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Israel supports Africa in fight against terrorism

TALI FEINBERG

Footage recorded and reported by Israel’s Channel 13 this week shows Israel Defense Forces (IDF) officers training Tanzanian soldiers in hand-to-hand krav maga (self-defence fighting tactics), hostage-rescue operations, and urban combat.

Towards the end of last year, the IDF provided special counter-terrorism training to commanders from the Ghana Armed Forces. Chad’s army is reportedly already using Israeli satellites to do surveillance on terrorist groups operating in the north of the country.

These are just some examples of Israel’s military assisting African armies to step up their counter-terrorism efforts, resulting in stronger ties between the Jewish state and the African continent.

It flies in the face of the “Africa for Palestine” theme of the upcoming Israel Apartheid Week (IAW), an international series of lectures and rallies held at universities. IAW organisers say Africa will “come alive” in support of the Israel-bashing extravaganza, but the evidence shows otherwise. It is clear that African countries are quietly forming close bonds with Israel on all fronts, especially in battling the ever-growing threat of terrorism on the continent.

“The fight against terrorism has become a global issue that requires well-trained security forces to fight the menace,” said Ghanaian Defence Minister Dominic Nitiwul following the training in Ghana. “This collaborative training between the Ghana Armed Forces and the Israeli Defense Forces is a step in the right direction, which adds to our efforts to ensure our preparedness and capacity building.”

In July 2018, the United States said that it would cut military aid for Africa’s fight against terrorism, and rather focus on “old threats” like China and Russia. Former Defence Secretary James Mattis announced a 10% cut in troop strength for the United States Africa Command.

This is in spite of the fact that African countries are struggling to prevent the expansion of terror groups in parts of the continent, according to a US State Department report. It leaves a void for Israel to fill.

“Many African countries seek closer ties with Israel in geopolitical fields such as security and counterterrorism,” wrote journalist Raluca Besliu in a recent *YaleGlobal Online* article. “Extremist movements such as Boko Haram in

Nigeria and Al-Shabaab in Somalia are a threat in East and West Africa alike. Israel’s security knowledge is perceived as beneficial, especially in terms of technological surveillance, collecting and digitising personal data, and border-control systems.

“Israel has a direct interest in supporting African states in fighting terrorism and monitoring jihadist movements, and in preventing the destabilisation of Egypt, its southern neighbour,” she said.

said Israel was “returning to Africa in a big way”. Netanyahu travelled to Chad in January this year to strengthen ties with the mostly Muslim country five decades after it ended relations with Israel. Chad’s President Idriss Déby visited Israel in November last year, renewing these ties.

“We have a shared struggle against the sickening evil of this century, which is terrorism,” Déby said at the time.

The leaders talked about the fight against terrorism, as well as increasing bilateral co-

IDF, the Mossad, and the Shin Bet security service are all working to boost military training in African countries.

“We treat African leaders with respect and appreciation and deal with them as equals, in a language of true camaraderie, personal friendship, and professionalism,” said Segal.

Israel has already categorically ruled out working with a number of African nations due to their human-rights record. A delegation of Israeli officials has been



Infected Mushroom, Erez Eisen and Amit Duvdevani, performing at Ultra last weekend. See story on page 13.

In 2016, Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu became the first Israeli prime minister in three decades to travel to Africa, visiting Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia. And in June 2017, he was the first non-African leader to participate in a Summit of the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) in the Liberian capital Monrovia.

The following November, he attended Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta’s swearing-in ceremony in Nairobi, joining leaders from other African countries and holding several bilateral meetings.

At the end of February this year, Israel hosted former soccer player and now Liberian President George Weah. He met Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin.

At the time of the Ecowas summit, Netanyahu

operation in agriculture, counterterrorism, border defence, technology, solar energy, water, and health. Chad’s army’s efforts to help combat Islamist terrorist group Boko Haram in neighbouring Nigeria, Niger, and Cameroon have made it an important ally of the West.

Netanyahu’s four visits to Africa over the past two years has been hailed by Atlantic Council Africa Centre expert J Peter Pham as a remarkable testament to how much of a priority the Israeli government has made of Africa.

The Atlantic Council is a Washington DC non-partisan think tank and public policy group with a mission to promote constructive leadership and engagement in international affairs.

Israel recently appointed Colonel Aviezer Segal as its first military attaché to Africa in several decades. The foreign ministry, the

travelling to countries in Africa and carefully weighing requests for further military co-operation, according to Israel’s Channel 13.

Last year, fifteen countries with diplomatic ties to Israel hosted an Africa Day celebration at the Kfar Shmaryahu residence of the Nigerian Ambassador to Israel, Enoch Pear Duchi. There, Zambian Ambassador Martin Mwanambale said, “We recognise that there can be no meaningful development without peace on the continent. Hence, we aspire for a peaceful and secure Africa.

“We envisage that mechanisms for peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts will be fully functional at all levels by 2020. We look forward to your [Israeli] government’s continued support for the African continent.”



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Glencore story highlights the dirty game of coal

NICOLA MILTZ

Coal mining is a messy business, involving a lot of dirty hands.

This has emerged in testimony at the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture. There, the story unfolded of how global commodities giant Glencore was allegedly forced by the state into selling one of its coal mines to the Guptas – the family at the centre of state-capture allegations.

This is a story about a coal mine, Optimum Coal Mine (OCM), formerly owned by Glencore, and how the executives at Eskom, South Africa’s electricity supply parastatal, together with high-ranking government officials, were allegedly hell-bent on forcing Glencore to sell the mine to the Gupta-owned Tegeta Exploration and Resources – literally for a steal.

It’s a murky mystery of corporate intrigue about how big business came off second best after colliding head-on with state capture during the Jacob Zuma years of state plunder.

It all started when OCM was formed specifically to supply coal to Eskom’s Hendrina Power Station back in the 70s. A coal supply agreement was in place for this purpose, which tied OCM into a long-term contract with Eskom to ensure security of supply.

The characters in this plot are ex-South African billionaire Ivan Glasenberg, the Chief Executive of Glencore, who became a Swiss citizen in 2011, and Clinton Ephron, the former Chief Executive of Optimum Coal Holdings, the company Glencore was pressured into selling to the Guptas in 2015. Ephron now lives in Israel.

The two mining executives came head to head with several players now implicated in state-capture allegations, namely former Mining Minister Mosebenzi Zwane, former Eskom Chairperson Dr Ben Ngubane, and Eskom executives Brian Molefe and Matshela Koko.

Ephron last week lifted the lid on Eskom’s shady tactics to squeeze Optimum out of business by forcing it into business rescue. According to his testimony, Glencore found itself “stonewalled” as it tried in vain to hold onto OCM in spite of the incessant interventions of government and Eskom.

Glencore acquired the mine only in 2011. After some time, Optimum found that the inflationary adjustments in the coal price paid by Eskom were no longer working, and that cost of running the mine and producing the coal was exceeding the selling price.

Around July 2013, said Ephron, “We had started feeling the pinch of lower export prices, and the exports could no longer subsidise the supply of coal to Eskom. The mines were starting to lose significant money.”

It was then that Optimum approached Eskom (in 2013) to alleviate some of the financial

burden it was experiencing. Optimum invoked a hardship clause provided for in the original contract to try offset the R829 million in losses it had suffered that year. By 2014 (around the time a co-operation agreement came into effect with Eskom), OCM was losing cash of about R80 million to R100 million a month.

This led to arbitration followed by lengthy negotiations, which led to what Ephron referred to as the fourth addendum to the original Eskom/Optimum coal contract.

The fourth addendum would have provided for an extension of the original agreement until 2023 (the existing expiry being 31 December 2018), a revised price for coal, a mechanism whereby Eskom would be able to source coal elsewhere if it could do so at a lower price, and a settlement of claims between OCM and Eskom.

“Glencore considered this proposal to be beneficial to all parties – a win-win,” said Ephron.

The “binding” addendum – which had been approved by an Eskom executive committee – suddenly went up in smoke, said Ephron, only a few weeks after Molefe’s appointment to Eskom.

At a “brief” meeting at Megawatt Park in May 2015, Molefe told Ephron that Eskom would not be amending the terms of the original coal supply agreement with Optimum, and that no amendments would be considered until after the end of the contract in December 2018.

Ephron told the commission he was “devastated” by this. “We had been down a long period of negotiation with Eskom. We had got to the point where we felt that we had reached some sort of conclusion on the Optimum saga. Only to be stonewalled at that point in time.”

Molefe told Ephron that Eskom would enforce its rights under the original contract. This included harsh penalties levied against the company over sub-standard coal.

OCM continued to negotiate with Eskom, which reportedly refused to budge.

Around July 2015, Ephron said he received an unsolicited R2 billion non-binding offer for Optimum via KPMG that was revealed later to have come from Oakbay, which is owned by the Guptas.

Ephron later said the company received a letter of demand insisting on payment of more

than R2 billion in penalties due to Eskom for coal that had been rejected. The following month, Ephron said Eskom withheld payment for coal delivered.

The company was forced into business rescue in August 2015, which ultimately paved the way for the Guptas to purchase the beleaguered mine.

In September 2015, Oakbay made a second non-binding offer for Optimum, this time for half the original offer.

Negotiations took place in October 2015 for the possible sale of OCM to Oakbay. By November, the company was still in business

with the Guptas for the sale of Optimum.

Glencore finally agreed to sell Optimum Coal Holdings to the Guptas for R2.15 billion. Today, no coal is being supplied by Optimum. The mine remains in business rescue.

This week, the commission heard more startling revelations of how Eskom took only three hours to pay a R659 million advance payment to the Gupta-linked Tegeta Exploration and Resources to fully acquire Glencore’s OCM without any goods or services having been delivered to the utility.

A few days before the Guptas were due to make payment, Ephron said Essa said there



Clinton Ephron

rescue, and it was threatened with liquidation.

Then, government mining inspectors were sent out for weekend safety checks at the company’s mines, and slapped Glencore with Section 54 notices which effectively threw salt onto its financial wounds.

Glencore, finding Oakbay’s offers to purchase unacceptable, decided to continue to fund Optimum and help take it out of business rescue.

Zwane then requested a meeting with Glasenberg in Zurich at which Gupta head honcho, Salim Essa, was present.

According to Ephron, at this meeting, Glencore said it would help take Optimum out of business rescue, but would be open to a sale at the right price.

The following day, a meeting was called with Glasenberg, Ephron, Essa, Zwane, and Tony Gupta. The minister allegedly said the best outcome would be for Glencore to reach a deal

was a shortfall of about R600 million. He asked if Glencore could fund the shortfall, and the Guptas would get Eskom to make a pre-payment. Ephron said they declined this offer.

The commission heard this week how Eskom speedily stepped in to approve the R600 million pre-payment for coal that the Guptas would now be supplying from OCM.

Energy expert Chris Yelland told the SA Jewish Report that this was a vital crime story showing “ruthless and opportunistic people operating under the cloak of black economic empowerment”.

Said Yelland, “While I’m hugely in favour of black economic empowerment, I’m not in favour of opportunistic criminal elements using this to further their own personal interests at the expense of the poor who have suffered the most. There are no angels in the coal mining industry, and cowboys don’t cry. All I can say is mining is messy.”



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Momo hoax raises scary parenting issues

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

There’s a terrifying monster popping up in your kid’s YouTube videos, interacting with them on WhatsApp, and encouraging them to commit suicide. It’s called the Momo Challenge, and the story has gone viral.

Naturally you panic, but as you delve deeper – as very few do – you realise that it’s a classic case of fake news.

That’s not to say that there aren’t any technological threats to our children. But we need to separate fact from fiction, remain calm, and practice responsible parenting to give kids the resources they need to deal with legitimate dangers.

“Parents need to be more worried about the real threats children face from bullies in their own environments or on social media than about rumours and scare-mongering,” says Arthur Goldstuck, the Managing Director of technology market research company World Wide Worx, and the editor-in-chief of online

consumer technology magazine *Gadget*.

“Parents of young children especially need to share in their child’s technology life, and be aware of what they have and do on their devices. Most parents abdicate responsibility based on their children supposedly knowing far more than they do. That’s far scarier than a hoax app.”

Clinical psychologist Ruth Ancer agrees, but takes the issue further. “Of course, the hoax highlights that parents should know what’s going on with their kids, but what it highlights more is that people shouldn’t have a reflexive panic response to such stories. Often, because ‘news’ is posted online, people assume it’s by a legitimate source. Yet, the panic this creates does much more damage than the initial cause of said panic.

“There needs to be a balance between preparing your children to face such threats and frightening them,” she says. “I see so many anxious children in my practice. The reason is often because they’re scared by the fears of their parents. Often, those fears are out of proportion to reality. That’s not to minimise the real dangers. To deal with these, parents need to have open communication with their children. If [your children] come across anything sinister online, they need to feel safe enough to come to you and tell you what they saw.”

Yet, how do we approach our kids about threats without scaring them? “First, find out what they already know,” says Ancer. “Ask without inserting fear. Tell them, ‘If you ever see something that worries you, you must tell me.’

“If there’s a legitimate threat with substantial evidence, talk to them. If there’s not, say that there’s a rumour, it doesn’t seem like it’s true, but if there’s ever something in a video telling them to do something horrible, they must come and tell you. Tell them that the things we watch on the internet are not supposed to scare us or tell us to do horrible things. Most of all keep things in perspective.”

It’s ultimately about educating yourself and your children. “Help your children to develop a sense of judgement rather than just banning things,” says Ancer. “If something scares them, first make sure it’s real. You can’t protect them for the rest of their lives. They need to have the tools to check up on stories before they just believe them.”

Yet, how do we know how to determine whether an online threat is real? Goldstuck uses Momo as an example. “It’s largely a hoax,” he says, “drawing on elements that have a ring of truth and fragments of fact to give those who want to defend it a basis for pointing to its veracity.”

Goldstuck explains how to recognise such hoaxes, which have common hallmarks.

“The first is that one cannot track them to the source. When you do find supposed witnesses, they’re either anonymous, can’t be traced for comment, or turn out to be fictitious,” he says.

