

■ Volume 23 – Number 28 ■ 2 August 2019 ■ 1 Av 5779

# south african Jewish Report

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**BENJAMIN ZANDER,**  
the world's most famous conductor  
and musical director of the Boston  
Philharmonic Orchestra, will be performing  
at the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards 2019



20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Absa  
jewish achiever awards  
2019

# Child prodigy to adult virtuoso

Benjamin Zander was a child prodigy who became an adult virtuoso. He now enthralled people as one of the world's top conductors.

He was born in England in a traditional and intensely achievement-oriented Jewish household. Zander began composing at the age of nine, and dropped out of school at 15 to study cello in Florence with Spanish cello virtuoso Gaspar Cassado for five years.

He completed his cello training at the State Academy in Cologne, travelling extensively with Cassado and performing recitals and chamber music.

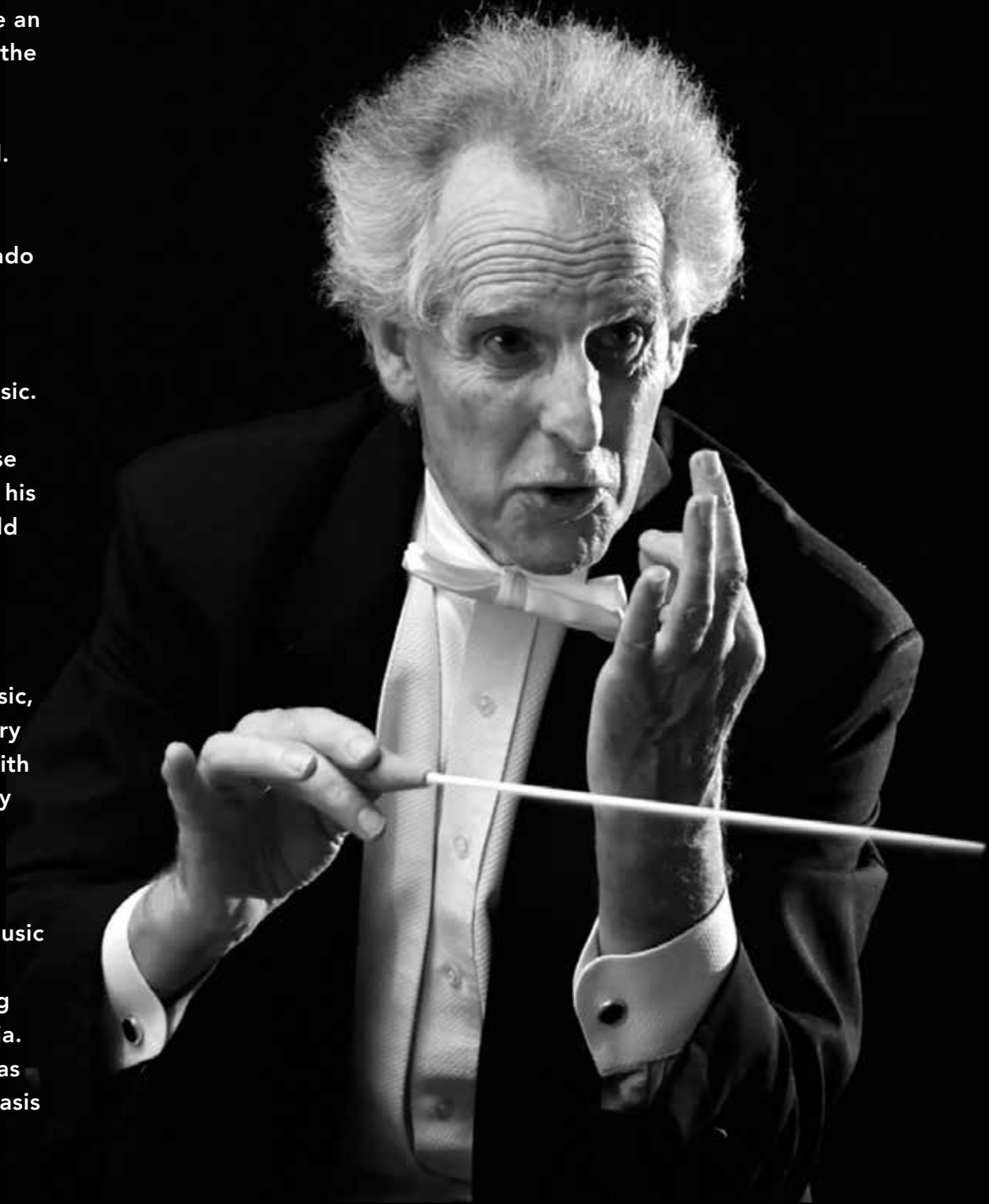
What might have been a brilliant cello career was cut short several years later, however, because Zander couldn't develop the requisite calluses on his fingers for playing professionally. His fingers would be bloody and raw after performances.

Forced to choose another calling, he became a conductor, and led the Civic Orchestra of Boston until 1978, when the board fired him because he insisted on playing challenging and "difficult" music, including Mahler and Bruckner. At that point, every player in the orchestra resigned in protest and, with Zander as their conductor, they formed an entirely new orchestra – the Boston Philharmonic (BPO), where he has been ever since.

Zander also conducts the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra of the New England Conservatory of Music (where he is a faculty member), and is frequently a guest conductor with other orchestras, including London's most famous orchestra, The Philharmonia.

In his 26 seasons with Boston Philharmonic, it has performed an extensive repertoire, with an emphasis on late Romantic and early twentieth century composers, especially the symphonies of Mahler.

Zander has had an extensive speaking career, travelling the world lecturing to organisations on leadership. The best-selling book, *The Art of Possibility*, co-authored with his partner, leading psychotherapist Rosamund Zander, has been translated into 15 languages.



*“There are very few things that everybody can agree on – one, surely, is the greatness of Beethoven’s music, another is Nelson Mandela. Indeed, he may be the only thing that everybody in the world seems to agree about.”  
– Benjamin Zander*

*“This guy was talking about real life. He could inspire any audience with his sense of spirit, his energy. He was authentic. And I think that’s what resonated most with people.” – Martha’s Vineyard Times 2004  
[www.mvtimes.com](http://www.mvtimes.com)*

*“Never doubt the capacity of the people you lead to accomplish whatever you dream for them. It’s a principle that leaders like Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, and Nelson Mandela have all embodied. Imagine if Luther King had said, ‘I have a dream – I wonder if people will be up to it?’” – Benjamin Zander*

*“Arguably the most accessible communicator about classical music since Leonard Bernstein, Zander moves audiences with his unbridled passion and enthusiasm.” – Sue Fox, London Sunday Times*





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## Herzog determined to fix Israel-SA relations

PETA KROST MAUNDER

Isaac Herzog – effectively Israel’s leader of the Jewish world – says he “objects vehemently” to the South African government pulling out its ambassador to Israel, and moving towards downgrading its embassy. He intends to do everything he can to change this. “It’s a huge mistake, and even under these difficult circumstances, I won’t give up,” the Jewish Agency leader told the *SA Jewish Report* in an exclusive interview.

This is Herzog’s third visit to South Africa, this time to attend the South African Zionist Federation’s conference last weekend.

Herzog – a soft-spoken, no-nonsense leader – is passionate about the South African-Israeli connection and its long-term importance. However, he is even more dedicated to the longevity of the Jewish people and ensuring we have a solid future.

Formerly the chairman of the Israeli Labour Party, Herzog served as the opposition leader from 2013 until 2018. He served as a member of the Knesset between 2003 and 2018, having held several ministerial posts. He is the son of General Chaim Herzog, the sixth president of Israel, and his grandfather, Yitzhak HaLevi Herzog, was the first chief rabbi of Ireland, and later the Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel.

Herzog reiterated what many other South African Jewish and Israeli leaders have said about the short-sightedness of the potential downgrade. “This government can contribute hugely toward the advancement of peace in the region if it wants to, but not if it cuts ties,” Herzog said. “I had a long meeting with our Israeli ambassador, Lior Keinan, and exchanged some ideas on what we can do to move forward.”

