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Thulsie twins' financial support points to bigger forces at play

TALI FEINBERG

Terror-accused Thulsie twins Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee once again appeared in the South Gauteng High Court on Tuesday, this time to hear about preparations for their trial.

They were arrested three years ago, accused of plotting to attack South African Jewish institutions including schools and youth movement camps, Jewish individuals, and the United States embassy.

Looking into the twins' support system, the *SA Jewish Report* found that they are backed by an organisation called Cage, formerly known as Cageprisoners. It describes itself as a charity and advocacy organisation to "empower communities impacted by the war on terror". However, journalist Terry Glavin wrote in the *Canadian National Post* that the organisation is "a front for Taliban enthusiasts and al-Qaeda devotees that fraudulently presents itself as a human-rights group". *The Economist* says it supports "defensive jihad".

Local terrorism expert Jasmine Opperman told the *SA Jewish Report* that "Cage is anti-Western, pro-Hamas, pro-Hizbollah, and has a strong anti-Israel stance. It will do anything to protect Muslim rights, even if it inflames the situation."

An anonymous source close to the Thulsie case said that Cage "assists al-Qaeda and ISIS operatives that have been arrested in the West. The Thulsies' wives, children, and attorneys are getting a stipend from them, so they are beholden to Cage."

The Thulsies' sister, Salomi McKuur, wrote on the Cage website in July 2018 saying, "We do not know where we would be if it were not for Cage Africa and the Muslim Lawyers Association. You are sent from Allah. We will never be able to repay you, but you will always be in our family's prayers."

The anonymous source has reason to believe that Cage might have an interest in delaying the Thulsies' case. If the twins were linked to a larger IS cell, it would be better that they did not stand trial and divulge what they know.

The Cage website openly calls for donations to support the Thulsies. "Cage Africa is appealing for funds to assist the Thulsie twins in their defence ... family and friends insist the twins are innocent of all charges.

"The Thulsies cannot afford lawyers. This case will set a

precedent under South Africa's Promotion of Constitutional Democracy and Terrorism Act, the broad reach of which has caused alarm to Muslim and civil society organisations. Please donate, however small, to their lawyer's account," says the appeal, followed by the twins' lawyer's bank details.

Karen Jayes, a spokesperson for Cage Africa, added to the above plea, saying, "Under the current toxic global climate and discrimination against Muslims, it is a concern that the first publicised case of the anti-terrorism act is against Muslims. Anti-terrorism laws politicise crimes, and are unnecessary.

"The Thulsie family are under tremendous stress and scrutiny. We are appealing to all willing and able donors to help ensure a fair trial."

Cage is allowed to operate in the United Kingdom, but some are questioning its motives, especially since the organisation's Asim Qureshi said it had been in regular contact with

Anwar al-Awlaki – linked to at least a dozen terrorist attacks – and Boko Haram, the Nigerian Islamist group which abducted 275 schoolgirls," according to the *Telegraph* article. (The "Bring Back Our Girls" campaign is a "colonial trope", and criticism of Boko Haram is about "demonising Islam", according to the Cage website.)

Advocate Allan Ngari, senior researcher at the Institute for Security Studies, said there was inaccuracy in some of Cage Africa's reporting, for example, regarding the prosecution of Omar Awadh Omar in Uganda. "I certainly agree with the need to uphold the rights of suspects accused of terrorism offenses, but it must be done within the remit of the rule of law. Propaganda does nothing but undermine the efforts of criminal justice systems in Africa working towards addressing terrorism offenses," he said.

"Its agenda is actually to undermine the efforts of the criminal

Ingrained in Soweto's history



Kliptown Gumbooters (KGB), sponsored by members of the Jewish community, dance in Freedom Square

See pages 14 and 15

Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

Mohammed Emwazi, the man also known as "Jihadi John". He is a British ISIS operative who beheaded a number of Westerners on film in Syria. Qureshi called Emwazi a "beautiful young man".

At the time, British Labour Party Member of Parliament John Spellar said that Cage was "very clearly coming out as apologists for terrorism". As reported in the *Telegraph*, "Cage campaigns for actual terrorists convicted not by kangaroo courts but by juries, on strong evidence, in properly conducted trials. It even campaigns for some terrorists who actually pleaded guilty.

"Other Cage favourites include Abu Qatada, al-Qaeda cleric

justice system. It strikes me as bizarre as its message is not accurate. Yes, there are challenges in dealing with terrorism cases, but it does not help to spread half-truths. It should not even be discussing the Thulsie case, as it is *sub-judice* (under judicial consideration). Peddling it means it has no understanding of how the criminal justice system works."

The Thulsie twins' trial date is set for 7 October, but having been postponed more than 30 times, it might just be postponed again. Meanwhile, they continue to be backed by Cage, demonstrating how this case could well be linked to much larger forces at play.



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UCT call for feedback on Israel boycott could backfire

TALI FEINBERG

Anti-Israel activists appear to be attempting to improperly influence a survey issued by the University of Cape Town (UCT) over a possible academic boycott of Israeli universities.

As UCT is calling for stakeholders to participate in the survey on whether or not to institute an academic boycott, aggressive views aired on social media, and a call for a response by non-stakeholders could skew the outcome against Israel.

A man named Haroon Aziz has put out a WhatsApp message calling on people who have nothing to do with UCT to complete the survey, tick the donor box, and make their anti-Israel views known.

It all started on 15 March, when the university's senate voted for a motion that, "UCT will not enter into any formal relationships with Israeli academic institutions operating in the occupied Palestinian territories as well as other Israeli academic institutions enabling gross

human-rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories."

This motion was taken to the university's council, its highest governing body, for a final vote on 30 March. It was not adopted, and was referred back to the senate for clarification.

"In the council's view, a number of issues required clarification and action. These included an assessment of the sustainability impact of the senate resolution, paired with a more consultative process," wrote UCT Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng on the university's website.

The executive is now calling on members of the UCT community to submit their views on the senate resolution. The outcome of this, together with a sustainability impact assessment, will be tabled at the senate meeting on 13 September, according to Phakeng.

However, Aziz's message and others like it that are believed to be doing the rounds could put a spoke in the legitimacy of the outcome.

"I was never a student at UCT, but I did the survey, and ticked donor to proceed. I added to my comments that UJ [the University of

Johannesburg] was a more progressive educational institution by far, and the forerunner of a similar boycott call, which earned it international respect/recognition," wrote Aziz.

"I asked if this time, delaying tactics and an impact study [are] more important than the moral impact of daily innocent lives being lost for the past 70 years, lives which include innocent women and defenceless babies."

Aziz said he would force the university to identify its council members, presumably so that they could be pressured into a decision to boycott. "In addition, I asked that they please identify their council members so the public can see who the Zionist sympathisers are. May I request that we encourage all our family

donors, and their identity is confirmed.

"For other groups in the UCT community [staff and students] the relevant identification number [staff/student number] is required when giving input, and for alumni, the year of graduation [is required], which is then checked against UCT's records," he says. "The names of all UCT council members have always been publicly available on the university website."

Jordan Seligmann of Progress SA (an organisation fighting extremism on campus), says, "We believe public consultation is necessary in this issue. Up until this point, the proposal has been considered behind closed doors to the point where many academics who sit on the university senate

University of Cape Town



and friends to copy and paste or write similar comments under the donor block?"

Sara Gon of the Institute of Race Relations, who has written extensively on the subject, says she doesn't think it will have an effect on the survey. "It's not slick enough," she says. "My main concern is that no mention is made of consideration of the ethics of the matter. The vice-chancellor should not have called for comment on the resolution, because it sets the unambiguous tone of the anti-Israel viewpoint. She should have quoted the resolution, and first asked whether such a resolution should be considered at all," Gon says.

Professor Adam Mendelsohn, the director of the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies, says, "My sense is that the survey will demonstrate how divisive this issue is within the broad UCT community. Beyond that, it is unclear what, if anything, will come from this exercise.

"To my knowledge, it's very unusual. I can think of no other occasion when staff, students, donors, and alumni have been polled on anything in such an open fashion, including the selection of the chancellor. The survey does seemingly rely on trust and good faith," he says.

In response to questions from the *SA Jewish Report*, Elijah Moholola from the university's media office said, "It is deeply disconcerting that WhatsApp messages such as these are circulating. UCT rejects such attempts to skew the request for input and its outcome."

UCT has a verification process in place for donors making input on the matter, he says. "Donors are requested to indicate their identity [name and surname] and contact details online as part of making their input. This is then checked against UCT's list of

were unaware of this proposal until we brought it to their attention. However, that being said, UCT must be aware of this campaign of ballot stuffing, and must scrutinise each submission. We have seen boycott supporters say that they don't care what the impact will be on UCT as long as this proposal goes through. It reveals that they are ideologues who don't care about the damage done to UCT with this proposal."

The call for the survey to push for an academic boycott also exists on Twitter. "Fellow alums, students, staff, tell UCT [that] Israel is a settler colonial apartheid state in which universities play an instrumental role. The academic boycott is urgent!" wrote Kelly-Jo Bluen.

The UCT Palestinian Solidarity Forum wrote, "Urging all students, donors, and alumnus to put their support behind a campaign that is both in line with the universities own vision and transformation goals, as well social justice. It's of vital importance that we all complete this survey, and let the university know that we stand behind the #IsraeliAcademicBoycott."

Says Wendy Kahn, the national director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, "We believe this is an important and constructive process. We urge people who are connected and care about the university to communicate with UCT, and have their voices heard on this critical topic."

• All UCT stakeholders are invited to submit their comments online on https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UCTcommunityviews_201906. Submissions should not exceed 500 words. The deadline for submissions is 17:00 on Friday, 21 June 2019.

Michael David

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New anti-Semitism faked as anti-Zionism

PETA KROST MAUNDER

Classic anti-Semitism is hundreds of years old. It is overt, and cannot be masked as anything else. However, “new anti-Semitism”, which reached the global stage in South Africa in 2001, is often manipulatively covered up as fighting for human rights.

“This modern and murky anti-Semitism legitimises an atmosphere of hatred towards Jewish communities,” says Yogev Karasenty, the director for combatting anti-Semitism in the ministry of diaspora affairs in Israel. “In so many instances, we see that boycotts against Israel are actually boycotts against Jews or Jewish communities [which are the first ones to suffer the consequences].

“For instance, when certain towns or shops self-declare as an ‘Israeli-apartheid-free zone’ and take off kosher products from their shelves or ban Israeli literature from their libraries; they are actually harming local Jews.”

Karasenty told the *SA Jewish Report* this had been gleaned by his department in Israel, which is in charge of coming up with an overall strategy and projects to fight anti-Semitism.

He confirmed that the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement and its ideological allies were the main engine behind the worldwide spread of the new and less blatant form of anti-Semitism.

“New anti-Semitism comprises the discrimination against, denial of, or assault upon the right of the Jewish people to live as an equal member of the family of nations,” says Karasenty.

He says this contemporary form of anti-Semitism has evolved from discrimination against Jews as individuals to discrimination against Jews as a people and the Jewish state. “What anti-Semites cannot or don’t want to say nowadays about Jews, they say about Israel,” he says. So, instead of targeting individuals for being Jewish, they focus on the Jewish state among all states.

While classic anti-Semitism hasn’t disappeared, the modern form is addressed by the final part of a three-dimensional International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism. Its definition of hostility towards Jews includes Holocaust denial, prejudice against Jews, and finally, the denial of Israel’s right to exist. The ministry of diaspora affairs, in fact, spearheaded the ratification of IHRA’s Working Definition of Antisemitism by the Israeli government in 2017.

This new form of anti-Semitism took off in the 1990s, and reached the global stage at the World Conference against Racism in Durban in September 2001, according to Karasenty.

“Demonisation of the state of Israel, together with virulent anti-Semitic imagery and language, acquired a global tone that has grown exponentially and has been catalysed by social media since then,” he says.

“Prejudiced individuals hold Jews collectively responsible for Israel’s actions, or use symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism to characterise Israel. It makes it obvious that this new form of anti-Semitism is nothing but old wine in new bottles.”

Karasenty says that while the globalisation of mass and social media empowers anti-Semites, it also promotes awareness and facilitates countermeasures against this pernicious phenomena.

He makes it clear that criticism of Israel, *per se*, is fair and acceptable, akin to what is directed at any other country. He tells the *SA Jewish Report* about a practical tool to differentiate between legitimate criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism. This is known as the 3D Test of Anti-Semitism, proposed by former Soviet refusenik and until recently Jewish Agency head, Natan Sharansky, and Professor Robert Wistrich.

The three Ds are: demonisation, double standards, and delegitimation. When an individual or organisation criticises Israel, one needs to ask whether Israel’s actions or image is being demonised, or the Jewish people’s right to self-determination is being denied, or criticism of Israel is being applied selectively.

If the content of any of the arguments employed can be categorised by at least one of these Ds, then anti-Semitism should be quickly identifiable.

He cites clear examples of recent new anti-Semitism:

- Under the guise of political commentary, the *New York Times* published a cartoon on its opinion pages in April that drew widespread condemnation. It was particularly reminiscent of the (Nazi) *Der Stürmer* cartoons. In it, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu features as a dog wearing a collar with a blue Star of David, guiding a “blind” President Donald Trump who is shown wearing a kippah;
- During the 2019 European Parliament elections, the neo-Nazi party Die Rechte

in Germany turned the Nazi slogan, “The Jews are our misfortune!” into “Israel is our misfortune!”. This slogan appeared across Germany together with other anti-Israel messages; and

- Earlier this year, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro accused opposition leader Juan Guaidó of being a “CIA agent who serves interests of the US and the Zionists” in an interview with the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese *Al-Mayadeen* TV.

BDS employs online campaigns, “apartheid weeks” on campuses across the globe, and the promotion of conspiracy theories and blood libels about Israel. The organisation’s key aims qualify as anti-Semitism according to the 3D Test, according to Karasenty.