“The second trademark of this and any urban legend is that the people sharing or repeating the story are never the people to whom it happened.

It usually happened to a friend of a friend, or someone who knows someone who passed it on to the person sharing it.

“The third trademark can be summed up in one word: hysteria,” says Goldstuck. “Authentic scares tend to be surrounded by reasoned commentary, sober assessment, and practical advice. Panic legends are characterised by high emotion, excessive use of capital letters and exclamation marks, and exhortations for people to pass it on to everyone they know.”

Another issue raised by the panic surrounding Momo is how parents can and should monitor and control their children’s online activity.

Tech entrepreneur and parent, Antony Seeff, previously brought out KidTech, which offered “safe” cell phones for school kids by providing a cell phone contract and smartphone with pre-installed parental control apps and educational games. While the product did ignite interest, it was ultimately discontinued.

“There are many apps available, parents just need to get around to installing them,” says Seeff. “That’s what we’ve found is the biggest



Momo

issue. Parents know there’s a problem, and they know that there are appropriate apps, but no-one does anything about it. That’s why we took this product to market, to help parents who know they should be doing something.”

These days, smartphones themselves come with some parental-control features, says Seeff. Google has a child safety product that it has launched for android, iPhones have parental controls, and parental-control app and family locator OurPact is available on all android devices. Antivirus company Norton also offers the Norton Family parental control app.

Israeli technology is at the forefront of parental-control apps. “Israeli company Keepers has great technology mainly around cyberbullying and sexually inappropriate behaviour,” says Seeff.

“It monitors all your kids’ chat apps and the moment dodgy behaviour is picked up, it notifies parents by sending them a snapshot of the conversation. Parents can’t spy on everything, but they’re notified when they need to be. Keepers is being rolled out internationally, but it’s not available in South Africa yet.”

Experts agree that managing your kids’ online activity comes down to good parenting.

“Issues like bullying, peer pressure, and sexually inappropriate content are being manifested through technology, but they’re still social issues,” says Seeff. “We can’t only rely on technological solutions. Have good controls in place – don’t let your kids sleep with their phones in their rooms, for example. Know what your kids are doing on their phones, what apps they’re using, and what shows they’re watching online. Depending on the age and maturity of the child, check their phones now and again to make sure that nothing suspect is going on. Many new-age parents are scared to encroach on their kids’ independence. But as a parent, you have the right and responsibility to know what’s going on with your child.”

Rabbi wins provincial award for cycling project

JORDAN MOSHE

It is not often a rabbi and head of school is recognised for service excellence in a sporting arena. The Premier of Gauteng, David Makhura, last week presented Rabbi Dovid Hazdan of the Great Park Synagogue and Dean of Torah Academy with the Social Transformation through Sports and Recreation award at the Premier’s Service Excellence Awards at Emperors Palace last Thursday night. The award was received for his socially transformative Cycalve programme.

“We’re hoping that the award will generate greater interest amongst sponsors and participants to help us take the project even further,” Hazdan says.

“Having been recognised by the premier, we hope to gain momentum, and take this programme to different cities and communities across the country.

“The premier

stressed the need to recognise excellence in our province, and the investment people are making in others,” says Hazdan. “His motivation for the recognition is that it will promote greater excellence in Gauteng and encourage the creation of more initiatives and involvement.”

With award categories including economic growth and sustainable development, the Gauteng provincial government paid tribute to businesses, nongovernmental organisations, and communities whose projects have contributed to improving lives.

Motivated by Wendy Kahn, the National Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Hazdan submitted an application on behalf of Cycalve towards the end of last year.

Every year Hazdan, the programme’s founder, brings together Grade 11 students from Torah Academy, two schools in Soweto, and an Afrika Tikkun team from Orange Farm in a relay cycle ride from Johannesburg to Durban.

Taking place over five days, the ride fosters tolerance and inspires leadership and camaraderie among young South Africans of diverse cultures and



Rabbi Dovid Hazdan and Rabbi Yossi Chaikin with their award

backgrounds.

In recent years, the Jewish Agency’s diaspora-connection project, Partnership2Gether, has sponsored the participation of an Israeli team from Bet Shemesh in Israel.

Hazdan believes that this prestigious award will bolster the programme to build on decades of past successes, and help to reinvigorate its commitment to investing in the positive future of young South Africans.

Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
18:14	19:02	Johannesburg
18:56	19:47	Cape Town
18:04	18:53	Durban
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Corruption: a tale of two countries



OPINION

Gavin Rome

In Israel, the corrupt occupants of high public office have been subjected to the full brunt of a criminal justice system being applied without fear or favour.

A couple of years ago, the former Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yona Metzger, pleaded guilty to a charge of bribery, tax fraud, and interfering in the trial process. The Jerusalem District Court rejected Metzger’s plea bargain, and sentenced him to four and a half years in prison.

In 2014, former Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was found guilty of corruption, and sentenced to 27 months in prison.

On 28 February 2019, Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit announced his intention to indict the country’s Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, with corruption. In the published draft indictment, the charges against Netanyahu have been set out in three separately numbered cases.

In case 1000, Netanyahu is charged with receiving gifts from a Hollywood mogul in return for political favours. In case 2000, the charge is that Netanyahu and the publisher of Israel’s *Yediot Ahronoth* daily newspaper, Arnon Mozes, concluded a corrupt agreement. The charge is that Netanyahu promised to procure legislative changes that would improve the market share of Mozes’ newspaper at the expense of its competitor. In return, Mozes’ newspaper would give Netanyahu more favourable press coverage.

Similarly, the charge in case 4000 is that Netanyahu benefited Shaul Elovitch, the controller of the Bezeq Telecommunications Company. Again, the charge is that he did so in return for a promise of receiving favourable coverage on Bezzeq’s Wallah news site.

In Israel, the offences of bribery and corruption are provided for in the general penal code. Leaving aside issues of enforcement and political interference for the moment, it is interesting to consider how the South African legal system would treat charges of a similar nature to those levelled at Netanyahu.

“It is necessary for an unequivocal message to be sent out that corruption on the part of politicians, especially those holding high office, will not be tolerated.”

South Africa does not have a codified list of criminal offences. Historically bribery was dealt with as a common-law crime. The legislature has since appreciated the necessity for specific anti-corruption legislation. The main anti-corruption law in South Africa is the Prevention and Combatting of Corrupt Activities Act, 2004 (PCCA).

The PCCA creates a general offence of “corruption” which is given a broad and expansive definition. Under the PCCA, a person is guilty of an offence if he directly or indirectly accepts or offers to accept a

gratification from another person. He would be guilty even if they gave or agreed to give a gratification to any other person for his benefit or that of another. The fact that a corrupt activity or the agreement to embark upon a corrupt activity proves unsuccessful is irrelevant. Thus – and assuming their validity – the charges against Netanyahu would in South Africa fall within the ambit of the offence of corruption.

The disgust with which South African courts have viewed high-profile people engaging in corrupt activities was recently heard in the Supreme Court of Appeal in the case of the State v Scholtz & Others. In that case, the former premier of the Northern Cape, John Block, and others, were charged with corruption.

In upholding Block’s conviction and sentence of 15 years imprisonment, the Supreme Court of Appeal disagreed that getting a fine of R1 million and a suspended sentence would be adequate for his corruption conviction. It stated, “Mr Block was a political leader who achieved high political office. Unfortunately, he used his status to corruptly enrich himself. If there is any prospect of fighting the endemic corruption which exists in this country, it is for our political leaders to set the example, and not misuse public offices to corruptly obtain personal wealth. It is necessary for an unequivocal message to be sent out that corruption on the part of politicians, especially those holding high office, will not be tolerated.”

Sadly, successful prosecution of powerful politicians is not a South African norm. The failures of the South African legal system in

the fight against corruption have generally not occurred at a court or legislative level.

Rather, the ineffective nature of the criminal justice system is the result of the targeted political weakening of the institutional autonomy of the National Prosecuting Authority.

It is thus not surprising that since the advent of democracy, no senior South Africa Cabinet minister has been convicted of corruption. It is to be hoped that in the more open environment of President Cyril Ramaphosa’s administration, the criminal justice system will undergo an independent institutional renaissance.

In Israel, the institutional independence of the attorney general’s office will probably be tested over the next few months. Netanyahu has vehemently denied all of the charges against him. In the course of doing so, he has attacked the integrity of both state prosecutors and the attorney general.

It is, however, worth recalling that it was a right-wing politician, Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who during the equally turbulent and fraught times of the early 1980s, helped to entrench the rule of law in Israel.

Unlike in South Africa, the respect historically given to the rule of law and the outcome of past high-profile corruption cases make it likely that Israel’s prosecutors and its courts will remain indifferent to the politically charged atmosphere prevailing in the case against Netanyahu.

• Gavin Rome is a senior counsel at the Johannesburg Bar. He has acted as a Judge of the High Court on several occasions.

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The countdown to elections in SA and Israel

It is election season in Israel and South Africa, with the Jewish state’s big day coming up on 9 April and ours one month later, on 8 May. Both our nations are counting down to the day that will have a massive impact on the future.

The possibility of a change in leadership has huge ramifications for any country, and can alter its very nature. Remember the day that former President Barack Obama handed over the United States to President Donald Trump. I rest my case!

And, in South Africa, we know the damage a corrupt leader can have. Jacob Zuma was president of South Africa for nine years (since 2009), and he enabled corruption to become entrenched in this country’s hierarchy. The worst damage came after he was re-elected in 2014. It appeared to herald a free-for-all for crooks, who devastated state coffers.

Benjamin Netanyahu has also been Israeli Prime Minister since 2009. He is the only Israeli prime minister to be elected three times in a row, and believes, in spite of the charges against him, that he will rule for a fourth time.

Under Netanyahu, Israel has prospered and entrenched its start-up nationhood. However, while he has been at the helm, the formerly strong left-wing has weakened substantially, and become almost fringe.

Is Netanyahu good for Israel, and should he stay on for another term? Would he really take Israel into peace talks? Is he the leader Israel needs, or is it time for change?

I can’t answer that for you, but I can say that this coming election in Israel is going to be an extremely interesting bun fight.

Israeli politics is not about which party wins, but which party creates the strongest alliance and – in doing so – what concessions are made to the weaker parties to get them to join the strongest alliance.

Already it has turned vicious, with Likud getting into bed with the Otzma Yehudit party that is a reincarnation of Kach, the one started by ultra-right-wing leader Meir Kahane. Kahane and Kach, with its one seat, were kicked out of the Knesset in 1988 because of their racist ideology. Its ideological descendent is now part of Netanyahu’s right-wing alliance.

And, to make life even more interesting, until recently there didn’t appear to be a natural national leader to the left of Netanyahu. Then, along came former army chief, Benny Gantz. He launched his political party, Hosen l’Yisrael (Israel Resilience) only in December last year.

He has now become the leader of the Kachol Lavan (Blue and White) party, an alliance that is left of centre.

Gantz was the 20th Israel Defense Forces chief of staff, and is certainly a celebrated military man, which always finds favour in Israeli politics.

His party merged with Telem, another new party (started in January this year) under former Defence Minister Moshe Ya’alon, and Yesh Atid (a centrist political party representing the secular middle class) to form Kachol Lavan.

Ya’alon was a minister under Netanyahu until May 2016, and left when there was speculation that he would be fired. He resigned from Likud to form his party named in remembrance of much celebrated late Defence Minister Moshe Dayan and his Telem party back in the early 1980s.

The Blue and White alliance looks set for a fight with the right wingers under Netanyahu, or whoever might unseat him in Likud.

Coming back down south, the stakes are just as high, but in truth, there is unlikely to be huge change. There will be battle, but it won’t be for power. The battle will be for just how many more seats the African National Congress will win or lose – sending a message as to whether the majority is backing Cyril Ramaphosa as president and just how strong his support-base is. There isn’t a question as to whether the ANC will win, no matter how corrupt its previous leader was.

But just who will be the official opposition, and by how much? That is the question? As it stands, the Democratic Alliance is the second most powerful party in the country. In the past few years, it hasn’t engendered a great deal of trust. There has been much infighting, with the ugly spat with former Cape Town Mayor Patricia de Lille being really bad for the party’s popularity. But, as is evident with the ANC whose crimes have been far, far worse, we are a fairly forgiving bunch.

The other contender for the opposition is the Economic Freedom Fighters, under the maverick Julius Malema. The more powerful it is, the worse it is for us.

So, for the most part, we are going to be stressing over what party is the official opposition – and by how much. That is what will have an impact on us.

Yes, the ANC has let us down beyond repair under Zuma, and yes, there is still a massive amount of rot in the government, but I would say there is a large-scale agreement among us that Cyril Ramaphosa is the best person in the party to run this country.

There are no obvious leaders in other parties who could be presidents in waiting.

There are lots of other little parties, but none that at this late stage appear to be about to put up a real fight either for power or opposition.

So, ours is unlikely to be as exciting a battle as the one in the Middle East, and this newspaper will be keeping you updated on both.

May the best parties and leaders win! Behatzlach!



Any wonder why Israel doesn’t buy into UN investigations?

Did Israeli soldiers violate international law by deliberately targeting unarmed children, journalists, health workers, and people with disabilities during the past year of violence along the Israel-Gaza border?

A United Nations’ (UN) Human Rights Council report to be released within the week says there may be “reasonable grounds” to believe that they did. Some of those violations might even constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity.

A three-person commission, chaired by Santiago Canton, an Argentinian lawyer and former aide to former United States President Jimmy Carter, has been investigating which side is to blame for the violence that left 189 Palestinians dead, and four Israeli soldiers injured.

Among its recommendations are that countries around the world consider arresting “persons alleged to have committed the international crimes”- in other words Israeli soldiers and commanders – and subject them to “individual sanction” including “a travel ban or an assets freeze”.

United Kingdom Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has subsequently renewed his call for a British arms embargo against the Jewish state.

The report’s findings are not a surprise to Jerusalem. As is standard practice, it refused to co-operate with the UN. Israel argues that any – and every – UN commission finds her guilty a priori, and there isn’t therefore any point in participating in what, it argues, are farcical exercises.