In his opinion, this community is “hugely impressive”, but it is “being challenged dramatically with an unclear future”. He’s referring to the “strong anti-Israel line from the ANC [African National Congress], which has put a certain cloud over the ability of Jews and Zionists to express themselves in the future, and be able to thrive as Jews”.

Dealing with this, he says, is part

of the Jewish Agency’s role. “We do our best to strengthen Jewish communities, and enable each and every Jew to feel free as Jews, and to express their Zionism with no fear or harassment.”

Herzog clarified that South Africa is the world leader of the so-called “new anti-Semitism”, which is classic anti-Semitism intertwined with the delegitimation of Israel. This problem, he says, stems from within the ANC.

“Its position is due to historical relations with the Palestinian national movement,” Herzog says. “The problem is that it hasn’t acknowledged that the region has changed, and many of those countries that called for our annihilation 50 years ago are now some of our best allies. Meanwhile, it is trying to pursue a whole set of resolutions against Israel worldwide.”

And then you have a situation in which “the average South African is brainwashed by a machine that tells it false lies about Israeli democracy”.

Herzog believes “Israel-hatred” needs to be dealt with on three fronts.

First, “We have made sure Jews are well protected and defended. This is clear from the impressive organisation that deals with this in South Africa.”

Second, he speaks of fighting anti-Semitism in the courts, and trying to get governments around the world to adopt the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) resolution on anti-Semitism.

As for education, “this is complex in a political climate that doesn’t want to hear”, he says. “There are modern day tools we use, like social networks, and we can try and do our best to show the true story of Israel.”

He cites as an example the fact that people aren’t aware that the extreme Muslim Brotherhood movement is represented by a political party, the Ra’am Tal Party, in Israel. “They say whatever they want without limitation, even if it’s the most harsh and difficult things for us to hear, but I take pride in this, as it proves the incredible democracy we have.”

However, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is complicated.

“What haven’t we tried? We tried peace agreements, unilateral withdrawals, economic packages, and other measures. There is an overwhelming majority in Israel who want peace, but there is a total lack of trust in the Palestinians to deliver,” he says.

“In 2005, Israelis were out there supporting unilateral pull-out from Gaza. We uprooted Jewish settlements in the process. We promised it would be the Hong Kong of Middle East, but instead, we got 10 000 missiles fired at us. “Israelis are wary of trying this

says.

But the biggest issue he faces is the rift between Israel and Jews, and the loss of Jewish people for whatever reason.

“Apart from the well-being of the Jewish world – which fulfils my being and runs in my veins – my aim is to save the Jewish people from the split,” Herzog says. “The historical divide which will enable young Jewish millennials to fade into the horizon, without feeling Jewish or loyal to Israel. This is the negative side of things, but let me tell you the positive side.

says. “This is how I’m working to restructure the Jewish Agency, and upgrade its activities to meet future challenges.”

When questioned about the Israeli rabbinate’s views on this, he says, “I do my best to meet the most extreme poles of the Jewish world, and discuss in depth where we are going from here. In close quarters, I find much more common denominators than are spoken of.” In these meetings, it helps that he has a name with historic significance in the Jewish world. “I tell them everybody is

## Life-changing cycle



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

**Rabbi Dovid Hazdan leads the Cycalive riding pack. See page 16.**

again. We have to find new ideas. A major development between 2005 and today is that there is a strong political coalition of moderate nations with Israel confronting Iran in the region. These nations, including Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and others, once wanted to throw us into the sea, but are now working with us.”

While dealing with Israel-hatred is a major issue for the Jewish Agency, it also focuses on maintaining and strengthening Jewish identity, the future of the Jewish generations, and the centrality of Israel in their lives, says Herzog. “It’s fascinating for me to see the different challenges facing Jews around the world,” he

Herzog cites a report commissioned by the Israeli government that “counted 60 million human beings around the globe who feel Jewish, and are connected to Judaism”. These people aren’t from reform or conservative movements, but rather tribes in Africa, people in Central America, and northern Brazil. Some are descendants from Marranos in Spain, and others, like a tribe in Uganda, converted to Judaism more than 100 years ago.

“The Jewish community is always interesting and challenging. We have to find ways of building the Jewish people 100 years down the road,” he

our brother and sister. Many have learnt.”

He tells of how Education Minister Rafi Peretz recently sent him a letter of apology after equating intermarriage to a modern holocaust. After a heart-to-heart discussion, Herzog said, “He apologised for his comments, announcing he loves and respects all brothers and sisters in the Jewish world.” Though Herzog understands Peretz’s worry about losing Jewish people through intermarriage, he says there are some things best left unsaid.

And so, he continues to try to smooth the path for the Jewish world going forward.



Canada won't reschedule poll

Canada isn't changing the date of its national elections, even though they fall on a Jewish holiday.

Chief Electoral Officer Stéphane Perrault announced on Monday that he wouldn't recommend changing the date, which coincides with the last days of Sukkot. Last week, the country's federal court ordered him to review a prior decision.

The government was responding to a lawsuit filed by an orthodox Jewish candidate in Canada's federal election, and a Jewish voter. They said holding elections on 21 October, which is Shemini Atzeret, one of the last days of the Sukkot holiday, discriminated against observant Canadian Jews.

Of the four advance polling days, three are on other Jewish holidays or Shabbat, when observant Jews are prohibited from working, travelling, actively using electricity, or performing a variety of work tasks. A special ballot can be sent by mail.

Since 2007, Canadian law has mandated

that national elections be held on the third Monday in October in the fourth calendar year following the previous election.

Gal Gadot's eight-year-old in 'Angry Birds 2'



Gal Gadot should watch out – her eight-year-old daughter might upstage her one day.

Alma Varsano, Gadot's older daughter with her Israeli real-estate-developer husband Yaron Varsano, is the voice of one of the hatchlings in *The Angry Birds Movie 2*, which is scheduled to be released in mid-August. She is joined by other children of actresses: Faith Urban, 8, and Sunday Urban, 11 – Nicole Kidman's daughters with Keith Urban – and Genesis Tennon, the daughter of Viola Davis.

"Looks like I'm out of a job – so proud of my little hatchling Alma," Gadot posted on Instagram with a clip from the movie.

US law helps care for Holocaust survivors

Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in the United States House of Representatives that will prioritise health care and nutrition services for Holocaust survivors.

The bill, the Trauma-Informed Modernization of Eldercare for Holocaust Survivors Act or TIME for Holocaust Survivors Act, was introduced earlier this month in the senate. It increases the chances that survivors can age in their own homes rather than in

institutions.

It was introduced by Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz, who is Jewish, and Representatives Donna Shalala, and Elise Stefanik. The bill incorporates several provisions into the Older Americans Act to ensure that Holocaust survivors have care and services tailored to their needs.

"My district has among the largest populations of survivors in the country. The trauma and grief that these survivors endured is unimaginable. The TIME for Holocaust Survivors Act can tend to that unique pain in this closing chapter of their lives, and allow them to live out their remaining years with dignity," Wasserman Schultz said.

There are about 80 000 Holocaust survivors living in the US, with one-third of them living at or below the poverty line. Institutionalised settings, with confined spaces or restrictions on food, can induce panic, anxiety, and trauma due to their Holocaust experiences, the bill notes.

Countries suspend funding for UNRWA

The Netherlands and Switzerland have announced the suspension of funding for United Nations aid agency UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine).

The suspensions, announced by both countries on Tuesday, followed a damning report alleging corruption at the organisation's highest levels.

An internal report leaked on Monday alleged graft and sexual misconduct at UNRWA, which was thrown into crisis after the United States last year announced it would no longer fund it. The allegations are now being scrutinised by UN investigators.

