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incorporating found objects
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Gerard Sekoto,
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BDS and Hamas firmly tied, Israel says

NICOLA MILTZ

The Israeli government claimed in a report released last weekend that the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement is tied to terrorist organisations like Hamas.

This report, titled “Terrorists in Suits – The Ties Between NGOs Promoting BDS and Terrorist Organisations” flies in the face of the BDS movement’s insistence that it is a peaceful, human-rights organisation, which denies links to violence and terror.

The Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs and Public Diplomacy released its report on Sunday, revealing more than 100 links shared between the internationally-designated terrorist organisations Hamas and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) with at least 13 anti-Israel BDS promoting nongovernmental organisations (NGOs).

South Africa is mentioned several times in the detailed 80-page report, including the fact that BDS South Africa (BDS-SA) plays “a central role” in the global BDS campaign against Israel.

“The terror groups have realised that armed conflict is not perceived as legitimate by the majority of Western society,” the report says. As a result, Hamas and PFLP operatives have “infiltrated and adopted seemingly benign NGOs” in South Africa as well as in the Palestinian Authority, Europe, and North America.

One of the most notorious names in the report is Leila Khaled, who became the poster girl of the PFLP in the 1970s for her involvement in the hijacking of two airliners.

The report says that BDS-SA “disingenuously draws on South Africa’s past under the apartheid regime as a model for the boycott campaign against Israel, a theme which reverberates with NGOs around the world. Leila Khaled, a

renowned hijacker of a passenger airline and member of the PFLP terrorist group, acted as an official fundraiser for BDS South Africa.” The Johannesburg City Council is at present considering proposals made by political parties and friends aligned with BDS to have Sandton Drive named after her.

The report further goes on to explain how BDS-SA “has invested great efforts” in convincing the African National Congress to support the downgrade of the South African Embassy in Israel. It says that for more than a decade, BDS has promoted Israel Apartheid Week in cities and universities across the country and the world. “This campaign has led to dozens of violent incidents against Jewish students on campus.”

Responding to the report, BDS SA Board Chairperson Professor Farid Esack told the *SA Jewish Report* that he found the report to be “rather juvenile and deceitful”. He insists that Khaled is no more a terrorist than the late President Nelson Mandela was.

The report “ignores the contribution of many other Palestinian solidarity formations in South Africa, and gives much more credit to BDS South Africa than it deserves”, he said.

“BDS-SA, like its international partners, has always advocated a peaceful and non-violent approach in seeking justice for the Palestinians, an end to Israeli occupation, and peaceful co-existence for all the people in that region. We have consistently opposed all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism. If others insist on equating a narrow contemporary nationalist and religio-ethnic ideology with a 3000-year-old religious and cultural tradition which has made an enormous contribution to civilisation throughout the ages, then... well, tough.”

The report, however, goes on to document in detail a complex web of connections between known terrorists and civil society BDS organisations. It reveals that Hamas and the PFLP are utilising a network of NGOs promoting boycotts against Israel as an additional tactic in their “ultimate goal of dismantling the state of Israel”.

According to the report, the ties are not only ideological, but include the placement of known terrorists in positions of influence within major BDS organisations.

The report reveals how Hamas and the PFLP have successfully placed more than 30 of their members, 20 of which have served time – including for murder – in senior positions within BDS-promoting NGOs. It documents how boycott organisations and

terrorist designated organisations raise finances together, share the same personnel, and showcases that contrary to popular belief, these officials have not abandoned their support for terrorism, but instead, continue to maintain organisational, financial, and active ties with terrorist groups.

It details how, through these NGOs, these terrorists “exploit Western governmental funding, philanthropic foundations, financial platforms, and civil society to advance their goal of dismantling the state of Israel”.

The Israel-boycott organisations in question are shown to have received millions of euros in funding from European countries and philanthropic foundations, while gaining access to additional funds through financial, crowdfunding,

and banking systems.

A response by Iqbal Jassat, one of the heads of the pro-BDS Media Review Network (MRN), has created quite a stir. It said, “@MRN1SA #BDS bites! Zionist apartheid regime shows signs of reeling from global boycott, divestment n sanctions. We are Hamas. We are PFLP. We love Leila Khalid. Long live #BDS!”

The MRN is an organisation which claims that its aim is to “dispel myths and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims”. In response, a Twitter user said: “So, you clearly confirm BDS supports terrorism.”

Adam Marcus said, “So, do you share Hamas’s view on gay people and women? Very progressive!”

Gimpel the Fool said, “Nice to see you admit you are Hamas.”

Continued on page 6>>

Starting a new chapter

Photo: Guy Lerner

Rabbi Sam Thurgood of Beit Midrash Morasha writes the final *lamed* of the Torah under the guidance of Rabbi Ruben Suiza. See story on page 14

The Jewish Community Survey of South Africa

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Israeli academics reject university’s reconciliatory statement

TALI FEINBERG

Israeli academics are angry at a reconciliatory statement put out by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) and Stellenbosch University regarding the academics’ non-attendance at a conference at Stellenbosch University in December last year.

The Israeli delegates pulled out of the conference after their names were removed from the academic programme. This followed a call for an academic boycott of the event by anti-Israel activists. The academics say that the SAJBD and university are missing the point, and believe that they should rather not have put out their statement.

Professor Arie Nadler – who was supposed to present his research at the conference – expressed deep disappointment. “A key element in ameliorating past wrongdoings is the truth. Their statement is a ‘political’ effort to smooth the edges, and ignores truth,” he wrote to the *SA Jewish Report* from Israel.

“I did not ‘end up not attending’ because I felt ‘unwelcome’. Also, this was neither a matter of ‘perception’ nor an issue of ‘guaranteeing peace and security’. The truth is: Israeli scholars had been actively excluded from the academic programme.”

Following the meeting with the SAJBD, Professor Wim de Villiers, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University, wrote that the university’s leadership “expressed regret that the Israeli academics ended up not attending the conference”, and that “scholars from Israel ended up not participating because they felt unwelcome by the manner in which the university engaged with anti-Israel activists. This perception of exclusion was not intended by the university, and we regret this and the

subsequent loss of the important Israeli voices at the conference.”

At the meeting, Professor Thuli Madonsela, the Law Faculty Trust Chair for Social Justice, stressed that the university’s actions were aimed at ensuring peace and security for the conference following calls to exclude Israeli participants. It had never been its intention to undermine academic freedom, nor to make Israeli participants feel unwelcome.

“The statement does not include an assumption of responsibility...”

Both the SAJBD and the university emphasised that academic freedom should be embraced, defended, and never be taken for granted. “We continue to welcome academics from all over the world at Stellenbosch University, including scholars from Israel,” said De Villiers. The conference was titled “Recognition, Reparation, Reconciliation: The Light and Shadow of Historical Trauma”, and was organised by Professor Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, the Research Chair for Historical Trauma and Transformation at the university.

While the SAJBD and the university were happy, the Israelis explained why they were not. According to Nadler, “The statement does not include an assumption of responsibility, or an apology. I would have expected differently from a society built on the noble foundations of truth and reconciliation. It would have been better if this statement had not been made.”

Professor Raya Morag, who was also supposed to be at the conference, agreed. “This statement is but another denial by Stellenbosch University of its outrageous behaviour towards the Israelis. It is a shame.”

SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn said that at the time of the impasse with the

university last year, Madonsela asked SAJBD President Mary Kluk if she [Madonsela] could facilitate the engagement between the university and the SAJBD.

Kahn said this meeting was important because, “It was important to sit around the table and discuss the issues face to face, to get clarity on what had transpired, and find a constructive way forward.”

She said the SAJBD wanted an assurance from the university that there was no policy of boycotting Israeli universities. “It became clear in the meeting that the intention was never a BDS agenda,” said Kahn.

“Protests are a way of life in South Africa, and certainly on our campuses. Just as it is the protester’s constitutional right to object to issues, it is every South African’s right to freedom of expression,” she continued.

“Universities and all South Africans need to guard freedom of expression fiercely, and not be bullied into abandoning these values. The only way to respond to bullies is to stand your ground and guard your principles. We believe that following this incident, Stellenbosch will defend academic freedom in spite of threats and intimidation.

“We commend many of our academic institutions for standing up to BDS bullying, including the University of Cape Town, which refused to cower to BDS pressure last year to cancel the International Debating Championships. [The University of the Witwatersrand] too stood firm when it hosted the Zamir Jazz Quartet.”

Kahn said that Madonsela had apologised on behalf of the university, and that the board was encouraged to learn that Stellenbosch was currently collaborating with Israeli academics.

Shabbat times this week		
Starts	Ends	
18:15	19:28	Johannesburg
19:15	20:21	Cape Town
18:15	19:23	Durban
18:15	19:41	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:52	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:41	East London

Torah Thought

Make 2019 a year of reconciliation and celebration

This year is a year of celebration, and a chance to bring South Africa together

Last year, 2018, was an important year, because of the many historic milestones that were commemorated. The end of World War I, the 80th anniversary of the “so called” Kristallnacht – the night of the broken glass – in 1938, which marked the beginning of the Final Solution of Nazi Germany. And, on a more positive note, there was, of course, Nelson Mandela’s 100th birthday.

This year will be a year filled with those kind of remembrance days too. In September, we will mark the beginning of World War II in 1939, and in June, we will commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day. But most importantly, South Africa is going to celebrate the end of apartheid, and the first democratic elections in 1994 – already 25 years ago.

This is a milestone in the younger history of South Africa, and I am looking forward to it. For me, it is an opportunity to learn more about the history of South Africa, and the

different biographies of people whose lives I share. It is my hope that I will understand better how South Africa’s multi-faceted society has tackled the many obstacles on the path to reconciliation. However, I think this year is also a great opportunity for all of us, the Jewish community included, to examine our own identity within this larger context.

Where do we see ourselves five, 10, and 25 years from now? More importantly, what impact will we make as Jews in the future? How can we keep our values and ideas significant for our own community, and for the society we live in?

These questions can be answered only if we start thinking about our own identity right now. How does Judaism fit into post-apartheid South Africa? What is our role in the reconciliation process, one that perhaps only begins now? What is our history? Where did we fail, and where did we match the principles of Judaism?

When I look at the set-up of the broader Jewish community in South Africa, I see

a very diverse community, with members coming from all kind of backgrounds, progressive and orthodox, Chassidim, secular, Jews by birth, by choice, and so much more. I see a people united and willing to shape the future for the best. But, do I see everything? Am I seeing the broken identities of some of our fellow Jews, the scars of the past, the open wounds that are not able to heal yet?

Do we see them?

I am not an expert on reconciliation in South Africa. My biography as a German Jew is very different to yours. But I share the dream and longing to heal our society. I see the Jewish community spearheading a process out of which healing for South Africa will grow. Let us make 2019 a year of celebration, and a milestone year in bringing South Africa closer together.



Rabbi Adrian Michael Schell, Bet David Progressive Jewish Community Morningside

Anti-Semitic graffiti found in Gauteng

NICOLA MILTZ

Two seemingly unrelated incidents of anti-Semitic graffiti have been discovered within close proximity of two Gauteng synagogues in the past week.

Last Friday night, as congregants were walking to the Sydenham-Highlands North Hebrew Congregation, they came across offensive graffiti. The word, “Revolution”, and below it, “Hitler was here” were crudely displayed on an electrical box close to the shul on the corner of Main and Viljoen Street, Rouxville.

Meanwhile, in Pretoria, at the intersection of Steger and Schroder Streets in Groenkloof, a short walk from the synagogue, someone spray painted a black swastika and the word, “Hitler” written inside a heart on the asphalt in the middle of the road. This apparently was not yet there when congregants walked to and from shul on Shabbat.

On Sunday morning, a resident of an old-aged home in Groenkloof noticed a large and vulgar spray painted body part (that of a penis) painted on two sides of the road on Leydes Street. She quickly alerted the city councillor in her area, Shaun Wilkinson. On inspection of the area, Wilkinson came across more graffiti near the Pretoria synagogue.

It is believed the same person or small group of people were responsible, as it appeared as if it was the same “handiwork”, Wilkinson said.

Further away in Muckleneuk, an old South African flag, this time in colour, was painted on a public wall. It is believed that all three Pretoria incidents took place on Saturday night, 2 February. There are no witnesses so far, but according to Wilkinson, several reports of rowdy youngsters were heard in the vicinity of at least two of the three incidents.

Rabbi Gidon Fox of the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation said that while incidents of this nature were unfortunate and offensive, he believed it to be an isolated incident, and did not see the need to make a big deal out of it.

“I have been here for more than 13 years, and this is the first time I have come across anything anti-Semitic. I don’t believe it is emblematic of a



Graffiti on the corner of Steger and Shroder Streets in Groenkloof, Pretoria

broad issue, or anything seething under the surface, just individual bigotry and hatred. I’m reticent about making this into something bigger than it is,” said Fox.

Louis Perlman, the Chairman of the Pretoria Council of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), confirmed that the graffiti was found about half a city block from the Pretoria shul complex.

The matter, he said, was reported to the local Community Security Organisation and National Council of the SAJBD.