It certainly seems as though the commission passed its verdict before it even began investigations.

The founding text explaining the goals of the inquiry talks about examining Israeli “military assaults on large-scale civilian protests”. To define the Gazan protestors as “civilians” when Hamas itself has admitted that 50 out of the 62 people killed on 14 May were members of its group – and so were more than 50% of those killed since the start of the riots – flies in the face of available evidence. The commission’s claim that only 29 of the fatalities were members of Palestinian armed groups also directly contradicts Hamas’ statements.

The report further ignores Hamas’ cynical use of children as human shields. There are documented cases like one Hamas fighter, caught by Israel, who admitted that, “They [Hamas] tell women to go forward. They say to a woman, ‘Go ahead, you’re a woman, the army doesn’t shoot women.’ They tell small children, ‘Go ahead, the army doesn’t shoot small children.’ They tell a child to go ahead, and he goes. It’s a small child. They trick him.”

The founding text is also problematic for another reason. It characterises Israel’s actions as “assaults” while ignoring the Israel Defense Forces’ (IDF’s) argument that, like any sovereign country in the world, it has the right to defend its borders against violent protestors armed with Molotov cocktails, ammunition, and explosives.

Language is important. By using the Palestinian name for the protest – “right of return” – throughout its arguments, the commission further buys into the Palestinian narrative while ignoring the Israeli one; namely that Jewish people have the right to self-determination in Israel.

Still, did the country shoot itself in the foot by refusing to co-operate? That refusal meant that the investigating team did not visit Israel and do first-hand research. Incidentally, it also didn’t visit Gaza as Cairo refused to let it enter through its border

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Paula Slier



arguing security concerns.

In the end, the team had to rely on thousands of documents and 325 interviews – only 15 of which were from the Israeli side. Its statistics for the number of Gazans injured and killed came from sources inside Gaza, mostly from the Hamas-run health ministry, which are difficult to verify independently.

But what is known is that at least some of the protestors Hamas claims were killed by soldiers were killed by their own fire or explosives.

Human rights group UN Watch has vehemently criticised the report, arguing that it gives a free pass to Hamas and ignores the group’s incitement and support of violence.

UN Watch accuses the commission of ignoring a 29-page submission it drafted for deliberations. With respect to the damning claim that IDF snipers

Palestinian protesters evacuate a wounded youth during clashes with Israeli troops along the Gaza Strip border with Israel



intentionally shot children, health workers, and the like, the group points out that the claim is not substantiated, and ignores the fact that the IDF is greatly respected for its high moral standards. What’s more, it has robust internal complaint-and-review procedures.

The claim that the IDF intentionally harmed disabled people, including two with hearing disabilities, is also problematic. How can soldiers be expected to identify people with hearing disabilities on sight?

A recurring claim throughout the report is that Israel’s military response was disproportionate. However, the law of armed conflict state that proportionality is a consideration military commanders make in real time as to whether or not the expected civilian casualties are excessive in relation to anticipated military gains. The commission did not have real-time data by which to judge its call.

In two weeks, a more detailed report will be submitted by the commission to the UN Human Rights Council’s 40th session in Geneva. It will be one of seven different reports, totalling five resolutions, that over the course of an entire day will condemn Israel.

By comparison, Iran, North Korea, and Syria will each have only one resolution tabled against them, while no resolutions will be put forward against the regimes of Turkey, Zimbabwe, China, Pakistan, and others that are certainly more totalitarian than Israel.

In light of all these shortcomings, it is any wonder that Jerusalem chooses not to participate in UN investigations?

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Will Israel policy impact on Western Cape vote?



OPINION

Steven Gruzd

If the South African government were to downgrade its Tel Aviv embassy before the elections on 8 May – not seen as likely – could the African National Congress (ANC) be punished at the polls by pro-Israel Christian voters in the Western Cape?

After all, Christians (not all of them Israel supporters, of course) make up about 88% of the province’s population, compared to just 5% who are Muslims, and 0.5% who are Jewish, according to Statistics South Africa. The *SA Jewish Report* consulted pundits and politicians to explore the Western Cape provincial race more deeply.

If the mooted downgrade happens before election day, Darren Bergman, the Democratic Alliance (DA) Member of Parliament (MP) and deputy shadow minister of international relations says, “I think many Jewish and Zionist voters of the ANC would change their vote to more progressive parties. They would understand that a downgrade is an own-goal that will stifle bilateral trade that has helped the South African economy as well as much-needed agricultural and technological advances. A downgrade would hurt South Africa more than it would Israel.”

Gareth van Onselen, the Head of Politics and Governance at the South African Institute of Race Relations, says, “I am not sure if DIRCO’s [the Department of International Relations and Cooperation’s] decision will directly affect the national vote. The DA’s response to that decision, however, if it does happen, will be telling. And it could well have an effect on the DA’s Jewish support base, one way or the other. I don’t think the party can afford to be quiet on it, as it has tried to do with a great many controversial issues in the past. It will have to take a clear, unambiguous position.”

But it’s not that simple. Does Israel policy even matter in these (or any) elections in South Africa? Michael Bagrain, DA MP and shadow minister of labour says, “Israel has never been a real issue in the Western Cape. We see so much press on this ‘wedge issue’ that we thought it would make a difference in [2014], but in fact it wasn’t taken up by the Muslim community.”

Van Onselen says, “When the DA has erred on its policy position on Israel... it has resulted in immediate and significant unhappiness with the party. Outside of the DA, the ANC routinely uses Israel to try and mobilise support against the DA. I am not sure how successful it has been, given its declining fortunes in the Western Cape.”

Wayne Sussman, who analyses by-elections for the *Daily Maverick*, says, “The ANC and [Islamic party] Al Jama-ah have come out with posters in the past few elections relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and while this always attracts media attention, it tends to be low down on the priority list for most voters. Equally, the African Christian Democratic Party has struggled to translate its unabashed support for Israel into votes.”

We must be wary of assuming anything about how groups vote. Cherrel Africa, the Associate Professor of Political Studies at the University of the Western Cape, says that she is not aware of data analysing voting choice by religion and views on Israel, which indicates these are not key variables for voters. “Therefore, while segments of the electorate may hold strong views on single issues, their voting choices are influenced by a range of complex factors.”

Africa says, “Perceptions of the importance of the ‘coloured vote’ have resulted in campaigning that often encompasses unintentional or deliberate racial mobilisation and inflammatory political rhetoric... [but] national political developments and party behaviour are crucial

influences on voter perceptions and behaviour in the Western Cape.

“While race and racial issues remain salient, we need to move beyond reducing voting choices to racial identity and the presumption of racially-defined voting blocs.” She acknowledges that different race groups in the province face different forms of persuasion, information networks, life experiences, and socio-economic circumstances.

Sussman says degrees of urbanisation and race are more important divides in the Western Cape than religion. “Muslims in Cape Town tended to vote more for the ANC than Christian voters, but this has changed.” He cites Ward 48, where late ANC stalwart Dullah Omar and his family have deep roots. It includes the religious Muslim community of Gatesville and Rylands, with more middle- to upper-middle-class

There have been dramatic changes in Israeli politics as the elections draw near. On announcement of the elections last year, there didn’t seem much to write about the right-wing parties, and it looked like a repeat of the last election was going to take place. The Likud party had 30 seats, and a number of smaller parties – HaBayit HaYehudi (the religious Orthodox Zionist party), Yisrael Beiteinu (secular right-wing nationalist party) and Kulanu (viewed by many as centre right) – garnered another 24 seats.

The first big shock in the run up to election was Naftali Bennett leaving HaBayit HaYehudi, the party he headed. Then, there was the arrival on the scene of former General Benny Gantz and his subsequent joining forces with Moshe Ya’alon and Yair Lapid to form the Blue and White Party.

Benjamin Netanyahu

Bibi Netanyahu pushed to have the Otzma Yehudit (extreme far-right) join with HaBayit Yehudi and the National Union (an alliance of right-wing nationalist parties) to form The United Right List. And then came the announcement of the intention to indict Netanyahu.

What effect is all of this going to have on the election results? Anyone in Israel who didn’t realise that Netanyahu would be indicted must be living in another world. It’s been going on for years. Yet the polls still insist that Likud will obtain 29-32 seats in the Knesset. Although Blue and White is expected to achieve 34-36 seats, it won’t be at the expense of the right-wing parties.

The old Zionist Union (centre-left political alliance) which held 24 seats in the current Knesset and is now participating in the elections as Labour, is expected to obtain somewhere in the six to eight range. Unlike the parties which are just extensions of some individual politician, Likud is a party with branches across the country. Although it benefits from leaders who are popular (with the right wing), like Netanyahu, it has other well liked candidates such as Ze’ev Elkin, Yisrael

Muslim voters. The ANC won the ward with just more than 50% in the 2000 local government elections. In a 2005 by-election, Omar’s wife won 61% of the vote. In 2006, the ANC won the ward with 38%. This dropped to 15% in 2011, and 6% in 2016.

Africa says an outright majority for the DA in the Western Cape is far from guaranteed. Surveys and by-elections suggest a dip in support. Factors include drought management, and Patricia De Lille’s tortuous departure.

“Additionally, in a dramatically changed national political context, challenges such as a lack of congruence in DA leaders’ public statements, the resignation of Gwen Ngwenya as the DA’s policy chief, and its campaign approach embodied in the #TheANCIsKillingSA billboard, does not bode well for the party’s provincial performance.”

Katz, Miri Regev, and Tzipi Hotovely, who are all cabinet ministers. Gideon Sa’ar and former Jerusalem mayor Nir Barkat are also vote catchers. So, it doesn’t appear that Netanyahu’s indictment is going to lose Likud votes. If it does, these will go to the right, and not to the centre or left.

The polls predict that Blue and White will win the most seats, and this can play an important role in helping right-wing voters decide how to vote. In the last election, it appeared that many of these voters answered Netanyahu’s last-minute call to support him so that Likud would be the largest party.

HaBayit HaYehudi, which held 12 seats in the 2013 election, was reduced to eight in the 2015 election. With Blue and White polling as many as six to eight seats more than Likud, there is no reason to abandon their favourite

party and vote Likud. They can use their vote more profitably by voting for the marginal parties such as Yisrael Beiteinu, Kulanu, Shas (an ultra-orthodox religious party) and maybe Moshe Feiglin’s Zehut (libertarian Zionist) Party.

In Israel, no one party has ever received more than 50% of the vote, so “blocks of parties” are critical. The right-wing block together with the religious parties has about 55% of the seats in the Knesset. The left and centre left – 35%, and the Arab parties 10%. In order for the left and centre-left block to gain a majority and form a government, they will have to post gains of more than 75% in the election. The polls, in fact, reflect only a four to six seat change in favour of the left and centre-left block.

Interestingly, one of the first polls after the indictment announcement (published in *Yisrael Hayom*) reflected 43% preferring Netanyahu to be prime minister against 36% for Gantz.

Bennett, when he left HaBayit HaYehudi, took with him Knesset member Ayelet Shahr. Their new party has been named The New Right. The reason for him leaving HaBayit HaYehudi has not received much media coverage. Last year, after the major

Any party’s foreign policy is but one of many factors influencing voter choice. Says Bergman, “It should count for about 5% of your perception of that party”, and is much less important than the personal well-being parties offer.

Van Onselen concurs. “I don’t think foreign policy in and of itself matters greatly. That’s the same for almost any issue. It is very rare in politics the world over for one issue to determine voting behaviour. But that is not to say it does not matter at all. It defines people’s views together with a range of other issues and can easily help push perceptions in one way or the other.”

• Steven Gruzd is an analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs. He recently co-published ‘Israel’s ties with Africa: A focus on Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa’.

OPINION

Aubrey Katzev

bombardment from Gaza, both Avigdor Lieberman and Bennett wanted a stronger response from Israel. Prime Minister Netanyahu was not in favour of a prolonged war. Lieberman resigned as defence minister. Bennett threatened to do so if he was not appointed defence minister in Lieberman’s place. Netanyahu declined his request, but Bennett did not carry out his threat.

Rumour has it that Netanyahu approached the spiritual leaders of HaBayit HaYehudi, and convinced them to dissuade Bennett from resigning and taking HaBayit HaYehudi out of the coalition. I suggest that this is why Bennett left HaBayit HaYehudi and formed the New Right. He says the New Right will be a party for religious and secular Israelis. It is against having an independent Palestinian state.

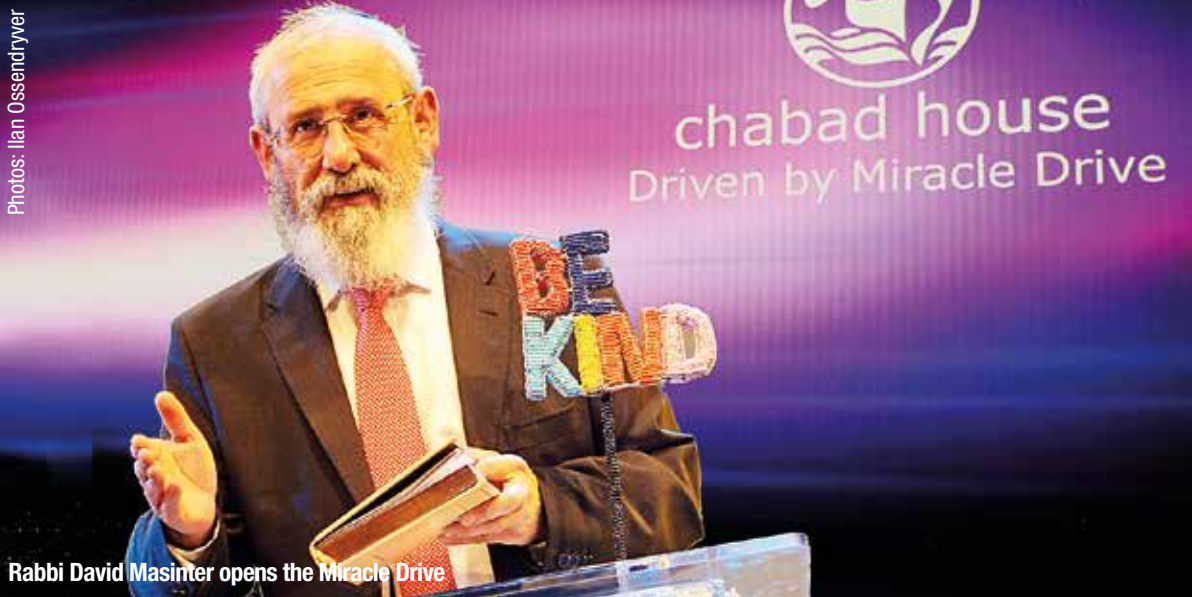
When Gantz raised the stakes by merging with Lapid, Netanyahu persuaded the HaBayit HaYehudi-National Union Party to include members of Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Strength) onto its slate. For many, Otzma Yehudit is regarded as espousing racist views. Netanyahu and HaBayit HaYehudi-National Union have been attacked for facilitating the possible entry of racists into the Knesset.