The ACMS data show that 70% of all anti-Semitic social-media posts are clearly within the new anti-Semitism category, with the remainder divided between Holocaust denial and distortion, and classic anti-Semitism. The data was obtained by flagging and analysing more than 55 million posts across social networks worldwide throughout 2018.

Nearly 240 000 online anti-Semitic users worldwide were responsible for the dissemination of the virulent content, according to Karasenty.

One of the most concerning effects of the new anti-Semitism is the growing unwillingness of Jews to self-identify as Jews in the public sphere, and to express their connection to Israel, according to Karasenty.

“In the best scenario, the normalisation of such discourse on university campuses challenges Jewish collective identity among youngsters. In the worst scenario, anti-Semitic hate speech often precedes hateful acts of violence against Jews.”

Karasenty believes that new anti-Semitism has been catalysed in social media due to a chronic

lack of enforcement – or refusal to enforce – pre-existing community standards, or to recognise the hateful nature of online anti-Semitic rhetoric.

“The absence of suitable sanction both by the state and the platform providers when grave violations of the standards occur contributes to the growing inflammatory discourse.”

The diaspora affairs ministry is engaged in ongoing efforts vis-a-vis leading IT companies. In the past three years, it says it has seen a significant shift in the companies’ willingness to enforce their own community standards. This occurred mainly due to increased awareness by legislators on national and transnational levels, as well as increased public awareness of the harmful potential of the phenomena.



Blaming Israel for the world’s suffering and “Nazifying” Israel by comparing Zionism with racism are clear examples of how this demonising is done, says Karasenty.

“Singling out Jewish national rights as an illegitimate and racist endeavour, and the consideration of the mere existence of the state of Israel as a colonial act of aggression are the new ‘ugly head’ within the historical evolution process of anti-Semitism,” he says.

According to the diaspora affairs ministry’s anti-Semitism cyber monitoring system (ACMS), which monitors social networks, most of the anti-Semitic incitement in South Africa stems from university campuses, and the political discourse of diverse individuals. Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) – which was created by BDS – is highlighted for its detrimental national effects.



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Ignore cybersecurity at your peril

NICOLA MILTZ

African National Congress Secretary General Ace Magashule claimed that his Twitter account had been hacked after the rand-damaging and potentially catastrophic tweet referring to the Reserve Bank's mandate was sent from his account last week.

Whether it's true or not, there is a spike in cyber hacking globally, which experts say needs to be addressed.

"It has come to my attention that there is a fake tweet doing the rounds alleged to be from my account," tweeted Magashule last week in a bid to calm the waters after his tweet caused the rand to nosedive.

The list of Twitter, cell phone, and other cyber hacking claims is endless, with many prominent politicians falling prey to hackers. Most recently, the cell phone of Benny Gantz, the leader of Israel's election frontrunner Blue and White party, was allegedly attacked by Iranian state intelligence.

Elliot Black from the Israel Trade Office told the *SA Jewish Report* this week, "Any remotely accessible information is remotely accessible to the wrong people. It is every individual, company's, and manager's responsibility to secure remotely accessible information services and money."

A visiting delegation of Israel's top cybersecurity startups was in South Africa this week for the Israel Cyber Roadshow, bringing relevant cybersecurity solutions to the local market.

It is actually very easy to hack someone's Twitter account or cell phone, say computer scientists.

"Your phone is a spy tool," said visiting cyber expert Ronen Sasson of CommuniTake Technologies, which specialises in mobile security. His company has developed the IntactPhone, which he says is practically unhackable. However, "nothing is 100% safe".

Sasson said phones are usually hacked in one of three ways: either by malware inserted remotely, by physical extraction of encrypted data, or by the interception of communication while in transit.

"Hackers can listen to your board meetings, record the meeting, and hack into photographs and tap valuable data. They can even hack a pacemaker and cause a heart attack," said Sasson, who has come to South Africa to leverage his expertise in mobile phone cyber security. "It is a behind-the-scenes war and in most cases, is even more damaging [than that]," he said.

In an environment of so many malware attacks and data breaches, is it possible to hack-proof your mobile device?



Here are a few ways to secure your cell phone:

Keep your operating system up to date, experts say.

Many hackers take advantage of vulnerabilities in out-of-date operating systems.

Install security software, and choose an antivirus from a reputable antivirus company.

When you set a passcode, pick something that's complex, yet easy to remember. Avoid birthdays, pets' names, bank PINs, or part of your phone number.

Avoid easy unlocking methods. Don't be tricked by fingerprint or facial recognition. Hackers can copy your fingerprints from drinking glasses or use photographs of you.

Don't set your phone to unlock automatically when you're at home, or when it's near other smart

devices. If someone breaks into your home or gets hold of your smart watch, your phone will be vulnerable.

Download applications (apps) only from a reputable seller or site, such as Apple's App Store or Google Play. Be careful if you use an Android phone. Google allegedly doesn't vet its apps as carefully as Apple does.

Know how to control your phone remotely. Settings or apps allow you to remotely lock and erase your phone if it's stolen; If you have an older iPhone, get the Find My iPhone app from iTunes. Download Find My Phone for older Android models.

Be careful when using unsecured Wi-Fi connections. Try to avoid them, and use your phone's secure mobile connection. Otherwise,

install a virtual private network, which directs your traffic through encrypted connections.

Disable Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and cellular data when not in use.

A hacker can't hack your phone if it's not connected to the internet.

Make sure to charge your smartphone on trusted USB ports. These include the ports on your computer and in your car (if applicable). Hackers can hack public USB charging ports like the ones you may see in a coffee shop or airport, and steal personal information.

Avoid auto-login because it makes hacking as easy as opening your browser. Take time to enter your usernames and passwords, especially on sites that you use for banking and other sensitive business.

Try to use a variety of passwords. Having the same password for your email, bank account, and social media apps makes a hacker's job too easy. It's recommended to use password management software to store login information.

Change passwords regularly. Don't share personal information like addresses on social media.

Don't open suspicious mails. Merely clicking on the link can give the sender a backdoor into your personal information. Delete the message immediately if you don't recognise the sender.

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Market shudders on threats to Reserve Bank independence

JONATHAN
KATZENELLENBOGEN

The rand remains under pressure after last week's double whammy of a threat to Reserve Bank independence from within the African National Congress (ANC), and the earlier release of a growth figure that showed the poor state of the economy.

Economists and traders said ANC Secretary General Ace Magashule's threat to Reserve Bank independence could, if implemented, open the path to hyper-inflation and an economic crisis in South Africa similar to those in Zimbabwe and Venezuela.

Magashule, widely regarded as head of the "Zuma faction", called for government ownership of the central bank, a change in the bank's mandate to one focusing on growth rather than protection of the currency, and "quantity" easing.

This was a reference to quantitative easing, the massive injection of liquidity that was used in the United States (US) and Europe to save the financial system after the 2008 crash.

"If we go back to 1994, there are two institutions that have given huge comfort to investors: the national treasury and Reserve Bank," says David Shapiro, the deputy chairperson of Sasfin Securities.

"All the governors have been well respected, and you don't want to fiddle with that. Giving independence away would be disastrous," he says.

Earlier this week, the rand had strengthened slightly on its low against the dollar of R14.95 last week, but it had yet to regain its position prior to the bashing.



...ANC Secretary General Ace Magashule's threat to Reserve Bank independence could, if implemented, open the path to hyper-inflation and an economic crisis in South Africa similar to those in Zimbabwe and Venezuela.

President Cyril Ramaphosa quashed the threat to the independence of the bank, but the rand remained under pressure. With the bank a frequent target of populist talk, there are continuing worries in the markets about its future position.

Says Shapiro, "By itself, government ownership would make little difference to bank independence" as the shareholders have no real power. It is the South African constitution that gives the bank its independence, and the mandate of protecting, "the value of the currency in the interest of balanced and sustainable economic



growth".

Shapiro points out that many of the world's central banks are state owned. The worry, he says, is that government ownership and a change in the South African constitution could pave the way for political influence over monetary policy and "allow the government to print money, and use foreign exchange reserves for the wrong purposes".

Michael Kransdorff, an economist who is a co-founder of interest rate comparison site MyTreasury, said changing the bank's mandate to one focusing on growth would be "very negative" for South Africa as it would "raise inflationary expectations, and hurt price stability".

The current bank mandate is price stability, and it does that to advance long-term economic growth," says Kransdorff.

"High inflation kills long-term economic growth. It creates massive uncertainty for business and consumers about future prices, and leads to distorted and suboptimal economic conditions.

"Putting the printing presses in the hands of a profligate government like ours is an economic blueprint for financial ruin. It's been tried many times, and always ends the same way. Zimbabwe and Venezuela are two recent examples," he says.

Roy Topol, an independent fund manager who has worked at Investec and Old Mutual said, "The risk of a change of mandate is that they start printing money and inflation gets out of control.

"The role of the Reserve Bank is to keep inflation under control. If it controls prices, and prices are stable, economic growth will follow, under normal circumstances," Topol says.

Kransdorff said the use of quantitative easing to boost the economy was totally inappropriate for

South African circumstances. "The South African situation is very different" to those countries that have used this tool, he said.

"We suffer from structural supply problems, including labour-market issues, a skills deficit, electricity shortages,

and lack of competition in key sectors," said Kransdorff.

"Quantitative easing can't be done in a small economy. We don't have a reserve currency like the US, the Eurozone, and Japan. It can't be done in a country like South Africa, where there are

too many problems already, says Topol.

Shapiro says the adoption of quantitative easing would mean "government would go wild with that money". Inflationary pressures in South Africa meant that quantitative easing would be dangerous. Quantitative easing was used in cases where there were concerns about price-level falls or deflation.

"We have electricity price rises, wage pressures that are above the inflation rate, and a weak rand pushing up local oil prices," says Shapiro.

"The Ace Magashule story about quantitative easing has made people worry," he says. "What the president needs to do is to come out decisively with a reform agenda with firm policy and action.

"We need strong action that is not linked to ideology. It must be a functional, business-like strategy."

Mystery of grave dug up in Robertson

TALI FEINBERG

A Jewish grave was partially dug open in Robertson in the Western Cape recently, and a case of vandalism has been opened with the police.

A contact in Robertson reported this grave invasion to Country Communities Department (CCD) Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, who reported it to the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies on 20 May.

"There were no signs of anti-Semitism *per se*. The diggers didn't get very far into the grave, they dug only about three foot (0.9m) down. The grave was repaired immediately," said Silberhaft.

However, he said, "It is a custom of Satanists to dig out body parts, and it is known that they look for 'the Jewish head'. In some African countries where Jews are buried, we pour concrete over the grave so that this can't happen. But in Robertson, the digging went in from the foot."

The grave belonged to someone with the surname "Zacks", but Silberhaft said the grave hadn't been asked about or visited in many years indicating that there was no family to inform about the incident.

The Cape board paid for the repairs, which was completed last week, as it holds the trust of Robertson Hebrew Congregation. Board Director Stuart Diamond said the board was working with the local council to prevent other cases from happening.

Silberhaft said the department was also working on the issue of unmarked graves of Jews in some African countries where other people were being buried on top of them. This was another reason to put down a concrete slab on top of a Jewish grave, he said.

"This 'inter-burying' is an ongoing issue that the CCD and African Jewish Congress are dealing with," he said.

"Cemeteries are becoming places of antisocial behaviour, where drugs and alcohol are consumed," added Diamond. "This often goes hand in hand with destruction and vandalism. For example, in Worcester recently, a plaque was smashed off a wall at the Jewish

cemetery. The Cape Board is also dealing with that issue.

"We are working closely with municipalities, and even in a country community setting, we have eyes and ears," said Diamond. "We are also starting a new anti-Semitism hotline, where community members can report acts of vandalism, hate speech, graffiti, anti-Semitism, theft, or destruction. We are keeping an eye out, building positive relationships, and working for our community."



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antisemitism?

assimilation?

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South African Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

Discovering the seam of Soweto

When we set out to find out if there was a Jewish connection to Soweto, we knew we would find something interesting. Isn't that always the case?

However, we had no inkling just how much the Jewish community made up the inner seam of Soweto.

The reason we decided to do this was because this long weekend includes 16 June, Youth Day, and the commemoration of the 1976 Soweto uprising.

Every year, we make an attempt to bring you some new and interesting insights.



So, Jordan Moshe went along with photographer Ilan Ossendryver – who also happens to be a tour guide – to Soweto.

As more and more was revealed, we felt a real sense of pride. Professor Selma Browde was behind Soweto's electrification. The Freedom Charter was signed on the property of a Jewish company with lots of Jewish people involved.

This is such a testimony to who we are. It's not to say that we can claim that the community was at the heart of the anti-apartheid struggle, that wouldn't be true. However, what it does mean is that a good percentage of individual Jews were

integrally involved.

It speaks to our diversity within the community, and just how much we are a part of this crazy, wonderful mélange of a country.

I also loved the fact that when Jewish people lived in Kliptown, they lived closely and happily with their Muslim, Black, Indian, and Coloured neighbours. They all kept their religion and culture, but lived side-by-side as a community.

That is how we are in this country. We are different but the same.

We play our part wherever we can, and do our best to develop South Africa.

In the story about Tanya Cohen leaving Business Unity South Africa (page 11), we meet an accomplished Jewish woman who has been deeply involved in helping business to hold the economy and the country together over a very rough patch.

We do our best, but for some we will always be "Zionists". They can't see us as part of the network of this country because we support Israel.

I always wanted to believe that was why they alienated us from the rest of the country. But, my interview with Yogev Karasenty, the director for combatting anti-Semitism in the Israeli ministry for diaspora affairs, revealed that this was not the case. Anti-Zionism is a real form of anti-Semitism. Of course, it would be because Israel is a Jewish state.

So, they alienate us by vilifying the Jewish state, to which we are intrinsically linked by virtue of who we are.

This anti-Semitism has been given a name – new anti-Semitism – and a clear definition, which Karasenty clarified for us on page 3.

This is the main form of anti-Semitism that we face in South Africa.