“As there appears to be a link between the two graffiti incidents, both having appeared at about the same time, attention seeking rather than hate speech directed against the Jewish community is perceived to be the motivation of the perpetrators.”

He said the incident was kept low key, and there was no release to the local press “as this may only encourage the attention seekers,



Graffiti on an electrical box near Sydenham-Highlands North Hebrew Congregation

assuming this was the motive”.

Wilkinson said he did not believe this had happened before, certainly not during his tenure as ward 59 councillor.

“I have not come across this during my time as councillor. In one weekend, I have a penis with the word ‘why?’ written next to it on Leydes Street, just outside one of the female residences of the University of Pretoria; a swastika at the synagogue in Groenkloof; and an old South African flag in Muckleneuk, all on the

same night.”

“My guess it was some youngsters from the neighbourhood or a single person walking around in the middle of the night,” he said.

Both Johannesburg and Pretoria incidents of anti-Semitic graffiti were reported to the CSO.

Said Director of CSO

Johannesburg, Jevon Greenblatt, “What we are seeing is in line with global trends, even though what we are experiencing in South Africa is not yet at the levels being experienced in Europe and other countries. Any form of anti-Semitism is a concern, and should not be treated lightly because history shows that words turn to actions.” These incidents didn’t warrant a specific increase in security, however. “What it comes down to is constantly working with the community, remaining vigilant and aware, and putting measures in place to make sure that Jewish installations are protected.”

Anti-Semitism expert David Saks, the Associate Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, said that the two incidents of anti-

Semitic graffiti were “no cause for real concern”.

“Incidents like this are inevitable from time to time. Anti-Semitism remains quite low in South Africa.”

According to Saks, there has been a 50% rise in anti-Semitic incidents in South Africa, at 62 incidents reported in 2018 compared with 44 incidents in 2017.

While it remains relatively low compared to Europe and other parts of the world, right-wing anti- Semitism is on the rise in this country, experts say.

Commenting on the Pretoria incident, Saks said, “These people are trying to get at the Jewish community, trying to make people upset. It rewards them.” He said it was best to remove the offending graffiti, and not turn it into a big issue as this “might encourage and reward the perpetrators, leading to copy-cat actions”.

The most recently recorded incidents of anti-Semitic graffiti directly targeting synagogues in South Africa occurred in 2015, when swastikas were daubed on the wall of the reform shul in Port Elizabeth in January. In the second incident in July of the same year, a slogan reading, “Your land will escape” and below that, a swastika, followed by “Heil Hitler F**k the Jews Amen” was written on a sign attached to the fence of the Essenwood Road shul in Durban.

Clover’s African footprint an elixir for Israel’s Central Bottling

JONATHAN KATZENELLENBOGEN

Israel’s biggest drinks company could soon control Clover, one of South Africa’s largest dairy and juice businesses.

Privately-held Central Bottling Company (CBC), the owner of the Coca-Cola franchise in Israel and the dominant player in the country’s drinks market, is the leading partner in a group, called Milco, to buy Clover. If the deal goes through, CBC will have a 60% share in Clover.

CBC is owned by the heirs of its founder, Moshe Wertheim, who was one of Israel’s wealthiest men. Wertheim, who died three years ago at the age of 86, originally fought in the Palmach, the Jewish underground army.

He founded CBC in 1967, and also held large stakes in Bank Mizrahi-Tefahot, and a broadcasting company, Keshet. Under an

Israeli law to break up highly concentrated industries, Wertheim had to sell off some of his holdings.

In response to the announcement of the buyout offer earlier this week, the local Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement released a statement objecting to the deal, claiming that CBC was complicit in human rights abuses and violations of international law.

“BDS South Africa is currently investigating the matter, and will be meeting with our partners as well. If the deal proceeds, we will actively support and join the call for direct action and a militant but peaceful campaign, including protests and disruptions against Clover, and a boycott of all its products.

Later, the followers of the Radio Islam Twitter feed were asked, “If Israel’s Central Bottling Company acquires a 60% stake in



Clover, would you consume any products from the dairy and drinks producer? The poll results showed that 253 took part, and that about 50% voted “no” they would not consume Clover products. About 45% voted “yes”, indicating that they would consume Clover products, and

Continued on page 4>>

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Inventor of Please Call Me ‘an enigma and a genius’

TALI FEINBERG

“He is exceptionally smart. He has always been a forward thinker. He always showed me the other side of the coin, and taught me how to look at things more than what they are,” says Dean Doucha, about his uncle, Ari Kahn.

Last week, Kahn revealed on Radio 702 that he was the original inventor of the Please Call Me feature that has been at the centre of a decades-long legal battle.

For the past 10 years, Nkosana Kenneth Makate has been demanding compensation from Vodacom for inventing the Please Call Me feature that it adopted.

Speaking to Bongani Bingwa on 702, Kahn pointed out that Vodacom had admitted that he was the rightful owner of the patent. “It’s not something new... they have been telling me this for the past ten years privately. The simple fact is what Makate suggested to Vodacom, they never developed or deployed. His buzz memo was not deployed back in 2001, and has not been deployed in the 18 years that have followed. And what Vodacom actually developed belonged to MTN,” he said.

Chris Schoeman, Makate’s former litigation funder, said that what Kahn said was absolutely correct. “Makate invent[ing] the Please Call Me concept – that is simply not true,” said Schoeman.

A patent filed by MTN on 22 January 2001 shows that Kahn is the inventor of “a method and system for sending a message to a recipient and a system for implementing the method”. It gives examples of messages that could be sent automatically, like “call

me back” or “I have reached home safely”.

But who is Ari Kahn? “He moved from Cape Town to San Francisco in 2002 because he saw it as a spiritual centre of the world,” said his brother-in-law, Laurence Lasersohn. “He is extremely anti-establishment and very spiritual... basically a ‘rocket scientist’.

“He studied medicine before



doing a computer science degree, for which he was awarded the highest marks ever at Wits University. He’s a very bright guy, and he’s not confrontational. I’m sure he’s working on his next patent.”

Doucha said Kahn was “an enigma and a genius, not governed by the boundaries of society”. For example, he had been vegetarian or vegan his whole life. He remembers that his uncle was registering domains online before the internet even came about. “I battle to fathom that kind of foresight,” he said. Yet, he emphasises that Kahn is a very private individual who, ironically, lives mostly “off the grid”. “He is a salt of the earth kind of guy, but also a major philanthropist. And he is a yid at heart! He is one of six siblings who have all done very well. They

grew up in a kosher home, and kept Shabbos.”

Doucha said he was surprised that Radio 702 had managed to reach his uncle, and that Kahn even chose to go on air, as he had always shied away from the limelight. “Maybe he just wanted to clear the air and attach a person to the other side of this equation, but I can promise he’s had no sleepless

nights about this. There’s no ego involved – he’s just not that kind of person.

“Whatever he said is true, as he has no reason to tell anything but the truth. He continues to work on game-changing projects, but he never attaches his name to them. He lives a humble existence, and is always looking to better the

world and humanity. His foresight is unparalleled.”

Meanwhile, Makate has denied that he and Vodacom have reached a settlement agreement. Vodacom lead Independent Director Saki Macozoma said the company could have handled the matter with Makate better from the start when he was still an employee. “We cannot undo the past. Where we’ve erred, as the company, we apologise,” he told *Eyewitness News*.

Though Vodacom said it couldn’t disclose how much its chief executive had offered Makate, only revealing that it was substantially higher than the previous R10 million offer, Schoeman said the company offered Makate R49 million in compensation.

Kahn told 702 that he did not expect to be paid for his invention, as he was a consultant to MTN at the time.

Clover’s African footprint an elixir for Israel’s Central Bottling

>>>Continued from page 3

the remaining 5% indicated that they did not care either way.

Given the small sample size, and that people might have been confused by the question in having to vote “no” in support of a boycott, the poll is hardly a definitive indicator of views.

The Milco consortium did not respond to the BDS threat, but is most likely to have considered a boycott along with other risks in the due diligence process ahead of the offer.

Apart from CBC, the other partners in the Milco acquisition group are Brimstone, a South African-based black-owned holding company, which will hold 15%; Ploughshare, another black-owned local investment group, which will hold 11%; Incubev, a group of executives with experience in the sector, at 8%; and Clover management, with a 6% holding.

Milco views the buyout as a way to take advantage of the African opportunities generated by the growth of the continent’s middle class. The investors also see value in Clover’s large footprint in the region, and its extensive cold chain distribution system. Clover has 13 production facilities in South Africa, and distribution coverage in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, and Swaziland. The company sees export and potential growth opportunities in much of sub-Saharan Africa.

Clover employs 8 500 people, and has sizeable shares in the markets in which it competes. The company says its share of the South African pure

fruit juice sales is nearly 47%. It has a 26% share of South Africa’s butter market, 23% of the fresh cream market, and 28% of the Feta cheese market.

The offer of R25 a share made on Monday this week compared to Friday’s close of R20, means the company is valued at R4.8 billion. Clover issued a cautionary announcement in October last year, which indicates that negotiations regarding the sale have taken some time.

An independent board, an independent expert – PricewaterhouseCoopers – as well as management have backed the deal, which will be put to a shareholder vote next month. The proposed deal will then face a series of regulatory hurdles before final approval.

Given its heavy dominance of the relatively small Israeli drinks segment, and its past problems with competition authorities, CBC may well be keen to acquire assets outside of the country.

The company produces and distributes a wide range of products that include a full range of Coca-Cola drinks, Carlsburg beer, fruit juices, iced tea, and Tara dairy products. According to a report in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, CBC has a two-thirds share of the country’s soft-drink market.

It has a 90% share of the country’s cola market, and a 75% share of the iced-tea category. Outside of Israel, the company has operations in Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Romania.

Two years ago, CBC was ordered to pay a \$17 million (R228 million) fine by Israel’s Antitrust Authority, which performs a role similar to that of South Africa’s Competition Commission.

The offer of R25 a share made on Monday this week compared to Friday’s close of R20, means the company is valued at R4.8 billion.

To be brave and bold and stand up for what is right

To be brave and stand up against something you believe is wrong is tough. Going against the grain is never easy. Trying to get people who are set in their ways and beliefs to change them requires huge emotional and spiritual strength.

It takes a strong, often maverick, individual to do this because support is generally given to those taking the popular path, not going against it.

South African-born Grant Gochin – who now lives in California – is that kind of man. He is an out-and-out activist, and believes in doing what is right for his people, no matter what it takes. In this case, his people are Litvak Jews. He is taking on the Lithuanian government, and not for the first time. Every time he does so, it is to ensure that it recognises what the people of Lithuania did to their fellow citizens who just happen to have been Jewish. He has been on this mission for about 20 years. (See Grant’s story on page 5.)

What is so astonishing is that, while most South African Jews hail from Lithuania (myself included), few of us know the horrific atrocities that were perpetrated by Lithuanian civilians against their fellow citizens who just happen to have been Jewish.

Around the world, people recognise the role the Germans, Austrians, and Poles played in the war, but relatively few know about Lithuania. And, as South African Jews, we certainly should. If Gochin has anything to do with it, we will. Also, because of him, the Lithuanian government and people will never forget what they did to us.

The reason I make this point about Gochin is that he holds his head up high, way above the proverbial parapet, and goes all out to do what he believes needs to be done according to his conscience. He gets harassed and harangued on social media, and has made many enemies, but he keeps on fighting the good fight.

“If we don’t stand for our families, they will be forgotten,” he says. It is as simple as that for him.

Not everyone has the courage of their convictions. Some people believe certain things, but don’t stand proudly behind them. No, they’d rather duck and dive to avoid being found out because – I would hazard a guess – they have a good idea that they are wrong.

Just this week, swastikas and Nazi slogans were found in the streets outside two shuls in Gauteng, in Pretoria and in Sydenham. Who was responsible? Your guess is as good as mine.

Nobody has owned up to it. It was done when nobody was around. We clearly weren’t meant to find out who did it, simply to be shocked and upset.

Defacing public property using Nazi slogans is ugly, anti-Semitic, and racist. But if you are going to be a racist, stand by your beliefs, don’t be a coward and hide behind the darkness and quiet. (See page 3.)

Give us the opportunity to respond. Come out and face us, and tell us why you hanker after such atrocious people like the Nazis after what they did to the world.

Being an anti-Semite, to me, is totally baffling. To simply hate a nation of people because they were born to a certain religion seems crazy. But then, racism generally has that impact on me.

But why hide behind the shadow of darkness? My sense is that these defacements are nothing more than a game to those who painted them. I am not sure I am convinced of the conviction with which they were written. It seems to me those involved were playing a nasty game, and somehow neo-Nazi slogans are *de rigueur* in their circle of friends.

I bet it gave them a huge kick to go home and tell their friends. Personally, I think they are cowardly troublemakers with too much time on their hands.

The time would be so much better spent researching what actually happened during World War II, and just how despicable the Nazis were. They certainly weren’t people worth emulating.

Speaking about people to emulate, I found it quite astonishing how just last week, hordes of people were boycotting Vodacom and making all sorts of threats because of its battle with its former employee, Nkosana Makate, who claimed to be behind “Please Call Me”.