The press have traced the roots of Otzma Yehudit to the party started by Rabbi Meir Kahane which was expelled from the Knesset in 1988. The left-wing parties are instituting action in the electoral commission to have Otzma Yehudit barred from standing in the election. This has led to a counteraction to have Arab parties barred from taking part. After all, if alleged racists from the right are going to be barred, then why not others as well?

At the last election in 2015, there was no such outcry. There was no demand for Otzma Yehudit to be banned because it was not expected to pass the threshold, and the left must have been very happy to see the 120 000 right-wing votes cast in its favour going to waste. Now that these votes will count, the left is claiming the moral high ground. Rather hypocritical!

• Aubrey Katzev is a Cape Town attorney who has a CA, BProc and an Honours degree in Jewish Studies. He is a dedicated Zionist and been involved in Jewish communal affairs and various communal bodies his whole life, including the Jacob Gitlin Library in Cape Town. Aubrey has been an Israeli election pundit for many years and his predictions are seldom off the mark – when they are, it is by a very small margin.

These Miracle Drive shoes are made for giving



JORDAN MOSHE

Amid fine dining, laughter, and foot-tapping tunes, this year’s Miracle Drive Gala Dinner upheld the true Jewish spirit of charity.

Beyond the gourmet dishes and live entertainment, a pair of brand-new shoes were in goody bags given to every guest. These were not like Oprah Winfrey’s gifts, these were specially designated for donation to someone less fortunate, embodying the ethos which drives this unique Chabad House event.

For the 29th consecutive year, Chabad’s Miracle Drive delivered a vibrant experience to every guest. Held at the Sandton Convention Centre on Wednesday last week, the dinner was both a celebration of the progress made in helping the Jewish community of South Africa over the past year, and the launch of charitable initiatives for the year ahead.

Bringing together donors, sponsors, and supporters, the event gives the community the opportunity to reflect on its achievements, and to establish a path of giving for the year ahead.

“We all have a responsibility to make the world a happier place,” said Rabbi Yossy Goldman of Sydenham Shul. “We all need to add joy to a depressed world, to bring light to the darkness that shrouds our world. This is what Chabad House is all about.”

This is a vital imperative, even in the difficult times we’re facing in South Africa. A student of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Goldman said that throughout the turbulent years of conflict in South Africa, the Rebbe remained adamant that Jews could and should remain in the country. “The Rebbe gave South Africa a massive vote of confidence at the time,” Goldman said. “He dismissed the perceived need to leave. He said we shouldn’t be afraid.”

Goldman stressed that this was still applicable today. “His assurances have been repeatedly vindicated. Even today, the prophets of doom are still out in full force. They’ve been saying that the country will last for another five years since I arrived in 1976. For 50 years, they’ve said we’ll be closing shop in five years. When Mandela was released, the Rebbe said we have nothing to fear, South Africa will be good until the coming of Mashiach. Such was his long-term view.

“We’re still here. Alive and kicking. We live with hope, confidence, prayer, and patience. For us human beings, to create a place for G-d in this world is a big



miracle. That is what we celebrate tonight.”

And what a celebration it was. In the capable hands of Harry Sideropoulos, guests enjoyed cuisine tastefully seasoned with jokes and skits.

Three lucky attendees also walked away with grand prizes, which included cars sponsored by Nissan and a baby grand piano from Yamaha. Adding some variety to the evening’s offering was internationally acclaimed British singer and songwriter Alex Clare, as well as the Mzansi Youth Choir, whose skilful rendition of Gad Elbaz’s Hebrew hit *Hashem Melech* had guests on their feet.

Rabbi David Masinter spoke about Chabad’s upcoming projects in the months ahead. “Let’s turn the world upside down,” said Masinter. “We cannot get up early enough. Thanks to our supporters and sponsors, we can make miracles.”

This year, Masinter said, Chabad would focus on three specific initiatives. These include job-creation initiatives with sponsor Standard Bank, as well as increasing acts of goodness with the Acts of Random Kindness charity initiative and Be Kind art installations, sponsored by Liberty Life.

The third is aimed specifically at the Jewish community, involving the distribution of tehillim books to every Jew in South Africa. “We want to get a psalm book into the hands of every Jewish family in the country,” said Masinter. “Psalms have tremendous power, and we will get a copy to every child, teenager, adult, and senior member of the community.” Beyond providing the text itself, the project includes a programme to teach people about the importance of psalms.

Ending the evening on a high note, Sideropoulos performed Greek Eurovision 2010 entry *Opa* as dessert was served. With song in their hearts and charity on their minds, guests came away from a memorable evening ready to make the world a better place, starting a simple pair of shoes.

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A High-Tech Way For Getting A Green Card

A different alternative than the fluctuating real estate market for investing in the EB-5 program

The recent, dramatic shifts in immigration policy have resulted in a reduction of H1B visas, and in rejections of H4 EADs. The timeline to receive Green Cards now may be over 15 years. Because of all these changes, there is a desperate need for alternative solutions for those seeking permanent residency/Green Cards.

The EB-5 program has long been used by real estate developers to build Manhattan skyscrapers and hotels around the US, while allowing investors and their families to get Green Cards. The EB-5 program has not been looked at as a source of traditional funding for high-tech or medical device companies... until now.

Dr Jay Yadav, an Atlanta based serial entrepreneur and world-renowned interventional cardiologist who has also created and sold three different leading-edge healthcare companies exceeding US\$1 billion, is now in his newest venture to build an innovative and high-tech Spine and Orthopaedic company as the Founder and CEO of MiRus. MiRus is founded with strong technology platforms with \$80 million in R&D and holds more than 140 patents. It is introducing disruptive technologies in Spine, Orthopaedics, Dental, and CMF with a long-term view of creating a multi-billion dollar global company.

Dr Yadav, an immigrant himself, has been very involved in the Atlanta community to create high-tech jobs and provide an opportunity to expand the international relationships with the business community. While he has had tremendous interest from investors globally in his new project through traditional funding methods, Dr Yadav and his team incorporated the EB-5 program to create alternate funding mechanisms for MiRus while addressing the needs of the immigrant community for Green Cards.

MiRus' strategy is to create hundreds of high-tech medical device jobs in Atlanta and has been scoped by the EB-5 program to create 2 400 jobs.

For many Indian investors who work very hard to save



money, investing in fluctuating real estate might be more risk than they can afford to take. Investing in an operating medical device company that is already generating revenues, provides confidence in not only receiving Green Cards for the investors and their families but also in getting the \$500,000 original investment back in four to five years, along with receiving a nominal interest payment annually.

The EB-5 program through MiRus has already received multiple investors who have transferred \$500,000 to receive green cards for them and their families. The families can move to the US on a conditional Green Card with the responsibility on MiRus to create 10 direct and indirect jobs per investor.

MiRus has received significant interest in the EB-5 program investment from surgeons, physicians, Wall Street investment bankers, high-tech H1B employees, management consultants, and Silicon Valley professionals, all of whom are in the US on a temporary visa.

Parents and families can also gift the amount to the individuals seeking a Green Card, which allows for many students on an F1 visa to apply for the MiRus EB-5 program, provided that there is full compliance with the source of funds of the giftor. The source of funds can be a mix of cash, loan against property, gift from families. Recognizing that high-tech employees and physicians on an H1-B visa will be unable to come up with the required investment, we are working with non-traditional lenders who can help bridge that gap.



The EB-5 program at MiRus is being implemented by Noah Roth, Chief Operating Officer. Please visit MiRus at www.mirusmed.com and email nroth@mirusmed.com or call 732-809-7995 with additional questions.



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Making a marathon into a mitzvah

TALI FEINBERG

Bev Segal has liver cancer, and her right eye was removed after an ocular melanoma nine years ago. She has also suffered cancer in her bones and her kidney. Yet, she is running the 21km Jerusalem Marathon on 15 March in aid of DL Link, an organisation that has been by her side every moment of the past nine years.

“My liver cancer is stable right now, meaning that it hasn’t got bigger or smaller. And I have always been fit. My oncologist told me to never stop exercising. To be honest, exercise has been one of the things that has kept me going. So, when DL Link suggested that I run the marathon, I couldn’t say no!” she says. Her husband, Robert, and daughter, Kelly, will be joining her on the day, although running shorter marathons.

“Just because you have cancer, doesn’t mean you can’t run a marathon or do anything you dream of doing,” she says. “Cancer is no longer a death sentence. With so many clinical trials and new treatments. There is always hope.”

Running in Jerusalem is certainly a symbol of hope for her, and she cannot wait to enjoy the atmosphere on the hills of this holy city.

“DL Link has a fundamental purpose: to ease the pain and suffering of cancer warriors and their families,” says Dani Bloom, also running the marathon. This can involve anything from delivering a challah on a Friday, to celebrating milestones in treatment, to offering support groups for patients and their families.

Bloom says she decided to run after attending the DL Link appreciation dinner in November. While listening to cancer survivors sharing their stories, she was moved to tears. “Uncontrollable emotion overtook me, and I knew I had to do something.”

Bloom has also just turned 40. “Without being too dramatic, the fact that I walk this earth today is a complete miracle, and I felt that it was time to give back for this gift of life, health, and capability. What better way than to run the half Jerusalem Marathon for DL Link!”

Bloom will be running with the names of eight cancer warrior or survivors on her shirt. “This is the spiritual element of the marathon. There are different reasons for running for each person. For example, one of the warriors is the same person my husband cycled for in a race the year before – there’s something in that!

“The main reason for running with warrior names is for a *refuah shelaima* (healing from illness),” she says. “I will run with my heart and soul. I will think about each of them every step of the way. I will meditate on their names as my feet pound at the stones of Jerusalem. To run for them is the highest honour and privilege. It’s my way of bringing healing to them.”

Bloom will run the half marathon, and she is not sure exactly what to expect on the day. One thing is for sure, however. “I’ve trained as much as I could. I have to have faith that my body is ready. My headspace is strong and determined. I have a purpose, and I have to actualise that goal. That’s all that matters.”

Sharene Loupo was motivated to run for DL Link because, “My mom had a very curable form of thyroid cancer ten years ago, and I remember what we went through as a family. Thank goodness she is okay, but every time she has a scan, the same feelings of anxiety and worry resurface. The disease is soul-destroying. Not only does it make you physically sick, it attacks you and your family. DL Link is there for you to lean on. No money in the world can buy that.”

She will be running with the name of one cancer warrior on her shirt. “A beautiful young lady with a husband and young children, which is so close to my heart as I am a wife and mom too. It sometimes scares me that I might not be able to be there to see my kids grow up and enjoy them to the fullest, and I am sure it



scares her too,” she says.

“Hope is something that cannot be bought, but it can be given in various ways. This is my way of giving hope. I will run, walk, and crawl to the finish line if I have to. Therein lies the hope that the battle against this horrid disease



can be won.”

Loupo says she is not a natural runner, and she has had to work very hard to push through the mental and physical challenges. “I have been training six days a week to ensure that my fitness and endurance are

stretched beyond measure, as the Jerusalem run is very hard. I am also expecting to feel completely overwhelmed with emotion to be running in such a beautiful place with people who are there either to run for a cause or for themselves. We will all be running together to get to the finish line.”

How can the community get involved? “You can spread the word that DL Link is there for all races, genders, and religions,” says Loupo. “It is always looking for volunteers to assist, and no amount of money is too big or small. This can come in the form of signing up for a monthly debit order, once off donations, or contributing towards a certain project. All funds and gestures go into creating a safe haven for people who are fighting the disease and their families.”

Bloom is overwhelmed by the enthusiasm shown by schools, shuls, and individuals who have signed up to help raise funds for DL Link, and she has a total of twelve schools working with her. “The kindness and generosity of this community – and others outside this community – is simply unparalleled. It is phenomenal to witness and be a part of. I feel spiritually elevated and blessed beyond measure.”

Rebbetzin Zeesy Deren, the Director of the Sinai Academy International School and Cape Town Torah High, as well as the founder of the Echad Institute for Mindfulness and Meditation, explained how her schools are using unconventional, innovative teaching methods.

They personalise learning. “We look at the individual child, and almost design a personal curriculum for each of them. There’s no more cookie-cutter approach. We’re presenting the child

How to create the ‘unselfie’ generation

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

“We have to get children and adults into a space where they feel safe, have a sense of belonging, know that they can engage, and that they have worth. Then you’ll see their brains thinking.”

So says Gavin Keller, education guru and the Chief Executive of Cape Town’s Sun Valley group of schools. He was part of a four-person panel moderated by Rabbi Yossy Goldman at Sydenham Shul’s big learning launch last week.

Panellists addressed changes in education, how children and adults learn, and why it’s important to integrate new-age thinking with age-old wisdom.

Keller argued that we need to combine new and old educational paradigms to develop critical thinkers. He referred to the old style of education as “post-box schooling”.

“This is when they arrive with the curriculum, normally designed by the government, and they shove in the work as fast as possible into the post-box,” he said. “At the end of the school term, they ask you to open that post-box and spew it out, and then they judge you according to how well you did. Then they give you a rating: bright, average, or dull. While that’s the old style, it’s unfortunately still happening in about 96% of South African schools.”