What is fascinating is that organisations like Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) make such a song and dance about not being anti-Semitic that they almost have some of us hoodwinked.

Part of the dilemma created by this racism is that we start to think that we are making too big a deal of the negativity directed at us.

The truth is that it isn't as widespread as some would have us believe, but thanks to BDS and its hold on certain members of government and vocal "opinionistas", this racism is powerful here.

It has also found its way into left-wing circles in this country, as Ivor Chipkin points out in his opinion piece on page 7.

For so long, this murky hatred and racism has been cleverly disguised as anti-Zionism – to the point of some Jewish people wondering whether it is legitimate or not.

A handful or so of left-wing Jewish people have bought into it enough to support BDS. By their apparent self-hatred, they give BDS credibility. How I wish they would do some genuine research about who they are support and condemning ... Perhaps they could go to Israel and see for themselves.

Some anti-Israel rhetoric can be convincing as it flies close to the winds of what is happening in Israel, just taking it to the extreme. At other times, the imaginative creation is of a country that is the most abhorrent place in the world, whose people kill and maim women and children daily just for fun. Or so the rhetoric goes.

It gets worse and sicker, but so many lap it up as the truth.

The truth is that the crazier the rhetoric, the easier it is to interpret it as clear anti-Semitism.

The ministry for diaspora affairs has a tool that was formulated partly by former Jewish Agency boss Natan Sharansky. Its simplicity makes it easy to differentiate new anti-Semitism from fair and justified criticism of Israel and the Israeli government.

Now that it is so clearly explained, I believe it will be easier for us to deal with.

Shabbat Shalom, and have a great Youth Day!

Peta Krost Maunder
Editor

Trump's 'deal of the century' not that great

United States (US) President Donald Trump calls his much-anticipated plan to jump start the Israeli-Palestinian peace process the "deal of the century". But right now, it's looking anything but that.

Most people seem to be preparing for its failure – not that anyone outside the White House, let alone the general public, has seen its content. At the moment, it's a lot of guesswork and some leaked information.

Even official statements are none too promising. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says the proposal is "very detailed", but parts of it are, "one might argue, un-executable".

In comments that were leaked to the *Washington Post* newspaper, Pompeo told a closed-door meeting of American Jewish leaders that, "I get why people think this is going to be a deal that only the Israelis could love ... Everyone will find something to hate about the proposal."

Even Trump admits that Pompeo could be right, and that the plan his son-in-law and senior White House adviser, Jared Kushner, has been working on for two years, might not go anywhere.

It's certainly not going to go anywhere in the next three months after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to form a coalition government two weeks ago. New elections have been called for in September.

Trump is none too pleased. Speaking to reporters on the White House lawn three days after the Israeli parliament dissolved, he said, "Israel is all messed up with their election ... They ought to get their act together. Bibi [Netanyahu] got elected. Now, all of a sudden, they're going to have to go through the process again until September? That's ridiculous. So we're not happy about that."

Last September, when Trump met Netanyahu on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, he told the Israeli leader, "It's a dream of mine to be able to get that [the deal] done prior to the end of my first term."

Trump held off on unveiling it until after Israel's 9 April elections, counting on Netanyahu to win. The argument not to release it before then was so that it would not become an issue in the polls or hurt

Netanyahu's chances of re-election by infuriating his support base. The plan is expected to call for at least a few painful concessions from Jerusalem, which won't go down well with right-wing Israelis.

But now, the deal, which has reportedly been ready for months, will presumably be delayed again – for the same reasons. It's unlikely Trump will want to unveil it while Israel heads to another election.

This puts the American president in a difficult position. Time is against him. The new Israeli elections are slated for 17 September. Add to that another two months for a new government – hopefully – to be formed, and you're in mid-November. By then, the US will be in its own election cycle for party primaries that begin in early 2020. And never mind Netanyahu's electorate being unhappy about the deal, any calls for Israeli concessions will not be popular among Trump's core constituency – the evangelicals. He certainly won't want to alienate them as he runs for re-election.

It's also questionable whether Arab countries like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar, which have indicated they're willing to come on board, will take such a chance without

**DATELINE:
MIDDLE EAST**

Paula Slier



knowing if Trump will be returned to office. It's one thing for them to take that risk now when he still has another year-and-a-half in office; it's quite another to take it just months before the 2020 US presidential election, scheduled for 3 November. These leaders are facing a fallout in the Arab world from critics who chastise them for selling out the Palestinian cause. They'll want to know their risk is not for a dying administration.

Without the support of the Arab world, the deal most certainly will fail. And if it does, it won't help Trump's electoral chances just months before he faces the polls.

Conversely, if Trump wins re-election, his "deal of the century" will get a new lease on life. It won't be easy for the Palestinians, who have boycotted the effort from the beginning, to ignore an American administration for another four years. As a means to win them over, Kushner has divided the plan into two aspects. The first – the economic part – he plans to roll out in Manama, the capital of Bahrain, at the end of the month. The more sensitive aspects of the conflict – the political and security elements – will follow at a later stage.

The Palestinians, a host of Arab countries, Russia, and China plan to boycott the two-day meeting. Dubbed "Peace to Prosperity", it is meant to promote investment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by raising tens of billions of dollars in pledges. But there are problems. Prospective donors and investors will want to know the



US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

political vision – the end game – before they commit. The very people the meeting serves to help – the Palestinians – won't be present, and Israel's participation will be by a team representing a transitional government that has no lasting power. And it begs the question: doesn't the release of even only the economic aspect potentially affect Netanyahu's electoral prospects – by an administration which says it doesn't want to have an impact on the Israeli elections? For now, Kushner insists he'll go ahead with the Bahrain workshop, but it's difficult to see what will come out of it.

As for the deal itself, there's talk that the American administration is preparing how to react if it fails. Even without seeing it – and that's part of the problem – Palestinians insist that it's tilted heavily in favour of Israel, and doesn't offer them a state of their own. Assuming they reject it as expected, Israelis on the right could pressure their government to annex parts of the West Bank in response. There are fears this could trigger violence and forever kill efforts to craft a two-state solution. Ultimately, this would be a lot more serious than whether Trump or Netanyahu wins another term in office.

The new anti-Semitism

OPINION

IVOR CHIPKIN



Like many people, I am deeply distressed and surprised by the growth of anti-Semitism in left-wing circles. Labour under Jeremy Corbyn is typical of a wider phenomenon. Anti-Zionism has given a fig leaf to expressions of hostility to Jews.

Who can forget Fees Must Fall activist Mcebo Dlamini's fondness for Hitler, or the anti-Semitic graffiti associated with the "Fallists", or even the claims that University of the Witwatersrand Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib and the university's administration were beholden to Zionist financiers.

Even if these were isolated incidents, the fact that they happened at all is suggestive of a political mutation.

Growing up in South Africa, anti-Semitism was unmistakably a phenomenon of white South Africans. Going to public schools in the 1970s and 1980s exposed Jews to deeply racist and anti-Semitic environments.

I know this from personal experience. I was the lone Jew at Craighall Primary in the 1970s, there with the children of the mainly English immigrants who had moved to South Africa a decade earlier. They had very easily adapted to the violence and racism of white South Africans.

Arriving at Woodmead School in Standard Nine (Grade 11) was my first liberation. Non-racism and diversity were spaces of tolerance, subversion, and freedom. So too was the United Democratic Front (UDF)

and the broad "progressive movement". Black politics opened up spaces of personal and political freedom. It was axiomatic that left-wing spaces were democratic and convivial.

So how has anti-Semitism become a "left-wing" phenomenon? The standard answer is that left-wing anti-Semitism is not anti-Semitism at all. It is anti-Zionism, an expression of opposition and antagonism to the apartheid-like character of the Israeli state and its ruling ideologies.

The fact that the Zionist state insists that it is a Jewish state implicates modern Jewishness in racism, occupation, and colonialism. The fact, moreover, that so many Jews identify as Zionists, implicates the majority of Jews as racists, occupiers, and colonialists.

Yet, there is a much more profound transformation happening of which left-wing anti-Semitism is just a symptom.

A lot has been written about populism in Europe and America, if less so in South Africa. Populists claim to speak on behalf of the "real people" or "silent majority" forsaken by globalising elites.

This appeal to authenticity ushers populists into the arms of nationalism.

Nationalism is ultimately a politics grounded in racial or cultural essentialism. In other words, it fixates on a particular trait (the colour of one's skin, for example), and turns it into a measure of belonging to the nation. During the apartheid period, whiteness was the standard of national belonging, for example. In Israel today it is Jewishness.

Historically, the African National Congress and especially the UDF's vision of post-apartheid South Africa was not a national one. We see this in the Constitution today, which goes very far in not defining the people of South Africa in any racial, religious, or cultural terms.

As nationalists have won the upper hand, however, (since Thabo Mbeki), so race-thinking has come more and more to dominate the definition of who is truly South African and who is not.

In Europe after World War II, the relationship between nationalism and fascism was increasingly understood. This is why the European Union, established as a bulwark against further wars, sought initially to subject national governments to a supra-national bureaucracy.

Germany was the biggest beneficiary of this change, able to deal (or repress) its Nazi past by strongly identifying as a European power, not a German one.

This supra-national feature of the European Union has been controversial since the beginning. Britain did not sign the Treaty of Rome in 1957, worried that it would be surrendering its sovereignty to the "empire of Charlemagne" ultimately under German control.

As it happened, Britain joined the common market only in 1973 – though it sued for entry earlier. Ambivalence to Europe in those days, however, was not necessarily a concession to British nationalism.

Labour, for example, the traditional party of "Euro-scepticism" saw Britain's natural affiliation lying with the Commonwealth, not with Europe. In the 1950s and 1960s, membership of Europe competed with still strong attachments to the empire.

In the 1950s and 1960s, left-wing movements in Europe tended to be critical of nationalism. The "little people" were the workers exploited by capitalists everywhere.

When Labour appealed to the Commonwealth instead of Europe, it

placed the identity of British people in relationship to the great and diverse people of the former empire. (This began to change as communists and socialists threw in their lot with "third-world" nationalism.)

Yet, the British Empire is long gone. Saying no to Europe has become an assertion of English – not even British – nationalism. After all, the Scottish and the Irish voted strongly to remain. And therein lies the difficulty. When nationalists in Britain speak of the "little people" what they are saying is "real English people".

Paul Gilroy, one of Britain's finest sociologists, writes that race thinking, including anti-Semitism, is so basic to nationalism that it is impossible to think the one without the other. His argument is compelling (and helps to explain why, bizarrely, the Israeli right increasingly talks of Palestinians in racial terms). In the United Kingdom, the alien character of the Jew is at the heart of this politics.

Left-wing Euro-scepticism in Britain, even if it sometimes still talks the language of international solidarity, has more and more thrown in its lot with little-England nationalism.

Many left-wing organisations and individuals have thrown in their lot with an inherently anti-Semitic politics. The Jew, that is, is a figure of profound hostility in a world of nationalist revival. Often, anti-Zionism is merely the respectable form of this new anti-Semitism.

• Ivor Chipkin is the executive director of GAPP, a think-tank on government and public policy. This is an extract of a presentation he will make in Belgrade on 17 June to the International Studies Association Conference.

“...there is a much more profound transformation happening of which left-wing anti-Semitism is just a symptom.”

Can our schools prevent violent incidents by pupils?

TALI FEINBERG

Last week, a 19-year-old school pupil fatally stabbed a 16-year-old pupil at a southern suburbs Johannesburg school. While this kind of tragic incident is unheard of at a Jewish school, this is no guarantee that it cannot happen.

Jewish schools across the country have security at every gate, but how would they prevent a pupil from bringing a weapon to school with the intent to do harm?

This was the question posed by the SA Jewish Report to Jewish schools in Cape Town and Johannesburg. While all said that security was of the utmost importance, none could confirm that

measures were in place to prevent a weapon like a knife being brought onto campus by a pupil at the school.

"We are aware of the dangers, but are not allowed to body search students," said Belinda Rosenfeld of King David High School Linksfield. "If we are alerted to a possible situation or have reason to be suspicious, we would do a bag search," she said.

Yeshiva College Principal Rob Long said that "the security of our learners, parents, and staff is of utmost importance to us. Hence security is always top of mind.

"The incident of a Forest High pupil stabbing another pupil highlights the problems that society faces in all public places. I do believe that

security at our school is vigilant in general."

Said David Ginsberg, finance and administration director at United Herzlia Schools, "At Herzlia, we take every precaution necessary to ensure a safe and secure school for all.

"We use a combination of resources, guards, and technology, but cannot comment on the specifics. Security measures vary from time to time in accordance with advice from the CSO (Community Security Organisation), local authorities, and service providers."

It appears that while security is given the highest priority at our schools, this issue should be explored further.



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FEED THE SOUL

Will Ukraine's Jewish president have the last laugh?

STEVEN GRUZD

No jokes. Last month, Ukraine inaugurated Volodymyr Zelensky, a 41-year-old Jewish comic actor, as its new president.

In a run-off election landslide against the incumbent, Petro Poroshenko, Zelensky, the popular TV satirist won 73% of the national vote. He prevailed in all but one of the country's 25 oblasts or regions.

While Poroshenko has stridently and repeatedly denied claims of having Jewish family roots, Zelensky has never hidden his Jewishness, although he is not observant. Besides Israel, Ukraine is now the only country to have a Jewish president and prime minister – Volodymyr Groysman was elected prime minister in 2016.

"Zelensky being Jewish was a total non-issue in these elections. It was not something people cared about. It was mostly discussed in media coverage from the West," said Yarik Turianskyi, an analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs who closely follows Ukrainian politics. "An overwhelming majority of Ukrainians across the board voted for him, knowing about his Jewish origins."

Zelensky became famous by participating in a popular university comedy game show stemming from the Soviet era that combined improv with prepared skits, and later went on to form his own TV entertainment company.