Switzerland's suspension will have an impact on money slated for 2020, not the \$22.5 million (R319.2 million) already earmarked for 2019, Swiss officials told media there. The Netherlands, which funds UNRWA to the tune of about \$15 million (R212.8 million) annually, will suspend its contributions "until we get satisfactory answers", Sigrid Kaag, the Netherlands' minister for international aid, told

the NOS broadcaster.

A copy of the damning report obtained by AFP describes "credible and corroborated" allegations of serious ethical abuses, including involving UNRWA's top official, Commissioner-General Pierre Krahenbuhl.

The US decision caused a financial shortfall of \$446 million (R6.3 billion) in the agency's budget of \$1.2 billion (R17 billion). Before the scandal was exposed, Krahenbuhl said he expected to end 2019 with a deficit of at least \$211 million (R3 billion).

Outcry over French official's swastika cake

The Simon Wiesenthal Center has called for the firing of a city council member from the French city of Montpellier over a birthday cake decorated with a swastika.

Montpellier councillor Djamel Boumaaz, a former member of France's far-right National Front Party, received the cake with a black swastika on a white background surrounded by cherry filling for his 40th birthday, and posted a photo of it on social media. The tweet has since been removed.

The Wiesenthal Center posted a screenshot of the tweet on its Twitter page, and called on the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism "to condemn Boumaaz, and to urge the mayor of Montpellier to take measures to remove him from his municipal functions".

Boumaaz's Twitter feed includes many references to the quenelle, an inverted Hitler salute, and a tweet in which he doctors a photo of the Gaza border to look like a concentration camp. In 2016, he wrote that his Twitter account was "forbidden to dogs and Jews".

He told the French newspaper *Le Parisien* that he received the cake two years ago from a supporter, and that the message that accompanied the cake noted that he turned it down. He said the police investigated it at the time following complaints from social-media users, and the case was ultimately closed.

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Torah Thought

Danger of making incidental significant

While encamped on the eastern side of the River Jordan, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, owners of cattle, observed that the Land of Jazer and Gilead was suitable for the rearing of livestock. Knowing that the people of Israel were about to cross over the Jordan to enter the land of Canaan, they asked that they be allowed to remain and settle on the east side of the river.

Moses, misunderstanding the intentions of the Reubenites and Gadites, reprimanded them for attempting to dissuade the Israelites from entering the promised land. The Reubenites and Gadites explained that far from undermining G-d's intention, they were prepared to lead the assault on the inhabitants of Canaan, and would return to their homes on the east side of the Jordan only once all the Israelites had been settled on their holdings on the west side of the Jordan.

While this was a very noble gesture on the part of these two tribes, their reply betrays their priorities. They explained that they would go heavily armed into battle after they had built sheepfolds for their cattle, and cities for their children on the

east side of the Jordan.

From a legal standpoint, the declaration of intent to establish a *chazokah*, (a hold) on the land by building sheepfolds and cities is perfectly in order. Such construction signifies occupation, and therefore possession of the land. But Moses was perceptive that the descendants of Reuben and Gad were more concerned about their property and material wealth than they were about the safety and security of their families, hence the order of their building projects: (Numbers 32:16).

In his reply, Moses subtly corrected them, urging them to first take care of their children, and then worry about their wealth. "Build towns for your children, and sheepfolds for your flocks, but do what you have promised." (Numbers 32:20-24).

Midrash Bemidbar Rabba (22:9), commenting on the verse, declares, "The descendants of Reuben and Gad made the incidental significant, and the significant incidental."

While Judaism doesn't advocate abstention from the physical pleasures of life – and even includes a petition for

**Rabbi Malcolm Matitiani, Temple Israel, Cape Town**

material wealth in the Shemoneh Esreh recited thrice daily – our tradition condemns the pursuit of wealth for its own sake.



Thus, according to Midrash Bemidbar Rabba (22:9), G-d said to the tribes, "Since you mention your cattle before your children, you will find no blessing in your wealth." The Tanna ben Zoma defined a rich person as someone who is content with their portion. (Pirkei Avot 4:1). Ben Zoma's intention is not for people to accept adverse conditions and circumstances, but he cautions against becoming obsessed with the acquisition of material possessions.

Such a fetish is an ever-dangerous reality in the modern consumer society. There is nothing wrong in acquiring products that make our lives more comfortable and enjoyable, as long as we don't lose sight of what's truly important – the pursuit of holiness in the form of intellectual and spiritual growth, and the development of our relationship with G-d, our fellow human beings, and the world we inhabit.



# SA-born doctor the brains behind pancreatic cancer breakthrough

NICOLA MILTZ

As South Africa mourns the death of Johnny Clegg from pancreatic cancer, a Pretoria-born oncologist is trailblazing her way into medical history with groundbreaking research into the deadly illness, offering hope to patients worldwide.

Dr Talia Golan is a world-renowned specialist and researcher who left South Africa when she was 13, then head girl of Carmel College primary school, and a firm fan of Johnny Clegg and Savuka at the time.

Little did she know then that one day, she would lead research into the

This week, in between seeing patients and meeting her research team, Golan snatched some time to chat with the *SA Jewish Report* about her extraordinary life and times.

For someone who recently made it onto Forbes Israel’s “50 Most Influential Women in Israel” list, she comes across as surprisingly humble and down to earth – with a strong South African accent after all this time.

“It’s all about the patient,” says the mother of four, who possesses that rare and elusive blend of compassion, empathy, and scientific expertise.

Explaining her research, she said the new drug, Lynparza, which is

cancer, and the drug “provides tremendous hope for patients” in the advanced stage of the cancer. “This drug has shown efficacy, and a really phenomenal response in this patient population,” she said.

The treatment is turning heads in the medical world, with the prospect of long-term survival from this deadly disease seemingly within reach.

Golan has spent the better half of the past decade producing this vital research, and knew early on that she and her team were onto something.

“I knew that POLO and Lynparza had potential. The results we have seen are more than a personal achievement for me. It’s hard to describe the feeling of seeing patients visibly affected. I’m so privileged to do this research, which is giving people real hope for the first time.”

According to *Cancer.Net*, pancreatic cancer is the 12th most common cancer worldwide. It’s the fourth leading cause of cancer death, and less than 3% of patients with metastatic disease survive more than five years after diagnosis. Early diagnosis is difficult, said Golan, as often there are no symptoms until it is too late. Sadly the majority of patients are diagnosed at metastatic stage.

Golan derives immense satisfaction and joy from knowing that strides have been made, and that medical experts have hailed the drug a potential game-changer in treating the fatal illness.

She told reporters several weeks ago that when they saw that the results were positive, “It was an exceptional, phenomenal moment. For the field, it’s a huge thing.”

Golan’s fondest memories of South Africa include “Sunday braais with family, hanging around the swimming pool with her *wildechai* (wild) cousins and older brothers, and visits to the Kruger National Park and Durban beachfront”. She says South Africa still feels like a second home when she visits relatives, which isn’t often. “I love the colours, the nature, the people, the accent, the whole feel of the place feels good,” she said.

She emigrated to Israel with her parents, both physicians, and three older brothers, all of whom live in Ra’anana. Her father, Alfie Feinberg, is a retired paediatrician, and her mother, Myra Feinberg, a practicing



radiologist. She is married to Yariv Golan, a cyber tech expert, and the couple have four children, aged 19, 17, 14, and 13.

Golan says in the past, few studies showed the benefits of various drug regimens until the Lynparza/POLO trial began showing promise in its various trial phases.

“Interacting with my patients is what I find most fulfilling about my job. It’s humbling, we go through difficult moments,” she says.

According to Sheba Medical, the breakthrough involved screening about 3 000 patients, 154 of whom underwent randomization, and were assigned a trial intervention. The results demonstrated that the drug

had a noticeable impact on those affected with the disease. Patients from around the world were given the drug in addition to a round of chemotherapy, and then were treated repeatedly with Lynparza. The trial group’s results far outpaced those who did not receive treatment.