Keller believes in constructing the classroom around what’s happening in the child’s life.

Tracking matriculants from 1966 to 2016, scientists have discovered that young people are taking longer to reach adulthood in this new “selfie” generation which arose with the advent of smartphones. “These devices are never going away, so we need to teach children how to use them,” said Keller. “We must teach children in the 21st century how to apply all that incredible wisdom that we’ve had – the training and teaching we’ve had on kindness, gratitude, suffering, and getting back up after failure – to the new age of learning.

“Thinking won’t happen if you don’t play,” he added. “If you don’t take time out, go walking outside, go to gym, or rest, you will never be bright. The brain is totally dependent on you resting to make neural pathways. No one has ever had their “aha!” moment sitting at their desks.

“We want to take working memory and put it to a place where it can be mindful and relaxed, so we can ponder that material.” That’s why Keller’s schools have eliminated homework. “Children need time to go home and rest their brains so that everything they’ve learned at school can be filed. Otherwise we’re just shoving it into the post-box.”

Yet the problem with the selfie generation is that when a child is relaxing, they check their phones to see how many likes they got on their Instagram photo. “This group is suffering from the highest levels of depression we’ve ever had, and feeling disconnected. We must start getting children to develop, think, and reason, and then go home and

continue the debate with their parents around the supper table. When we get that right, then we’ll have the unselfie me.”

Discussing IQ and EQ, Shelley Freinkel, the Head of King David Senior Primary School Linksfield, said emotional intelligence was the most important factor in determining success. Academic intelligence, while valuable, is not the be all and end all. “Historically, especially in our community, the premise has generally been to achieve the highest marks, go to university, and get a degree. If you don’t fit that mould, the perception is that your children are destined for a lifetime of mediocrity. Yet, success in life and business is a matter of EQ – imagination, emotion, relationships, and character, rather than just raw intelligence. We’re working to create environments that integrate multiple intelligence, and develop well-rounded children.

“Today’s workplace demands people who are empathetic, creative thinkers, problem solvers, and collaborative team players. All schools need to look at the whole child, and direct the child beyond academics, although never neglecting diagnosed barriers to learners which can be remediated. Social and emotional learning must be taken into core instruction. Educators need parents to partner in that vision, to nurture and to celebrate their children’s passions and talents beyond the academic curriculum.”



Rabbi Ramon Widmonte, Zeesy Deren, Shelly Freinkel, Gavin Keller and Rabbi Yossy Goldman

with choices on how and what they learn. This empowers them to own their learning.”

Children and teachers take part in projections and reflections, she says. Children have checklists on what they must accomplish, and they reflect on what they’ve learned, while teachers keep journals, and provide weekly feedback on each child.

“Different age groups are also taught together at times, resembling normal life.” Peer learning is done where the younger child learns from the older child, and the older child gains confidence. “We teach kids conflict resolution, so they learn how to communicate early on.” Ultimately these schools reduce the pressure. “Let the child think and be, because we want them to actually learn,” said Deren, echoing Keller’s words.

“Based on the teachings of the Rebbe, classes have a moment of silence each morning to think of something higher than themselves, in a quiet space where the brain is clear,” she said. “We teach Judaism from inside out, and give kids space to ask questions.”

ISRAELI SUPER GROUP ENTRANCES ULTRA SOUTH AFRICA

HOWARD SACKSTEIN

Tens of thousands of revellers poured into the Ultra music festival in Cape Town and Johannesburg on 1 and 2 March to writhe to the rhythmic beats of Israeli psytrance supergroups Infected Mushroom and Vini Vici.

It was a rare double-header for the South African music scene to have two Israeli mega music groups headlining the main stage. Israeli flags waved prominently in the audience as Infected Mushroom’s unique blend of trance and psytrance music enveloped the night.

Infected Mushroom has become the poster performer of Israel’s resurgence onto the international music scene, together with Eurovision winner, pop star Netta Barzilai, hip hop band Static & Ben El, and psytrance duo Vini Vici.

Classically-trained Erez Eisen and Amit Duvdevani formed Infected Mushroom in 1996, and they have been one of the most enduring partnerships on the Electronic Dance Music (EDM) scene. Thirteen albums later, the duo is stronger than a committed marriage.

Having played Ultra Miami, Burning Man, Coachella, and heading to Tomorrowland in Belgium later this year, Infected Mushroom is the superstar of EDM music festivals around the world.

The band’s high energy performance at

Ultra Johannesburg was one of the stand-out performances on the night. Bouncing wildly on stage, Duvdev (Amit Duvdevani), appeared to be in the throes of a spiritual experience amidst the throng of wildly adoring fans.



One after another in the line-up, the two Israeli groups played a combined three hours of deep trance. Vini Vici and offshoot Sesto Sento was formed by Matan Kadosh and Aviram Saharai from Afula in the north of Israel in 2014. They have collaborated with Dutch trance superstar Armin van Buuren.

In an exclusive interview, Duvdev told the *SA Jewish Report* that the band used to come to Cape Town every year to play the psytrance clubs and at the Vortex Trance Adventures

festival. It was there that Duvdev met his now wife of 14 years, who was an Israeli model working in the mother city. Today the couple have three kids, and live in Los Angeles.

In 1995, on his way back from Goa, Duvdev

met Eisen and, in 1996, when psytrance music exploded in Israel, so did Infected Mushroom.

Says Duvdev, “Israel is a hectic place. It’s fast-paced, people feel pressure because of the situation, so they like to break through. Trance and psytrance kind of fitted like a glove, and the public just fell in love with it.”

The duo borrowed the name Infected Mushroom from a band Duvdev knew in high school.

Duvdev says he and Eisen listen to a huge

amount of new music and new producers to remain relevant, current, and ensure the longevity of the band.

Collaboration is clearly one of the elements that keeps the band relevant to a younger, more commercial audience. Duvdev says that while collaborating with famed Russian-German record producer Zedd (Anton Zaslavski), Lady Gaga, whom Zedd was producing at the time, heard an Infected Mushroom track. She asked: “What is this? I want to do lyrics right, I want to make it my song. Then came *Aura*, her opening track on that album,” he says.

Another groundbreaking collaboration was the Infected Mushroom re-work of the music of The Doors. It had original members of the band playing on the album, which was a huge coup for the Israeli band. In doing this, they produced one of the most memorable collaborations in modern trance music.

Duvdev is dismissive of Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS), saying, “We really don’t care about BDS. It’s nonsense. We are a super non-political band.”

Duvdev’s message to South Africa is clear, “I’m sorry that I’ve waited so long to come back, and I hope you all have a great time”.

Like spawning shrooms, the Israeli band infected the musical soul of its South African audience.

Meat the new burger patty – it’s made out of a plant

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

Imagine biting into a burger without feeling guilty about eating meat? Meat made from vegetables that is as bloody and delicious as the real thing might be the stuff of science fiction, but it’s now science fact.

Even better, in the United States, it is kosher, and may well be kosher here soon.

For the past four months, burgers have been available in South Africa that look, feel, and taste like meat, having been imported by Infinite Foods. They are made out of peas and lentils and many other complex ingredients such as wheat, potato protein, coconut oil, heme, and binders like konjac and xanthan.

The website of Beyond Meat, the United States maker of these products, says that they are made without soy or gluten, and are GMO (genetically modified organism) free.

It sounds like a mouthful, but consumers in the US – where it has been available for some time – say that it actually tastes better than meat. The developers of this product describe it in futuristic, almost messianic terms. Impossible Foods, a competitor to Beyond Meat in the US carries the tagline, “We’re on a mission. And it’s not to Mars”. The point is that this isn’t just a “veggy” burger, it’s just like meat – just not meat produced by an animal.

Beyond Meat Chief Executive and Founder, Ethan Brown, says: “Meat contains elements such as amino acids, lipids, carbon dioxide, trace minerals, and water. These are all present in the plant kingdom as well. Animals are bioreactors. We have the ability to take plant matter, run it through our system, and create muscle.”

Brown is a vegan who does not wear animal products. He previously worked in the hydrofuel cell, or clean tech industry. He is obsessed with sustainability.

Animal agriculture has been damned by environmentalists for its negative effects on the planet and cruelty. Recent documentaries



like *Cowspiracy* and *Forks over Knives* tell that 51% of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by livestock. The effect on our water resources is devastating. According to the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, it takes 5 000 litres of water to produce 1kg of beef. These figures don’t take into account the fact that we slaughter about 66 billion animals a year, many of whom are kept in cruel factory farming conditions.

Brown is unapologetically futuristic, saying that he hopes that these products, which extend to chicken, scrambled eggs, even (kosher) bacon, will do nothing less than change the way we think of food. While realistic about the fact that we are “hard-wired” to eat meat, he believes that in 200 years, eating animals will be seen as something we used to do (like riding in horse-drawn carriages).

Dovi Goldstein, the Managing Director of South Africa’s Beth Din Kosher Department, says the Beth Din would “love to look into” these products, saying that they could be positive as they could encourage more people to eat kosher.

However, he says, “We would have to go through the full process of checking ingredients.” If the products come to South Africa with a reliable hechsher on them, and are not repackaged, the Beth Din would rely on this status, he says.

Goldstein insists that because the product doesn’t come from an animal, the Beth Din would not consider it to be meat. The term “meat substitute” would need to be used. Similarly bacon – which could be kosher and parev in these circumstances – must be termed “bacon flavoured” so as not to confuse consumers.

He says the product is not kosher if it is prepared, cooked, and served in non-kosher restaurants. This is currently the status quo in South Africa, as Beyond Meat burgers are available only in some restaurants.

Making meat from vegetables isn’t the only futuristic alternative-meat technology attracting large-scale funding from powerful investors like Bill Gates. Israeli startups such

as Aleph Farms and SuperMeat are producing meat in laboratories through cultivation of cells. So far, they have managed to make steak and sausages, and they plan to start selling produce by the end of this year.

So called stem-cell meat has been attracting the attention of religious authorities worldwide. Goldstein says the topic has come up at the last two international AKO (Association of Kashrut Organisations) conferences, and the current Orthodox Union position is that it would be considered a meat product.

He is optimistic that this product will ultimately bring the price of meat down. “Currently only a tiny percentage of the animal is considered kosher,” he says. “Once we get stem-

cell production right, 100% of the product would be kosher.”

Jews are permitted to eat meat, says Goldstein, but it’s not an ideal situation. “In the ideal situation, before the sin, Adam was commanded not to eat animal products... In the future, after the world will be corrected, heaven and earth will be renewed, the nature of man and animals will change and become more spiritual. At that point, we will revert back to that ideal moral sensitivity according to which it will be forbidden to kill animals to eat their flesh,” says Eliezer Melamed, an orthodox rabbi and a rosh yeshiva in Israel.

Could we be on the verge of some kind of breakthrough?



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Confronting today’s burning issues

This year’s Sinai Indaba tackled some of the hot-button issues in the world today, including the rising cost of living, the social and cultural challenges presented by technology, and the rapidly shifting geopolitical dynamics.

More than 4 000 Jews descended on Sinai Indaba in Johannesburg last week, after 1 100 people attended in Cape Town the weekend before. The forum’s eclectic assortment of speakers included rabbis and roshei yeshivot, psychologists, political advisors, academics, entertainers, mystics, and business leaders.

Rehabilitating the porn generation

DEVON MOGG

Many of us remember a time shrouded in myth and legend; a time before the advent of the first smartphone. In those days of yore, you had to be able to read a map book to navigate streets unknown to you. People had to remember information as opposed to merely whipping out a device and Googling the answer.

The smartphone has improved our lives in many ways. However, one of its most damaging effects is the proliferation of pornography, and the effect that easy, instant access to porn is having on our children.

Just how damaging is it? Dr David Pelcovitz, professor of psychology at Yeshiva University, tackled this issue at last weekend’s Sinai Indaba. He believes we might not know.

“In the age of the smartphone, you can’t do a study on the impact of pornography because you need a control group of males who haven’t been exposed to it. No such group exists,” he said.

But the last such study – of college students in the 1980s – showed that access to porn led to increased callousness towards women, less serious attitudes to rape, and more acceptance of infidelity.

More recent research undertaken by the American Academy of Paediatrics showed that pornography led to increased depression, anxiety, violent behaviour, dysfunctional male-female relationships, and teen pregnancies. The effect on marriage is no less deleterious. “Pornography conditions arousal to self-centred, sensually blunted, loveless sex,” said Pelcovitz. “And, unfortunately, the porn mistress is always

ready, always willing, reliably sexy, and never says no.”

Yet today, the uncomfortable truth is that most adolescents get their information about sex from pornography.

Pelcovitz relates a rather shocking anecdote to illustrate the extent of the problem.

“In a religious Jewish all-girls school in Manhattan, a teacher discovered some girls in Grade 4 (10-year-olds) exchanging hardcore pornographic material. She immediately told the girls that this was inappropriate behaviour, and confiscated their devices. The girls were bewildered, they did not know what they had done wrong. That evening, the head teacher received a call from an irate and indignant mother. How dare she confiscate her daughter’s phone! The teacher’s pleas were dismissed out of hand. The next day the little girl in question arrived at school with a new iPhone.”

The antidote is what Pelcovitz terms “constructive shame”, in Torah parlance, *busha*. He emphasises that this shame is not crippling embarrassment that prevents us from moving on with life. “*Busha* literally means a break in the flow; it’s a stepping back, asking oneself, ‘Is this worthy of my values?’”

The only way to instil a sense of *busha* in our children, says Pelcovitz, is to have clear, open, and honest channels of communication.

“They need to feel comfortable in being open with us. Many teenagers caught in the web of internet pornography report feeling alone, abandoned, dirty, and that they have no one to speak to.”

Because of the shame and silence, he says, teens don’t receive the adult message that sex is about interpersonal dynamics and connection.

“Pornography is not a pleasant subject, but you have to talk about it. That which cannot be named cannot be put to rest.”