People were picketing outside Vodacom and threatening “a backlash”. Even the government put pressure on Vodacom to pay this man, who was said to be the inventor.

Then, 702 speaks to Ari Kahn, only to discover that he was in fact behind this invention, not Makate. So very confusing, not least of all because Makate won a long and drawn-out case against Vodacom.

We discovered that Kahn is indeed a man to emulate. (See page 4.) Isn’t it always so inspiring to find out what people in our community are capable of and do? Kahn, too, was watching the situation in regard to “Please Call Me” and Vodacom. He could have kept his mouth shut and the problem might have escalated, but he didn’t.

With integrity intact, he let South Africa know what really happened. *Kol hakavod* to these brave people!

Shabbat Shalom!
Peta Krost Maunder
Editor



Israelis watch the rising star of Gantz

There’s a popular weekly satirical show in Israel called *Eretz Nehederet*. In a recent episode, an actor playing Benny Gantz, the former Chief of Staff of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and newcomer to Israeli politics, is asked how he’s feeling.

He answers, “Fine”, to which an impersonator of Miri Regev, Likud’s minister of culture and a Netanyahu stalwart, starts screaming, “You see, you see he’s left-wing!”

This has fast proven to be the best way to taint the first serious contender in more than a decade to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s hold on power. If Gantz’s detractors can show the former army chief to be a leftist, there’s less chance he’ll take votes away from Netanyahu and his right-wing support base.

For weeks, after officially launching his political campaign, Gantz fuelled speculation. He kept quiet about his stance on issues, and in return his popularity soared.

Not saying anything seemed to satisfy Israelis. But he had to open his mouth eventually, and when, he revealed his political platform for the first time last week, instead of his ratings plummeting as pundits predicted, they’ve continued to climb steadily.

In anticipation of his speech, crowds gathered in Tel Aviv’s Fairgrounds, where they showered him with praise, shouting “Gantz!” every few seconds – even before he began talking. Keen to present himself as a unifying leader with vast military experience, he



pushed his IDF background.

The overriding issue Israelis vote for is security, and for the past 10 years, Netanyahu’s tough “Mr Security” image has kept him in the driver’s seat. But when compared with that of Gantz’s legacy, it’s nothing special.

Keenly aware of this, the former army chief has focused his political campaigning on his strong man image. He’s released short video clips highlighting the death and destruction caused in Gaza on his watch, including the 6 231 Hamas targets hit and the 1 364 Palestinians killed during Operation Protective Edge four years ago. For some, the videos were in bad taste, but their objective was clear – to make sure that no-one would mistake Gantz for being a soft-hearted

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Paula Slier

liberal.

Wary of his critics, the former IDF chief was vague about specifics in his much-anticipated launch speech. He did not explicitly say that he favoured the creation of a Palestinian state and, in spite of Netanyahu’s claims that Gantz would form a coalition government with Arab-Israeli political parties, he himself was mum on the issue.

A poll taken immediately afterwards found that Gantz’s Israel Resilience party would win 21 parliamentary seats compared to 30 seats for Netanyahu. But if Gantz was to merge with Yair Lapid’s centrist Yesh Atid party, together they could win 35 seats and defeat Netanyahu. It is the first time since the start of the election that polling has found the incumbent prime minister to be so vulnerable.

Gantz is positioning himself in the centre of the political spectrum. The problem is that centrist parties traditionally don’t do particularly well in Israel. What’s more, although Gantz’s party and Yesh Atid are in talks to run together, it’s not clear if either party’s

leader is prepared to relinquish the top seat to make such a merger work. At the moment, it’s Lapid who appears to be pushing the brakes.

Gantz appeals also to left-wing voters, whose overarching goal is simply to oust Netanyahu. They’re wondering when, if ever, he’ll be forced from office because of corruption charges. In the meantime, their next best hope is a Gantz win.

Polls show that about 70% of Israelis prefer a right-wing or centre-right government over a left-wing or centre-left one. In this respect, Gantz is careful not to position himself too much on the left of the political spectrum.

He knows his best chance at success is to head a centre-right coalition. If he can mobilise the anti-Likud elements around himself, it will be his best chance of defeating Netanyahu.

For now, Gantz’s star is shining bright. He appeals also to the politically apathetic, like a friend of mine who told me, “I’m voting for that army general even though I don’t know his name or what he stands for.”

In response, Netanyahu is reportedly considering an alliance between his Likud party and smaller right-wing parties to make sure they win more seats than the centrists.

But it’s not clear whether or not some of the parties that made up the outgoing Netanyahu coalition will win the minimum 3.25% of the vote (equivalent to four seats) to make it into the Knesset (Parliament).

In this scenario, Netanyahu won’t have enough natural allies to form the next government. And that could be his end.

While a lot can still change in the weeks before the 9 April elections, for the first time in a long time Netanyahu is being forced to mull the option that he might not win another term in office.

BDS and Hamas firmly tied, Israel says

>>>Continued from page 1

Ben Swartz, the National Chairperson of the South African Zionist Federation, told the *SA Jewish Report*, “The Israeli government report explores links between BDS and various terrorist organisations. Given the Media Review Network’s overt and well publicised links with BDS, Hamas leadership, and PFLP operatives like Leila Khaled, it is not surprising that they are feeling pressured by a report of this nature.”

Israel’s Strategic Affairs and Public Security Minister, Gilad Erdan, said the report “reveals the true nature and goals of the BDS movement and its

connection to terrorism and anti-Semitism”. “When people talk about the goals of the BDS movement, they don’t bother to read official statements from its leaders. If you do, it becomes clear that the goals of its leaders are the same as those of the leaders of Palestinian terror organisations. BDS rejects Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state within any borders. It wants to see Israel wiped off the map. Promoting boycotts is [just] a different means to achieve this goal.” Erdan called on European leaders to cut all ties with the BDS movement and groups supporting anti-Israel boycotts.

The State of the Nation that never was

Howard Sackstein writes a *State of the Nation* address that he believes President Cyril Ramaphosa should have given this week.

My fellow South Africans
The state of the nation is dire, we have been crippled by rampant theft and corruption, we have bankrupted the fiscus, and failed the people of South Africa. Twenty-five years since the advent of democracy in South Africa, it is unconscionable that we have created a kleptocracy that has stolen from the poor, and brought our nation to the brink of economic collapse and moral decay.

I thank you for having entrusted me with the task of righting our wrongs. Quite simply, the people of South Africa deserve better.

Integrity and justice

It is inconceivable that people walk free after having been implicated by various commissions of enquiry into state capture. It is untenable that people implicated remain in my Cabinet. They must face the full force of the law. And, if former President Zuma does not see his day in court, this will destroy the entire moral fabric of our society.

Foreign investment

I want to thank all of those business people who have been so active in assisting me in enticing foreign

investment into South Africa. I pay tribute to Colin Coleman from Goldman Sachs, who partners with me on these missions, and Adrian Gore and Stephen Koseff, who joined me in Davos. We welcome the enormous investment that Israeli companies are making in South Africa, and we are delighted that the Central Bottling Company has made a R4.8 billion offer for Clover.

Job creation

These three, and Brian Joffe are the driving force behind my job-creation initiatives. A recent study by an international consulting group found that of the 9.75 million South Africans in formal employment, about 2.5 million (or a quarter of the country's entire workforce) owe their employment to either Jewish founded, Jewish owned, or Jewish-run businesses. I call on the Jewish community to continue with this holy mission.

I want to acknowledge that Israeli coal and diamond purchases, investment, and tourism account for hundreds of thousands of jobs in South Africa. We have purchased a significant amount of Israeli technology in cyber security, medical technology, and mobile communications, without which we would be falling further and further behind the rest of the world.

Our food security in South Africa is also very much dependent on Israeli technology and expertise. Drip

irrigation and Israeli agri-tech has once again turned South Africa from a nation of starvation into a food exporter.

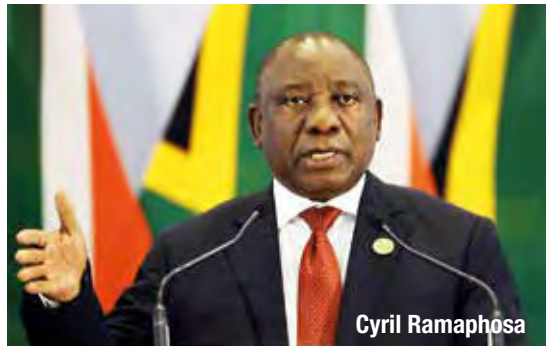
Israeli water technology can also save this country from the crippling droughts that climate change has wrought on our nation.

Land reform

We understand the need for land reform in South Africa, and the need of people to own their own properties, especially given the long history of land deprivation by the apartheid regime. The government has resolved to begin land distribution, starting with the 67% of land already owned by the state, municipalities, and tribal authorities.

Foreign policy

There are those unpatriotic few among us who attempt to stop us dealing with Israel. They do so for their own narrow selfish interests. They do not care how many jobs are lost in South Africa as a result, or the crippling impact this will have on the South African economy. They have successfully captured South African foreign policy, and have led us to conclude co-operation agreements with racist, fascist, and neo-Nazi terrorist groups like Hamas. They have also led us to re-name the street of the American consulate in Johannesburg after a terrorist who attacked civilian aircraft and took an American diplomat hostage.



Cyril Ramaphosa

While we support the rights of Palestinians to a national home, we also support Zionism, the liberation movement of the Jewish people.

We can no longer single out Israel for criticism if we remain silent about many of our friends who are some of the worst human-rights abusers in the world. Countries like Venezuela, Cuba, Libya, Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Zimbabwe are just a few of our friends with abysmal human-rights records.

Nation building

A key element of our year going forward will be to re-focus on nation building. It is time the politicians within my own party stopped using race for race-baiting popularism. That, the racist, bigoted rhetoric of the EFF, and the neo fascist statements of the BLF movement, have no place in a civilised democracy.

The Jewish community was always at the struggle for justice and equality in South Africa. Jews created the trade-union movement in South Africa, and many have been actively

involved in the struggle against apartheid since it began.

People like Helen Suzman led the struggle against apartheid in Parliament, while Jews such as Joe Slovo, Ruth First, Rusty Bernstein, and Ronnie Kasrils led the armed struggle

from beyond its borders. We call on Jews to continue this magnificent tradition.

Education

Education must be a priority – another lesson taught to us by the Jewish community. In spite of centuries of oppression, pogroms, and victimhood, the Jewish community has always understood that education is the key to bringing a people from poverty to prosperity. We have failed the children of South Africa. Having now introduced free university education, we must ensure that universities focus on hard-skill education not politics, that students learn in class, and that university is a wide parliament of ideas where no one is oppressed or feels silenced.

Conclusion

In 2019, I commit myself and my government to less talk and more action. Let the people of South Africa judge us on our deeds, not on our election promises. May 2020 bring a much stronger state to our nation.

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The gaping pitfalls of SA’s land expropriation policy

JORDAN MOSHE

“If we implement the expropriation without compensation [draft] law, it will destroy the economy, imperil jobs, and lead us to rack and ruin,” says Johannesburg advocate Mark Oppenheimer.

Oppenheimer clarified the mysteries surrounding expropriation without compensation and outlined the dire consequences for our country, at the Free Market Foundation in Bryanston last Wednesday.

“The people of South Africa need to know about the impact this would have on their lives,” he said, insisting that this issue is the greatest threat we face as a nation.

Given the misconceptions which surround the issue of land reform, Oppenheimer listed and dispelled various myths being peddled for some time.

Myth one: the land has not been given back to its rightful owners

Oppenheimer stressed that if your land was taken from you unjustly, you are deserving of compensation. “If it was taken by the apartheid state, or you were in some way unjustly deprived of it, you have every right to be compensated,” he said. Compensation can be effected in one of two ways: either the original land is returned to you, or you received financial compensation.

He emphasised that this process has been taking place. “Between 1995 and 2014, 1.8 million people who applied for compensation received money. People presented their cases, and 77 000 of some 80 000 cases were resolved.” Although the time

allocated to this process has ended and moves have been made to extend it, only a few cases remain unaddressed, he said.

Myth two: people are hungry for land
It is often repeated in the media that most of the population is desperate for land. The truth is, however, that possession of land itself matters little to most people, Oppenheimer said.

“During the compensation process, most people didn’t ask for their land back,” he said. “In some cases, the land was sacred or had symbolic significance, but this accounted for only 8% of cases. Ninety two percent of people preferred to receive money.” Money represents freedom. With it, one can buy land that one really wants. If you’re a modern person, a stretch of land in the Northern Cape is of little use to you.

According to the 2016 Survey of the South African Institute of Race Relations, the most pressing issue among South Africans is unemployment, followed by service delivery, and lack of housing. At the very bottom of the list, coming after poverty and corruption, is the matter of land redistribution at only 0.6%. Said Oppenheimer: “Almost no one sees this as an issue. We have a small minority that is incredibly vocal, and politicians have turned a non-issue into something which energises people. The average South African, however, is not interested.”