Golan was in South Africa in December for the launch of the South African Friends of Sheba Medical Center. She told those present at the launch that she was “extremely proud” of her roots. “Africa is in my soul,” she said, adding that it was an honour to represent Sheba Medical Center’s work to bringing cutting-edge care to patients.



Dr Talia Golan

disease which took the musician’s life two weeks ago after a valiant struggle.

Golan, a graduate of the Sackler Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University, heads up Israel’s Sheba Medical Pancreatic Cancer Center, where she is becoming renowned for headline-grabbing research into the disease.

In the past two months, Golan and her team have been featured in leading medical publications including the *New England Journal of Medicine*, which recently reported that the drug she has been working on has yielded promising results.

The research team announced recently that a targeted cancer therapy drug it had developed together with pharmaceutical giants AstraZeneca and MSD (Merck) offers “potential hope” for patients with a specific kind of metastatic pancreatic cancer, as “it delays the progression of the disease”.

part of a clinical trial regimen known as POLO, treats a specific type of metastatic pancreatic cancer in those who carry the BRCA 1&2 mutation. The treatment “also exemplifies the advent of precision medicine based on a specific genetic biomarker, BRCA 1&2”, she says.

In other words, the drug can help target those with the BRCA mutations – unstable cells that often lead to cancer. Ashkenazi Jews (who make up the majority of Jews living in South Africa) are particularly vulnerable since they are susceptible to carrying the BRCA gene which can lead to cancer, she says.

Golan has been conducting research and clinical trials with AstraZeneca and MSD, as Merck is called outside the United States, to evaluate the safety and efficacy of the new drug-treatment regimen.

This is the first phase 3 biomarker study that is positive in pancreatic

## Former Peruvian president considered a flight risk to Israel

GABE STUTMAN – JTA

A former Peruvian president living in the Bay Area and facing bribery charges in his home country has been denied bail by a federal judge in San Francisco out of fear he will flee – to Israel.

Alejandro Toledo, who led Peru from 2001 to 2006, is wanted on corruption charges after prosecutors say he took \$20 million (R284.2 million) from Odebrecht, a Latin American construction conglomerate.

United States marshals arrested Toledo, 73, at his Los Altos Hills home on 16 July in response to an extradition request. At a bail hearing on 19 July, a US attorney argued that Toledo should be denied bail because of the significant risk that he would flee the country. Toledo’s wife, French-born anthropologist Eliane Karp, earned a degree at Hebrew University and has Israeli citizenship – and Israel doesn’t have an active extradition

agreement with Peru.

“Mr Toledo has a history of extensive foreign travel and ties outside the US,” Elise LaPunzina, assistant US attorney, said in court according to an audio recording of the hearing. Those ties might “facilitate [Toledo’s] travel to a country that doesn’t have an extradition treaty to Peru. Notably Israel”.

LaPunzina said the FBI found \$40 000 (R567 482) in a suitcase at the time of Toledo’s arrest, indicating to Judge Thomas Hixson that the former politician “is potentially mobile”.

The Odebrecht bribery case, one of the largest political corruption scandals in history, has spanned continents, implicating leaders from Mexico to Mozambique, including a third of Brazil’s government ministers under former President Michel Temer. Jorge Glas, the former vice-president of Ecuador, was sentenced to six years in jail, and former Peruvian President

Continued on page 8>>



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# Jewish doctor played a key role in miners’ silicosis settlement

TALI FEINBERG

Pathologist and doctor Bertie Goldstein would have celebrated the fact that the Gauteng High Court finally approved a R5 billion settlement between miners and six large mining companies last Friday. It was a huge recognition of his life’s work as one of the earliest researchers into silicosis in miners in South Africa.

Goldstein, usually known as Bobby, passed away on 23 June in Johannesburg at the age of 94.

The agreement, on behalf of thousands of mineworkers and their dependents, affects people who contracted silicosis or pulmonary tuberculosis during or after being employed as gold miners from March 1965, according to *Fin24*.

According to the American Lung Association, “Silicosis is a lung disease caused by breathing in tiny bits of silica, a mineral that is part of sand, rock, and mineral ores such as quartz. It mostly affects workers exposed to silica dust in occupations such as mining, glass manufacturing, and foundry work. Over time, exposure to silica particles causes scarring in the lungs, which can harm your ability to breathe.”

“[Bobby] authored and co-authored a myriad papers on miners’ silicosis in South Africa,” says Eli Goldstein, his first cousin once removed. “The recent decision by the courts, which occurred a month after he passed away, would have been a culminating achievement for him in terms of his part in this saga as the hearings made use of academic findings.

“As a very humble man who was always loath to sing his own praises, I believe his work in the field of lung disease in South African miners went a long way toward the eventual settlement of R5 billion to mineworkers and their families this month.”

“He spent his working career conducting research into asbestosis in miners. My uncle is quoted as part of the team that ‘made valuable diagnostic and research contributions’ working with the Miners’ Medical Bureau and the SAIMR [South African Institute for Medical Research],” said associate professor Chyrisse Heine, the doctor’s niece, who thinks of her uncle like a second father. “He was part of a team that carried out about 2 500 routine heart and lung examinations a year for the bureau.

“He travelled all over the world, presenting his work at conferences and publishing his research, which is well-cited even today. One such citation is his work to demonstrate that coal miners have elevated risks of coal workers’ pneumoconiosis, developing coronary obstructive pulmonary disease, deficits in ventilatory function, bronchitis symptoms, and silicosis.”

She says her uncle spoke four languages – English, Afrikaans, Zulu, and Yiddish. He started

his medical career at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in 1943. An illness contracted in 1948 forced him to interrupt his studies for a few years, and he subsequently completed his medical degree in 1951.

Goldstein joined the SAIMR in Braamfontein in December 1955, where he worked in the unit dealing with pathology of the lungs and heart, and did research on the dust-related diseases contracted in asbestos coal and gold mines.

He was also later involved in research into occupational diseases, and this unit eventually became known as the National Centre for Occupational Health. He was admitted as a Fellow of the College of Pathologists in South Africa in 1966, and in 1967, during a long sabbatical, toured Europe, where

he visited a number of medical laboratories that were doing similar work.

In subsequent years, Goldstein often attended and presented papers at local and international conferences dealing with dust-related diseases in miners. As a



Dr Bertie Goldstein

member of the South African Society of Pathologists, he was also affiliated to the International Society of Pathologists, and regularly attended and participated in their congresses.

Well-known for his work in lung pathology, Goldstein for many years demonstrated in practical sessions for undergraduate pathology students at the adjacent medical school. Later, when SAIMR and Wits Medical School amalgamated their pathology

departments, he became a lecturer on the staff of the university’s medical school, where he gave an annual course of lectures on lung pathology to third-year students.

“Bobby officially retired at 63 in 1988, but continued to assist in and publish research work

on a voluntary basis until he moved to the Rand Aid Elphin Lodge Retirement Village near Sandringham, Johannesburg,” says his cousin. “Besides his broad intellect, he was an amazingly curious person, always wanting to know more about subjects that were sometimes beyond his scope of focus on lung disease. He mastered the use of a computer at 87, and used it do research in various areas.

“One of his hobbies was photography. He left behind a huge collection of slides that he had taken in his lifetime on various trips locally and abroad while lecturing at conferences. He had a clear mind, and still drove his car up to two weeks before his death,” Goldstein says.

“Being the unassuming person he was, I doubt whether he would have wanted to be seen as the hero of the story, but I do believe he is owed immense recognition for the part he played in the large body of research used among other evidence to get the mining houses to settle.”

## ‘We no longer feel comfortable in our own shul,’ say North Miami Beach Jews

BEN SALES – JTA

When Rabbi Mark Rosenberg’s family played back the footage on their home’s security cameras in North Miami Beach, they could hear the rat-tat-tat of bullets being fired at the synagogue a few blocks away. On Sunday, a man had been shot repeatedly in front of the Young Israel of Greater Miami as he waited for daily services.