A few years ago, he produced and starred in the TV series *Servant of the People*, where he plays a high school history teacher who becomes the president after a video of him ranting against politicians goes viral. Through the show's various seasons, the TV president has had to deal with parliament and oligarchs

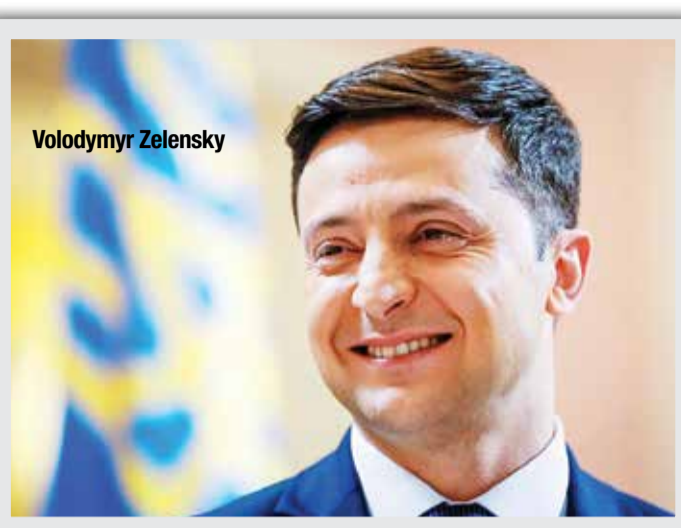
undermining him through all manner of political machinations, back-stabbing and ruthlessness. This is a real case of life imitating art, as Zelensky has already faced these sorts of challenges, having stepped out of the studio and into the nation's top job.

This celebrity status was at the core of his appeal. "It would be the same as if Trevor Noah wanted to run for president in South Africa," said Turianskyi. "Zelensky has an equivalent status in Ukraine. Noah appeals to all racial groups, and mocks politicians from across the political spectrum. In the case of Zelensky, he too appeals to almost everyone, spares no-one, and bridges traditional divides such as being Russian or Ukrainian-speaking." Born in the eastern Ukrainian industrial town of Kryvyi Rih, Zelensky is himself Russian-speaking.

Turianskyi characterises Zelensky's brand of humour as "sharp and edgy political satire" and said, "His election is a rejection of traditional politicians, and shows just how fed up the voters in Ukraine are."

He will face many more challenges, including promoting greater transparency and openness in government, tackling entrenched vested interests with a lot to lose if change comes, and the threat of a resurgent Russia on the country's eastern flank. In an early test of his leadership, Russian President Vladimir Putin offered Russian passports to those living in occupied eastern Ukraine. Zelensky retorted by saying he would offer Ukrainian passports to Russians.

Zelensky is not the only celebrity recently to assume high office. Guatemala elected comedian Jimmy Morales in 2015. Former footballer George Weah is president of Liberia. Ex-cricketer Imran Khan is president of Pakistan. Hollywood actor Ronald Reagan had two terms



Volodymyr Zelensky

as president of the United States in the 1980s, and Donald Trump really came to the public's attention through his role on reality TV show *The Apprentice*.

Zelensky is also not the only Jewish leader of a non-Jewish state. There have been 30 non-Israeli presidents and prime ministers who have Jewish roots, including in Austria, France, Italy, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Russia, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

In a tweet, Max Seddon, a Russia-based *Financial Times* correspondent said, "With a win like this for Zelensky – a non-practicing Jew – Ukraine is now the first country outside Israel to have a Jewish president and prime minister at the same time. Perhaps Russia will have to rethink five years of propaganda about how the country is full of Nazis!"

Absa cements multimillion three-year Jewish Achiever sponsorship

JORDAN MOSHE

Absa executives and the board of the *SA Jewish Report* met on Wednesday to re-cement their partnership for the SA Jewish Achiever Awards.

Against a breath-taking view of Sandton, the partners signed an agreement to maintain their bond, paving the way for the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards for another three years.

The signed contract formalises the relationship between the awards and Absa as event sponsor, a role it has played for 16 years.

"The purpose of today is to sign this long marriage, and renew our vows," said Cliff Mayinga, regional manager at Absa. "It is the 20th anniversary of the Jewish Achiever Awards, and Absa is proud because this is the 16th sponsorship provided by us. We renew our vows for a further three years, and couldn't be more proud."

His words were echoed by Absa Managing Executive Oscar Siziba, who stressed that the relationship was a long-term one which would continue well into the future.

He expressed Absa's gratitude for the opportunity to partner the event, and reflected on the significance of engaging with the South African Jewish community through the partnership.

"The Jewish community plays a critical role globally, on the continent, and in South Africa. As small as it is, it makes a meaningful difference not only in its community, but beyond."

The role of the Jewish community is made clear by its initiatives, Siziba said. "It has become the voice of those who cannot speak for themselves. It does not shy away from holding those responsible accountable for their actions. Few communities can say this with conviction. The role played by the Jewish community is clear to everyone."

Siziba emphasised that the relationship was not about sponsorship, but about playing a meaningful role in the country, and investing in the potential of individuals. "The awards are an accolade for us," he said. "Our special relationship is the perfect expression of our

social promise, and we want to ensure that whatever work we do through this involvement is something that the greater community enjoys.

"I said last year that we would renew this relationship, because no one walks away after 16 years of marriage. It's a privilege to be part of this journey."

Howard Sackstein, the chairperson of the *SA Jewish Report*, said that where other relationships were one dimensional, family was a multidimensional relationship. This was why the theme chosen for this year's awards ceremony was "Rise".

"We've been through such a rough time in this country," said Sackstein. "We believe the country itself is rising, and it's an opportunity that we have with Absa, as a family, to rise and meet the challenges of our amazing country."

The accomplishments of individuals in our community speaks to the multidimensional approach of the awards, he said. "You cannot be successful in business, and not be involved in your community. You cannot be successful, and not care about the people you see on a



Howard Sackstein and Oscar Siziba

daily basis."

It is for this reason that the Achiever Awards and Absa have remained partners with a shared vision. Said Sackstein, "We love this partnership of 16 years. It's not just marriage, but a blood bond. Our partners have been with us for many years, and we have created something unique."

"Together, we honour nine people a year who have contributed substantially to the building of the country. We sign an agreement, but more importantly, we both have the opportunity to ensure that this country rises.

"For 16 years, we have done amazing things together, and I look forward to the next 16."

20th Anniversary
Absa Jewish Achiever Awards
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Send nominations to nominations@sajewishreport.co.za

Jewish Report



Europcar



Millennials strive for change in a less than clear-cut world

TALI FEINBERG

While the South African youth of 1976 had a clear-cut fight on their hands against apartheid, today's young people are tackling issues like gender-based violence, climate change, and inequality.

Some say millennials are focused on themselves and are not worried about the world around them, but there are many who are passionate about righting wrongs.

"Coming from Habonim, I am surrounded by strong-minded and passionate Jewish youth, many of whom are taking action in their schools and homes," says Erin Gordon, a 23-year-old graduate from Johannesburg.

"There is apathy within the youth, but I believe we are not hopeless. Rather, we are on the brink of a breakthrough," she says, pointing out that the youth is getting restless with the status quo.

Gordon is one of many young people who are passionate about changing South Africa and the world around her. While the previous generation's youthful activists rallied against apartheid, today Jewish youth are campaigning for everything from women's rights to freedom of association on campus.

"I am passionate about fighting for gender equality. As a young woman in South Africa, the issue of gender inequality and gender-based violence is something that is present in our day to day lives. It falls on the youth to take control of the situation, and ensure that the world is a safer place for women," says Gordon.

"Even in a privileged community such as the Jewish community, women and those who don't conform [to established gender roles] have a higher risk of becoming victims of abuse and sexual violence. Thus, it's an issue we should all work to fix."

Jordan Seligmann, an actuarial science and finance student, says he is passionate about fighting for freedom, individualism, the rule of law, and the rights of the Jewish community, particularly on university campuses.

Formerly chairperson and currently the president of SAUJS (the South African Union of Jewish Students) in the Western Cape, he has also held senior positions in the Democratic Alliance Student Organisation (DASO) and the African Students for Liberty (ASFL).

"On university campuses, I have dealt with anti-Semitism in its various manifestations. The Jewish community has contributed enormously to the development of this country economically and politically. I believe that we have the potential to contribute even more to the future development of South Africa, but it requires Jews to be able to feel safe enough to express their culture and religious beliefs in this country," he says.

Seligmann is a founder of Progress SA, a new organisation on campuses that promotes the principles of liberty, opportunity, non-racialism, non-sexism, the market economy, and the rule of law.

"When we founded Progress SA, we all had our own reasons why these values were important to us. We had experienced the Fees Must Fall protests, and the consequences of those protests. We had witnessed identity politics on our university campuses, and the fact that there wasn't an effective counterbalance to the rising tide of regressive collectivist ideologies that were informing university debate and policies," he says.

"These principles are important in South Africa. Every day, we hear about state capture undermining state institutions' ability to function, and about how politically-connected individuals loot state coffers and avoid prosecution for illegal activities. Anyone who rightly objects to these occurrences believes in the rule of law. The idea of judging individuals on their own merit and not on their race stems from individualism," he says.

"I believe there are many young Jews who are passionate about various causes in our community. While I do believe that more young Jews could get involved in the NGO (non-governmental organisation) space, there are certainly many who already volunteer for causes they care about. "We can either sit back and do nothing while our country goes down a dark path, or we can get involved and change the course."

Seligmann believes that the Jewish community still has a large role to play. "We must continue to fight for future prosperity for all inhabitants of South Africa, and to be an example for the rest of the country to follow, both for [the sake of] our success, and our compassion for the rest of humanity.

"The youth have the duty to fight for a free South Africa. The Soweto uprising reinvigorated the struggle and led to the end of apartheid and the dawn of freedom. However, the price of freedom is eternal vigilance."

Kayla Bagg is studying psychology and gender studies at the University of Cape Town. She, too, is passionate about feminism and bridging the gender gap.

"I have been discriminated against because of my gender countless times. It's time the Jewish community in South Africa recognised the negative impact of discrimination on the basis of gender, and is able to make changes," she says.

"This is an issue that affects all mothers, daughters, sisters, cousins, and aunts – where people cannot ignore the increasing discrimination occurring in our society. Behind every cause that Jewish youth fight for, gender equality plays a role in determining the

path one can choose.

"Jewish youth in South Africa should come together in order for us to exert the necessary changes we want to see in the world," Bagg says.

"If we truly want to make a difference, this will not happen until the group divide ceases to exist. The youth should never be underestimated, and if we want our Jewish community to continue growing, it's important to hear our voice.

"This Youth Day, I would like all Jewish youth to take the small step towards pursuing something they are passionate about," she says. "We have the power to make the change – there is nothing stopping us."

Says Gordon, "We should take inspiration from the youth of 1976. They had the bravery and determination to change what they believed was wrong. We should look to the 1976 uprising for inspiration in creating lasting and legitimate change in our society."



Kayla Bagg



Jordan Seligmann



Erin Gordon

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Israel has its first gay government minister. He has visited SA.

JTA AND STAFF REPORTER

Amir Ohana was appointed Israel's justice minister last Wednesday. He is Israel's first openly gay government minister.

Ohana was in South Africa in August 2017 as part of a delegation of Knesset members from various political parties. The group came to the country to support the local community, and promote dialogue, understanding, and cooperation between South Africa and Israel.

While he was taken aback at the strong bonds between the South African Jewish community and Israel, he was unimpressed by the African National Congress's (ANC's) treatment of their group.

"What I find distressing is the way the ANC government claims to strive for peace in our region, but it would happily host Hamas and not members of the Knesset," Ohana, then a Likud MP, told the *SA Jewish Report* at the end of their trip.

"They welcome people like Khaled Mashal, a terrorist leader, from an organisation which has a covenant that stipulates that it strives to kill all Jews, but they refuse to see us," said Ohana, who was one of two Likud MPs on the week-long trip.

"The ANC government says it wants to build bridges, but instead it's trying to burn bridges."

Ohana's appointment comes days after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired acting Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, who had continued in her position in spite of not earning a spot in the 21st Knesset after April's elections.

Cabinet ministers don't have to be members of Israel's parliament, but after Netanyahu failed to form a ruling coalition after the vote, he said that it would be inappropriate for her and another unelected member of her party,

Education Minister Naftali Bennett, to remain in their positions until new elections are held on 17 September.

Why Ohana?

A statement from the prime minister's office has emphasised Ohana's experience with the justice system, but Israeli publications noted

that he is a Netanyahu loyalist who first and foremost supports legislation that would grant Netanyahu immunity from prosecution in at least three corruption cases against him.

Ohana also headed the committee that wrote the controversial nation-state law which states that Israel is not a country of all of its citizens, but a Jewish state.

Ohana may additionally have been a more palatable choice than Betzalel Smotrich of the right-wing Union of Right Wing Parties, who has been demanding the justice ministry portfolio. It is not known whether Smotrich was even in the running, but he definitely damaged his chances when he said recently that he wanted to run the country according to the Torah, and "go back to operating as it did in the days of King David and King Solomon".

"There goes the halacha state," a Likud Party spokesman reportedly quipped after the

announcement of Ohana's appointment, using the term for religious law.

Does he have job security?

Netanyahu originally announced that he would keep the justice and education portfolios for himself until the new elections, but changed his mind after some complained that it was wrong for him to act as justice minister while under threat of indictment.

Ohana's term will be short due to the new elections, but some news outlets report that he could hang on to the portfolio in the next government if Netanyahu has any say.

"He won't be much of a justice minister," *Ha'aretz* columnist Yossi Verter wrote.

"This is a transitional government where there is no Knesset and no ministerial committee for legislation. He will influence the way the system is run about as much as the sleepy guard at the justice ministry headquarters on Jerusalem's Salah e-Din Street."

Verter also noted that during his tenure in the Knesset, "Ohana hasn't made any particular effort to advance interests of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community. His consistent excuse was his commitment to coalition discipline. Over time, this evolved into personal discipline in service of the leader, and on Wednesday, he got his reward."