Myth three: anyone can be a farmer
The common belief is that managing a farm is not unlike managing a vegetable garden. Not so, says Oppenheimer. “It’s more than taking ownership of the farm,” he said. “It’s about the



Mark Oppenheimer

skills, the expertise, and experience gained through years of work. It’s highly technical, and people can’t simply step into it. Among farmers, hundreds of years of knowledge are passed down, and they make use of incredibly technical equipment which requires skills and training.”

Citing a case study, Oppenheimer explained that in recent years, the government had spent R1.4 billion buying 264 farms in the Eastern Cape with the aim of redistributing them. What followed, he said, was a 90% failure rate. “Only 26 of them still function. The rest of failed completely. A farm is a very technical endeavour that needs the expertise of someone who knows what it involves.”

Myth four: this law won’t affect the economy

As much as President Cyril Ramaphosa may say otherwise, the fact remains that land reform would have a direct impact on our economy, according to Oppenheimer.

“If you remove property rights, you are sentencing the nation to failure. As exceptional as our story as a nation may be, we believe we can do things that other countries did and succeed where they failed.

“Dispossession without compensation has been tried in Zimbabwe and Venezuela. In Zimbabwe, not only farmers were affected. [The country] suffers from a 90% unemployment rate. Zimbabweans have found themselves driven to South Africa because of how that decision destroyed their economy. In Venezuela, the inflation rate is at 1.3 million percent. The country suffers from mass starvation. This was the richest country in South America, with the biggest supply of oil in the world. A terrible economic policy ruined this. Within 20 years, they’ve managed to destroy a nation.

“We believe that we’re different here. When we do it, we won’t [have an] impact [on] the economy. If we implement this policy, we can look forward to seeing the banknotes Zimbabwe rolled out here.”

Myth five: paying compensation is unaffordable

The argument that the state cannot afford to pay compensation is an outright lie, Oppenheimer said. “[A total of] 0.3% of government expenditure is currently being spent on land reform,” he said. “For an issue that has been consuming our press for more than a year, the government has allocated less than a percent of its budget. If it really was an issue, more money could be allocated from government funds.”

He said this funding would have to come from taxes, which would mean less money would be available for all the other government initiatives and schemes. “This is one among many government initiatives, none of which will be able to be funded if we dedicate funds to this policy. And if this policy drives away tax

payers and foreign investment, where will the funding come from?”

“Forced to abandon their property once it is seized by the state, taxpayers will leave in droves. Only 1% of our population earns more than R48 000 per month. If that 1% opts to leave the country because of land reform, the tax base will disappear. These people pay for roads, education, hospitals. You don’t want to see them leave.”

Myth six: the Constitution impedes land reform

Contrary to popular belief, our Constitution does not need to be reformed for justice to be dispensed, said Oppenheimer.

“People have called it a traitorous document, one which sold out the South African people to the National Party, and that true justice is possible only if we alter the Constitution to allow for land reform without compensation.

“Land reform is important. You are deserving of compensation if you are entitled to it. The Constitution is a roadmap for dealing with such issues, and contains relevant clauses to help resolve these issues.” Oppenheimer explained that the Constitution’s property clause section dealt with compensation, providing for expropriation.

“All states expropriate,” he said. “They have to. The Constitution is equipped to handle redistribution of land that has been illegally taken, bought on loan, or acquired in almost any other way. Although in most circumstances it is just and equitable to pay compensation, there will be cases in which no compensation is paid, and this is provided for by the Constitution.”

Oppenheimer said that it was imperative for us to make use of the avenues available to prevent the worst from happening.

“We have an ill-informed press that has supported expropriation without compensation in the name of justice,” he said. “Few voices have pointed out how this policy will affect not only the wealthy but more importantly, the poorest members of our population. People need to express [their] views and share the real impact this policy would have. If you don’t have a platform to share, support those who do, and share what they publish.”

Additionally, he encouraged people to take the fight to the polls. “The Democratic Alliance, African Christian Democratic Party, Inkatha Freedom Party, Congress of the People, and Vryheidsfront Plus oppose the policy,” he said. “They could be louder, but when Parliament took the vote to amend the Constitution, they opposed it. They’re playing an important role. Though we may have to hold our noses to vote for them, they’re the ones fighting for us.”

• A video recording of this talk can be found on the Free Market Foundation YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ChannelFMF>

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Scientists pour cold water on Israeli company’s cancer-cure claims

NICOLA MILTZ

A team of scientists at a biotech company in Israel have claimed that they will have the elusive cure for cancer within a year, but scientists both locally and abroad remain critical and sceptical.

The company, Accelerated Evolution Biotechnologies Ltd, or AEBi, which was founded in 2000 from the ITEK Weizmann technology incubator, announced recently that a new treatment being developed by the company would offer a complete cure for cancer. What’s more, it would have “none or minimal side-effects at a much lower cost than most other treatments on the market”.

It sounds too good to be true, say some scientists, many of whom were quick to criticise the claims.

The treatment is said to work like a cancer antibiotic, according to scientists Dan Aridor, the Chairman of the board of AEBi, and Chief Executive Dr Ilan Morad. They call the treatment MuTaTo, or multi-target toxin, and they have been quoted in recent articles in Israel and the United States as saying that the results of pre-clinical trials have been very good.

Fellow scientists, however, quickly rejected these claims, calling them “spurious”, “highly irresponsible”, “unsubstantiated”, and even “cruel”, according to JTA.

So far, tests have been conducted only on mice, not on humans, although the scientists told the *Jerusalem Post* that their results were “consistent and repeatable”. The company told the *Times of Israel* that it planned to advance its research, and get to clinical trials as fast as possible.

Locally, scientists have reacted with caution, some refusing to comment until such time as thorough clinical trials had been conducted, and more research material is available.

The University of Cape Town’s Professor Musa Mhlanga, who works at the university’s Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine and who is an expert in biomedical science, told the *SA Jewish Report*, “As a scientist, I am always initially sceptical. It is difficult to credibly understand the claims of AEBi without them providing peer-reviewed data published in a reputable journal. Barring that, these claims are simply that, claims that still need to pass the litmus test of the scientific and medical community. Once that has happened, much more can be said.”

Abroad, sceptical scientists have also noted that the research group has not published any findings to back up its claims.

Morad told the *Times of Israel* the company had not published its research in medical journals because it “couldn’t afford” to do so. The company later explained that it was also due to the fact that it was privately-owned, and was still in the process of generating a final patent.

Health specialist Professor Michael Herbst of the Cancer Association of South Africa is also doubtful. Logistically, he said, it appeared to be totally unrealistic.

“The company says that a biopsy specimen of each patient will have to be forwarded to the laboratory so that individualised treatment can be prepared for each patient. According to the World Health Organization, just more than 18 million individuals worldwide were diagnosed with cancer during 2018. Imagine the size of a laboratory that will have to handle 18 million biopsy specimens and prepare individualised medicine for each patient. Unbelievable!”

He questioned where the infrastructure would come from, and who would man the laboratories, manufacturing processes, and distribution.

“Where will their funding come from? They said that they could not publish any papers covering their research because they didn’t have the necessary funding. Where will their funding come from for such a major project?

“The sad side is that individuals diagnosed with cancer are, again, exposed to news which creates expectations. Imagine the disappointment when this does not materialise. We have seen this happen before,” said Herbst.

Victoria Forster, a cancer researcher and child cancer survivor who writes for *Forbes*, called AEBi less than forthcoming with information about its alleged cure.

She also said that the claim that one cure will work for all of the more than 200 different types of cancer out there was a “huge red flag”. Such a claim was “highly unlikely”.

Meanwhile, Israeli scientists are experimenting with immunotherapy, which manipulates one’s immune system to identify, fight, and destroy cancer cells.

While immunotherapy has been around for many years, new advances in the field coupled with recent drug approvals have intensified interest in it and its application for cancer treatment, especially late-stage cancers that resist conventional treatments. Immunotherapy drugs are already helping patients with melanoma, lung, stomach, liver, and bladder cancers, as well as some blood cancers.

Dr Mark Israel, the National Executive Director of the Israel Cancer Research Fund, told JTA, “Recent developments in immunotherapy have ushered in a medical revolution, representing a real paradigm shift in cancer treatment.

“Cancer immunotherapy is exciting because, as opposed to other forms of therapy, it engages the body’s own highly sensitive system for detecting cancer cells and destroying them. This area will have a major impact on cancer outcomes going forward.”



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19:45 - 20:00	INTRODUCING THE ONE STOP SHOP HOME IN ISRAEL - LEADING REAL ESTATE GROUP BRIGA - ISRAEL'S MOST EXCLUSIVE DEVELOPER EFRAT LEVY - EXPERT PROPERTY LAWYER PERRY HADAR - TOP INTERIOR DESIGNER MARK JOFFE - FOR YOUR INSURANCE SOLUTIONS IN ISRAEL
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JORDAN MOSHE

Held in collaboration with WIN, the forum included an evening conference and market open ceremony. Bringing together leading businesswomen, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, entertainers, and politicians of all ages from South Africa, the United States, Israel, and Gibraltar, the hallmark event featured public and private industry

Although great strides have been made in empowering the previously disempowered in the workplace, Singer believes events like this can address the fact that the business world still has unconscious biases against women, including Jewish women. “This opportunity offers so much healing to many past experiences that had been dismissive towards many of us – as women and as Jews,” she says.

Given the current global political and

Karpes agrees. “The world is already moving towards flexible work hours and working from home,” she says. “This will



All three believe that the experience will enable them to reach out to more professional Jewish women, and empower them to harness the potential the network has to offer. "Forming a network that other businesswomen can join will make it easier for Jewish women to venture into this world of entrepreneurship," says Singer. "We all share similar stories and value systems, and

She says, “This is good for us all as women who are each-other’s best cheerleaders, and also important in a world confronted by ongoing misogyny and anti-Semitism. I am a strong believer in the power of collaborative impact and demonstration effects.”

SUZANNE BELLING

It was set up by the then National Chairperson of the SAJBD, Mervyn Smith, who then became congress president. Saks says the congress has provided an important forum for African communities

"The future methods are currently under investigation, and we will release further details in the near future. But we can safely say that the African Jewish Congress will continue."

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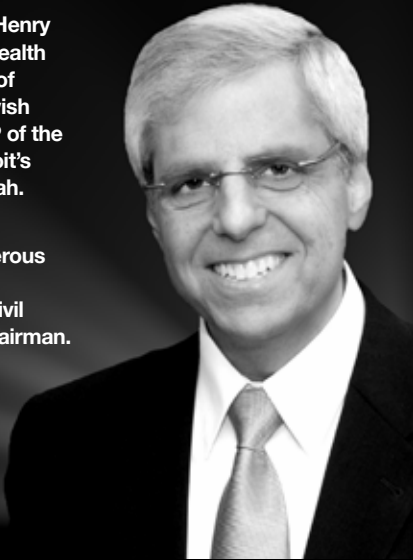
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New Sinai speaker Gary Torgow is an inspirational communal and business leader, founder and volunteer. Torgow is the chairman of Chemical Financial Corporation, the holding company for Chemical Bank (the largest bank headquartered in Michigan).

He is also the founder and chairman of the Sterling Group, a Michigan-based real estate, development and investment company. He currently serves on the board of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and is an executive board member of Business Leaders of Michigan and a trustee and board member of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan. He is on the Foundation Boards of Wayne State University and Henry Ford Hospital, and is a member of the Beaumont Health Trustees. Torgow serves as a trustee on the board of Touro College, is on the executive board of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, he's a senior VP of the Orthodox Union and is the board president of Detroit's largest Jewish day school, the Yeshiva Beth Yehudah.

He is a board member of the Mesorah Heritage Foundation and has served as a volunteer on numerous civic and communal boards, including the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation and the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, both of which he served as chairman.



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New to Sinai and most well-known for his best-selling book, *Toward a Meaningful Life*, his Meaningful Life Center has been described as the spiritual Starbucks by the *New York Times*. Rabbi Simon Jacobson is easily considered one of the most outstanding speakers in the Jewish world today.

His books have sold over 300 000 copies and have been translated into Hebrew, French, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, German, Hungarian, Polish, Czech and Georgian. Clearly no stranger to the media, Rabbi Jacobson has been interviewed on over 300 radio and TV shows, including *CNN with Larry King* and the *Charlie Rose Show*. His sought-after talks have captured the hearts of thousands of participants on six continents and in 40 states, with a strong, spiritual message and unique insight into the human condition.

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Biopic reveals Bader Ginsburg before she became ‘notorious RBG’

CURT SCHLEIER – JTA

The young attorney seems unsure of herself. As a law professor, she is unaccustomed to appearing in court, so she hesitates at first, unable to begin her summation. But once she gets going, there is no stopping her.

It is the climactic scene of *On the Basis of Sex*, a biopic about Ruth Bader Ginsburg that makes its debut in February. The film focuses largely on Charles Moritz vs Internal Revenue Service, a major gender-discrimination case that Ginsburg shepherded to trial years before she became a justice on the United States Supreme Court. To succeed, she would have to overturn years of precedent.