On Saturday, Rosenberg attended services, and sat on that very bench, outside the synagogue’s front door. A pro-bono police chaplain, he got a call the following evening from the police, and was up into the early morning dealing with the shooting’s aftermath.

The victim, Yosef Lipschutz, has had multiple surgeries, and is in a stable condition. The perpetrator is at large, and police have yet to determine if the shooting was an anti-Semitic hate crime.

But in the days since, the shooting has shaken the close-knit, orthodox community of North Miami Beach, and left some wondering whether the sense of safety they previously felt has disappeared. While Rosenberg said the shooting wasn’t comparable to the fatal attacks on synagogues in Pittsburgh and Poway, California, this year, he can’t help but see a pattern.

“Because it was a shul, and because of all the anti-Semitism going on in the world today, we almost got used to it that we no longer feel comfortable in our own shul,” said Rosenberg, who is not Young Israel’s pulpit rabbi. “People are having these thoughts, ‘Look how easy it is for it to happen. Look how simple it is for someone to come with a gun, and start shooting people.’”

The attack occurred at 18:35 on Sunday night, before the evening prayer service. Lipschutz, 69, a bachelor who attends services at Young Israel every morning and evening, got to synagogue early, and was waiting on the bench outside the front door, as he usually does.

Congregants said Lipschutz is a gentle, unassuming person, who is always helping out around the synagogue. Usually, that means unnoticed tasks like monitoring the air conditioning, holding open doors, or helping people with disabilities to their seats. Last weekend, he co-sponsored the synagogue’s refreshments after Saturday services.

“He has the softest smile when you look at him, and say ‘hi,’” said Amy Salzman, who runs youth programming at the synagogue. “We need someone to volunteer to help put felt bottoms on the chairs, and then I see him there the next week, quietly by himself, putting felt bottoms on the chairs.”

On Sunday, Lipschutz was getting ready to enter the synagogue when a man who appeared to be in his 20s got out of his car, advanced toward the bench, and began shooting at Lipschutz, according to Rosenberg. Lipschutz reportedly dived behind the bench – possibly saving his life – until the shooting stopped 20 or 30 seconds later. The perpetrator then got back in his car.

According to Rosenberg, the perpetrator circled the synagogue with his car more than once on Sunday.

Police have tried to locate all the security camera footage of the shooter. On Monday, a team of 10 to 15 detectives went house to house asking if people had tapes of the attack. And, even though it has not officially been

classified as a hate crime, Rosenberg said police were treating it like one. They have stepped up patrols around all of the neighbourhood’s synagogues, and have stationed a police officer outside Young Israel whenever it is having services. Police have deployed a specially trained team to deal with the shooting’s aftermath.

Young Israel, an orthodox synagogue with roughly 300 member families, already has security measures in place, including cameras, a double-locked door, and an occasional armed security guard. But Salzman lamented that that, apparently, wasn’t enough.

“We can’t be quiet anymore, because that’s not how you get protection, that’s not how you get people to listen,” she said. “People are scared, asking, ‘Can I come to shul? Is it safe to come with my child?’”

She pointed out, “Right now, there’s so much police around, it’s the safest place to be, probably.”



The wider North Miami Beach community, meanwhile, is uniting around Young Israel, said the synagogue’s rabbi, David Lehrfield. On Monday, local law enforcement briefed all of the community’s rabbis, and a group of lay leaders.

Although a Brooklyn rabbi was shot and killed in August 2014 just blocks away from the Young Israel synagogue, community members said it was unclear whether that murder was a hate crime. Locals said they did not generally experience anti-Semitism.

“We do have a feeling of security, and a feeling of confidence that everything will be OK, and that this is a random occurrence that will never happen again,” Lehrfield said. “We are very united and optimistic. We intend to maintain the strength and sanctity of our community.”

Nor do community members expect the attack to scare people away from the neighbourhood. Ron Fisher, a Young Israel member who runs the synagogue hospitality team, said the area was still attractive to orthodox families because of its synagogues, kosher restaurants, and other institutions.

“There are too many draws for people to come here for one isolated event to deter people from coming here,” he said. “I would expect that it’s not going to influence people.”



# Israeli national and former SA resident on the run from Bermuda police

TALI FEINBERG

The Bermuda Police Service is trying to determine the whereabouts of fugitive Yuval Joshua Abraham, formerly resident in South Africa, where it believes he may have returned.

“Mr Abraham is an Israeli national,” says Robin Simmons of the Bermuda Police Service. “We are aware that he has lived in South Africa, Israel, and the United Kingdom, as well as Bermuda. Civil proceedings have been taken out against Mr Abraham in the United States (New York), UK (London), Bermuda, and South Africa (Case Number 8227/18 High Court of South Africa, Western Cape Division, Cape Town).”

“The allegations are that while employed as chief financial officer (CFO) at Hiscox [Services] in Bermuda, Abraham falsified invoices which allowed him to use company funds to purchase a number of expensive

wristwatches for himself. The loss to the company is about \$1.8 million (R25.6 million).

“A complaint was made to the Bermuda Police Service, and a file of evidence submitted to the department of public prosecutions,” Simmons says. “Information about the allegations was then laid before the criminal court in Bermuda, and a warrant issued for Abraham’s arrest, which has been circulated to colleagues internationally via Interpol.”

However Abraham fled the country before he could be arrested, he says. “We are unaware of Abraham’s current location, and are considering all options with a view to tracing his whereabouts.

Abraham was relieved of his job as CFO of Hiscox Services, the service company that manages expenses for Bermuda legal entities for the Hiscox Group, on 27 April this year, Hiscox said in its US court application.

The company said Abraham had left



Bermuda, and was believed to have travelled to London, South Africa, and then Israel in early May.

According to an affidavit filed in the Bermuda Supreme Court by Marc Wetherhill, Hiscox’s

group company secretary, Abraham was employed in Bermuda on a work permit issued “pursuant to a Polish passport”, and he holds South African and Israeli passports.

The following charges have been approved: eight counts of obtaining a money transfer by deception; nine counts of false accounting; one count of attempting to obtain a money transfer by deception; and one count of money laundering.

“Mr Abraham is believed to have had contacts in the Newlands area of Cape Town. If located, the Bermuda authorities would seek his detention and extradition to face justice in Bermuda. Any information regarding Mr Abraham’s whereabouts would be gratefully received.”

Anyone with information can contact Detective Constable Jeff Blair or Special Constable Andrew Bartlett at the Bermuda Police Service specialist investigations department (financial crime) on (441) 295 0011.

# Epstein lawyer defends OpEd declaring statutory rape outdated

ANDREW SILOW-CARROLL, BEN SALES – JTA

In 1997, Alan Dershowitz wrote an opinion piece headlined, “Statutory rape is an outdated concept.”

Now, 22 years later, he’s defending the column on Twitter at an awkward time. Dershowitz was a member of the team that got convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein a plea deal that sent him to prison for 18 months, a sentence that critics today say was unusually brief and lenient. Epstein is now being prosecuted for sex trafficking, and is accused of sexually abusing dozens of underage girls.

Dershowitz, a prominent defence lawyer and emeritus Harvard University law professor, himself faces accusations of sexual

group.”

He then suggests that the age of consent should be lowered to 15, or perhaps even 14.

Facing a barrage of criticism – for his handling of the Epstein plea deal, for the allegations against him, and now for this column – Dershowitz has been unapologetic. He told the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* earlier this month that, “I have no misgivings, and I will continue to represent controversial people. That’s what I do. If I’m in a case, my job is to get the best possible result.”