Amir Ohana

Photo: Miki Alster/Flash90

Is he good for the LGBTQ community?

Ohana's loyalty to the conservative Likud is puzzling. In November, the Knesset voted down an amendment to the country's surrogacy law that would have allowed same-sex couples to have children by surrogacy in Israel rather than forcing them to go to other countries at great expense and emotional hardship. Netanyahu and most of the coalition voted against the amendment, authored by Ohana, with Netanyahu saying that he was afraid of angering the haredi Orthodox parties in his coalition and bringing down the government.

Ohana has a husband, twin children born through a surrogate in the United States, and a harrowing story of not being with the babies when they were born prematurely.

Meanwhile, Israel's LGBTQ task force called his appointment a "historic milestone", and said he could make a difference even as an interim minister, pointing to things under his authority that do not require government approval.

Those include softening the protocols for transgender people in the committee for gender reassignment, creating new and better procedures for recognising the non-biological parents of children born via surrogacy, and revamping the process for allowing LGBTQ parents to adopt children outside of Israel.

Netanyahu is expected to give the education portfolio to a leader of the Union of Right Wing parties, namely Smotrich or union head Rafi Peretz.



Sharon Feuer, Patrice Motsepe, Solly Krok, Paul Krok, and Stephen Falcke

At 90, the journey's just beginning for Solly

HOWARD SACKSTEIN

It was 90 years ago that Chai Sora lay in the delivery room of the Queen Victoria hospital near Hillbrow in Johannesburg. Much to the surprise of the doctors in the maternity ward, when Solly Krok popped out, the labour was not yet over. Nineteen hours later, Abe made his appearance and the legend of the Krok twins was born.

In an array of glittering functions held over the past few weeks, Solly Krok celebrated his 90th birthday. He devoted numerous birthday speeches to his growing fear about the rise of anti-Semitism around the world, and his deep concern for the future of South African Jewry. At 90, the man is energetic, and is planning to live to "100 years plus VAT".

As youngsters, with Solly as accountant and Abe as pharmacist, the twins ventured into the world of business. Their first success was the creation of a skincare beauty range for the African community. The products became the largest cosmetic range sold in South Africa at the time, although the "complexion lightening creams" led to much controversy.

The range was originally sold by African

hawkers, who used a certificate issued by Twins Pharmaceuticals to bypass the restrictions of the *dompas* (pass book) and travel freely around the country selling the cosmetic products. Later the twins would sign lease agreements in their own names, acting as a front to allow Indian and black entrepreneurs to own their own operations in racially restricted areas. Twins was listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) in 1968.

Together with legendary South African industrialist Jonathan Beare, the Kroks secured control of SA Druggists (SAD), and later engineered the purchase of SAD by Aspen Pharmaceuticals.

Along the way, they bought the 3.26 hectare Summer Place, the former home of flamboyant fugitive oil and arms dealer Marino Chiavelli, and turned it into one of Johannesburg's most sought after function venues. Added to the list of Krok entertainment venues were Gold Reef City and the Wild Waters aqua park in Boksburg.

Although it started as a business venture to secure the rights for a casino near Soweto, the Krok group offered to build

Continued on page 16 >>

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Busa head Tanya Cohen bows out of 'complex, challenging' role

NICOLA MILTZ

Tanya Cohen this week announced that she was stepping down as chief executive of Business Unity South Africa (Busa) at a critical juncture in South Africa.

"I'm taking a break, nothing more, nothing less," Cohen told the *SA Jewish Report* via cell phone during a flight from Johannesburg to the United Kingdom on Tuesday night, one day after the surprise announcement was made.

"It has been a very busy, challenging role which left me with very little time for myself. I want to spend time with my family, and think about what's next," said this Ladysmith-born (in KwaZulu-Natal) Zulu-speaking business leader.

Cohen's announcement – six months early – comes after two and a half years at the helm of Busa. Her decision to step down has been made at a time when business could benefit from Cohen's level-headed and pragmatic approach as President Cyril Ramaphosa attempts to kickstart the engine of the economy.

Busa is considered the apex institution representing organised business, with a range of members: professional, sectoral, chambers, and South Africa's largest corporates. During the final years of the destructive Jacob Zuma administration, Busa called for accountability and ethical leadership in government.

The organisation has worked with labour, government, and the community on the national minimum wage and amendments to labour laws at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac), and it partnered closely with President Cyril

Ramaphosa at the recent Jobs Summit and Investment Conference.

In a statement issued this week, Cohen said, "I have accomplished what I set out to do: reposition Busa as South Africa's apex business organisation and a credible, strategic, and critical partner to government and other social partners at Nedlac. It was an opportune time to bow out."

Cohen and her colleagues at Busa worked to influence policy and legislative development for "an enabling environment for inclusive growth and employment".

The Busa board said this week that Cohen was "an exceptionally capable leader" who, during her tenure, managed to reposition Busa and build strategic relationships with government, organised labour, and the community.

Journalist and former *Business Day* editor Tim Cohen (no relation) wrote in *Daily Maverick* this week that it had been a monstrously difficult few years for government-business relations that had taken its toll on Cohen.

Expanding on this, Cohen told the *SA Jewish Report* that "it was a very complex, diverse role", dealing with all sorts of sectors and sizes of businesses, and involving a lot of navigation and engagement with government, trade unions, business, and the community.

Busa said that Cohen would be taking a sabbatical ahead of pursuing new opportunities.

Asked what she had in mind, Cohen said she was thinking of studying, but was looking forward to taking time off and exploring her options.

Cohen, who grew up on a smallholding in

Ladysmith, attended Klipriver Primary School and later Girls Collegiate in Pietermaritzburg, which was across the road from the Pietermaritzburg Hebrew Congregation where she and the two other Jewish students would sometimes go.

Today, Cohen lives in Kyalami with her husband, the well-respected Johannesburg radiologist Dr Jonathan Hack, and their two sons. The couple met when they were students at the University of the Witwatersrand where Cohen studied a BA LLB majoring in law and economics, and later did her Masters.

As a former chairperson of the governing body of the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration, and having held the role of employee-relations executive at Woolworths, Cohen was well placed for her role at Busa.

During her time at Busa, she said she had the "extraordinary privilege" of working with capable and committed people, be it within Busa and its membership base, or within government, labour, community, institutions, and the media.

Some of those people, she said, were from the South African Jewish community, which "punches way above its weight" in terms of its contribution and commitment to economic transformation.

She spoke of key individuals who had made a lasting impression. "There are some incredible people in our community who are doing phenomenal work. People like former Investec Group Chief Executive Stephen

Koseff; Discovery Chief Executive Adrian Gore; Colin Coleman, the chief executive of Goldman Sachs in sub-Saharan Africa; Netcare Chief Executive Richard Friedland; and Professor Michael Katz to name a few, and the many others, maybe not as visible, but highly capable in the social-impact space who are doing amazing things."

A common commitment to South Africa's prosperity, its people, and the rule of law had always prevailed, she said.

According to Busa, some of Cohen's notable achievements include hosting the inaugural Business Economic Indaba, positioning Busa on policy game-changers such as the future of work, health, land, energy, the national minimum wage, labour relations stability agreements, and the Jobs Summit Framework Agreement.

If she could wave a magic wand, her wish would be that South Africa could have "a high quality education system for lifelong learning". This, in addition to a rapidly transformed and growing economy that creates lots of jobs for young people in particular.



Tanya Cohen

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The highs and lows of 600 years in Lithuania

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Jewish life in Lithuania dates back to 1340, when Grand Duke Gediminas invited merchants and craftsmen from Western Europe to settle in his domain. Over time, Jews came to call this land, Lite.

About 150 years later, his counterpart, Alexander, expelled the Jews from his country, confiscating most of their property. But it took a mere eight years for Alexander, then the Grand Duke of Lithuania and King of Poland, to invite them to return.

Then in 1648, mass murders of Jews took place during the Cossack rebellion in the country.

The highs and lows of a rich and chequered 600-year history are depicted in the current exhibition at

the South African Jewish Museum in Cape Town, titled “One Century of Seven: Lietuv. Lite. Lita”. The exhibition, which runs until mid-July, is billed as a unique look at the life and destiny of Jews in Lithuania.

The exhibition’s timeline spans the centuries, including the Holocaust, until 1995, when Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas

apologised to the Jewish nation for the Lithuanians who participated in mass murders.

Opening the exhibition last Thursday, Sigutė Jakštonytė, Lithuanian ambassador to South Africa, said that coexistence of nations had been the hallmark of her country.

“We are proud of our country’s multinational history, and appreciate the cultural contributions of different nations that regard Lithuania as their

us forget the innocent victims of the Holocaust.

“We must also remember that hundreds of Lithuanians risked their lives to save the Jews,” she said. She spoke of 898 of her countrymen recognised as Righteous Among the Nations for their efforts in this regard.

The ambassador said that the Lithuanian parliament, acknowledging the Jewish contribution to Lithuanian society for 700 years, had proclaimed the year 2020 as “The year of the Vilna Gaon and history of Lithuanian Jews”.

“The year 2020 marks the 300-year anniversary [of the birth] of [Talmudic sage] Vilna Gaon. He was the great Lithuanian rabbi, one of the most prominent Jewish spiritual leaders, who helped Vilnius become the centre of Jewish intellectual, cultural, and political life,” Jakštonytė said.

To mark the anniversary, Lithuanian authorities have compiled a programme to be showcased in Lithuania and worldwide. All the events will be dedicated to preserving Jewish heritage, history, and culture in Lithuania. The current exhibition could be an introduction to the celebrations, the ambassador said.

“This unique project [the exhibition] unites people and countries, builds bridges between

the past and the future, and shows that the historical multinational community of our country is being

much of the traditions and character of the Litvak community died with its members at the hands of the Nazis

and their Lithuanian collaborators in Ponary forest, and in other places in Lithuania.

“The involvement of the local population in the destruction of Lithuanian Jewry is a defining factor of the

Holocaust in Lithuania,” he said.

Describing our shared history with the Lithuanian people as “complex”, Morris praised the Lithuanian government’s moves to acknowledge the Litvak contribution to the country’s heritage as “admirable”.

In addition to the Year of the Vilna Gaon, a museum dedicated to Jewish life in the shtetl is being built in Shaduva.

“Exhibitions such as this, developed by the Lithuanian Jewish community and sponsored by the Lithuanian government, are further examples of Lithuanian society acknowledging our shared history,” he said. “These overtures towards acknowledging our shared past should be praised and supported.”



Sigutė Jakštonytė, the Lithuanian ambassador to South Africa; Robert Kaplan, the chairperson of the South African Jewish Museum; and museum director Gavin Morris at the opening of the exhibition on Lithuanian Jewry

home,” she said. She noted that the relationship between Lithuanians and Jews stretched back more than 700 years, and had experienced “joyful and very painful moments”.

“We have to remember all of them, and learn from them. The 20th century brought great pain and suffering to the Jewish community in Lithuania, and nothing can make



A panel of the exhibition.

Photos supplied

treasured and cherished,” Jakštonytė said.

Museum director Gavin Morris didn’t mince his words. “One would have to wear very heavily rose-tinted glasses to say that Jewish life in Lithuania was a bed of roses. Over those centuries, our ancestors experienced expulsions, pogroms, poverty, and all manner of tragic events.

“But equally, they experienced self-government, the use of their own language, and the opportunity to further enrich their culture and learning,” Morris said. “Vilna, once known as the Jerusalem of the north, became a centre for global Jewish learning.”

The Holocaust brought an end to this long history. “A small Jewish community lives on in Lithuania, but

What happened to the Blue Box?

DAVID SAKS

The Jewish National Fund of South Africa (JNF-SA) is poised to reissue its Blue Box, perhaps the best-known symbol of diaspora Zionism. Throughout the last century, this was a standard item in Jewish homes.

Amidst the bustle of daily life, frequently in lands where Jews suffered under harshly oppressive conditions, people made sure to drop the occasional coin into their JNF *pushka* (container for collecting money). This enabled them to participate in a practical, meaningful way in rebuilding and resettling Israel.

The practice of offering money to connect to the greater Jewish community and to Israel has Biblical origins in the practice of *machatsit hashekel*, the annual half-shekel donation given by Jews living outside of Jerusalem to support the Temple.

The practice of issuing collection boxes to support the work of the Keren Kayemet L’Yisrael (KKL – “the sustaining fund of Israel”, as the JNF is called in Israel) gradually stopped – although it was never formally discontinued by the JNF – so that today, few of the younger generation have ever heard of it, according to Bev Price, the education officer at JNF-SA.

“The Blue Box was something that cut across differences in religious practice and

ideological differences, and came to embody the single-minded commitment of diaspora Jewry to Israel”, Price said. “JNF-SA is embarking on an awareness programme to engender enthusiasm for the Blue Box. We are contextualising the relevance of the Blue Box in our own century, and as far as possible, aiming to get one into every Jewish home once again.”

Another aim of the initiative is to pay tribute to members of the older generation who established the Jewish community and devoted themselves to raising funds for the *yishuv* (Jewish residents in the land of Israel prior to Israel’s establishment) and thereafter for the state of Israel.

The person generally credited with inventing the Blue Box (although there are other claimants in that regard) is Haim Kleinman, a bank clerk

from Galicia. Shortly after the establishment of the KKL at the 5th Zionist Congress in December 1901, he decided to place a collection box for it in his office. He was sufficiently impressed by the enthusiastic response to write the following in a letter to *Die Welt*, the Zionist newspaper in Vienna:

“In keeping with the saying, ‘bit and bitty fill the kitty’, and following the congress resolution on KKL’s founding, I put together an ‘Erez Israel box’, stuck the words ‘National Fund’ on it, and placed it in a prominent spot in my office. The results, given the extent

of the experiment so far, have been astonishing. I suggest that like-minded people, and particularly all Zionist officials, collect contributions to KKL in this way.”