But the film is more than your typical courtroom drama. While powerful and inspiring, the movie also manages to paint a subtle portrait of a woman finding a place for herself in a society that wants her to stay home and cook.

Viewers here don’t meet “notorious RBG”, as she is often called these days, the tough, take-no-prisoners liberal-pop-culture icon of the past decade. Young Ruth is not yet a superhero in 1972. Yes, she is as determined to fight for truth, and is a respected lawyer, but she is still shackled by the misogyny of the time.

That nuanced and honest approach to the character is thanks in large part to the approach of two key creatives – screenwriter Daniel Stiepleman, and the film’s star, Felicity Jones.

Jones, a British actress who launched her career at the age of 12, and has gone on to star in blockbusters such as *The Theory of Everything* and *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*, had an emotional connection to the film.

“I understood what it felt like as an outsider on so many levels,” she said in a telephone interview. “I grew up on film sets where there were only a handful of women.”

Reading the script, Jones said she felt an immediate connection.

“What was interesting to me was trying to discover the woman behind the icon,” Jones said. “What are the decisions she made, and how did she get to the place where she is now? How did she harness that essence and anger, and use it to her advantage?”

Stiepleman, 37, is Ginsburg’s nephew. Ruth’s husband, Marty, was his mother’s older brother. And while he isn’t exceptionally close to his aunt – he is closer in age to her grandchildren – he remembers being at the Ginsburg house for Passover seders and Thanksgivings. (Chanukah was normally held at the home of his cousin

Jane, Ruth’s daughter.)

The idea for the film originated in 2010 at Marty’s funeral.

“In a eulogy, someone mentioned the only case the two argued together,” Stiepleman said. “Until the end of his life, he said that this was one of the most important things he did.”

Ginsburg entered Harvard Law School in 1956, one of nine women in the sixth class ever to accept women.

“Why are you occupying a place at Harvard that could have been occupied by a man?” the dean asks in the film.

“So I can be a more understanding wife,” she responds.

Her husband (played by Armie Hammer), a year ahead of her in school, is diagnosed with testicular cancer. So Ruth juggles her own classes, attends his to take notes, and cares for their newborn infant daughter Jane, all while earning a spot on the prestigious *Law Review*.

In spite of her academic success, no law firm will hire her. One offers secretarial work. Another tells her, “We hired a woman last year. What would we do with two of them?” A third wonders warily if she observes Shabbat.

Ultimately, Ginsburg lands a job teaching law at Rutgers University in New Jersey, but even that is tainted when she realises it is a token hire.

She is angry, but at the time, the broad equal-protection clause was by precedent applied only to cases of race, not gender. There was little recourse until Marty suggested a unique approach. Charles Moritz, a Denver resident, was denied a tax deduction for home health care for his mother because he was unmarried. Women, divorced men, and widowers were entitled to the benefit, but unmarried men were not. The Ginsburgs believed a male plaintiff



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could change the dynamic.

Ginsburg herself was peripherally involved in the film from the beginning, giving her blessing to Stiepleman, opening her files to him, and reviewing the script. She never asked for changes involving her character. Her focus was on assuring that the law – and Marty – were

presented accurately.

On the subject of accuracy, some have argued that the casting of Jones erases Ginsburg’s Jewishness from the film. Natalie Portman had been slated to fill the role, but that fell through in 2017.

When the trailer debuted in July, viewers called attention to Jones’ accent – a far cry from

Jewish nominations for the Oscars

MARCY OSTER – JTA

RBG, about the life and impact of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, received an Academy Award nomination for best documentary feature.

The Oscar nominations were announced on Tuesday morning. The awards ceremony will take place on 24 February.

BlackKkKlansman, a film about a Jewish cop who teams up with an African-American detective to infiltrate the Ku Klux Klan, was one of eight films nominated for best picture.

Adam Driver, who plays the Jewish police officer, was nominated for best supporting actor in the film, which also nabbed a best-director nomination for Spike Lee.

Rachel Weisz was nominated for best supporting actress for portraying a friend of England’s Queen Anne in the 18th-century costume dramedy *The Favourite*. The film also picked up a best-picture nomination, and seven other nominations, including best costumes.

Composer Marc Shaiman was nominated for best original score for *Mary Poppins Returns*,

Ginsburg’s nasal Brooklyn tone.

Anna Miriam wrote in *Alma* that Jones, with her “fine features and her awkward American accent, beautiful, perfectly manicured,” erases “any trace of Ginsburg’s roots”.

Besides the Shabbat reference, nothing else in the film stands out as Jewish.

Jones has played a Jewish character before: Margot Frank, the sister of the famous diarist, Anne, in a 2009 BBC miniseries.

Stiepleman would have none of the criticism. “I was desperate [to cast] Felicity,” he said. “Ruth has a particular alchemy – steely, driven, and precise. But when you get to spend time with her in the comfort of her home, all of that is undergirded by joy and optimism. Some actresses can play steely. Some can play the joy. But Felicity can combine the two, and she channelled Ruth’s essence.”

When asked about it, Jones sidestepped, talking instead about how she focused on capturing the details of Ginsburg’s persona.

“Felicity has to depart, and it’s all about becoming Ruth,” she said. “I become obsessive about costume, hair, makeup. I became meticulous, listening to Ruth in court, how powerful her voice is, and how her Brooklyn accent comes on strong when she’s frustrated.”

At the time of shooting, Jones was also preparing for her wedding to long-time fiancée, director Charles Guard. For Guard, the timing wasn’t the best.

“I kept telling him he had big shoes to fill,” Jones said. “Look at what Marty does for Ruth!”

and for best original song, *The Place Where Lost Things Go*, from the film. *Shallow* from *A Star Is Born* also received a best original song nomination for the writing and producing team that included Jewish songwriter, producer, and DJ, Marc Ronson.

Filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen received a nomination for best adapted screenplay for *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*.

Israeli filmmaker Guy Nattiv’s short film *Skin* was nominated for best live action short film. Nattiv, who has lived in Los Angeles for the past several years, wrote the film with Sharon Maymon, a friend from high school. The 20-minute film about former skinhead group member Bryon Widner will be screened this year as a full-length feature.

Roma, a drama that follows the life of a live-in housekeeper to an upper-middle-class family in Mexico City, received 10 nominations, including best picture, followed by *A Star is Born* and *Vice* with eight. *Black Panther*, with seven nominations, became the first superhero movie to be nominated for best picture.

British peer pledges support for Jewish life in Commonwealth

SUZANNE BELLING

South Africa’s Parliamentary Jewish caucus hosted Lord Jonathan Mendelsohn – a former front bencher in Britain’s Labour Party – as its guest of honour this week.

Mendelsohn, the President of the Commonwealth Jewish Council (CJC), spoke at the culmination of the African Jewish Congress (AJC) biennial general meeting in Cape Town on Tuesday.

He was effectively forced to stepped down as a frontbencher by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn at the beginning of 2018. More recently, Mendelsohn has publicly called Corbyn an anti-Semite in Parliament.

South Africa’s Parliamentary Jewish caucus – the three Democratic Alliance members of Parliament, Michael Bagraim, Darren Bergman, and Glynnis Breytenbach – welcomed Mendelsohn, who is still a Labour working peer in the House of Lords. Mendelsohn said there was no informal Jewish caucus in the British

Parliament, (but) “we have a very active group of Jewish peers interested in Jewish causes”.

He paid a warm tribute “to one of my gurus, the marvellous Ann Harris”, the President of the AJC, and her efforts to keep it alive.

“It is very important for the African Jewish Congress to function well, to make sure we can keep connected with each other, to build, develop, work together, and do remarkable things.”

The CJC, he said, had started to work more actively within the Commonwealth and within the various communities, also becoming observers at the World Jewish Congress. It is fully recognised by the Commonwealth secretariat.

“We are trying to be much more engaged in what we can do to support and help communities. It is a priority for us that we are able to find ways for the many and varied communities, stretching as they do across the globe.

“That is part of the mission of the

Commonwealth, and why the Commonwealth is so relevant to where we are today. The Commonwealth today is part of the future, it is part of the free association of nations coming together,



Darren Bergman, Geoffrey Ramokgadi, Lord Mendelsohn, Michael Bagraim, Glynnis Breytenbach, Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft and children from the Afrika Tikkun School in Cape Town

based on common values, with the potential to build and develop a better future, to see what can

be done in the fields of economy, social relations, faith relations, to see what can be done to develop a new and better future.”

The CJC, he said, was devoted to helping Jewish communities from about 33 countries enhance the Jewish life of its members. It helped remember important events, including the Holocaust, with lasting values; and share the responsibility we have to the world, including in the area of environmental sustainability. It works to build relationships to improve society “to invigorate our communities, to infuse enthusiasm across societies, to make a contribution, ensuring the rights of people and democratic values”.

Several diplomatic representatives to South Africa attended the event, including United Kingdom High Commissioner Nigel Casey, and Singapore High Commissioner Chua Thai-Keong, as well as the South African High Commissioner to Swaziland, Dumisile Sukati.

Survey of SA Jewish community to answer our questions

JORDAN MOSHE

How do we express our Jewish identity in South Africa? Are most of us religious or not? Just how many of us are there in the country? These are just a few of the questions we will soon be able to answer with certainty thanks to a countrywide survey of the South African Jewish community to be conducted this year by the Kaplan Centre.

With religious affiliation no longer asked in the South African census, the role of communal surveys has become increasingly important in gleanning information about the Jewish population. The last survey of this kind was conducted 14 years ago, and with the figures becoming increasingly outdated, the Kaplan Centre at the University of Cape Town (KC) and the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (JPR) in London are joining forces to bring these figures up to date in the form of the Jewish Community Survey of South Africa (JCSSA).

The questionnaire is being compiled by the JPR and KC, who will also both carry out initial data analyses. The survey will be administered online by a major global polling company.

“We need to fill the gaps in our knowledge of the community,” says associate professor Adam Mendelsohn, the Director of the Kaplan Centre. “While we may have some stats from independent research, no holistic collection of data on the broader community has been gathered for some time.

“Investment in Jewish communal life in South Africa benefits from being based on reliable and timely data. The data from the study will assist with community planning, service provision, care needs, Jewish schooling, and other communal programmes that strengthen the vibrancy of Jewish life in the country.”

Because our understanding of the community has been based largely on anecdotes and speculation for the past few years, the timing of this survey is particularly important.

“This survey is essentially a chance for the community to take a selfie and look at where it is,” he says. “By investigating questions like trends in family sizes, the feelings of parents about Jewish schools, issues surrounding anti-Semitism, and impressions of Israel, we can provide community members with useful information that will help guide decisions relevant to the future. This is not a scholarly exercise, but one with practical benefits.”

Mendelsohn expects a reasonable amount of communal participation. Though he acknowledges that the questions posed are time-consuming and demanding to

answer, he believes that Jews from across the country recognise the importance of the survey.

Hasson agrees, pointing out that the success of the survey depends on communal involvement.

“We need widespread participation from all segments of the South African Jewish community,” she says. “Whether one is living in the heart of the Joburg Jewish community or in a small country town, whether one attends shul three times a day or has never entered a synagogue, each and every Jew living in South Africa is invited to participate in the survey. The more people participate, the more accurate a picture

we can get on what the South African community looks like in 2019. The JCSSA is a once-in-a-decade opportunity for all members of our wonderful community to have their say.”

Updates on the launch of the survey are expected to be released soon. The community is assured that the survey will be completely anonymous, and no personally identifying information will be collected.

• For news and information about how to get involved, visit the survey website and Facebook page at www.jcssa2109.co.za, and www.facebook.com/jcssa2019.


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“This survey is essentially a chance for the community to take a selfie and look at where it is.”

“People in the Jewish community don’t know as much as many of them believe they do,” says Survey Project Co-ordinator Reviva Hasson. “The Jewish community has been evolving in all sorts of ways over time. Think schooling, migration, and expressions of Jewish identity. But without access to the solid empirical data that this survey will deliver, it is reliant on anecdotes when making important planning decisions about the future and the allocation of communal funds.”


Hasson says that this survey is being conducted for the benefit of the community. “Because the Kaplan Centre is an independent research institute, it is able to offer insight into community dynamics without [having] an agenda of its own. The community will gain essential planning data to help a broad spectrum of Jewish communal bodies better understand the communities they are serving.”

Regarding direct benefits to community members themselves, Mendelsohn says that the information gathered will assist people to plan for the future.

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Morasha goes from darkness to light with new Sefer Torah



OPINION

Rabbi Sam Thurgood

Sunday, 3 February, was a day of intense emotion for the Beit Midrash Morasha and the Cape Town Jewish community. We began the day by burying the remains of six Sifrei Torah which were destroyed in the fire that engulfed the shul in December 2018, and ended it by completing and welcoming a new Sefer Torah.

Neither of these events are common occurrences, but holding a funeral for a Sefer Torah is particularly rare. The customs and procedure surrounding it are difficult to find. They required numerous calls to the Beth Din, Chevrah Kadisha in Johannesburg, even America, to gain clarity on how to proceed.