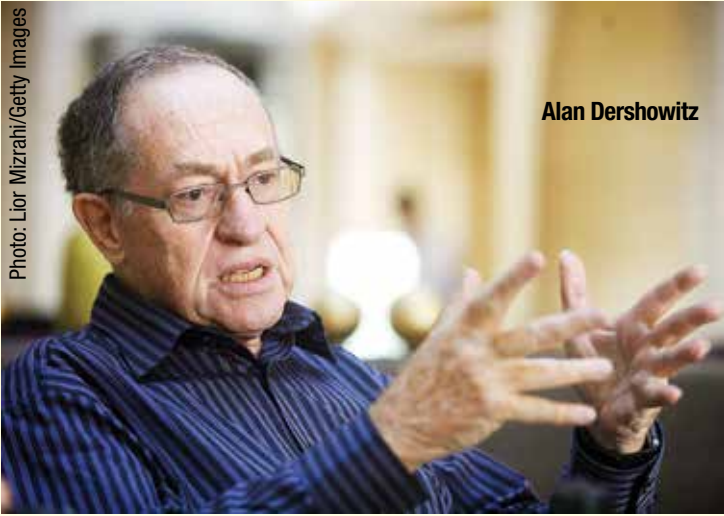
He similarly defended the 1997 column in a series of tweets, saying there should be “Romeo and Juliet exceptions” to statutory rape.

“I stand by the constitutional [not moral] argument I offered in my controversial OpEd,” he wrote. “[I]f a 16-year-old has the

“which would allow him to claim a payment”.

Dershowitz writes that Giuffre “has a long history of lying for money”, and appears not to have told her friends or the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) that he was among the people with whom she had sex. He says he gave Bruck access to tapes in which Giuffre’s high-powered lawyer, David Boies, acknowledges that it would have been impossible for Dershowitz to have been in the places where Giuffre claims to have met him. Boies disputes Dershowitz’s account.

Ransome, who met Epstein as a 22-year-old in 2006, also told Bruck that Epstein ordered her to have sex with Dershowitz. She was also represented by Boies in a sex trafficking suit against Epstein, which was settled in 2017. Dershowitz claims never to have met Ransome, and says she is dishonest. He points to an incident in 2016 in which she told the *New York Post* that she had sex tapes of Bill Clinton and Donald Trump, but failed to produce them when asked.



abuse from two of Epstein’s alleged victims – Virginia Roberts Giuffre and Sarah Ransome. He vehemently denies the accusations against him.

The 1997 column is getting renewed attention after it was quoted in a current *New Yorker* article about Dershowitz and his entanglement with Epstein. In the column, which ran in the *Los Angeles Times*, Dershowitz argued that statutory rape was an increasingly irrelevant legal concept as teenage sex was normalised and rarely prosecuted.

“This raises a fundamental question about the continuing legitimacy of statutory rape laws at a time when sex involving teenagers is so rampant, and prosecution for statutory rape so selective,” Dershowitz wrote. “It’s obvious that there must be criminal sanctions against sex with very young children, but it’s doubtful whether such sanctions should apply to teenagers above the age of puberty, since voluntary sex is so common in their age

group.”

He has also attacked the *New Yorker* profile of him, written by staff writer Connie Bruck. Before it was published, he called it a “hit piece” with the “explicit purpose of silencing my defence of President Trump, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the state of Israel”.

The lengthy article, titled “The Devil’s Advocate”, quotes Giuffre, who in accusations going back to 2014 names Dershowitz among the men she says Epstein forced her to have sex with. Giuffre says she had sex with him at least six times. When asked why she decided to name Dershowitz, she told Bruck, “Jeffrey got away with it, basically. And Dershowitz was one of the people who enabled that to happen.”

Dershowitz vociferously denied her allegations, and ended up suing her lawyers in 2015. According to the article, the case was settled in 2016, with Dershowitz’s insurance company paying Giuffre’s lawyers an undisclosed sum. The settlement also included a sum of money to Dershowitz

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# Being a part of the world Jewish club

When I was in Israel towards the end of last year, and had the chance to ask Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu one question, I left feeling slighted. I asked him what Israel was doing to help the South African Jewish community at the heart of the “new anti-Semitism” (traditional anti-Semitism intertwined with the delegitimation of Israel) who were feeling the brunt of the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement. He made light of it, as did the Israeli media.



This experience certainly didn’t engender a feeling of solidarity, nor a belief that Israel was on our side. In fact, I came home feeling that, to a large degree, we were on our own on the southern tip of Africa. I tell you this now, simply because meeting Jewish Agency leader Isaac Herzog this week gave me new perspective. I now have a sense of being part of a much larger Jewish world. I feel like South African Jewry is actually an important cog in the Jewish wheel. Since meeting him, I believe that in terms of world Jewry – with its headquarters in Israel – we are very much part of the club. And it feels great. I believe Israel is aware of us, and fighting for us to be able to live freely as Jews in

South Africa, without needing to hide who we are and what’s important to us. What changed, you may ask. Well, quite simply, here was an important Israeli leader who did his homework on South African Jewry before he got here. He was here – as you might be aware by now – as a guest of the South African Zionist Federation’s conference last weekend. After he arrived, he spoke to many influential people, and has since made it known that he is determined to do what he can to help us. His visit also showed me what the Jewish Agency is already doing to protect us in terms of financial assistance, security, and various other issues pertaining to our stability in South Africa. He didn’t come here to convince us to make aliyah – although he wouldn’t turn us away if we did. In his quiet but forceful way, he made it clear he’s determined to ensure that we can hold our head high as Jews in South Africa, and as people with a close affinity to the holy land. How refreshing that is! We certainly get many fascinating visitors from Israel, and we have a wonderful Israeli ambassador, Israel Centre (under the auspices of the Jewish Agency), and *shlichim* (emissaries) involved in various Jewish organisations. So, this bond and support has perhaps been there all the time. I don’t mean to offend anyone who has been working hard to keep us in the Jewish world loop, but I certainly didn’t feel it quite as much as I do now following Herzog’s visit. Somehow, I believe he has the ear of Israeli leadership, and he seems to have the power to make a tangible difference. What’s also interesting for me is that for many years, South African Jewry dug deep into their pockets to give money to Israel, and I know we still do. We did what we could to help build this homeland, in spite of the fact that most of us were happy at home in South Africa. It was what we always did because, as Jews, Israel was and still is important to us. Now, it appears that Israel – the economically thriving metropolis – is helping us. Again, while it isn’t really a surprise, it was never said in so many words. Not that I like us being on the receiving end (I always prefer to be giving), but it certainly feels like there is a familial and loving bond behind this. Herzog said something else that astonished me. He was talking about the future of the Jewish nation, and how the Jewish Agency looks after Jews, no matter what they wear on their heads or how and if they daven. While he is clearly concerned about Jews turning away from the Jewish world, he is so open to accepting people who believe they are Jewish, and want to be a part of our community. This is such a new idea for me, and one I’m sure our orthodox rabbis wouldn’t approve of. However, he made the point that there are 60 million human beings out there that identify as Jewish, and we shouldn’t turn our backs on them. Following the difficult debate that we had in this newspaper over the attendance of orthodox rabbis at Limmud, this is surely food for thought. Especially considering that Herzog has conferred with top rabbonim in Israel over this. I can’t imagine they love this idea, and I’m not 100% sure how I feel about it, but it’s surely something to ponder when looking to our future. With great respect to the Zionist Fed team, they brought out some great minds and speakers to inspire our community. *Kol Hakavod* to the SAZF! We have devoted a substantial space in this newspaper to covering what was said at the conference as it is worth reading. As we bid farewell to the dedicated team of Ben Swartz and Nicci Raz at the helm of the organisation, I would like to congratulate Rowan Polovin for taking on the SAZF leadership mantle. We wish you the best of luck! I would also like to congratulate Benji Shulman for his award – it is so well deserved. From our perspective on this newspaper, the work he does for the community is huge.

Shabbat Shalom!  
Peta Krost Maunder  
Editor

# What does it mean if Israel bombs an Iranian warehouse in Iraq?

For 38 years, there’s been no mention of Israeli strikes in Iraq. All that changed this week, when the London-based Arabic newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat* reported that Israeli Air Force (IAF) F-35 jets bombed Iranian warehouses storing arms and missiles near Baghdad. According to the newspaper, which cites anonymous Western diplomats, the IAF struck twice in the past month.