The rest, as they say, is history. Before long, KKL *pushkes* were appearing everywhere, whether in the *shtetls* (small Jewish towns) of Eastern Europe, the larger cities of Western Europe and the new world, or isolated *dorps* (towns) in the rough-and-ready hinterland of South Africa.

It provided a steady stream of revenue to assist the KKL in realising its aim of developing the land of Israel, laying down the original pre-state infrastructure including planting forests, building roads and water reservoirs, establishing parks, and preparing the soil for agriculture and settlement.

The initiative went beyond simple fundraising. From the outset, it also functioned as an educational tool through which to spread the Zionist message and renew the historic bond between the Jewish people and *eretz Yisrael*. The official “Blue Box”, with its distinctive colour and design, was introduced as early as 1904.

There is, inevitably, a tragic side to the Blue Box saga. Originally, they were found primarily in Central and Eastern European countries, including Russia. With the double catastrophe of communism followed not long afterwards by Nazism, they all but disappeared from these areas and instead, moved to Anglo-Saxon countries and Latin America.

One of the most affecting relics of the Holocaust is a rusted, battered Blue Box recovered from the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto. On the one hand, it testifies to the unspeakable tragedy that engulfed the Jews of Europe during that time, yet there is another, more uplifting, meaning one could read into it. In the words of KKL-JNF

Chairman Efi Stenzler (*Jerusalem Post*, 15 April 2015), it shows how even in the desperate circumstances in which they found themselves, “the ghetto fighters drew hope of saving themselves from the inferno and arriving in the land of Israel”.

Price says that in the 21st century, KKL-JNF has evolved into the “elder custodian” of the land, keeping it well-manicured, as well as implementing many civic projects for Israelis (particularly those in vulnerable parts of the country like the Gaza envelope). “The continuous presence of

the Blue Box over the past 114 years has served as a symbolic object in Jewish homes and a visual reminder to Jews living in the diaspora that our geographic location does not preclude our commitment to and love for our spiritual homeland.

“On the contrary, JNF-SA hopes to restore the humble ritual of placing money in a Blue Box for Israel (before lighting candles on Friday night, for example) as well as the tradition of contacting the JNF-SA ‘Blue Box lady’ once your box is full. Just as our parents and grandparents did,” she said.

• Those who have any filled boxes, would like to purchase a box, or have Blue Box stories to tell, can contact Bev Price on 011 645 2579.



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Jews ingrained in Soweto's history

JORDAN MOSHE

Epstein and Klein are surnames which you would probably associate with Houghton or Sandton, but they are names that will go down in the history of Soweto.

These names adorn a wall in Kliptown, bearing testimony to the role they and other South African Jews played across the decades of Soweto's history.

Their names speak for the involvement of South African Jewry in Soweto, a legacy which spans across decades.

Kliptown, the oldest residential district of Soweto, was first laid out in 1891, and Jews lived there from the start. Their presence in Kliptown predates the establishment of Johannesburg itself, with a number of Jewish

merchants and tradesmen settling in the area towards the turn of the century, along with Christians, Muslims, and Indians.

Jewish shop owners operated alongside their religiously diverse counterparts in this multi-racial melting pot, forging a unique understanding that remains among residents today.

From 1903, the area became home to several rapidly expanding informal settlements. This then led to the establishment of South West Township (Soweto) in the 1930s, when the Nationalist government started separating races. Soweto became the largest black city in South Africa.

In 1955, Kliptown and its community secured

an important place in the history of the anti-apartheid struggle. On 26 June, the Freedom Charter (a vision for a united, non-racial, and democratic South Africa) was adopted, bringing Black activists together with Indian, Coloured and White organisations.

Among these were prominent Jewish activists such as Leon Levy, then president of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and a signatory of the Freedom Charter; ANC stalwart Joy Coplan; and Lionel "Rusty" Bernstein, who played a crucial role in drafting the charter itself.

Three thousand delegates came from all over

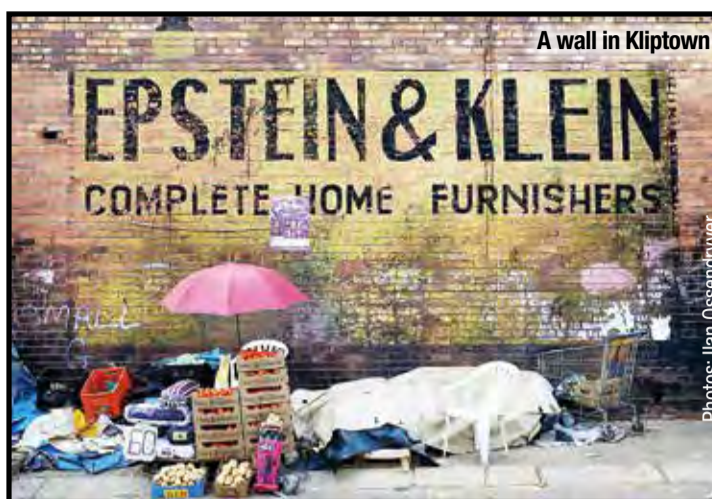
At the signing of the Freedom Charter



Photo: Eli Weinberg

the country to adopt the charter in a coal yard owned by Jewish furniture dealer George Klein of Epstein & Klein.

"We owned the space adjacent to the store, and were asked if we could provide the ANC [African National Congress] with space for its



A wall in Kliptown

Photos: Ilan Ossendryver

gathering," recounts his son, Ivor Klein. The government went on to develop the area into Freedom Square, and declared it a national monument, buying him out of his share in the space in 2000.

The day would go down in history, leaving an impression on those in attendance for years to come. "We could not persuade ourselves to stay away," writes Bernstein. "There was too much of that year's life and hopes invested in it. We had to see it for ourselves."

Coplan was a 17-year-old activist at the time, and attended the gathering without her parent's knowledge. "I came from Cape Town with Albie Sachs to watch the meeting," she recounts. "I had to be there. I remember police being virtually everywhere, waiting to come in and arrest people. It was probably best that my parents didn't know I was there."

They witnessed what was then the biggest delegate gathering the country had ever known.

This momentous day was recognised even then for the huge impact it would make on the country.

Levy recalled (in a speech delivered at a Jewish communal event in 2015), "The Charter was crafted from thousands of demands written on scraps of paper at hundreds of meetings held in factories and farms, townships, rural areas, universities, and wherever people lived or worked. It endures as a democratic beacon which proudly belongs to all of us." After its adoption, the charter was at the centre of the four year-long treason trial. Levy was one of those put on trial, and eventually acquitted.

Jews continued to run businesses in Kliptown for years after that, witnessing another hallmark event in the brutal repression of the protest against Bantu education (the official education system for Black South Africans) on 16 June 1976.

"I was in Soweto that day, and watched as the riots broke out," Klein recalls. "It was terribly violent, and it's a miracle that I came out of it. It was quite an experience. You don't want to know what violence I saw."

Traumatic though its history may be, Klein stresses that Jews are an indelible part of Soweto's past. "We're all part of the story," he says. "I made deliveries for a business that my grandfather had started in 1905. Together with Muslims, Indians, Chinese, and plenty others, we traded for years in Kliptown. Until 1992, I drove through Soweto daily. I never had one problem or difficulty. We are part of that history."

The Jewish influence on



Photos: Ilan Ossendryver

Justice Matshaya at the Soweto Country Club

JORDAN MOSHE

If you visit Soweto, you might well hear residents chatting about their kibbutz or referring to the *gan yeladim* (playschool).

It's testimony to how more than 25 years since the advent of democracy, efforts to uplift and engage residents remain a priority of the Jewish community. Even Israeli influences are being felt in the township community.

Jewish personalities continue to maintain their involvement and investment in Soweto. "Jews have always been part of life in Soweto," says photographer Ilan Ossendryver, who has been conducting tours in the area for almost three years. "The promenade on the main street was owned by Jews, Jews owned and ran dozens of local shops, and lived here until 40 or so years ago. Our involvement continues."

The Soweto Country Club is a case in point. Few would expect Soweto to attract golfers, but thanks to businessman Selwyn Nathan,

the township today boasts an exclusive clubhouse and course that rivals that of Houghton. "We couldn't have done this without Natie," says Justice Matshaya, the club's manager. "I had to convince him that Soweto needed a golf course, and after some discussion, he committed to the project. This is a community-inspired course and club. It has the potential to draw world-class golfers."

Another Soweto local, Bob Nameng, a social activist and the founder of the group Soweto Kliptown Youth, says he is inspired by Jewish people. "We are all part of the human race, and can all learn something from the Jewish people," Nameng says. "Intercultural engagement is crucial, and both Israel and the Jewish people have much to teach us all, even here in Soweto."

Nameng went to Israel in 2003 on an informal education programme. "I knew little about Jews or Israel beyond what I learned from the Bible," he says. "But when I experienced Israel and what it offered, I

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Jewish Report



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The woman who lit up Soweto

JORDAN MOSHE

The fact that Soweto has electricity today is down to Dr Selma Browde, a Jewish woman from Houghton, who was a radiation oncologist, health activist, academic, and politician.

When Browde inadvertently joined the Johannesburg City Council in 1972 for the Progressive Party, she was the only candidate out of 14 to achieve this, and stood in opposition to the Nationalist Party.

She did so with one thing in mind: assisting those whom the apartheid regime had marginalised.

“Suddenly, entire disadvantaged communities such as Alexandra and Soweto used me as their representative on council. They came to my house with their problems.

“The government wasn’t doing good work in townships. It had a pathetic budget, and people were living in terrible conditions. They were living in small houses with no running water, and using a toilet in the yard. I once saw a small, four-room house that was accommodating 26 people. It was appalling.”

The problems were innumerable, but the one particular need which Browde chose to focus on was the lack of electricity. She explains, “Not only was there no electricity in homes, there were no streetlights either. Without lit streets, crime prevented people from going out after dark. It was unbelievably terrible.”

Browde says that she noticed that while the agenda of the council made provision

for high-mast lighting in Soweto, this would cover only a small area. She took up the gauntlet, and challenged the decision, rallying the support of the media in her call for complete and effective lighting throughout Soweto. She emerged victorious, and lights were installed across the township, reducing crime and making the streets safer at night for residents.

However, she remained determined to bring electricity into homes as well. “I realised that they needed electricity inside, too,” she says. “People wanted to study, and they needed light for that. When he lived in Soweto, [Nelson] Mandela became a good friend of my late husband Jules, having studied with him at Wits [the University of the Witwatersrand]. He was studying by candlelight. It was unthinkable to me.”

After researching the minimum electricity requirements of township homes with an engineer, Browde brought a motion before the council to implement a cost-effective electricity solution. To her disgust, no one took her seriously.

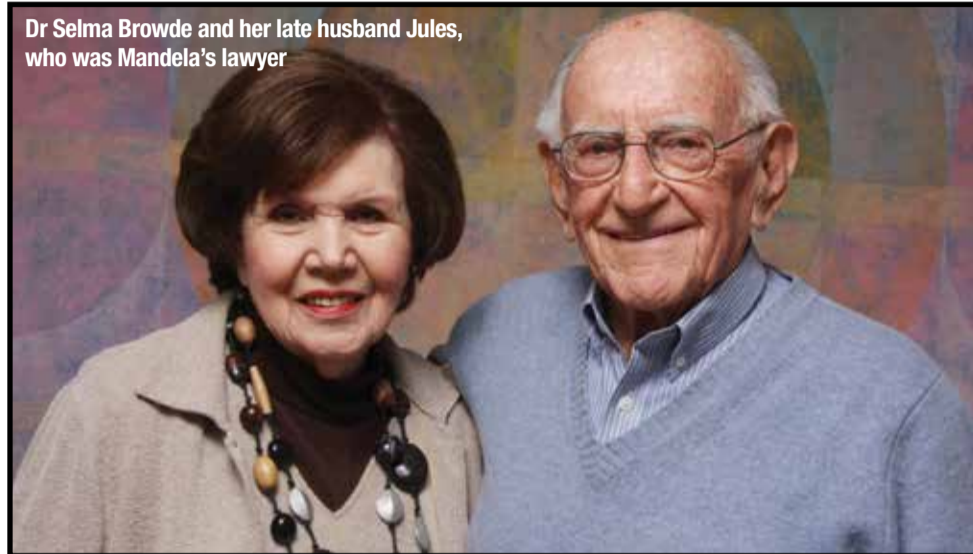
“We worked out the minimum cost to be R18 million total,” she says. “Even in those days, it was still affordable. When I presented the motion, a United Party member on the executive told me that the residents of Soweto didn’t want electricity, that they liked coal fire because it reminded them of living in kraals. It was a disgusting excuse not to spend money.”

Browde turned to the media for help, putting out a call in Soweto’s *World* newspaper for letters of motivation

from Soweto residents. Although she received a flood of heartfelt responses, the council refused her again, saying that she had written the letters herself. Browde eventually turned to Zac De Beer of Anglo American for assistance, and the businessman assured her he would raise the necessary funds through a consortium. He put the plan into effect in 1974.

the arrears were not set aside, and efforts to address the cost of electricity supply to the township remain an issue today. “There have been problems with electricity ever since,” says Browde. “De Beer thought he was doing good, but the consortium had no idea of township life. People in Soweto were paying more than we were in Houghton, and the problem persists today.”

Dr Selma Browde and her late husband Jules, who was Mandela’s lawyer



De Beer, however, implemented a more sophisticated electricity supply solution of his own, coming at tremendous cost to residents who could ill-afford the rates. Browde also discovered that the already high cost was unrealistically inflated, with small homes racking up bills of more than R1 000 for the consortium to recoup its losses. She lobbied to have a flat rate for residents implemented, as well as for all amounts outstanding to be written-off.

Although the rates were implemented,

Although local government has installed meters in recent years, the cost of electricity in Soweto remains high, and Browde remains committed to seeing it reduced. Today, at 92, she continues to visit the townships, and maintains the battle to improve the lives of others.