Internet filters and controls are a must, but Pelcovitz also calls for authoritative parenting. He believes that achieving a balance between love and limits is the key to limiting adolescents’ access to porn.

“All love, no limits, and kids grow up to be overindulgent and spoiled. All limits without love leads to rebellion. We need low levels of yelling and criticism. What we want is that our kids internalise our values.”

And when they don’t?

“There are four key words we can use, ‘How are you doing?’ We need to let our children know that we can help them with this, that we love them, and that we believe in them.”

“Our world is moving so quickly, with dramatic changes in the field of genetics, shifts in global power, leaps in technology, and the spiralling cost of living fundamentally changing our lives and the world we inhabit. This year’s Sinai Indaba confronted these and other burning issues,” said Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein.

“Our challenges may seem new, but their solutions are encapsulated in our eternal Torah wisdom. As our sages say, ‘Turn it [the Torah] over and over, because everything is in it.’”



Sound bites from Sinai Indaba

“The kabbalah teaches that we are all part of one soul. When we pray together, when we dream together, bond and connect together, something changes for all of us.” – Rabbi David Aaron

“My mother taught me the gift of being proud of who you are. I am the daughter of Sarah, Rebecca, and Leah. The daughter of G-d, the daughter of the Jewish people. And that is a legacy.” – Slovie Jungreiss-Wolff

“Stop waiting for the world to make you happy. It won’t.” – Rabbanit Yemima Mizrahi

“In relationships, there is physical compatibility, emotional compatibility, and intellectual compatibility. But there’s also spiritual compatibility – two people who simply share a vision. A couple may be in their 90s, but they share a sparkle, something that doesn’t change, that doesn’t wither, that only deepens with time.” – Rabbi Simon Jacobson

“At the end of the Cold War, there were two competing outlooks – one peaceful and positive,

the other talking about a new form of intensified warfare. Today, we see [that] the pessimistic view of the world is more connected to reality.” – Major-General Yaakov Amidror

“We are Jews. We have to be more than moral – we have to be holy.” – Rabbi Zev Leff

“The older I get, the more I realise that the key to wisdom and success in life is to learn how to fail and keep on failing, so that I can fail better.” – Dr David Pelcovitz

“Because of the Microsoft commercial, ‘Too Close’ suddenly had 80 million Shazams. Radios started playing my music all over the world. And I’m in yeshiva, completely oblivious.” – Alex Clare

“Going to shul is a very challenging exercise because so few of us have really experienced what shul is supposed to be, and what it’s really all about.” – David Sacks

“We are on the verge of a genetic revolution.” – Rabbi Dr Akiva Tatz



Dr David Pelcovitz



Communications minister calls for tech troops

MIRAH LANGER

The fourth industrial revolution needs an army, and South African Jewish youth have been invited by Communications Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams to enlist.

“For any revolution to be effective, it has to have a commander... I declared myself the commander of the fourth industrial revolution,” quipped Ndabeni-Abrahams at a meeting with young Jewish leaders in Sandton on Monday, “as I did that, I said that I needed to build an army.

“We need to work together; there is a need to co-ordinate,” she said at the event organised by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies. The function formed part of the board’s campaign to encourage community members to get involved in the upcoming national elections in May.

“For any revolution to be effective, it has to have a commander... I declared myself the commander of the fourth industrial revolution.”

The fourth industrial revolution is a term coined to describe how technological advances are changing all aspects of society. Young people are needed to forge ahead during this time, said the minister, who was in conversation with radio personality Arye Kellman.

“We are the internet generation. We are a generation that does not know any borders,”

she said.

“In South Africa, it is particularly exciting that technology can cut across disparate economic realities. The internet doesn’t care if you are rich or not. If you have access to it, it bridges the divide.”

The challenge was to create the logistics to ensure equal access, Ndabeni-Abrahams said. Yet, she assured the audience that the government was committed to resolving this through a number of initiatives.

In regard to basic education, it was shaping its policy based on an “isteam” concept of education. This means that along with a focus on science and mathematics, it also recognises the significance of innovation and the arts. These will be key components of a society steeped in artificial intelligence.

“The fourth industrial revolution is not there to replace anyone. It is machine to machine, but most importantly, it empowers society to change things. Robots can never replace our thinking, our creativity, the innovation we have.”

Even adults needed to upskill themselves and collaborate in order to thrive in this new era, she said.

The government has recognised that it will need to change legislation, provide adequate funding, as well as overhaul its engagement with the private sector to achieve in this sphere. “This time, we won’t be doing things that are comfortable as government,” the minister said.

Ndabeni-Abrahams said that while the government remained resolute about policies like transformation, it recognised that businesses needed to grow without being stifled by regulation.

“At least now we have open engagement with industry, which is a start. The

interactions between the Cyril Ramaphosa-led government and the private sector are hopeful,” she said.

People had not completely given up on the ANC government, rather they were looking forward to change and engagement with it

voices heard. “You must make as much noise as you can – believe me, it works!”

Deena Katzen, the National Chairperson of the South African Union of Jewish Students, thanked the minister for her engagement with the group, saying that she had inspired



Radio personality Arye Kellman, Communications Minister Stellah Ndabeni-Abrahams and SAJBD representative Yanir Grindler

going forward.

“As South Africans, we need to have a common voice and a clear plan. A country is not just a government. We need to give South Africans a chance to identify their role in people-driven [growth] that can turn around the economy.”

She called on the youth to challenge the status quo. “We have to be bold about what we believe in, and we have to know our story. You can’t do it alone; you need to reach out to other young people to make sure that they support you.”

Her last call was for the youth to make their

them to make their mark on the country.

“As young people, we often feel quite marginalised in the political spectrum,” she said, pointing out that at times, young people felt like they were not being taken seriously enough to make any substantial change to society.

The minister had shown them otherwise. “The youth are incredibly powerful. It’s important that we use that power to make changes, and to turn South Africa into a country which we are proud of,” said Katzen. “We are responsible for our own actions, and we are responsible for our own future.”

ADVERTORIAL

JERUSALEM COLLEGE FUELS CAPETONIAN'S ALIYA

When Cape Town native Aryeh Ross spent a year studying at the Mayanot yeshiva in Jerusalem, making a permanent move to Israel wasn't on his mind.

"While I was at yeshiva, I really had totally different plans," Ross recalls. "I certainly loved Israel. The country has an amazing pull to it – the diversity, the nature, the cities, the culture, and so much more. It really pulled me in. But after yeshiva, I went back to South Africa for eight months. I didn't know what I wanted to do next. I took a lot of time to figure it out."

Fast forward to the present, and Ross's plans are clear. He made Aliya six months ago, and is completing his first semester in Jerusalem College of Technology's (JCT) International Program in English, a unique balance of Torah studies and secular academics which allows students to continue learning with their rabbis in yeshivot in Israel while obtaining an academic degree and strong professional training in business or computers.

How did Ross, now 20, get to this point? He discusses his journey from Cape Town to Jerusalem in the following interview.

Q: Why did you choose JCT's International Program?
A: "JCT was always on my mind. I learned about the institution at the end of 2017 through a distant family member. He told me that it was a college for students who are seeking to study secular subjects in a religious environment. I was eager to learn more, and did my own research on the International Program.

"I made up my mind quickly – I was going to come to JCT, whether I made Aliya or not. It was obvious that no other school could offer me the novel opportunity of focusing on Jewish and secular studies."

Q: What are your impressions of JCT after one semester at the school?
A: "It was a phenomenal semester. The lecturers at the university are very professional, and they teach in a way that helps me understand the material. I'm also struck by the great students the university attracts. My classmates are motivated and ambitious. They're people that have their sights set on big goals for the future."

Q: How are your future career and life plans taking shape?



A: "I'm studying business, and I plan to live in Israel forever. I'm currently in an internship with The Israel Forever Foundation, working as an executive assistant. But I'm really looking forward to more business-orientated positions. Studying business gives you a whole new mindset. It's all-encompassing, and it changes your way of thinking about everything."

Q: What are your thoughts about JCT's business degree in particular?
A: "I love the way it's structured.

Q: How is life in Israel treating you so far?
A: "I couldn't be happier. Recreationally, I enjoy playing

sport and working out. Jerusalem is a tremendous hub for so many different types of people from all over the world. I really love living here.

"Of course, I miss South Africa. Ultimately, I decided that Israel is the place I want to be. South Africa is a special place, and the culture is fascinating. But Israel is where my future lies, especially in terms of personal and professional fulfilment. I'm not sure I would have figured that out if it weren't for JCT."

The Jerusalem College of Technology offers an International Program in English on campuses for men and women. At the Machon Lev Campus for men, located in Givat Mordechai, it offers a BA in Business Administration and a BS in Computer Science. At the Machon Tal Campus for women, located in Givat Shaul, there is a BS in Computer Science.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.jct.ac.il/en/International-Program-in-English>.

Please pass the potatoes

I’ve tried to be offended the whole week, but to date, it hasn’t happened. And now I am worried. Genuinely so.

I’m reminded of a long-forgotten *Madam & Eve* column I saw years ago (when I still read *The Star* newspaper). It was at the time when drive-by shootings were a thing (I don’t remember why) and they occurred almost every day.

Madam & Eve were eating dinner when all of a sudden, windows shattered and glass went flying as the occupants of a car started shooting at them. As the vehicle drove into the distance, I think it was Eve who said, “Do you think that we are becoming desensitised to these shootings?” To which Madam replied, “I am not sure Eve. Please pass the potatoes.”

That is why I am worried.

Earlier this week, we were confronted by blatantly anti-Semitic images that were captured at the Aalst Festival in Belgium. One of the floats in the parade was a vile caricature of religious Jews, hooked nosed and ugly. To make it worse, they were standing in a heap of money.

It was a scene straight out of a pre-war Germany, where the media was used to dehumanise the Jewish population. There is so much written about why these images are so awful, and why they

capture the essence of anti-Semitism. I prefer to rely on the well-known American judge who, when asked to define pornography, said, “I can’t define it. But I know it when I see it.”

And yet, as much as I tried, I couldn’t – and still can’t – feel the outrage that I want to.

I have lost count of the number of Jewish cemeteries that have been desecrated over the past few weeks. I have lost count of the amount of times I have read reports of incidents where swastikas have been daubed on buildings, schools, and synagogues. I also no longer have a handle on how many anti-Semitic incidents have occurred in the New York area alone.

It has become so “normal”, that I hardly mention them on my show unless for some reason the occurrence stands out as being different or more putrid than the one before.

There is no doubt that I am becoming desensitised to it.

We are capable of getting used to almost anything. History is testimony to this. Life in South Africa and Israel - indeed anywhere – does so too.

And I am deeply concerned that we are becoming accustomed to these incidents of blatant and ugly anti-Semitism. I am worried that they are taking place with such frequency, I am at the point that my

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



outrage is not real emotion at all, rather something that I know that I should be feeling.

We are told that anti-Semitism in Europe has reached pre-World War II levels. The number of incidents in the United States is higher than it has

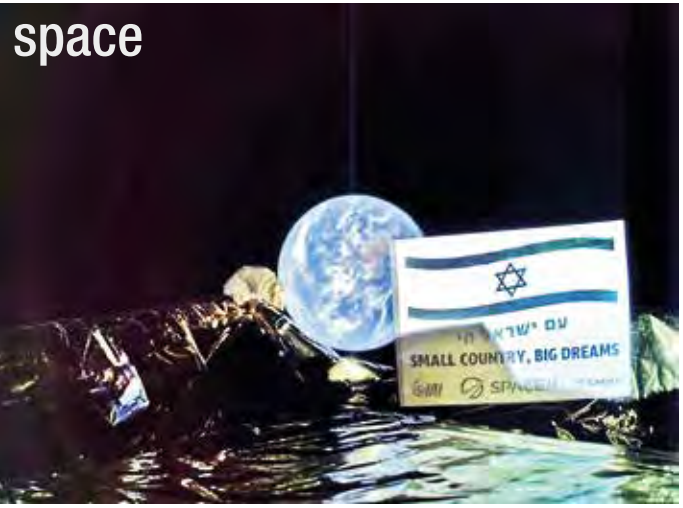
ever been, and the United Kingdom has the real potential of electing a proven Jew hater to highest political position in the land.

We have real reason to be concerned. And yet, when incident after incident after incident after incident occurs, whether we want to or don’t, we become so accustomed to it, that whether we were part of it or not, we too become victims.

This is the greatest danger of all. Please pass the potatoes.

A selfie from space

Israeli lunar spacecraft Beresheet this week sent a selfie with Earth in the background to mission control in Yehud, Israel – 37,600 kilometres away. Launched from Cape Canaveral on 22 February, the craft is currently entering the moon’s orbit and is expected to touch down on 11 April.



Monsters and mayhem: the life story of Jewish filmmaker Carl Laemmle

JORDAN MOSHE

He launched the careers of several Hollywood legends and humanised monsters on the big screen. If not for his vision, the Universal Studios of today would not have existed, and if not for his intervention, 300 Jewish families would never have escaped Nazi Germany. He is Carl Laemmle, and documentary producer James Freedman has finally brought his legacy to life.

Freedman explores the fascinating life of German-Jewish immigrant Laemmle in his newly-released documentary simply titled *Carl Laemmle*.

“I came across an article about Carl Laemmle fighting with Thomas Edison in something called the Trust War,” he explains. “I’m a movie buff, and had never heard this story. I asked friends if they’d heard of *Carl Laemmle*, but nobody had.”

After searching online, Freedman discovered the incredible story behind this man, and felt that it simply had to be shared. “Nobody really knows his story, not even the people at Universal,” he says.

An admitted research nut, he sought out archival interviews, names in phone books, film historians, and other sources to tell Laemmle’s story. Although the movie mogul is remembered by some for being the

pioneer of monster films, Freedman explored every facet of the man and his legacy, from his German origins to his family life.

The sheer range of sources featured in the documentary speak to the depth of Freedman’s search, from interviews with Laemmle’s grandniece, Rosemary Hilb, and great-grandniece, Antonia Carlotta, to footage provided by the Shoah Foundation. Even certain of the Holocaust refugees rescued by Laemmle make appearances. Says Freedman, “I had to find what would tell the man’s story.”