The essence of the ceremony is reflected in a conversation I had with a reporter in the morning after the fire. “I heard,” she said, “that the synagogue contained sacred scrolls worth millions of rands!” “No,” replied a friend of mine and member of our shul committee, “they were priceless.”

These Sifrei Torah were beloved friends and mentors, the custodians of the word of Hashem, divine instruction for life as copied perfectly from generation to generation for more than 3 000 years. They were our *morasha* (heritage and inheritance), received from those before us and transmitted to those after us. We held them each Shabbat, and declared *Shema Yisrael* (Hear, O Israel). We read from them four times each week (and often more). We raised them high, and said *Vezot HaTorah* (this is the Torah that Moshe presented to the Jewish people). We stood up for them when they were raised, and danced with them on Simchat Torah. On Sunday, we tearfully acknowledged that we would never do this with these Sifrei Torah again.

In the days before the ceremony, I transferred the remnants of the scrolls into two large clay containers, closed them with lids, and sealed them. I visited the cemetery to choose a plot – we try to bury them next to a Torah scholar – and then we applied ourselves to answer the question of how to lower the heavy jars into the earth in a dignified fashion.

The solution we found was to place them in an open coffin, which would provide stability and handles to lower them gently. This decision was pragmatic, not halachic, although it was

30 years ago, came from Israel and tore *kriya* (ripped his jacket in mourning).

That afternoon, when we welcomed our first new Sefer Torah, couldn’t have been more different in tone, but it was actually identical in theme.

We had been using the Lichtenburg Sefer Torah, graciously loaned to us by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies’ country communities division, and until Sunday, we had no Torah to call our own.

The story of this Torah is remarkable. The day immediately following the fire, Rabbi Ori Einhorn, a previous Rosh Yeshiva of the Yeshiva of Cape Town, began raising funds in Israel for a new Torah for our community. Together with members of Kehillat Kfar Shmaryahu, Ron and the Bar On family donated this Torah in memory of his father, Jack Bar On (Abromowitz), and grandparents



The Cape Town Jewish community participates in the burial of the Sifrei Torah

Joseph and Pauline Abromowitz. Once again, hundreds came together, and once again, tears were shed, this time in gratitude and celebration. In our people’s millennia-long love-affair with the Torah, I don’t think there have been many celebrations as heartfelt and meaningful as this one.

We had come from burying all of our Sifrei Torah to being blessed with another one. It was our journey from darkness to light, and a taste of what it will be like to come from exile to redemption.

On the day after the fire, I quoted a verse from Hallel, “This came from Hashem, it is wondrous in our eyes.” It was an acknowledgement that the destruction of our spiritual home was by divine decree, but that we couldn’t understand it. And yet, now we were able to say the next verse, “This is the day that Hashem has made, let us exult and rejoice on it!” And exult and rejoice we did!

Representatives of our community, other communities in Cape Town, and communal organisations filled in the concluding letters of the Torah. As soon as the ink had dried, we were off on a musical parade through the streets that even had traffic officers joining in and dancing. The parade was followed by celebration in the shul, in which everyone had a chance to meet our beloved new Torah.

A particularly poignant moment was when Holocaust survivor Ella Blumenthal held the new Torah in her arms and wept. She told me she kept thinking of her Torah in Warsaw, with a maroon cover, that was brought into the ghetto shul, but perished in the fire that consumed the Warsaw ghetto.

This new Torah is not only the word of Hashem faithfully written for a new generation. It is not simply the beautiful centrepiece of our Shabbat services. It is also not just the story of our people from creation to the borders of the Promised Land. It is the story of Jewish eternity.

• Rabbi Sam Thurgood is the rabbi of the Beit Midrash Morasha community in Cape Town.

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Primo Levi: the unbearable burden of bearing witness

MIRAH LANGER

“For those who have experience of Auschwitz, nothing can attain the same degree of reality as Auschwitz.” So said Professor Mario Barenghi during a recent lecture at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre in Forest Town, Johannesburg, about the difficulties survivors faced in bearing witness to the unprecedented horrors of World War II.

The focus of his talk was Italian Jewish chemist Primo Levi, who became famous for his writings about his experiences as a prisoner in Auschwitz.

Barenghi, a professor of contemporary Italian literature at the University of Milano-Bicocca, was lecturing in South Africa as part of recent commemorations of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January.

Levi, born in Turin in 1919, initially joined a partisan group when World War II broke out. However, the group was infiltrated, and Levi was sent first to a labour camp, and then to Auschwitz. He survived an 11-month stay there before being liberated on 18 January 1945.

In the ensuing years, Levi published a number of books, including *If This Is a Man* (1947), *The Periodic Table* (1975), and *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986). His works have become recognised as seminal texts in exploring the Holocaust experience.

In 1987, Levi died after falling down a landing in his apartment building. His death was ruled a suicide.

Barenghi proposed in his lecture, attended by representatives of the Italian embassy, that what elevated Levi’s testimony was

his reflection on the difficulties of bearing witness.

For example, many camp survivors, like Levi, struggled with how after their Holocaust experiences, time no longer seemed to flow normally.

“A barbed-wire fence, similar to the one at the death camp that separated the inside space from the outside now separate[d] the past from the present,” explained Barenghi to the packed audience. This meant that for Levi, even though he had survived, he often felt “closer to the dead than to the living”.

Sometimes, the pull of the past was so strong, “the survivors [were] haunted by the fear that the liberation itself [was] a dream, and that they will soon wake up in the camp again”.

At other moments, Levi expressed the survivors’ distress that the atrocities experienced were so unparalleled, those who listened would not believe them.

“My listeners do not follow me. In fact, they are completely indifferent... A desolating grief now rises in me,” quoted the professor from Levi’s writing.

In addition, explained Barenghi, it was sometimes difficult even for survivors to accept the veracity of their own memories.

He cited, as an example, Levi’s declaration that, “Today, this very day, as I sit at a table and write, I myself am not convinced that these things really happened.”

The professor also suggested that when it came to Levi’s writings, what he elected not to write about was as crucial as what he did choose to include.

“His testimony is based on his awareness of the need to be selective with information. In order to actually say something, you have to give up all thought of saying everything,” said Barenghi.

The professor quoted from Levi’s account of his journey to Auschwitz, where he declared, “Many things were then said and done among us; but of these it is better that no memory remain.”

Barenghi added that alongside moments when Levi explicitly stated that he was leaving out information, there were other omissions that Levi never overtly discussed.



For example, in *If This Is a Man*, “although death looms over the whole narration as a huge, dark shadow, the only direct depiction of a dying man occurs in the last chapter”, he noted.

By contrast, the violence committed against prisoners was frequently referenced in Levi’s work – showing his focus on detailing observations of human behaviour.

Levi’s writing could be traced across two phases, proposed Barenghi.

In the first stage, Levi’s style was linked to the Italian term *vertiginosamente* – a concept linked to vertigo – with connotations of “something frenetic, dizzying, whirling”.

As such, “in this first phase, then, the narration originates from instinct and impulse, from a need to let off steam”, posited Barenghi.

Levi’s second phase became more closely linked to his profession as a chemist. As Levi himself described it, he took on the role of a writer “who weighs and divides, measures, and judges on solid evidence, and does his best to respond to the whys”.

“His purpose is now to distil knowledge from horror,” Barenghi said about the shift.

No longer did Levi’s

testimony consist of “the simple preservation of the past”. Instead, his accounts were now styled to function “as a warning for our common future which concerns everybody”.

Levi came to the hypothesis that the roots of genocide could be located in the widespread – although often latent – belief that “every stranger is an enemy”.

Nevertheless, he chose to uphold the possibility that this belief could be challenged, and a common humanity asserted instead.

As such, suggested Barenghi, Levi’s work came to serve as a proposal for the acceptance of the other “not as a gracious granting, but as the foundation of one’s own humanity. Nobody is human alone.”

“Here... lies Primo Levi’s most precious legacy,” he concluded.

How to do good and reduce your tax bill – legally

JONTY SACKS

OPINION

Around the Shabbos table, I get asked the same question every week, “What is Section 12J?”

It’s not an easy conversation to have, as most shtetl folk are stereotypically “experts” in tax, finance, investments, share portfolios, and offshore investments.

Section 12J is relatively simple. Are you paying tax? If yes, carry on reading. Do you have to pay South African Revenue Service (SARS) capital gains tax this year? If yes, carry on reading. Section 12J is one of the few legal ways to reduce your tax bill before 28 February 2019. In fact, Helen Zille promoted Section 12J this week as a legal way to participate in a tax revolt.

Let me explain Section 12J briefly with the following scenario: Alon earns R3 million, and he would normally have to pay income tax on the R3 million. However, Alon is tax savvy, and invests R1 million into a Section 12J company. These are companies that the government has earmarked as major contributors to future economic growth, and they need cash injections.

If Alon invests the R1 million before 28 February 2019, SARS will allow him to reduce his tax bill by R1 million. This means that because Alon has been paying income tax every month, he will be able to claim up to R450 000 back from SARS as a refund.

Yes, you didn’t misread that. It is true. If you are paying tax each month, and if you invest in a Section 12J company before 28 February, SARS will write you a cheque, based on your marginal tax bracket, of up to 45% of the amount, which you invest. Don’t believe me? Well, we expect more than R2 billion to be invested just this year in Section 12J companies, which will bring the total invested amount to about R5.5 billion over the past few years.

Why are Jews still investing in South Africa? One of the reasons is because they are still South African taxpayers. Why isn’t everyone investing in Section 12J companies? Either they don’t pay enough tax, or they aren’t fully aware of how Section 12J works.

Why aren’t you investing in Section 12J? Ask yourself that question quickly, because we are only weeks away from 28 February, and time is running out to reduce your tax bill.

• Jonty Sacks is a partner at Jaltch, a specialist in Section 12J company formation and administration.

SA-born Litvak accuses Lithuania of insincerity on Holocaust

>>>Continued from page 5

It was a catastrophe for the state and society of Lithuania, and it is very distressing that Lithuanian citizens also directly participated in the mass murder of Jews organised by the Nazis.

“The government of Lithuania condemns in the strongest possible terms those Lithuanian citizens who collaborated

with the Nazi regime, and were involved in this horrible crime against humanity – atrocities of the Holocaust.”

It also mentions that Israel has honoured more than 900 Lithuanians as “righteous among the nations” for saving Jews; that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu supports Lithuania’s

position; and that the Lithuanian president apologised for Lithuania’s role in the Shoah back in 1995.

“[The Lithuanian president] also recognised the need to tell words of truth about the Holocaust in Lithuania.”

Perhaps the trial will bring us closer to the truth in this situation.

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TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Is Eurocentricity still a proverbial four-letter word in today’s South Africa? After the coming of democracy in 1994, there was political and social pressure to be more Afrocentric. This was to counter eons of brutal white and colonial rule that emanated from Europe, and persecuted Africa’s people. But society has matured, and become less threatened by the different ways people might identify themselves, whether it be African, European, or something in between. Anyone parachuting into the huge Linder Auditorium on the campus of the University of the Witwatersrand on Saturday to hear Italian pianist Mariangela Vacatello perform works by European composers including Mozart, might have thought it was a wholly European event. The 1 000-plus auditorium was packed to the rafters with an audience almost exclusively middle-aged and white. There was hardly a black face to be seen, aside from the waiters serving in the restaurant. Superficially, it looked like the 1960s, when apartheid was alive.

Of course, in those days, there was a curfew for black people in white areas, and they could not have attended anyway. They had to keep to places such as Soweto, and carry a “pass” signed by their white employer, to be in a white area. Saturday’s performance left the audience breathless, and demanding more. After a standing ovation, Vacatello gave several encores, the last ending with Mozart’s lively *Rondo Alla Turca*, with a jazz beat. She came to South Africa under the auspices of the Johannesburg Musical Society, a more than 100-year-old institution currently managed by Avril Rubenstein, in partnership with Richard Cock’s Johannesburg International Mozart Festival (JIMF). On Sunday, the Linder, which has over the years been host to significant luminaries such as Pinchas Zuckerman, saw a grand performance of the Mozart Requiem by the Johannesburg Festival Orchestra and the Symphony Choir of Johannesburg, programmed by JIMF, and conducted by Cock. There was not an empty seat and again, an almost exclusively white audience. They were there not because they were white, nor because Mozart was European, but because that is the kind of music they love. The dichotomy seems crude. And it is.