At the time of writing, there’s been no comment from the Israel Defense Forces, nor is any expected. Jerusalem has long practiced a policy of keeping mum when it comes to aerial strikes it (allegedly) conducts in enemy countries. But, usually, those strikes are concentrated in Syria, and are aimed at preventing Iranian shipments of weapons from reaching Hezbollah in Lebanon. They are mostly successful. Which is why it makes sense that Tehran has been looking at building an alternative “missile base”. The target of the first reported strike in Iraq was food refrigeration trucks that concealed Iranian-produced ballistic missiles. Several Hezbollah officers and members of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, a branch of the Iranian armed forces tasked with protecting the Islamic system from foreign interference, were killed. The second attack was on an Iranian base formerly used by the People’s Mujahedin of Iran, a militia that fought against the Iranian regime. Reports suggest that a number of Iranian advisors were injured, and a shipment of ballistic missiles that had recently been brought from Iran to Iraq was destroyed.

Lending credence to the speculation that Israel was behind the attacks, Israeli Regional Cooperation Minister Tzachi Hanegbi said last week that, “Israel is the only country in the world that has been killing Iranians for two years now.” Israel “strikes the Iranians hundreds of times in Syria. Sometimes it admits it, and sometimes foreign reports reveal it. We still don’t see the Iranians backing off from their intention to entrench themselves militarily in Syria. This campaign isn’t over.” Western and Israeli intelligence suggest that, particularly in recent months, Tehran has been providing militia groups in Iraq with dozens of guided ballistic missiles. Already a few weeks ago, Israeli sources warned that Tehran was building a logistical storage base in Iraq for missiles to be deployed to Syria or Lebanon for attacks against Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently warned Baghdad against allowing the Iranian Revolutionary Guard to operate in the country.

So, it makes sense that Jerusalem would do everything in its power to prevent Iran from using Iraq to target the Jewish state. Iraq straddles Syria, and the border area is empty desert and perfect for smugglers to exploit. The bases hit are in this region, and it seems highly likely that Iran was planning to move the missiles into Syria. Baghdad is in a difficult position. On the one hand, it receives a lot of financial and other help from Tehran, which means it has trouble standing up to it. It relies on the support of pro-Iranian Shiite factions inside the country who naturally refuse to be part of American President Donald Trump’s sanctions regime against Tehran. On the other hand, Baghdad’s security and stability depends on its relationship with the United States, and the Iraqi government seeks to

## DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Paula Slir



curry favour with the American government. Trump still has about 5 200 troops in Iraq, and is hesitant to withdraw them, in part because doing so would force Baghdad to align more closely with Tehran. Iran sees these forces as a direct threat to its interests, and has expressed this to Baghdad in no uncertain terms. So, Iraq finds itself in a difficult position, and since the new government took power in October last year, its relationship with the US has deteriorated. Complicating matters – although in Israel’s favour – were comments made a few weeks ago by Fareed Yasseen, the Iraqi ambassador in Washington. “There are objective reasons that may call for the establishment of relations between Iraq and Israel,” he said on 27 June. A backlash on social media from Iraqi activists and politicians followed, but the ambassador was neither recalled nor punished. The Iraqi foreign ministry said his statements had been misreported, and reiterated the country’s unwavering allegiance to the Palestinian cause. But, no doubt, the ambassador would have first cleared his remarks with the prime minister. Israel and Iraq share common concerns about an increasingly belligerent Iran. Both have good relations with the Kurds, and there is a sizeable Iraqi Jewish community in Israel. But, still, like Jerusalem’s clandestine relations with Sunni-Arab Gulf capitals Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, full diplomatic ties are a long way off. As many as 60% of young Iraqis are unemployed – and this is more important to them than the Palestinian-Israeli struggle. However, until the conflict is resolved, it’s unlikely Iraq or any other Arab states for that matter will openly engage with the Jewish state.



If these recent attacks in Iraq were indeed carried out by the IAF – and the feeling in the region is that they were – it’s good that Jerusalem is staying silent. It won’t do its potential relationship with Baghdad any good to be seen to be striking in a sovereign country. Also, it will merely complicate US-Iraqi-Iranian relations. Still, Israel can’t afford to stop hitting Iranian targets intended to open new fronts against it, whether they be in the Syrian Golan Heights or in Iraq. And, indeed, if these strikes are Israeli, they mark an escalation and expansion of IAF strikes against Iranian forces operating in the region. \* On 7 June 1981 Israel bombed an Iraqi nuclear reactor under construction 17km southeast of Baghdad, destroying Saddam Hussein’s nascent nuclear programme. I interviewed the commander of the operation, who said that the rear pilot of the six Israeli fighter jets that carried out the mission was none other than Ilan Ramon who became Israel’s first man in space. At the time, he joked that if the Iraqis retaliated, his plane would be the first to be hit. Tragically, he died in 2003 aboard space shuttle Columbia as it returned to earth.



# Truth is necessary for reconciliation in Lithuania

OPINION

GRANT GOCHIN



## GRANT GOCHIN

At the turn of the 20th century, about half of Vilnius’s population was Jewish. All that remains of Jewish life there is a tourist trail, and monuments lauding Holocaust perpetrators. To divorce Lithuania from its Holocaust-related past, and to create a national-foundation narrative, Lithuania devised a government agency named the Genocide Center, whose mission is to rewrite the history of Lithuania. Through this sanitisation process, it converts perpetrators into national heroes, and wherever possible, denies Lithuania’s culpability in the Holocaust. There is virtually no recourse against the Genocide Center. Its holocaust revisionism has been aggressive and blatant for years. Continuous appeals for the truth have been met with contempt and continuous intimidation by the government, which is then validated by the Lithuanian legal system. The Lithuanian foreign ministry has cynically marketed Lithuania as friendly towards Jews.



J Noreika memorial plaques are now no longer on the wall of Vrublevskiai Library

The Soviet occupation of Lithuania has been identified as a genocide, while the genocide of the Jews in the country has been all but ignored. Lithuania admits the murders occurred, but will not identify the Lithuanians that participated in – or led – the slaughters. It blames everything on Soviets and Nazis and a few “local collaborators”. Culpability by Lithuanians is effectively reduced to an occasional platitude, illustrating Holocaust distortion at its finest. Revising history to elevate murderers to heroes is an assault on the victims and all humanity. Because of this, the memory of the murdered has been all but eliminated from the Lithuanian consciousness. Marketing occasional platitudes about memory, while distorting the truth, supplants historical accuracy. As time progresses, this vulgar Lithuanian narrative has been repeated so frequently, unsuspecting Lithuanians believe it to be the truth. In 2015, the mayor of Vilnius removed Soviet art statues, and addressed the suffering of Lithuanians under Russian rule. However, he strongly declined to address monuments honouring the murderers of Jews. For this reason, I started a campaign to address the national honouring of Holocaust perpetrators. Each government department disclaimed responsibility, and ultimately, all roads referred back to the very locus of Holocaust deception, the Genocide Center. Academic studies are continually rejected for absurd reasons, leaving the judicial system the only

recourse. Unfortunately, Lithuanian courts often obey ideological instructions on how to rule rather than adjudicating on the truth, and so distortions are effectively endorsed. The court of public opinion becomes the last resort. In 2018, Silvia Foti, the granddaughter of Jonas Noreika (a nationally recognised hero) publicly and heroically stepped forward to describe the holocaust crimes of her grandfather. She said that she had approached the Lithuanian government to tell the truth. For this crime, Foti was repudiated by segments of the Lithuanian community, in America and in Lithuania. Additionally, she was vilified by the Lithuanian government. The combination of a campaign for truth about the holocaust by the granddaughter of a perpetrator, and simultaneously the descendant of his victims, was electrifying, and draw significant international media attention. No longer could the government stand so resolutely against the truth, and the Lithuanian façade began to crumble.