Born Karl Lammle in the southern German city of Laupheim in 1867 to Julius and Rebecca, Carl was the tenth of 13 children, eight of whom died as children of scarlet fever. He was determined from a young age to succeed, in spite of being the smallest student in his class. Ever the imaginative dreamer, he devoured children’s magazines about the Wild West and Buffalo Bill set in the promised land of America. His elder brother, Joseph, had moved there, and extolled it as a land of opportunity. When his mother died shortly before his 17th birthday, his father gave him a boat ticket, and in 1884, he emigrated to the United States.

Arriving in New York, he discovered a land of possibility. He records in his journal, “When I landed

in New York in 1884, Edison had just invented the lightbulb. Back then, there was no such thing as a moving picture, an electric refrigerator, automobiles, or radio. The Wright brothers still dreamt of flying.” After working a stint as an errand boy for a druggist for \$4 (R57) a week, he discovered that his brother was in Chicago, and went to join him where he worked at a clothing company and then as a bookkeeper.

Time passed quickly, and almost 30 years old, Laemmle found himself living in cheap boarding houses and selling newspapers on Sundays to make ends meet. This was a far cry from the glistening dreams which had drawn him to America. An avid admirer of the still-fledgling film industry and peepshows, he decided to establish the White Front Theatre, his first cinematic venture, working as cashier, projectionist, ticket collector, and janitor. As many as 1 400 people arrived on the day he opened his doors, followed by 4 000 the next day. Two months later, he opened his second theatre, and set himself firmly on the path of film production.

“My friends told me that I was crazy,” he writes, “that I would fail, that people would soon be fed up with movies, and not want to see them anymore. But I believed in movies.”

Blazing an incredible path, he took the industry by storm, going head to head with Thomas Edison who had a monopoly on producing motion pictures. Though he sued Laemmle more than 289 times, Laemmle won

every case, while convincing several of Edison’s best actresses and other independent filmmakers to join him in what is today Universal Pictures, with Laemmle as president. Together, they moved out West, and established what would become known as Hollywood.



In spite of battling to remain afloat as a German immigrant in America during World War I, Laemmle maintained a connection with his German home, visiting Laupheim until he was no longer allowed to do so in the 1930s. Disdained by Hitler and Goebbels as a Jewish filmmaker, his film adaptation of *All Quiet on the Western Front* was disparaged and pulled from German cinemas after the brown shirts filled the theatres to beat up movie goers, deploy stink bombs, and release mice to disturb the screenings.

Certain since 1932 that Hitler’s rise to power was a signal of onslaught against Jews, Laemmle helped to get

Jews out of Germany by giving them jobs at Universal, putting his distant relatives on the payroll. At one point, he hired 70 of his own relatives. As Freedman explains, it was said to be the only studio where the executives called the janitors “Sir” because they feared they were addressing the boss’s cousin’s brother-in-law.

His spirit did extend beyond his family, however. In spite of being forced to sell Universal after using it as collateral for a loan, a move which ended his film career, he devoted time and money to the mission of getting Jews out of Germany. As America’s immigration policy was unyielding at the time, this was no easy task. Laemmle, however, was determined, penning multiple affidavits for hundreds of Jews, guaranteeing that they had a place to live, employment, and economic support. Even when the government eventually banned his affidavits, he got friends and family to write them for him.

Although his struggle took a toll on his health, bringing on a heart attack at the age 72 in 1939, Laemmle succeeded in rescuing more than 300 Jewish families from the Nazis. More than 2 000 people attended his funeral. The legacy he left behind was multifaceted, says Freedman, and remains relevant today. “Laemmle was such a mensch,” he says. “With so much divisiveness over the subject of immigration today, we need to remember the immigrant who helped make America great.”

Sunday (10 March)

- The Big Band Music Appreciation Society hosts an audio programme presented by Alan Garlick, a random selection of well-known songs with great arrangements in big-band style, and a movie, *That’s Entertainment*, compiled by writer-director-producer Jack Haley Jr. 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.

Monday (11 March)

- The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre in partnership with the Embassy of Germany hosts a screening of the film, *Who Will Write our History*, with opening remarks from German Ambassador Dr Martin Schafer. Time: 19:00. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. RSVP to dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za or 011 640

3100. Free admission, donations welcome.

- The Union of Jewish Women hosts author and theologian Michael Worsnip on *Land restitution*. Time: 10:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW Office 011 648 1053.
- ORT Jet presents Aki Kalliatakis on *Delight Your Customers*, one in a series of three master classes starting on 11 March, following every Monday. Time: 18:00 to 20:30. Cost: R200 per session for ORT Jet members, R600 for non-members. Venue: ORT SA Academy, 44 Central Street, corner 10th Avenue, Houghton. Bookings samantha@ortjet.org.za
- Hebrew speakers meet at 10:45 at Beyachad building, 2 Elray Street, Raedene.



Letters

WELL-REASONED ARTICLE SHOULD BE WIDELY PUBLISHED

Undeterred, and in spite of the hate-filled disparagement that spewed forth when Shashi Naidoo uttered positive comments about Israel and Jews last year, Haafizah Bhamjee penned a reasoned and sensible article on Israel and the Palestinians in the *SA Jewish Report* of 22 February.

Naidoo was coerced, threatened with violence and death, and had to retract her statements in response to hate from the terrorist-associated Boycott Divestment Sanctions and other anti-Semitic, racist warmongers.

I am not aware of any such outburst in response to Bhamjee’s article. It would be great if she submitted the identical article to the *Star* and the *Sunday Times*. If she has not yet done so, I respectfully suggest that she does. I await her response with suspenseful interest. – **Jack Miller, Johannesburg**

BOARD HAS NO RIGHT TO DICTATE ABOUT RABBI

Take a look at your Torah, people. G-d created us as equals and that being so, what right do you have to dictate to anyone who will have the comfort of a rabbi? Shame on you for your actions being dictated by finances.

We will not allow you to take away our Rab Moshe! – **John Gee, Zambia**

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Parties must prioritise the tech revolution



ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev

The first major public event on the South African Jewish Board of Deputies’ (SAJBD’s) Make Us Count pre-election campaign was held in Sandton on Monday evening. By all accounts, it was a rousing success with capacity attendance, thought-provoking addresses from the two speakers, and plenty of lively participation. This event was primarily aimed at younger members of our community, including young professionals and students. The main item on the agenda was a discussion between Communications Minister Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams and media personality and entrepreneur Arye Kellman on the role young South Africans should play in economic and social development. Appropriately enough given the audience, Ndabeni-Abrahams is the youngest member of Cabinet. More importantly, her portfolio covers an area in which, by and large, younger people are already heavily involved in, and which will undoubtedly be a decisive influence in their endeavours, professional or otherwise. In her address and the question-answer session that followed, Ndabeni-Abrahams dwelt at some length on what is now commonly referred to as “the fourth industrial revolution”, a term that if anything, understates the extent to which emerging technology in fields such as robotics, artificial

intelligence, quantum computing, and biotechnology are transforming the way we live, work, and communicate. Properly harnessed, these spectacular developments have the potential to address some of the most daunting problems that have confronted the human race over millennia, including critical areas such as food security, employment, and healthcare. The very rapidity with which change is taking place poses its own challenges, since no country can afford to fall behind and still remain competitive. As South Africa approaches what is arguably its most important election since the democratic transition a quarter of a century ago, it is vital that these issues appear high on the agenda of all the contesting parties. We are gratified to have been able to make a meaningful contribution to the greater debate, for which thanks is due to our two distinguished speakers. It was also extremely encouraging to witness the enthusiasm and positivity shown by young participants from our own community and beyond. They, after all, are destined to be at the forefront of the technological wave. The next event on the Make Us Count programme will be a “Great Debate” in Johannesburg on 11 April between representatives of some of the main competing parties. It will be an opportunity for our community to understand their vision for our country, and to ask questions. We hope to attract full attendance once again, and encourage everyone to visit our Facebook pages for updates.

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

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

Letters

THE LEFT’S DOUBLE STANDARDS ON ISRAEL

I’m so glad that I read Paula Slir’s column before I read the letters in last week’s *SA Jewish Report*. Netanyahu has joined with the Jewish Power party, and they are said to be racist against Arabs. Slir points out that even though this is simply Netanyahu trying to ensure his political survival, there are Jewish organisations that are dismayed by this move, even downright angered and outspoken about it. But, she then asks where these critics were when “Arab Knesset member Hanin Zoabi joined the 2010 Gaza flotilla, called Israeli soldiers ‘murderers’, praised Palestinians who carried out deadly attacks on Israelis, and met their families in solidarity?” Where were these critics when other Arab Knesset members and government officials acted in favour of terrorists and squarely against the best interests of the state of Israel? Then, on the letters page, there is an offering from the Jewish Democratic Initiative. It also condemns Netanyahu’s alliance with the Jewish Power party, citing it as racist. And so, the same question must be directed at this organisation: where were you when Arab Knesset members intentionally worked to support terrorists to

the detriment of Israel? Would any other country tolerate their own parliamentarians working to sabotage their own state? I call them traitors. No other government would accept it. My view is that Israel is too liberal in this way. It doesn’t make sense to employ people who work contrary to the peace, security and prosperity of the country they are meant to uphold. But we don’t hear about that. That goes under the radar. Why? Maybe because Jews are supposed to be open-minded and tolerant. Indeed, those are lofty ideals. But not if it is a double standard. If you won’t criticise the extreme left, then you can’t criticise the extreme right. It’s not racism. It’s balance. As a final note, no Jews live in Gaza today. And we understand that no Jews who would be part of a new Palestinian state. Compare that with the many religious faiths and races that live in Israel today. This also is not balanced. This is racism against Jews. But it’s not even questioned. We should all just take this little titbit for granted. – **Michele Engelberg, Johannesburg**

AGRIZZI SHOULD BE CONDEMNED, NOT COMMENDED

Howard Feldman’s column – “Trying to understand Angelo Agrizzi” – in the 1 March edition of the *SA Jewish Report* refers. Questions come to mind that were not addressed by interviewer Chad Thomas on ChaiFM, nor by Howard Feldman in his overly forgiving article which followed the interview last week: First, why did Agrizzi decide to grant his one and only interview to a Jewish radio station? It seems strange that a top executive of an enterprise exposed for corrupting government institutions and public servants on a grand scale should be so interested in talking to the Jewish community. His interview was notable for making biblical and other references that alluded to Jews – why is he cosying up to the Jewish community? Second – and this also seems to have escaped Feldman and Thomas – by becoming a whistleblower, isn’t Agrizzi just trying to avoid going to jail, or trying to get a lighter sentence down

The thick skin of men in power



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Former South African President Jacob Zuma and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have something in common: no matter how much damning proof of wrongdoing piles up against them, they continue to behave without batting an eyelid. Zuma is out of office after nearly destroying South Africa, and should be in jail, but his cheerful face still appears on African National Congress (ANC) party billboards. He is seen publically campaigning for the ANC, doing his characteristic dance, with no shame. People who rejoiced at the exposure of his corruption network thought, “We’ve got him!” But he projects himself as the victim of a conspiracy, saying, “I don’t know what I have done!” Netanyahu’s three graft charges amount to very serious misdemeanours for which he could go to jail. But no crestfallen face has been seen on him. Withdrawing from politics to face his charges, which would be the right thing to do in good democracies, is totally unthinkable. That’s not how Israeli politics works, and not how he works. Instead, he continues to behave as if he is a brave warrior fighting a sinister barrage of odds. “Without me at the helm to provide security, the country would fall!” is his message. Sadly, most Israelis believe him, as if there are no other capable people in the nation. He claims a conspiracy against him from the “left”, and has made praise of anyone to the left of his politics equivalent to swearing, “It is the leftists who are out to get me!” In a right-wing country like Israel, with the left in disarray, this finds fertile ears. Torah Thought

From anti-Semitism to aerospace travel

Modern-day miracles are hard to come by. We are different to the way we were in the past. However, from time to time, we get a sneak peek into the miraculous ways of G-d. Take the story of Alex Friedman. Friedman was born in the former Soviet Union. His father was arrested shortly before his birth because of his Jewish activity, and he was jailed for seven years. He met his father for the first time in Grade 1, upon his father’s release. His family would daven quietly in the privacy of their home so that the neighbours would not hear them and hand them over to the KGB (Committee for State Security). He would organise regular sick-notes from a doctor so that he would not need to attend school on Shabbos. After graduating from school, Friedman wanted to study physics, but was prevented from doing so by anti-Semitism at the university. Instead he was told that he could study mathematics. In 1970, his family made aliyah to Israel. Friedman was soon drafted into the Israeli Airforce, and later went to work in Israel’s aerospace industry. He married, and now has seven children and several grandchildren. On a personal note, his son, Nachum, studied with me several years ago. Two weeks ago, Friedman and his team of space scientists made history. They sent off Israel’s first spacecraft, Beresheet, to the moon, joining the United States and China as the only countries in the world to accomplish this incredible feat. Friedman, the Russian boy who was not accepted into the physics course because he

Zuma has never gone to jail, nor will he. The rot of corruption in every aspect of South Africa with his fingerprints on it is so deep, it will take years to examine and tackle, no matter how many commissions of inquiry work at it. By then, the country will have moved on with other things to worry about. It is highly unlikely that Netanyahu will go to jail, given the political boiling pot which is Israel and the Middle East. The mark of a canny politician is not only what he does while in office, but how he behaves after exposure for lying or stealing. Netanyahu is still firmly in charge of what happens now. Politics is a slippery business, not a profession which inspires ethical behaviour in Israel, South Africa, or elsewhere. Accountability is difficult to impose. In South Africa, with its toxic racial mix in politics, most potential whistleblowers quickly withdraw when faced with accusations of racism. Fear of the consequences easily leads to turning a blind eye, all the way from the shopkeeper who cooks his books and pays less tax, to the highest politician who rapes his secretary. Zuma also made headlines in 2005 after accusations that he raped the woman known as Khwezi, earning his nickname “showerhead” after saying that he had taken a shower after sex with her. But he still has a huge, loyal following in KwaZulu-Natal province, which threatens President Cyril Ramaphosa’s ability to do what is necessary. This is in spite of the estimated R500 billion loss to the country through state capture that flourished under Zuma. In politics, it is often the most shrewd, not necessarily the most principled politicians, who end up having the greatest effect. But it sticks in the throat to see Netanyahu arrogantly strolling the streets of Jerusalem as if all is well, with his face on Likud posters smiling at the people, just like Zuma does here in Johannesburg. Rabbi Yehuda Stern, Sydenham Shul

was Jewish, is now part of the amazing breakthrough of sending off a spacecraft carrying the Israeli flag and a disk containing the Tanach. This is a true modern-day miracle. After the episode of the golden calf, Moshe prayed to G-d to forgive the Jewish people. “Please G-d, relent from your wrath and reconsider the bad that you are going to be bringing to your people.” The Hebrew word for “reconsider” is *vehinachem*. This same word also comes from the word *nechama*, comfort. Our sages teach that the Hebrew language is full of depth and meaning. So, the question is, what is the connection between “reconsidering” and “comfort” that they are both linked to the same Hebrew word? Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis answers this question with a beautiful idea. Comfort and pity can come from the outside, from our friends, family, and community. However, more powerful than that is the comfort that comes from within. The inner strength that commits itself to overcoming challenges and moving on. The resolution one makes with oneself to work through difficulties, and grow from the experience. This comfort is the result of “reconsidering” one’s situation, and motivates a change of attitude and mind-set. Friedman’s life story illustrates this approach. He did not sit back and wait for sympathy or comfort from others, but moved forward to build his family and his career. This his true comfort.