There are many black lovers of European classical music in this country, as there is a growing interest in opera by black practitioners. But overwhelmingly, there is disproportion in audiences such as that of the Mozart Festival. Does the skewed make-up of audiences indicate that South Africa’s non-racial project has failed? In this racially obsessed country, the likes of black populist politicians like Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) leader Julius Malema question the place of whites in the country. Showcasing these so-called “European” works could be interpreted by mischievous politicians as a statement that whites are not African, but European, and not deserving of African status. What place does this divisive argument have in the new South Africa, which is confused with identity issues, and is

witnessing the withering of the rainbow-nation dream? With elections coming soon, racist rhetoric will intensify as parties with a “white” image such as the Democratic Alliance compete against parties with a “black” image such as the African National Congress and EFF. Malema knows how to ride that wave. His party attracts votes through racial bombast. But in the broad sense, most people no longer regard it as sinful, politically or artistically, to be Eurocentric. Too often in the recent past, art has received accolades not because of its quality, but its maker’s identity. This is dangerous and misleading. Mozart may have been born in Europe about 260-odd years ago. He may have been born white-skinned and male. But these are not the reasons he is loved. He is loved because of the brilliance of his work.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Stellenbosch University denies being anti-Israel

In December 2018, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) was involved in a public spat with Stellenbosch University after several Israeli academics, as well as a Palestinian peace activist, were removed from the speaking programme of an upcoming conference. Their removal was in response to threats by agitators from the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement to disrupt the event – whose official title, somewhat ironically, was “Recognition, Reparation, Reconciliation: The Light and Shadow of Historical Trauma”. In spite of persistent denials on the university’s part, it became all too clear in the course of our liaising with the academics involved that their sessions had indeed been cancelled in response to BDS pressure. We found it particularly objectionable that the removal from the programme of Palestinian scholar Professor Mohammed Dajani was due to his having been brought out as a speaker by the SAJBD the previous year. In our correspondence with the institution and media statements, we ensured that the real facts of this disgraceful situation were made public. On 26 January, the board met the senior leadership of Stellenbosch to clarify what had happened and discuss a way forward. Amongst those in attendance was Professor Thuli Madonsela, Law Faculty Trust Chair for Social Justice and law professor. Madonsela stressed that the university’s actions were aimed at ensuring peace and security for the conference following calls to exclude Israeli participants, and that it had never been its intention to undermine academic freedom nor to make Israeli participants feel unwelcome. While our position remains that the conference organisers should have stood their



Above Board
Shaun Zagnoev

ground and not allowed themselves to be influenced by politically-motivated intimidation by outside parties, we can now accept that their actions, however ill-conceived, were aimed at preventing the conference from being disrupted rather than an endorsement of the campaign to boycott Israeli academics. Stellenbosch, for its part, reiterated its commitment to academic freedom, and confirmed that Israeli academics, no less than those from any other country, were welcome there. In an official statement released earlier this week, the university stressed its “continued adherence to the principles of freedom of expression and academic freedom”, in which regard it would continue to welcome academics from all over the world, including from Israel. Stellenbosch University is a respected academic institution of genuine global standing. It is to be hoped that going forward, the institution, as it has in years past, will firmly adhere to the

above-stated principles. The incident at Stellenbosch showed once again how universities the world over have been turned into a battleground by those intent on excluding Israel and its citizens from every conceivable international forum. To date, fortunately, these efforts have met with little success at official level. The board continues to monitor the situation on our own campuses. As we have done in the past, we will render whatever assistance we can to those, including Jewish students, who take a stand against this pernicious, dishonest, and fundamentally immoral phenomenon.

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

A column of WIZO South Africa

Worldwide WIZO sisterhood in Israel in 2019

One hundred Women’s International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) leaders from across the globe assembled in Israel last month for the 2019 Meeting of Representatives. This week-long event expresses solidarity and support for the work WIZO does to advance all sectors of society in Israel. It sets the policies for the coming year in WIZO’s 800 institutions, projects, and programmes, and offers an excellent opportunity to share ideas. Hailing from more than twenty countries, the delegates in Israel for the five-day conference visited WIZO schools and youth villages, and attended panels and sessions related to this year’s theme, Innovation and Renewal.



WIZO South Africa
Moonyeen Castle
President

For the first time, Ireland has representation, adding another group of WIZO women to the organisation’s worldwide network. As is traditional, the WIZO meeting concluded with former WIZO United States Co-President Jana Falic graciously hosting a festive closing event for participants. The “surprise guest” was none other than American-Jewish comedian and pro-Israel activist Roseanne Barr, who spoke warmly of her admiration for WIZO’s important work. The evening continued with a festive meal, and lively singing and dancing in an expression of WIZO’s worldwide sisterhood. World WIZO Chairperson Professor Rivka Lazovsky summed up the week’s events. She emphasised that the fact that hundreds of women from around the world came to Israel reflects the organisation’s ability to cope with the disturbing phenomena of the de-legitimisation of Israel around the world.

This column is paid for by WIZO SA

Lazovsky said she felt confident that WIZO would continue to be a force for improving the lives of people in Israel for years and years to come. 27 January is annual International Holocaust Remembrance Day, designated by the United Nations to commemorate the tragedy of the Holocaust. The number of survivors is getting smaller every year, but their stories and testaments live on in collective Jewish and global memories. WIZO makes it its duty to support WIZO members and their families who survived the Holocaust. We honour the memory of WIZO members who perished; and we pay tribute to the WIZO federations and members who worked courageously to save

Jews during World War II, and who helped displaced survivors after the war. *Am Israel chai* (the Jewish nation lives) – better and stronger than ever. WIZO Johannesburg hosted a fantastic Christmas party at Sithandiwe Disabled Care Centre last December, whereupon the organisation discovered that the kitchen staff needed assistance with preparing food for the children, who have special dietary requirements. In January, WIZO partnered with Magimix, which generously donated one of its food processors to the care centre. This will help to improve the quality of life of the children in immeasurable ways. It is the time of year when many annual general meetings of organisations are held, and new committees formed. WIZO wishes all incoming leadership and their committees success in 2019.

WHAT'S ON		Saturday (9 February)		Houghton. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW office 011 648 1053.	
		Sandton Central Shul hosts ShabbaTogether: Jewish Disability and Inclusion Awareness with guest speakers and workshops. Time: 11:00. Evening Havdalah and movie 19:45.		Tuesday (12 February)	
Venue: Sandton Central Shul, 8 Stella Street, Sandton. Contact: rak@chabad.org.za		Sunday (10 February)		• The South Africa Zionist Federation has opened registration for the Hebrew ulpan of 2019. Join one of its three classes based on a free assessment at our registration evening on 5 February, from 18:00 to 19:00. Classes will commence on 12 February 2019. Discounts are available if you are making aliyah. For more information, or to secure your place, contact Beauty on 011 645 2601/admin@sazf.org	
		Monday (11 February)		Wednesday (13 February)	
• The Big Band Music Appreciation Society hosts an audio on the life and tunes of Dean Martin, and a movie, <i>Deep in my heart</i> , a biography of composer Sigmund Romberg. Time: 14:15. Venue: Beit Emanuel, Slome Auditorium, 38 Oxford Road, Parktown (entrance in Third Avenue). Contact: Marilyn 072 243 7436 or Jack 082 450 7622.		• The Union of Jewish Women hosts Beekeeper Sharon Lage on <i>What is Happening to our Bees?</i> Time: 10:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street,		• Jewish Learning Institute course with Rabbi Ari Kievman discussing <i>Justice, Justice Shall You Pursue: Standards of Evidence in the Talmud</i> . Time: 09:45 to 11:15. Venue: Chabad House, 27 Aintree Ave, Savoy or 19:15 to 20:45 at Sandton Central Shul, 8 Stella St, Sandton, opposite the Gautrain. Contact: www.jli.org.za 011 440 6600, or jli@chabad.org.za	
		Thursday (14 February)		• Hebrew speakers meet at 10:45 at Beyachad, 2 Eray Street, Raedene.	

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

Judaism and the death penalty

JOCELYN ROME

Capital punishment was abolished in South Africa in 1995 by a ruling of the Constitutional Court, but the jury is out on whether South African Jews believe this is just.

Arguments about the re-instatement of the death penalty continue unabated, particularly in view of rising crime and the persistence of horrific high murder rates. In the United States, where the death penalty still remains in 30 states, the debate centres on, as it does in South Africa, the morality of the death penalty itself, the possibility of condemning innocent people to death, its effectiveness as a deterrent, and racial biases in its application.

Where does Judaism stand on the death penalty? Are some people so evil that they deserve to be executed? Is even a slight chance of executing an innocent person too great a risk to bear? Rabbi Ari Kievman tackled these serious questions on 30 January, in a lesson at the Jewish Learning Institute at Chabad House in Sandton, part of a six-part series on Crime and Consequence.

The series looks at contemporary legal matters through a Torah lens. The session was punctuated by insight from the audience, which included two retired judges, Percy Blieden and Ralph Zulman, among the 30 or so people attending.

The audience overwhelmingly supported the death penalty, a view which changed little when a second poll was conducted at the end of the session.

Are some people so evil that they deserve to be executed? Is even a slight chance of executing an innocent person too great a risk to bear?

The discussion centred on the possibility of human error. Blieden argued that each case was different, and needed to be assessed on its own merits. Countering this, Zulman recounted a shocking case in South Africa, where the judgement had a distinctly racist overtone. He told of how an accused was convicted and sentenced to death based on the judge claiming proficiency in Xhosa. He had ignored the court translation, which was actually in Sepedi.

Rabbi Kievman outlined the four elements of capital punishment found in the Torah: retribution, incapacitation, deterrence, and rehabilitation. The Torah, in Exodus 21:12, is clear on the moral applicability of capital punishment for those who commit murder: “One who strikes a person with a fatal blow shall be put to death.”

The Mishnah, Sanhedrin 6:2, discusses how confession and regret are part of a spiritual rehabilitation that can be achieved through the death penalty, allowing the perpetrator to achieve a portion in the world to come.

While the Torah is clear that the death penalty itself is not immoral and can rehabilitate the soul – even if only in the world to come – the commentaries show

how severe restrictions on its application made the death penalty extremely difficult to carry out.

In the Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Sanhedrin 20:1, the Rambam outlines the rigorous standards that need to be upheld. In order to impose the death penalty, the murder must have been premeditated, the murderer must have received and verbally acknowledged an explicit warning of the consequences of the crime, and two eyewitnesses are required to testify.

Actual executions were thus rare, and needed to be reviewed by a Beth Din of 23 judges and 69 rabbinic scholars, who scrutinised the evidence and offered opinions. “A Sanhedrin that executes once every seven years is called a ‘destructive court’. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria says once every seventy years.” (Mishnah, Manot 1:1).

The infinite value the Torah places on human life underpins the logic behind these high standards. The Torah considers it preferable that even a thousand

guilty people be exonerated, rather than one innocent individual be executed.

The Rambam did, however, as Kievman explained, outline an emergency law that could be invoked, which lowered the standards of proof if done in accordance with the needs of the time for a deterrent to prevent more crimes.

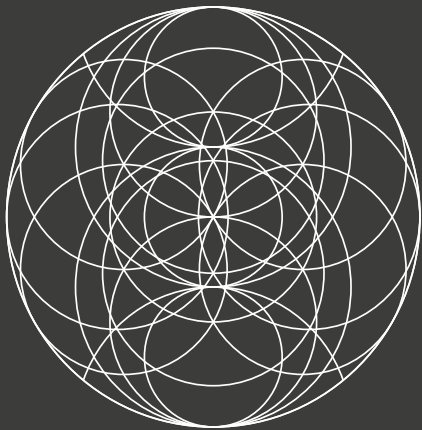
The Beth Din has the mandate to determine such needs. This emergency clause can be invoked only if murder has become a societal problem, and can be

deterred only through the use of the death penalty. The death penalty cannot be used if other forms of punishment can serve as an equally effective deterrent.

So how, in today’s times, when there is no Sanhedrin and Jewish courts do not have the authority to impose the death penalty, are Torah views of the death penalty relevant?

Kievman says the Torah’s message is didactic, one that can teach about the severity of murder and of the value of life, even that of a murderer.

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Deciding who to vote for



OPINION
HOWARD FELDMAN

It's going to get ugly. It always does. Anywhere in the world, an election year unleashes a tsunami of negativity, as each party does their best to show why the other would make a very poor choice.

Social media, fake news, and the scars left by the deep and unhealed wounds of apartheid, will serve to complicate the situation. One thing that we can be certain of, is that it is not going to be that pleasant.

For South African Jews, it is even more complicated.

- Even though there is a general approval of Cyril Ramaphosa himself, his party has been a key component of the corruption that has led to the economic woes of the country. We are in the midst of a state-capture enquiry that has left us speechless on the one hand, but also indicates that there is a clear intention to expose the horrors of the past few years and perhaps deal with them.
- Although no doubt a friend to the Jewish community in some areas, the African National Congress has an appalling track record with regard to its flagrant anti-Israel bias. It has gone so far as to sign a memorandum of understanding with Hamas, a designated terror organisation, whose charter openly calls for the murder and removal of all Jews from Israel.

South Africa is one of the few countries that allows Hamas to travel to the country and even open an office here. It has legitimised a genocidal and racist pariah.

- The Democratic Alliance, long the choice for South African Jews even prior to its current format, has shown significant cracks in its structure. Its communication on the Cape Town drought, the

Patricia de Lille debacle, and its inability to curtail Helen Zille, are cause for concern among Jewish voters.

Although the party is aligned to the values of many in the Jewish community, and the organisation is populated by members with the best of intentions, it currently does not inspire voter confidence.