“There are better people in government now, and I’m waiting for them to do better,” she concludes. “But I’ll keep fighting. I’ve had a very disjointed career, but you have one life, and must live it the way it’s used best.”

Soweto today

encountered another level.”

Nameng was taken with the concept of the kibbutz, specifically its focus on shared contribution and responsibility. “It struck me as an old-time value that we have lost,” he says. “The kibbutz system makes sense because it cares for everyone and everyone contributes. It speaks for simplicity and equality.”

So, now Kliptown has a kibbutz of its own, consisting of a communal facility, a library, and a plot for growing vegetables. Numerous residents lend a hand in its upkeep, and though it is fully operational, all are committed to seeing it flourish.

Says Nameng, “The Jewish people have overcome their trials and pain. We, as Africans, are still healing, and have yet to come to terms with our troubled past. If there’s anyone we can draw lessons and inspiration from in our process of healing, it’s the Jewish people. Their spirit is what we need here.”

The born-free generation should spend Youth Day reflecting on South Africa’s past, and learning the universal lessons Jewish history teaches, he says.

“We have lost the ability to see the importance of June 16,” he says. “We need to learn from it, document it, and teach about it, the way Israel and the Jews do with their history.”



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Jewish Report



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South African fitness icon works out in Israel

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Mapule Ndhlovu – billed as South Africa’s fitness queen – has just returned from a trip to Israel, where she explored the country’s fitness lifestyle. “Fitness is a universal language,” she says.

Born and bred in Alexandra, Ndhlovu didn’t grow up with many opportunities. Yet, fitness changed her life. Initially running for emotional release, she later joined a gym in the township. When the Institute of Fitness Professionals came to the gym as part of a corporate social responsibility initiative in 2012, it asked her if she was interested in studying fitness. She took the chance, and found her calling.

Today, Ndhlovu uses her story to inspire others. Her life is dedicated to promoting health and fitness. She is the Women’s Health Nextfitstar SA 2016, a personal trainer, and an Adidas and Shield brand ambassador. So, when the Israeli embassy invited her to explore Israel’s fitness lifestyle and outdoor gyms as a South African fitness ambassador, she grabbed the opportunity.

Israel’s Deputy Ambassador to South Africa, Ayellet Black, explained the invitation as follows. “This was a joint project between the embassy of Israel and the South African Friends of Israel. The embassy’s job is to find points of co-operation in different fields with South Africa.

“Obviously, the fitness sector is something that Israel is very good at, and something that is developing here in South Africa, so we thought it would be an excellent point of co-operation,” Black said.

They had heard of Ndhlovu’s wide

following on Instagram, with almost 12 000 followers.

“We loved the amazing story of how she became who she is,” said Black. “We thought it would be an incredible opportunity for co-operation between Israel and South Africa in a completely different field. Everything about Ndhlovu, her drive, what she does, how she does it, her following, and her influence in the fitness space offered an amazing opportunity to expose her to how Israel does fitness.”

They hoped she would bring what she learnt in Israel to South Africa, especially as Instagram is a developing space. “This is our second Instagram-related project because it’s a great way to show a completely different side of Israel and connect with South Africa in a new way,” said Black

Having just returned from Israel, Ndhlovu is raving about her experience. “It was absolutely amazing, I had so much fun,” she said. “I’m always talking about how I want to represent [South African] fitness all over the world. My friends always say, ‘If you think you know fitness, you should go to Israel.’”

Ndhlovu was more than impressed by what she saw there. “Fitness on that side is on another level. It’s a real lifestyle, people

live and breathe it,” she said. “I’d love South Africa to have something similar to that, where outdoor gyms are accessible to everyone. Fitness is still growing here, but it’s a matter of awareness and teaching people that fitness is not just about how you look, it’s a lifestyle. In Israel, you see a whole family training, anytime, anywhere, and it’s absolutely amazing. It’s 22:00, and

curious about where you’re from, what brings you to Israel, and what you think about it. I had the best time of my life. I’d love to live in Tel Aviv for a month. Wow!”

Asked whether she’s been approached by BDS (the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement) in response to the trip, Ndhlovu was surprised. “I haven’t experienced anything like that,” she said. “I think fitness is just a universal language.”

She admits that some people shared preconceived ideas of the country before she left. “I experienced exactly the opposite of what most people said [I would experience] when I mentioned I was going to Israel. People would say, ‘Why would you want to go there of all places?’ So, obviously, you are curious about the place when people react in that way, and maybe a bit scared because of what you see on social media. But Israel is just beautiful.”

Israelis have preconceived ideas about South Africa too, she points out. “When I told people that I was from Johannesburg, they’d say, ‘Ooh Johannesburg! There’s a lot of crime there.’ So, before you go somewhere, you have perceptions about the place.

You feel like you know the place, but then you have your own experience. Then you can form your own opinion.

“That’s what happened to me. I had the best of Israel. I’d advise anyone to go, have their own experience, and form their own opinion.

“Health and fitness have the power to change lives,” she said. “We just want people to live better lives. It doesn’t matter where you’re from, we all want to be happy and we all want to be confident. Fitness is the language we need to do that in the best way. It teaches people to be the best versions of themselves.”



Mapule Ndhlovu

everyone is still working out. It was even better than I had imagined it would be.”

Over six days in the Jewish state, Ndhlovu learnt a little Krav Maga, and even did yoga on a surfboard for the first time. “Just learning new techniques was great,” she said. She also got the chance to explore the country.

“Apart from exercising, I experienced some of the culture, the food, and the life there.” Ndhlovu also discovered a love for falafel. “Oh my gosh, it was yummy, you just want to have more,” she said.

“The people were nice. They’re always

At 90, the journey’s just beginning for Solly

>> Continued from page 10

South Africa’s only Apartheid Museum at Gold Reef City. At a cost of more than R100 million, Solly oversaw the detailed construction of the museum.

The Gold Reef City Casino next to the museum was listed on the JSE, and became yet another feather in the Krok empire.

Gambling was in the Krok blood, and the twins started Millionex, a fundraising lottery where winners took 50% of the proceeds and charities benefitted from the remaining half.

Although technically illegal, the authorities turned a blind eye to this charity fundraising endeavour. The Millionex programme ended only when the legal Lotto was started in South Africa.

Solly and Abe also started the charity initiative *Mock Wedding*, a satirical musical parody show starring some of the largest business luminaries in the country. Solly played the role of groom and his identical twin Abe played his alter-ego. Directed and choreographed by the famous theatrical team of Louis Berk and Joan Brickhill, the show ran to packed audiences in Johannesburg and Cape Town, raising significant funds for community organisations.

The philanthropic actions of the twins knew no limit. Abe and Solly funded Jewish schools and educational institutions, often with seven-figure donations. Today, there are buildings bearing the twin’s names at Bar-Ilan University and the Beer Yaakov Seminary for Sephardi girls in Ramla near the

airport in Israel. Solly also funded a nursery school in Jerusalem in honour of his late wife Rita.

Solly met the Lubavitcher Rebbe on three occasions. His message to Solly was, “Help the Yidden in Doren Afrika”. And so, whether it was kickstarting Aish Hatorah in South Africa or restructuring Ohr Somayach, or running the Jewish Guild, or saving the famous Chassid school in Boro Park, New York from closing, or funding the first weekday daily *Art Scroll* siddur, the name of Solly Krok keeps on popping up as an icon of the Jewish community.

The Krok legacy extends well beyond the Jewish community. Solly quotes the old Yiddish expression, *Vos du tust var yemem tust du var sich alien* (What you do for others, you do for yourself). The twins built an entire school in Soweto.

In 90 years, Solly has experienced many ups and the occasional down. “The biggest lessons in life come from over-confidence,” he says. “What swimmer drowns in the sea? Not the weak swimmer. The strong swimmer. He goes too far out.” The Epilady debacle in the United States is one such example brought on by over-confidence. Says Solly, “My father used to say to me, ‘Don’t jump out of your picture frame’ – stick to things you know, and don’t think you can do everything.”

At 90, Solly says his mission is not over. “You’ve got to teach by example,” he says. “We need to explain to the world that Jewish innovation has contributed to make the world a better place for humankind.”

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Jewish Report



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Seven reasons to get permanent residency in Cyprus

Nothing is more expensive than a missed opportunity!

Securing permanent residency in another country gives the bearer of that residency the right to live indefinitely in that country in spite of not being a citizen.

Having an offshore Plan B is an insurance policy which allows you to relocate to that country at any time without a visa; and without having to go through the normal onerous immigration processes and procedures.

There are a number of countries in Europe offering permanent residency through property acquisition, but investors are cautioned to investigate each programme to ensure they are aware of what the limitations are. Certain countries limit your investment to SDAs (special designated areas); others require that you are domiciled there for tax; some countries

have a language requirement; and others insist that you live there for a number of days a year for your residency to remain valid.

Cyprus, an English-speaking former British colony with full membership of the European Union, has the best permanent residency programme available in Europe. It involves investment in real estate; and with Cyprus' positive property growth and demand for long and short-term tenants, this offers a very attractive investment for the short, medium, and long term.

Here are seven reasons why South Africans want permanent residency in Cyprus:

1. Permanent residency for the whole family is secured in two months;
2. It's the only programme in Europe where three generations of the same family all secure permanent



residency on the same application, including the parents and the parents-in-law;

3. All dependent children up to age 25 also automatically qualify;
 4. The permanent residency permits are for life for everyone, and they automatically renew;
 5. You can rent the property out to the short-term holiday market or for long-term lets, thereby earning an attractive Euro-based income;
 6. You need to visit Cyprus only one day every second year for the residency permits to remain valid;
 7. There is no inheritance tax, so on your death, you can dispose of your assets to your loved ones without having to pay the Cypriot government any death duty. This is very advantageous for legacy planning.
- Protect yourself, your family,



and your assets from unpredicted events by taking advantage of the opportunity to secure permanent residency in Cyprus. Think of getting permanent residency as guaranteeing your family's future.

An astute offshore property investment that works for you in the short, medium, and long term is the achievement of a lifetime. In Cyprus, investing in the fast track permanent residency programme not only makes financial sense, it will have tangible benefits for your immediate family. Can you afford not to take advantage of this while the programme is still open?

Cypriot Realty, a South African marketing company, is a pioneer in property opportunities primarily in Cyprus. It has done so successfully from its Cape Town and Sandton offices since 2008. As a result, the company is recognised and respected as Southern Africa's authoritative investment specialist for promoting Cyprus as an ideal destination for the acquisition of permanent residency/citizenship, property investment, immigration/retirement, and starting a European-based business.

• *Jenny Ellinas is the Founder and Managing Director of Cypriot Realty. Contact her on 083 448 8734 jenny@cypriotrealty.com www.cypriotrealty.com*



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Shavuot inspires this reluctant shul goer



INNER VOICE

HOWARD FELDMAN

I have never really loved being in shul. That's not to say that I don't enjoy what the community has to offer, and I don't appreciate the value of prayer.

I just find myself becoming restless about 30 minutes before anyone else does. For some reason, I don't seem to have the staying power.

Which makes it all the more strange that over Shavuot, I found myself spending time at not one synagogue, but three: Mizrahi, Maharsha, and the Base. And loving each experience.

Each congregation is distinctly different. Each has its own unenforced dress-code, each attracts different people, and each has so much to offer. And those are just the three that I visited. Within walking distance, I might well have visited another seven or eight shuls, and each would have had a different nuance and personality.

On the second day of Shavuot, I went to hear Rabbi Ken Spiro at the Base. He is a well-respected historian, with whose work I connect. He has been to South Africa a number of times, most recently for Sinai Indaba.

His topic was Zionism and Judaism. I was only vaguely interested in this. Because of the work I do, I thought I had a clear sense of the subject, and it was unlikely I would gain much from it. But I went, and discovered that I was wrong.

Although the information was not new, the perspective certainly was.

His talk traced the history of Zionism, and depicted how the Zionist movement was inherently anti-religious. Its members referred to themselves as "Hebrews" instead of Jews, and rejected what

they believed was the "weakness" of European Jewry. Spiro spoke of the arrival of the Cochini Jews from India, who were deliberately housed in secular kibbutzim rather than being allowed to continue to be observant. The same applied to many Jews who came from Arab countries.

In essence, his talk tried to explain the antagonism between secular and religious Jewry in Israel today. Although we have come to accept it as a fact, if you think about it, the very notion is absurd.

Whether religious or secular or anything in between, the fact that a Jewish homeland exists, with all its warts, is something that should inspire us every day. Not something that should cause conflict. Yet in Israel, it does.

Spiro's talk was not meant to cause me to consider how blessed we are in South Africa. It was not designed to elicit a feeling of gratitude towards the magnificent, accepting community that epitomises the country.

A community where it is not uncommon for one family to have members who are both religious and non-observant. Where it is not unusual to see a woman with her head covered and her clothing conforming to strict laws of modesty, having a meal with a friend wearing a vest and lululemon yoga pants.

Of course, it's not perfect, and no doubt there are numerous anecdotal examples of the religious not accepting those who are not religious, and vice versa. On the whole, however, the attitude of the whole spectrum of observance is more tolerant and accepting than it is not.

We should be proud of that. We should guard and protect it, and we should make sure that our children see that we value it.

My shul-hopping over Shavuot, coupled with the perspective of Spiro's history, opened my eyes to the beauty of our community. It still won't make me love being in shul, but at least it's a start.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Remembering June 16



ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev



On 16 June 2006, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) led a Jewish community delegation to Soweto to take part in events commemorating the 30th anniversary of the protests that sparked what would come to be known as the Soweto uprising.

The delegation participated in a march from the famous Morris Isaacson School to the Hector Pieterse Memorial, named after the teenage demonstrator who was the first to be killed in the violence. The Morris Isaacson School, which featured prominently in the protests, is named after a distinguished member of our community whose generous support made its establishment possible in the early 1950s.

