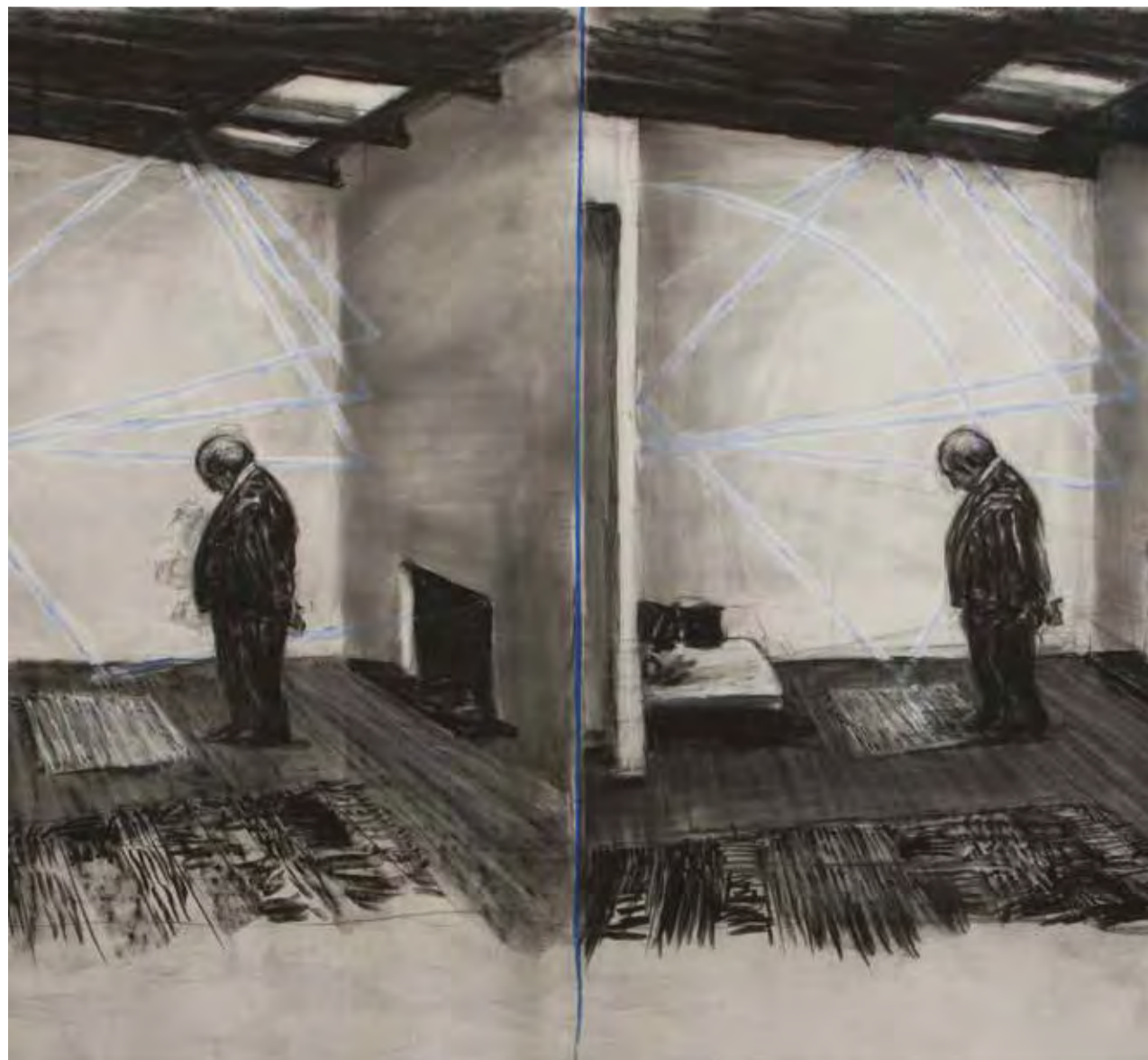
## Morning of music and movement for Joburg's elderly

The Union of Jewish Women (UJW) joined in the celebration of National Senior Citizen's Day in the United States on 21 August – declared by former President Ronald Reagan in 1988 – with an entertaining morning for

Joburg's seniors at UJW's premises, organised by Bev Cohen.

The elderly from retirement homes in Alexandra, Midrand, and Kensington, as well as the regular UJW Tuesday morning group attended this event.

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William Kentridge, *Drawing from Stereoscope (Double page, Soho in two rooms) (detail)*, 1999  
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# Koolulam says South Africans need to 'live a little and be free'

NICOLA MILTZ

Israeli hit musical phenomenon Koolulam is on its way to South Africa in October.

During a three-day reconnaissance to the country to arrange the tour recently, Koolulam co-founder Or Taicher, 33, concluded that South Africans are "very serious, inhibited people, who need to live a little and be free".

While arranging the mammoth logistics for Koolulam's upcoming Johannesburg tour, Taicher told the *SA Jewish Report* that "South Africa really needs Koolulam!"

"I have breathed the same air as the people of Johannesburg. I have seen the look on people's faces. Now I ask the question: when was the last time you really experienced true joy? When was the last time you truly lived?"

According to its promotional material, Koolulam is a social-musical initiative aimed at strengthening the fabric of society. In less than two years, Koolulam has literally taken Israel by storm, and at the last count, its online viewership numbered more than 50 million people.