Rabbi Yehuda Stern, Sydenham Shul

Chesed with cupcakes

Sandringham Gardens residents Becky Lazer (left) and Hetty Mroost (right) team up with Naomi Goldman and Chaya Finkelstein (centre), Grade 5 pupils of Torah Academy Primary School, to make cupcakes. The project is part of a *chesed* (kindness) programme between the school and organisations associated with the Chevrah Kadisha.



KDL movie night an enjoyable pyjama drama

King David Pre-Primary Linksfield scholars, their families, and staff enjoyed an outdoor movie night last Sunday on the senior primary school sports field. Each child converted a box into a car, in which they sat in pyjamas, eating popcorn and watching the movie.



Joshua Cohen, Jayden Gluckman, Ethan and Morgan Langlois

Heartfelt support for Hoërskool Driehoek

In a moving presentation, King David Sandton (KDS) Grade 7 students reflected on the tragedy at Hoërskool Driehoek on 1 February, when a bridge connecting two school buildings collapsed killing four students and injuring 22 as they were moving to class.

The presentation was motivated by a

strong feeling among Grade 7s and teachers that Jewish or not, KDS part of a larger community and is willing to help.

The presentation was initiated and delivered by the Grade 7s, included an original and moving poem in Afrikaans. KDS will send a hand-delivered letter to the school together with this poem.



Yeshiva College in the swim with inter-house gala

Grade 6 heads of Yeshiva College’s sports, arts, and culture committees led the school at its girls’ and boys’ inter-house swimming galas last Friday. All the Grade 6 leaders across the committees played important roles.

The competition was thrilling, and the achievement was excellent. The House of Judah won both the boys and girls galas, and special mention went to the *victores* and *victrices ludorum* (winners): Dalya Swartz, Tali Smookler, and Eitan Ehrlich in the junior category, and Cameryn Suckerman and Judd Suckerman in the senior category.

According to the school, the unity, camaraderie, and spirited war cries of the pupils added up to a thoroughly enjoyable day, making the ultimate winner Yeshiva College.



Judd Suckerman

Crawford pupil a tennis ace

Crawford College Sandton Grade 8 student Dina Tchelet was recently selected for the u15A Gauteng Central Provincial Tennis team after a gruelling qualification process. She is one of the youngest to make the team. Tchelet will play in the inter-provincial tournament this month.

She was one of six players chosen to represent Maccabi South Africa in Budapest, Hungary, at the 15th European Maccabi Games from 29 July to 7 August 2019.

Having played tennis since Grade 1 in 2012, Tchelet lives her life by tennis icon Billie Jean King’s quote, “Champions keep playing until they get it right.” She plays tennis six days a week for about 15 hours each week with a rigorous training schedule. Being a type-1 diabetic who is insulin dependent, she has learnt to be resilient and disciplined. Her goal is to get a tennis scholarship to an overseas university.



Dina Tchelet in action

‘Rambo’ urges kids to stand up to bullying

South African actor Sven Ruygrok, who plays the part of Rambo in the movie *Spud*, spoke to Grade 8 and 9 students at King David High School Victory Park recently, as part of the school’s anti-bullying programme.

In a hard-hitting, interactive talk, Ruygrok shared his story of how he had been bullied for being a gymnast and actor. He explained that bullies thrive off the power they get from the group who support them. Without their “backup”, bullies will not survive. Ruygrok said it takes only one person to stand up to the bully, and he appealed to students to be that person.

An excellent defence against bullying, he said, is to build self-confidence using your own talents and gifts. Instead of judging people based on their external image, focus on getting to know who that

person is on the inside.

Words are like toothpaste, Ruygrok cautioned. Once you have squeezed the



KDVP High School counsellor Gita Lipschitz and actor Sven Ruygrok

tube, it’s impossible to get the toothpaste back in. Even though you press “delete”, the damage is done, he said, urging students to choose their words wisely.

Zootopia on Wild Walk & Run

More than 2 500 King David students, parents, grandparents, teachers, and staff, woke up really early to take to the picturesque paths of the Johannesburg Zoo in this year’s King David Wild Walk & Run on Sunday 3 March.

The KD Wild Walk & Run aims to bring King David schools together in a fun, healthy way, encouraging unity and cohesiveness across ages and campuses.

“It’s a fantastic opportunity for King David families across campuses to enjoy time together outdoors,” said Rabbi Craig Kacev, the Director of the South Africa Board of Jewish Education.

The celebrations continued afterwards at the bandstand grass area, where participants and their families went on fun-fair rides, listened to music, and ate picnic breakfasts, while basking in the glorious Johannesburg sun.



Photo: Ian Ossendryver

SA World Cup is ‘half full’, says Bacher

LUKE ALFRED

In the cycle of sporting seasons, no year holds more enchantment than a World Cup year. First, the debate. Most of this is public, through the pages of the newspaper, on television, the radio, and across social media.

But some of it is private, therefore invisible, taking place in the nooks and crannies of everyday life: at the gym, at Shabbos dinners, during walks in the park.

It curls around the edge of social get-togethers like braai smoke.

After debate – and the hearty sift of selection – comes the team announcement, the farewells, the rising sap of expectation. Then there’s the tournament itself, the amped-up hope of the opening game, the progress of one’s team through the early phases. After that, the knockout stage, the nail-gnawing – and the brute realities of either heartbreak or elation.

Given South Africa’s World Cup history, the emotional palette for locals at such events is somehow more complicated. They have become so used to Cricket World Cup disappointment, that they tip-toe around the event, hoping for better, expecting the worst.

Unless you are lucky enough to be there, it’s almost as if we will all watch the tournament (the Proteas’ opening game is against England on 30 May) with one eye. Or sneak up on it in the hope that not caring too much is a guarantee of success. South Africans have become so used to devastation, that we erect emotional barricades around World Cups. Best pretend not to care – or not to care too much. It’s somehow safer that way.

Former Proteas opening batsman, Adam Bacher, seems to be like pretty much everyone else in this regard, greeting a

question of how the Proteas are likely to do with circumspection. “Am I confident,” he asks rhetorically. “There’s a lot of uncertainty about – I don’t think that’s ideal.”

Later he thaws, finding positives in what admittedly looks like a slightly chaotic pre-World Cup period. He likes the cricket being played by the Highveld Lions’ Rassie van der Dussen, but emphasises that the batsman needs to bat where he’s most comfortable.

“We can’t experiment too much,” says Bacher. “Rassie needs to bat in the top order, not in the middle order. I think it’s a question of fitting people in but keeping experimentation to a minimum. Balance could be our biggest challenge.”

On the subject of the middle order, Bacher also sees hope in the fact that AB de Villiers won’t be in England. “That will give the team a lot of freedom,” he says.

While there’s no doubt that De Villiers is still one of the finest short-form players in the world, the team will experience his absence as a liberation. He brings baggage, says Bacher, having experienced his fair share of World Cup heartbreak, and it’s therefore a good thing that AB won’t be making the trip.

When asked if the lack of baggage carried by the younger guard – such as Quinton de Kock, Kagiso Rabada and Lungi Ngidi – counts for anything, he greets the question with initial enthusiasm before drawing back. “It does help – but it’s not the main point,” he

says. “I think Quinton will be carrying a great deal with the batting. He’s our most attacking batsmen, so there’s big expectation.”

On the subject of younger players, Bacher likes our younger bowlers, floating the intriguing possibility that this could be a tournament won by bowlers rather than batsmen. “Look, most sides don’t have the

hard by younger, hungrier players, with the form player in domestic cricket being Aiden Markram, who has scored close to 300 limited-over runs in his past two domestic outings for the Titans.

Some feel that Markram was jettisoned far too casually from the Proteas ODI set-up last year and, as the happening player in the local



The Australian cricket team holding up the 2015 Cricket World Cup

firepower that we have,” he says. “If we bowl like we bowled in Australia in 2018, we will spring a few surprises. We could be in with a shout.”

Before South Africa play their first World Cup match against England at the Oval, however, some conundrums need solving.

Hashim Amla has been awarded a new national contract, but has been dropped for the first three ODIs against Sri Lanka. For all his loyalty and brilliance, many feel that he’s past his best. He’s been pushed

game, he deserves another chance.

Then there’s JP Duminy, who returned from a rotator cuff injury last week. As luck would have it, he made a duck for the Cobras, but he’s too good a player not to start scoring runs.

Such news might displease Bacher because it would cause further disruption. Then again, there’s no causal link between smooth preparation and success. Flying by the seat of our pants might yet land us the elusive cup.

Umhlanga Jewish Centre celebrates a special year

The Umhlanga Jewish Centre Shul inaugurated a new Sefer Torah last week. This coincided with celebrating 10 years since the purchase of the land the campus is on and the seventh year of the centre’s shul and Akiva College.

The Sefer Torah was hosted by the Aronoff family in loving memory of Albert Aronoff.

A Shabbat lunch was held in honour of Dr Jonathan Beare in recognition of his contribution to the campus.

“The UJC is a beacon of light, attracting Jewish life from all over the province of KwaZulu-Natal. We are privileged to have a community centre of this grandeur, one that is filled with activity on a daily basis, shaping the future of Jewish KZN,” Rev Gilad Friedman told the gathering.



The extended Aronoff family together with Rabbi Pincus Zekry and Rev Gilad Friedman with the Sefer Torah donated by the family to the Umhlanga Jewish Centre Shul

Cameron Wulfsohn reiterated this sentiment: “I needed to regain my connection to Hashem. I have not looked back since joining Akiva and the UJC. I never thought I would have a Barmitzvah. This community is one of a kind.”

Warren Shapiro spoke of Akiva College as “a school with soul, where every child is seen for who they are and educated and loved as an individual”.

Celebrating social cohesion and music

Sydenham Shul partners with Education Africa in an initiative to benefit under-privileged young South Africans and promote social cohesion.

Named Sounds of Celebration, the project has been in existence for six years. It raises money for the establishment of marimba hubs in a wide number of disadvantaged schools, providing educator training and creative spaces for pupils.

“The project is an example to members of my community [and beyond] of the important role we can all play in the betterment of the wider South African community,” says Rabbi Yehuda Stern of Sydenham Shul.

Between 2013 and 2018, Sounds of Celebration opened five marimba hubs: at Ithute in Alexandra; the Zama Montessori

School in Daveyton; the Boys and Girls Club of Protea Glen; and its newest hubs in Hammanskraal, and the Boys and Girls Club at Bertrams.

The project currently focuses on ensuring the sustainability and growth of 11 existing Education Africa Marimba Hubs so that more pupils can benefit from these opportunities.

Sounds of Celebration’s annual fundraising culminates in a celebratory concert every year, which brings young people together from all walks of life.

Musical talent is displayed on a range of instruments, including marimba, a steel band, gumboot dancers, a pipe band, a Japanese Koto, Djembe and Penny Whistle ensembles, and a male voice choir. This year’s show will take place in the second week of April, just before Pesach.

Job Offer: Principal Archivist – Jewish Living Archive

Job Title: Principal Archivist of the Jewish Living Archive

Job Description: Primarily based at the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies at UCT, and working closely with the Jewish Digital Archive Project (JDAP) at the South African Jewish Museum and with Special Collections at UCT, the appointee will serve as the principle archivist of the Jewish Living Archive.

Job Responsibilities: Responsibilities include professionally processing archival collections, dealing with research queries, undertaking research on behalf of the Jewish Living Archive, and coordinating a programme of oral history interviews.

Job Requirements: A relevant university degree plus one of a number of alternatives: a relevant archival

qualification, professional archival experience, or a postgraduate degree entailing research based on primary sources. If first degree did not include South African or international history, or a Jewish Studies component, evidence of acquired subject knowledge in one of those areas.

- Applicants should preferably have:**
- computer literacy including working with spreadsheets and databases
 - excellent written and communication skills
 - research and analytical skills
 - ability to work independently and as part of a team
 - planning, organizing, and multi-tasking abilities
 - strong interpersonal and client service orientation

Salary: R250,000 – R350,000 p.a. CTC commensurate with experience. This is a contract position.

Working hours: Mon-Fri 8:30am – 5:00pm excluding public and Jewish religious holidays

TO APPLY:
Please email your CV, including a letter of motivation to:
gavin@sajewishmuseum.co.za

Applications close 29 March 2019 • Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



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