On Youth Day this Sunday, we will once again take a group to Soweto, including King David and Yeshiva College students. As before, the participants will follow the original route of the 1976 protestors in marching from the Morris Isaacson School to the Hector Pieterse Memorial. On reaching their destination, they will lay wreaths in memory of the hundreds of South Africans who lost their lives in the uprising. In honouring those who died, we remember them not only as victims of an unjust, racially oppressive system, but also as brave freedom fighters whose courage and sacrifice helped pave the way to non-racial democracy less than two decades later.

As previously emphasised in this column, one of the practical ways in which our community can identify meaningfully with our country's national culture and heritage is by participating in events organised around public holidays. Over the years, the SAJBD has headed up numerous such initiatives, including attending commemorative events at Sharpeville on Human Rights Day and

joining other faith communities in activities organised around Reconciliation Day. Apart from the genuine goodwill that this generates towards our community, our participation in such events strengthens our own feelings of connection to the society of which we are a part, and creates avenues through which we can continue to contribute and build bridges.

Fighting racism is incumbent on us all Apartheid was formally consigned to the trash bin of history a quarter of a century ago, but inevitably, the abolition of racist laws did not mean the demise of racist attitudes themselves. Accomplishing this was – and remains – an ongoing imperative for all South Africans, even for the "born free" generation which has never lived under a system predicated on racial discrimination.

Last month, the SAJBD Gauteng Council launched what is hoped will be an ongoing campaign to sensitise our own community against this pernicious phenomenon. As a necessary first step, we have drafted a principled statement condemning racism, and committing ourselves to confronting it whenever and wherever it surfaces. The statement was sent last month to all our affiliate organisations in Gauteng to sign, and thereafter take forward in their own spheres of activity. I urge all community members to embrace the ethos and values of the declaration, and look for ways to give it practical expression in their daily lives.

• 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

How pictures change the story

The heartrending picture of the lifeless body of a young Syrian boy on a Greek beach, one of 12 Syrians who drowned in 2015 attempting to reach the Greek island of Kos, encapsulates the extraordinary risks refugees take to reach the West.

These photographs provide visual insight into situations which ordinary people would not be able to access. In addition, the internet allows these images to be distributed more widely and faster than in previous eras. Many modern cameras also have sound recording capabilities, which adds to their power. The downside is that the internet also offers an easy platform for the distribution of doctored images for agenda-driven purposes or "fake news".

Powerful photographs can be the centrepieces of major historical events.

On 8 June, 1972, during the Vietnam War, a South Vietnamese plane mistakenly dropped napalm on its own soldiers and civilians, resulting in an iconic photograph of that era. It moved people so much, it helped end the war. The image was a naked, burning nine-year old South Vietnamese girl, Kim Phuc, running screaming down the road towards an Associated Press photographer outside Trang Bang village, 40km northwest of Saigon. She had ripped off her burning clothes while fleeing, screaming, "Too hot! Too hot!"

The image rapidly spread around the world, becoming a form of shorthand for the atrocities of that war.

Another photograph that defined an entire moment in the history of a conflict was taken in South Africa in another June, four years later. It was the image of Hector Pieterse, taken in Soweto in 1976. Pieterse was a 12-year-old Soweto schoolboy among many other children protesting against the

TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin



enforcement of teaching in Afrikaans. He was shot by police as they opened fire on the crowds. A photograph of the mortally wounded Pieterse being carried by another Soweto resident was splashed on papers around the world.

That photograph became a form of shorthand representing apartheid's inhumanity. The anniversary of Pieterse's death is marked next Monday, designated as Youth Day.

Before the advent of cameras, all we had were second-hand accounts to describe the experience of victims and heroes. With cameras, the drama of Kim Phuc, Hector Pieterse, and others could be brought visually to the world. Added to this essential list of such visual dramas would be the Jewish child with a Star of David on his lapel emerging from a bunker at the Warsaw Ghetto in 1943 with Nazi troops behind him; or the lone man blocking the path of a Chinese tank in Tiananmen Square in 1989 after government suppression of massive student-led protests.

The new arrival in the field of photography is the quality digital camera that is now a standard feature of smartphones, which can be carried into almost any context, openly or in secret.

Cell phones have already been used as the source of serious photography by respected networks such as the BBC and others. Apart from professional photographers, everyone with a cell phone can call themselves a photographer. It's up to the networks and public to decide on the validity of their claim.

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Torah Academy honours best sportsmen



The Torah Academy Primary School sports stars were recently awarded at the school's annual awards ceremony. Nissan Steiner, left, the winner of the boys senior victor ludorum, and Yair Gerber, the winner of the junior victor ludorum are holding their awards.

Learning about Shavuot, and so much more



Shavuot offered a perfect learning opportunity for Sydenham Preschool children, who were introduced to the ten commandments, *tzedakah* (charity), the seven species, Har Sinai, Moses, *bikkurim* (the first fruits), dairy products, and more.

Yarin Ezerzer, Jake Bernstein, and Ariel Akrish with their *bikkurim* baskets

Executives in the soup for food drive

Jewish Food Fund Yad Aharon & Michael has invited top chief executives to visit the organisation's Johannesburg soup kitchen to raise awareness and funds for Jewish people in need.

In an initiative called the CEO Soup Kitchen, executives stand behind the counter, and chop, slice and dice, preparing soup for the week. They are filmed, and asked to nominate another chief executive to get their hands dirty for the benefit of those most in need.

"The objective of the campaign [which started in May 2019] is to educate the community about who we are, and what we do," says Jody Eberlin, the marketing manager of Yad Aharon. "We want to get the community involved, from the top downwards, and to show that executives are finding the time to give back in a meaningful and tangible way, whether that be in the form of monetary donations, volunteering, or both.

Yad Aharon & Michael started a bi-weekly soup kitchen called Yad's Soup for the Soul four years ago, after identifying the need for a kosher soup kitchen in the community. It serves food to Jewish individuals twice a week.

The executives committed to the project so far include Uber's Alon Lits; Excel Academy founder Dan Stillerman; Latest Sightings founder Nadav Ossendryver; Discovery Soccer Park Chief Executive Ryan Kalk; Ukhuni Business Furniture director Michael Stein; Verpakt Management Services' Amit Cohen; and Adrienne Hersch, the chief executive of Hersch Property Group.

By involving high-net-worth individuals, the CEO Soup Kitchen aims to raise funds for this year's winter kitchen, and increase awareness among the community – including on social media – of the role Yad Aharon & Michael plays in meeting a real community need.

Victory Park pupil in Joburg team

King David Victory Park Grade 7 pupil Zachary Valkin has been selected for the Johannesburg Primary Schools boys soccer squad. The Johannesburg team is selected from all Grade 7 boys from about 170 schools in the Johannesburg region.

Valkin was chosen while playing for the North West District in the Discovery District tournament, a competition held over three

days against 12 other districts from all areas of Johannesburg. The Johannesburg Primary Schools squad will represent the city in the Bill Stewart Tournament at Camp Discovery near Pretoria from 25 to 30 June.



Zachary Valkin

WIZO Joburg's Charidy campaign a virtual hug for needy kids

Imagine being under attack from enemy fire.

Or, think of the sad and shocking fact that many kids in South Africa are unable to leave their homes due to congenital, chronic, or degenerative neuromuscular conditions. They can't go to school or socialise, and are often shunned by their communities.

WIZO (the Women's International Zionist Organisation) Johannesburg exists to nurture others. With many of our members being mothers, we prioritise those who are

most vulnerable.

This is why we launched the Charidy campaign with the goal of raising R1.5 million. The funds will go towards trauma counselling in Israel for children and their families who are affected by Gaza rocket attacks; and for buying specially designed, all-terrain wheelchairs to give a life-changing gift of mobility to needy young candidates around South Africa.

On 4 and 5 June, our dedicated team took over the Beyachad boardroom, converting it into a buzzing call-centre. Our ladies worked tirelessly to ensure that we reached our target by the end of our allocated 36 hours. As the excitement – and nerves – mounted, and our callers continued to burn up those telephone lines, the number on our big screens continued to increase. And then, with minutes to spare, we managed to raise R1.5 million! There was great joy and euphoria at reaching this magical goal. Nothing compares to knowing that you are able to make a tangible, positive difference to the lives of those who really need it.



The WIZO volunteers

Letters

IN SUPPORTING BDS, IS SA GOVT DENYING ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST?

Hardly a day passes that we don't read disparaging articles condemning, criticising, and demeaning Israel. There is no end to what her detractors will dig up in order to malign the Jewish state.

What will never be written by those whose agenda is to destroy Israel is why, in a region of extreme drought where water is such a scarce commodity, those Arab states, almost drowning in oil, do not devote a miniscule portion of their wealth to water recycling or desalination. They spend billions of dollars on arms, on supporting terror groups, and suppressing their own populations in order to maintain their dictatorships. Here is but a small example of what Israel, starved of any natural resources such as oil, coal, or any other commodity other than its own ingenuity, has done.

Israel's ingenuity has not only made it the world's leading country for water recycling and desalination, but also a leader in the fields of agriculture, science, medicine, and other forms of modern technology. Deprived of the wealth that oil has produced for the Arab world, and reliant on her

own resources, Israel leads the world in these fields, whereas the Arab world has degenerated into a malaise of corruption, despotism, and genocide. And, Israel has become the scapegoat of these failed degenerate states.

Boycott Divestment Sanction's (BDS's) mission statement, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free", depicts the map of Palestine without any trace of Israel. This mission statement is not only chanted at every protest march by the anti-Israel lobby, it is on every official Palestinian document, office, and its coat of arms.

In other words, Israel does not exist in the eyes of BDS, Palestinian officialdom, or anti-Israel activists. In spite of the country being established legally, and voted a full member of the family of nations at the United Nations, it is not recognised by these groups, and every initiative is explored and exploited to further their narrative.

It begs the question whether in its coziness with these groups, the South African government takes the same view.

– Allan Wolman, Israel

HUMANITARIAN AWARD

- in honour of Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris

Awarded to a Jewish or non-Jewish person who has contributed substantially to the betterment of the lives of the people of South Africa.

Nominations close at 17:00 on 14 July 2019

Send nominations to nominations@sajewishreport.co.za

'Grown up' runners take Comrades to new heights

LUKE ALFRED

On Sunday, Maurice "Maish" Rosen competed his 36th Comrades Marathon, sneaking under the cut-off time with five minutes to spare. A couple of hours after his 18th or 19th Comrades "up" run (he isn't entirely sure) he was having a slap-up meal at the hotel buffet, with soup, chicken, beef, and all the trimmings.

This coming weekend, on both Saturday and Sunday, he will be running his usual 29km, feeling no apparent ill-effects from what he calls "a gruelling" uphill run in the Comrades of the previous weekend.

Such commitment to his sport and his routine would be remarkable in a man half his age, so it is incredible to learn that Rosen is a sprightly 65. "I have a sweet tooth, and I drink the very occasional glass of wine or draft beer," he says. "I find that I can just run it off."

Without really trying, Rosen has become something of a minor celebrity in recent months. In his guise as a dedicated Comrades man, he appears in a YouTube advert for a non-alcoholic lager that has received 60 000-odd hits. Strangers now recognise him in the street.

"People found the advert inspirational and emotional," he says on the day after the Comrades. "People came up to me and

commented during the race. I even had one guy say – I think he must have been in his forties – 'When I grow up, I want to be like you'."

Rosen is a smart choice to feature in an advert as a Comrades Everyman because he ran his first Comrades as a 25-year-old way back in 1979. "I couldn't walk for five days afterwards," he says, pointing out that the bug didn't bite immediately.

There was a four-year interval between his first and second race, whereupon he began to get into the Comrades groove. He loves the race, he says, for its camaraderie and fun, its colour, and its pageantry.

"Standing at the top of Polly Shorts in his tracksuit pants during my first Comrades was none other than the famous Wally Hayward," he remembers. "Let's run to the end," he said to us, and so we did.

"How can I put it? He sort of took a shine to us."

Back then, the race was different. There were only 1 400 to 1 500 athletes, and seconds were allowed to accompany runners on motorbikes. Everything was more ramshackle, more amateurish, and more relaxed.

Although the event now is exponentially larger and more streamlined with no seconds allowed, its soul has remained intact, according to Rosen.

"Comrades has retained the magic," he says. "It is an unbelievable day,

and an unbelievable event."

In spite of the Comrades brotherhood, there is still a race to be run, and Rosen learned early in his apprenticeship that he's a tortoise rather than a hare. "Speed kills', that's what I tell the youngsters when I'm asked for advice," he says.

He certainly practises what he preaches, preferring the slow and steady approach to one that's more demanding. There's also an element of self-preservation in his decision not to belt out from the front.

"My times have slowed significantly in the past four or five years," he says, although there's no thought whatsoever of not running in next year's down race. Indeed, he sees no reason why he shouldn't complete 40 Comrades all told.

While Rosen's horizons are still open, the same cannot be said for Ronnie Dribben, who ran his 30th – and in all likelihood, his last – Comrades on Sunday in a shade over 10 hours. "I've decided it might be my last one," says

Dribben, a mere spring chicken at 60. "It's been fantastic. I've done a 7:04 up run and a 7:04 down run.

significant knee operation "five or six" years ago, and there have been complications with his chest more recently.

"I've had breathing issues," he says, "so I've done a fair bit of my training for this latest race on a treadmill. The guys joke. They call me a bit of a Forrest Gump. They say I'm the only guy who trained for this year's Comrades by 'running' a 42km race on a treadmill!"

It all began more than 30 years ago for Dribben, when he found himself eating poorly and was 20 kilograms heavier than he should have been. Regular exercise and healthy eating changed all that, as he ran the first of his 30 Comrades in 1989.

Thirty years later, and he's likely to call it a day on what some call the greatest ultra-distance race on earth, but that doesn't mean he's going to become a couch potato. Far from it. He has ambitions to continue with his Iron Man events and, who knows, he might in time reach 30 of those.



Ronnie Dribben

You know what they say, it might be time to get out while I'm at the top."

Dribben has suffered from a couple of setbacks in recent years which might have something to do with his decision. He had a

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