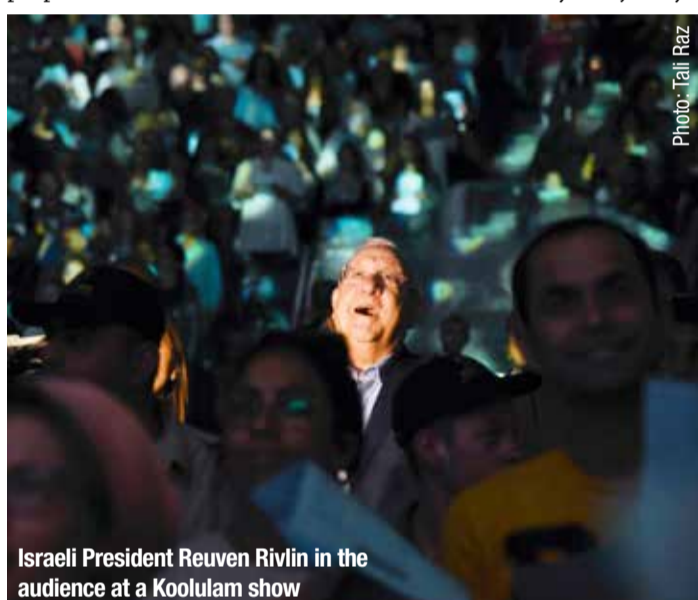


Photo: Teili Raz

Israeli President Reuven Rivlin in the audience at a Koolulam show

Koolulam organises mass singing events in which large groups of people come together to form a collaborative musical creation. The South African event in October is aiming to reach 4 000 people and pack a hall at the Sandton Convention Centre – marking Koolulam's first international gig.

Each mass gathering is unique, with the aim of creating social harmony where it is most needed, says Taicher, Koolulam's artistic and creative director.

Taicher wears shorts and flip flops for his interview, his standard business attire, he says. He is laid back and casual, but has an euphoric and contagious energy about him – exactly like a Koolulam event – something that has to be seen to be believed.

He has no airs or graces, embodying the spirit of a project which sees everyone as the same – from presidents and celebrities to you and me.

At every Koolulam event, the audience becomes the performer.

"You bring your voice. It's not about the quality of the voice, it's about bringing your voice to the group," he says.

The audience is split into three different vocal groups – baritone, alto, and soprano. The conductor leads an intense musical session, and thereafter, singers and musicians come together to perform the song. Super-cool, dreadlocked, Ben Yaffet, 27, the co-founder, principal conductor, musical director, and content creator of Koolulam, leads the song. The performance is combined with a stupendous backdrop of lighting and earth shattering sound effects.

Every event is filmed by a professional crew. The powerful cinematic video is then distributed online, where it is intended to inspire more people to come together in "one big ensemble of humanity", Teicher says. The result, he says, is an "overwhelmingly uplifting and empowering experience of human interaction and co-

operation".

The Koolulam team sees itself as social activists devoted to shared healing.

"Our aim is to bring people together from all walks of life to do one thing: stop everything for a few hours and just sing – together. To feel pain, to feel joy, to unite – that is what Koolulam is about," says an impassioned Taicher.

It did just that on 14 June 2018 on Eid-al-Fitr, the festival that marks the end of the 40-day Ramadan fast. Seven hundred people crowded into Jerusalem's ancient David's Citadel, to take part in a Hebrew, English, and Arabic "Koolulam" song-mob rendition of Bob Marley's *One Love*. The Jerusalem event was advertised on social media, and tickets were just 40 shekels (R125), "the cost of three coffees in Israel", Taicher says. They sold out in less than 10 minutes.

The evening was sponsored by the Tower of David Museum and Jerusalem.com with the co-operation of faith leaders and more than 50 other local and international dialogue and interfaith organisations. It was held in honour of Kyai Haji Yahya Cholil Staquf of Indonesia,

the head of the 60-million-member Nahdlatul Ulama, the world's largest Muslim organisation.

"The event took place at midnight. Just imagine, rabbis, sheiks, and priests singing Bob Marley's song in three different languages. It was incredible. There was immense joy in singing together," he says. The event inspired musical harmony which he hopes will linger to inspire "harmony in humanity".

Co-founder, Michal Shahaf, 34, the General Manager of Koolulam, is in

charge of the project's overall activity, including strategy, PR, media, community management and communications. She is a digital expert and entrepreneur. Recently, she said, "A Koolulam participant cannot help but feel more trusting of their fellow human after such an experience. This not only leads to people being kinder to one another, but to people being more hopeful, which leads to people being courageous. And our world needs kinder, hopeful, and courageous people.

April's Koolulam event in Tel Aviv went viral after 12 000 people, including President Reuven Rivlin, participated in Tel Aviv's Menorah Mivtachim Arena to sing Naomi Shemer's *Al Kol Eleh* for Israel's 70th anniversary.

In its first year, Koolulam received the prestigious Jerusalem Unity Prize in the presence of Rivlin. The Asia Society awarded Koolulam the prestigious Game Changer Award of 2018, and this is just the beginning.

Koolulam has organised more than a dozen events across Israel, including groups of cancer patients undergoing treatment in hospital and their medical staff, and Holocaust survivors, their children and grandchildren.

At every Koolulam event, a different, well-known song is chosen to be performed. The song chosen for the South African event – known to the *SA Jewish Report* – is a closely guarded secret which will be announced next week.

"Our musicians put together a fresh and innovative arrangement of the chosen song. We will work hard to get the true essence of the South African people."

Musicians will write and re-write a new instrumental arrangement, as well as an original three-part vocal arrangement.

"I am going to devote my heart and energy to the people of South Africa. There is no doubt this event is going to be unique," says Taicher.

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