- The party most loyal to the community and to Israel is undoubtedly the ACDP, led by Reverend Kenneth Meshoe. It continues to stand firm on its support, not only for Israel but for South African Jews. That said, whether it is multifaceted enough to present a viable alternative is something that I am not yet convinced about.
- The Economic Freedom Fighters is an interesting party. Julius Malema is undoubtedly one of the smartest politicians on the circuit. He values education, and is no doubt a lot more measured than his persona displays. He is also a marketing genius. I continue (perhaps naively) to feel that some of his (anti-Semitic) and other rhetoric is just that, and that beneath the populist approach is a practical and shrewd leader. In spite of this, until more is known about his followers and policies, the community needs to proceed with caution.

A common accusation levelled at the Jewish community is that it views politics and candidates in terms of their impact on Jews and Israel. There is nothing wrong with this. It's time that we stopped apologising for it.

How a country treats its Jews and its attitude to Israel is deeply relevant, as it reflects its prejudice, how it interrogates and understands global politics, and who its bed-fellows are.

The next few months are going to be scratchy. We are going to be bombarded with negativity and noise. It is going to be vital to assess what we hear carefully, and make decisions that are best for the country and the community. We need to make peace with the fact that the field is an imperfect one. But we still need to decide who plays.

Jill Katz, a regal presence who touched many lives

DIANE WOLFSON



Jill Katz, a renowned, respected, and beloved matriarch and rebbetzin, passed away last week at the inspiring age of 91.

She was held in high esteem as a refined, regal, and elegant lady, who conducted herself with grace. She was very dear to her many friends, and incredibly devoted to her extended family.

Together with her late husband Rabbi Shabsy (Sidney) Katz of blessed memory, she led the large Pretoria Jewish community for close to four decades. In their rabbinical role, they became highly influential figures in the wider Jewish community, and government circles.

After the sudden loss of her husband, Jill continued to involve herself in communal activities. She volunteered for many years for several large research projects, involving herself in working with the archives of various communities in southern

Africa. In July 1987, she concluded an 11-year project as editor of the book, *The Story of the Pretoria Jewish Community up to 1930*, beginning with the first Jews to settle there in 1855. This book is a great tribute to her for the enormous amount of work she did to research and edit it.



Jill Katz

Although she held a public position, she quietly touched and affected the lives of many. She was a sage and larger-than-life presence.

She is survived by her children, Chana Zakheim of Jerusalem, Israel; Ruth Chaiton; Rabbi Michael Katz; and Joan Wainer – all of Johannesburg. The light of her life was her many grandchildren and great-grandchildren throughout the world.

Planting seeds of Zionism



King David Pre-Primary Linksfield children learned about Israel and nature at the same time recently by building and planting a garden bed in the shape of Israel. The activity was prompted by a visit by Bev Price from the Jewish National Fund, who contributed seeds and decorative stones.

Reading aloud to promote literacy



Ariella Urdang and Jordan Abrahams read to Grade 1 children at King David Ariel on World Read Aloud Day

Students from the writing club at King David Victory Park (KDVP) High School visited King David Ariel on 1 February to read aloud on World Read Aloud Day.

World Read Aloud Day is a day when people around the globe read aloud together and share stories, part of a movement to encourage reading and promote literacy. Reading aloud is one of the most important things a parent or caregiver can do with children of any age. Not only does it build a strong language foundation, it introduces vocabulary, and helps to develop empathy, curiosity, and critical thinking skills.

Led by Ronel Klatzkin, KDVP High School's writing club is an extra mural where high school students write stories, plays, and poems. The club's visit to Ariel was a huge success, and was thoroughly enjoyed by reader and audience alike. "Reading to the children at Ariel was such an amazing feeling," said Ariella Urdang, a Grade 11 student in the writing club. "They weren't the only ones who learned from the experience."

STEM cell at Sydenham

Spending time in the STEM Room (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) is always a firm favourite at Sydenham Pre-Primary. Sitting at the mirror table with the activity of the day are from left: Shayli Bubly, Danya Katzman, and Orli Crouse.



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Letters

NOTHING ‘ABOVE BOARD’ ABOUT MANAGEMENT OF COUNTRY COMMUNITIES

I refer to a column which appeared on page 19 of your 1-8 February edition, written by Shaun Zagnoev.

I note with interest that the column expressly states that it has been paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), and that above the author’s name appears the words “Above Board”.

I am an ex-Pietersburger now living in Israel. My parents, grand-parents, and many friends are buried at the Pietersburg Jewish Cemetery. In terms of the Pietersburg Hebrew Congregation Trust, it is required to maintain the cemetery in perpetuity.

I am concerned about the following:
1. The SAJBD is failing to fulfil its obligations to country communities, whether in respect of trusts or otherwise.
2. In 2018, the Gauteng constitution was amended to exclude about 95% of the geographical area for which it was then responsible. The areas which now fall outside of Gauteng include Witbank, Springs, Kroonstad, Welkom, Potchefstroom, Polokwane, and many others.
3. Accordingly, as of next year, only the Gauteng and Pretoria urban areas will remain under the jurisdiction of the Gauteng board. Where the excluded communities sit is not entirely known. It

would appear that the SAJBD has “washed its hands” and moved along. What then?
4. Furthermore, and no doubt because of the above decision, Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, who is probably better known to readers as the “travelling rabbi”, has been given notice that his tenure with the SAJBD will terminate at the end of this year. It confirms that country communities are no longer a focus of the SAJBD – if they were even a concern of the SAJBD.
5. What, then, is the future of country communities, the members of which are in effect being “excommunicated”? What was the basis for this decision? Zagnoev is silent about this. The immediate question, then, is which elements of the South African Jewish community does the SAJBD seek to represent? Only its strident supporters, it appears. That is an entirely flawed approach.
6. In his paid advertorial, Zagnoev states that on an annual basis, the trustees of the various trusts, have meetings to “assess how the funds have been allocated during the previous year, and how they should be used in the year to come”. I disagree. This is nonsense which Zagnoev could never support.
7. I am concerned, and believe, that such meetings have, in fact, not taken place, and that there has been a general lack of

proper governance and compliance with community trust deeds insofar as country communities are concerned. There have been a number of appointed “commission” reports on this issue, including the Donen report and Joffe report, some of which have been reported in your newspaper yet, curiously, have never been made available to community members. Why not? Surely the community is entitled to know what is going on?

...there has been a general lack of proper governance and compliance with community trust deeds insofar as country communities are concerned.

8. With regard the reference to Beyachad, it (Beyachad) has by all accounts unilaterally extended its role way beyond simple administrative services, in spite of what Zagnoev suggests. The activities of Beyachad require thorough investigation, and by an independent body. The findings then ought to be made available to the community. An organisation which survives on donor funding needs to account for its activities in all respects, and without exception.
9. My concerns are such that after requesting access to information in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA), the SAJBD for all practical purposes declined my request. I have

launched legal proceedings against the SAJBD in the Johannesburg High Court. I have done so in an effort to obtain access to records held by the SAJBD in relation to the Pietersburg Hebrew Congregation Trust. With all affidavits now having been filed, I anticipate that the case will be heard later this year. The various affidavits address the essential issues involved.
10. I am also aware that a PAIA request has been submitted to the Pietersburg Hebrew Community Trust’s trustees for access to records on a substantially similar basis to my request to the SAJBD. Either way, if the SAJBD is in fact “above board”, this will be established from my court application or the separate PAIA request.
11. If any of your readers or yourselves wish to know more about these legal proceedings, you are welcome to contact me at wienerd@bezeqint.net. I am prepared to provide copies of what are now public documents in my case against the SAJBD. But I will not go any further in the circumstances, and will not provide comment. In any event, the affidavits filed provide sufficient information about the issues involved. I will let the court decide what I am entitled to.
12. I conclude by urging your readers to exercise their democratic right and, when the next round of elections is held in respect of the SAJBD and its constituent bodies, to exercise their right to vote in such a manner as will ensure proper governance of the affairs of the Jewish community in South Africa. Anything less is not conducive to accountability by those who claim to represent the community.
– Dennis Wiener, Israel

The Board Responds

CAMPAIGN TO VILIFY BOARD HAS NO BASIS IN TRUTH

In response to the various comments and allegations made by Dennis Wiener, the SA Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) in the first instance wishes to point out that certain of the issues he raises are the subject of an upcoming court hearing. Since the matter is sub judice, it is our intention that they be addressed in the appropriate legal forum rather than playing out to no good purpose in the press.

We can respond, if only briefly, to certain other assertions unrelated to the impending hearing.

First, it is simply untrue to claim that the board’s Gauteng constitution “was amended so as to exclude about 95% of the geographical area for which it was then responsible”. The Gauteng Council, as its name implies, is responsible only for centres that fall within the boundaries of Gauteng province (but not Pretoria – Wiener is perhaps unaware that there is a SAJBD Pretoria Council which functions independently of the Gauteng Council). Virtually all of the towns he mentions (Witbank, Kroonstad, Welkom, Potchefstroom, and Polokwane) are located in other provinces, and as such fall under the purview of the board’s country communities department.

Next, there is no basis to the assertion that meetings of the various country communities trusts administered by Beyachad have not taken place. For the record, over the past four months, such meetings have been held for all but one of the 12 individual trusts that we oversee (including that of Pietersburg/Polokwane), and a meeting for the remaining one will be held within the next month. We also note that, other than nominating trustees to the various trusts to supplement trustees appointed by the various communities, the SAJBD is not responsible for managing the trusts. These trustees function independent of the board.

In 2017, the board conducted an internal investigation, headed by Judge Meyer Joffe, into governance practises within the organisation, and every recommendation

has since been implemented so as to ensure that all our activities, including those relating to the trusts, have been strictly compliant with the findings and recommendations of this commission. The SA Jewish Report was given full access to the findings of the investigation at the time.

Finally, with regard to the future of the country communities, it is categorically not the case that the board has taken a decision to “wash its hands” of its responsibilities to care for the needs of Jews in smaller country centres. Rather, following a necessary restructuring process that took into account current demographic realities, it was decided that from the beginning of 2020, the needs of Jews still living outside the main urban centres, and the maintenance of cemeteries, will be cared for fully in alternative ways, which may entail the relevant SAJBD regions assuming responsibility. Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, who for many years has carried out his role as spiritual leader to the South African country communities with distinction, was very much a part of this process, and continues to be centrally involved in ensuring a smooth, efficient transition to the new system.

I am extremely disappointed that in spite of our request to Wiener to have his dispute with the board adjudicated by any retired Jewish judge, he has elected to pursue a costly and resource-intensive judicial process. Notwithstanding Wiener’s extensive campaign to vilify the board (of which his letter to the SA Jewish Report is another salvo) and threats to take this issue to the mainstream media unless his demands are met, we are duty bound to pursue what our elected leadership considers to be the correct course of action.

I conclude with the firm assurance that the board, as it has done throughout its long history, will continue to represent the entire Jewish community of South Africa, and be guided by what is in the community’s best interests. Those wishing to know more about what we do, or who have specific questions are more than welcome to contact our offices.
– Shaun Zagnoev, SAJBD Chairperson

Fundraising Executive for Non-Profit Organisation

This is an exciting opportunity for a dynamic and motivated fundraiser to play a pivotal role in the growth and security of Jewish communal organisations dedicated to securing the future of Jewish life in South Africa, and its connection to Israel.

We are seeking an enthusiastic and capable person with a proven track record in raising funds within the local and international South African Jewish community. This person will be responsible for developing and delivering the overall fundraising strategy of the organisation and its beneficiaries, supplementing existing grant funding with unrestricted funding from individuals, corporates, grant-makers, and other sources.

The fundraising executive will be responsible for leading a team, and developing a diverse range of sustainable funding streams to support and expand the work of the organisation. This individual will

also be responsible for developing the organisation’s communications and media profile at national and international level, in collaboration with the executive directors of beneficiary organisations.

- A strong track record of securing funding (more than five years) for charitable or non-governmental activities from diverse funding streams;
- A strong portfolio of communication and awareness-raising materials (essential);
- Excellent contacts and connections with potential major donors;
- An understanding of the Israeli and local political environment;

Interested parties should send their full CV and a letter of interest to recruitmentfundraiser@gmail.com

Suitable candidates will be shortlisted and invited to an interview in Johannesburg.

Those shortlisted for the interview will be given a brief on the financial and fundraising position, and will be required to present a summary fundraising strategy during the interview.

Closing date: 21 February 2019
Planned start date: March 2019

SUV

2019 Ford Everest
2.2 TDCi XLS

35-year-old male

PREMIUM

R871^{pm}

OUTBONUS R3 327

OP19/0093/E

SUV

2019 VW Tiguan 1.4 TSi Comfortline

SUV

2019 BMW X3 XDrive 20D

SUV

2019 Toyota Fortuner 2.4 GD-6 R/B



47-year-old female

PREMIUM

R692^{pm}

OUTBONUS R2 642



59-year-old male

PREMIUM

R741^{pm}

OUTBONUS R2 828



40-year-old male

PREMIUM

R838^{pm}

OUTBONUS R3 197

2019

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SEDAN

2014 Mercedes-Benz C180



55-year-old female

PREMIUM

R630^{pm}

OUTBONUS R2 403