In the Lithuanian presidential election of 2019, Gitanas Nausėda campaigned to address judicial corruption. We could see that a new wind was blowing. Within the first two weeks of his presidency, corrupt judges have been dismissed, and the street in Vilnius named for an architect of the Lithuanian Holocaust – Kazys Skirpa – is to be renamed. On 27 July, the monument in Vilnius for Noreika was removed.

Changing a street sign and removing a monument is the first breakthrough to truth telling. As a nation, Lithuania is to be applauded. The majority of Lithuanians are fine people. It’s not an easy process for any nation to admit that some of their founding fathers were murderers and criminals, especially when they have been fed a contradictory narrative. In order for a nation to mature, truth about its past is a necessary step. Under new leadership, Lithuania finally has the opportunity to walk a fresh path. The government needs to tell the truth. It needs to revoke certificates of good conduct awarded to Holocaust perpetrators, and renounce their national honours. It needs to replace the leadership of the Genocide Center, and appoint new leaders who will commit to telling the truth. They will need to tell the population that they were deliberately misinformed, and in the words of the Lithuanian foreign minister, “come clean”. South Africans are aware that reconciliation must be based on truth. Then, and only then, can Jews and Lithuanians walk together towards a better future.

• *South African-born Grant Gochin is actively involved in Jewish affairs, focusing on historical justice. He has spent the past twenty years documenting and restoring signs of Jewish life in Lithuania. In March 2019, he took the Lithuanian government to court to get them to recognise their active role in the Holocaust.*



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# Israel’s second election looks to be re-run of the first

TALI FEINBERG

As Israel draws closer to its second national election in a year come September, it’s unclear if the result will be any different to the polls in April.

Looking to explore this further, new South African organisation the Jewish Democratic Initiative (JDI) hosted a live link-up with Professor Gideon Shimoni, an expert on South African Jewry and Israeli history.

“One thing’s for sure, the majority will still go to the ‘conservative hawks’,” said Professor Shimoni, speaking to the audience from his office in Israel. “Once again, Avigdor Lieberman of the Yisrael Beiteinu party holds the balance.

If he again refuses to join a coalition with majority party Likud, we may find ourselves in the same situation of going to another election.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu failed to form a coalition after the April elections when Lieberman refused to join him, citing an ideological dispute with ultra-orthodox parties over the ultra-orthodox draft law.

Shimoni said that opposition party Kahol Lavan had sworn not to go into a coalition with Likud if Netanyahu remained at the helm. Thus, it might put pressure on him to step down. If he doesn’t, the party might have to go back on this demand to save the country from a third election.

Shimoni is of the opinion that Israeli parties are slaves to

the polls. If the polls say that the electorate is concerned about a certain issue, then that is what the party champions in its campaign. Thus, none of the parties are addressing the larger issue at hand: resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“There is an evasion of the fundamental issues, and there is no sign this election will bring change,” he said. “Israelis live an intense life with many everyday concerns like the cost of living. Furthermore, the average person is not exposed to the conflict on a daily basis.” Political parties align themselves with these concerns.

So, if Likud wins the election in September, what will change? “Bibi will continue to ‘control’ the conflict, and sustain the status quo”, or even annex parts of the West Bank, which will make the conflict harder to resolve, Shimoni said.

He said it was difficult to remain optimistic about the future of the country, and he feels alienated by the direction Zionism has taken in Israeli politics. However, there is still hope. Civil society, the supreme court, and public opinion all stand in the way of annexation and extreme politics.

Regarding the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) lobby group in South Africa, Shimoni said it had aligned itself with extremists on the Arab side, which is “a zero-sum game with no compromise” that aims to annihilate Israel. For this reason, he believes BDS has no role to play in resolving the conflict, which needs compromise from both Israel and the Palestinians.

Shimoni said the South African Jewish community had become more religious, and almost all of our leadership aligns itself with the national religious camp in Israel. South African Jews must hold these leaders to account, he said. If they applauded President Cyril Ramaphosa’s call at the SA Jewish Board of Deputies’ conference for South Africa to play a role in mediating the two-state solution in Israel, then they must push for a two-state solution.

“Israel is not a hopeless case. Hope comes from the bottom up – people who are open to dialogue and engagement in Israel and the diaspora,” he said.



Professor Gideon Shimoni

## Make South African business boom, urges Swartzberg

MIRAH LANGER

Embrace profit with a purpose, and find positive opportunities for growth at times of great social change. This is the challenge that Discovery co-founder and Vitality Group Chief Executive Barry Swartzberg issued at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) in Illovo this week.

“Profit with a purpose. These things can co-exist, they are not mutually exclusive. In fact, businesses that embrace profit and purpose have longevity,” he said.

society. When change happens, there is opportunity. Go out there, and seek it,” he said.

“Don’t go into a negative spiral. This is the time to take the opportunity, and create great businesses. Forget all this noise; just start operating!”

Earlier, the founder of the think tank, Rabbi Gideon Pogrund, addressed the audience, noting that while ethical compliance within companies is mandatory, in the same way that “rules are different from values”, people should want to act ethically because the business culture is based on shared values.

Pogrund urged the business community to move beyond merely ensuring compliance, or the company’s adherence to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate social investment (CSI) criteria.

“How do we display ethical leadership, so that compliance is not so much the goal, but the natural outcome of doing the right thing?”

“While CSR and CSI do great things, they are essentially detached from the core purpose and activity of organisations,” he said. “How do we

merge financial and social imperatives so that having a positive social impact is part of how we do business? How do we achieve all of this under tough conditions, a stagnant economy, and with investors expecting a return on their capital?”

Speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* after the seminar, Pogrund said that attendees of these kinds of events were right at the heart of business decision-making in the country. They included corporate managers and those involved in state-owned enterprises.

Pogrund shared Swartzberg’s belief that there were fresh ways to assess the road ahead for the business sector.

“No one is saying be naïve or idealistic. We know that there is a lot wrong, and that there is a lot to be concerned about, that is absolutely appropriate.”

However, those involved in business in South Africa could empower themselves to look at the opportunities available from a fresh angle.

“I distinguish between hope and optimism. Optimism is the belief that things will get better, which is rather passive. Hope, however, is the belief that we can make things better, which is more active.

“It’s about giving people a sense of hope, and that has certainly been one of the positive outcomes of these forums. People walk away feeling inspired.”

Pogrund told the *SA Jewish Report* that the issue of ethics and values in business had strong ties to Judaism.

“Jewish values are timeless, and they aren’t meant to be compartmentalised or selectively applied. They make a claim on every aspect of our lives, including how we approach business.

“In Judaism , the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem* – sanctifying G-d’s name – is of foundational importance. Behaving ethically in business is a great opportunity to fulfil this *mitzvah* (good deed).”



Dr Morris Mthombeni (head of faculty at GIBS), Barry Swartzberg, and Martin Kingston

Swartzberg was speaking at an ethics and governance think tank last week. He was on a panel alongside Andile Sangqu, the executive head of Anglo American South Africa; Sabine Dall’Omo, chief executive of Siemens Africa; and Martin Kingston, the executive chairman of Rothschild & Co South Africa, the vice-president of Business Unity South Africa, and a board member of South African Airways.

Said Swartzberg, “Companies exist for the long term to create value. What you try and create is a virtuous cycle, a system that works for all participants and stakeholders. It’s good for society, and good for your business. That’s how you would define shared value.”

Throughout his contribution to the evening’s discussion on values-based strategies for chief executives, Swartzberg was upbeat on the key issues facing the country’s business sector.

“South Africans underrate themselves,” he declared. “They are actually world class. They are entrepreneurial, they are self-starters, they are go-getters. The only thing we lack is a little bit of self-confidence. We can operate anywhere in the world. We should have the confidence to [do so] more.”

Swartzberg said that while some might lament the scandals that have plagued the country, it is also important to note that these have ultimately been exposed. “South African civil society is strong,” he said referencing the fall of apartheid; the recent change of government with the appointment of President Cyril Ramaphosa; and the outing of widespread corruption in the public and private sectors.

Thus, when it came to the strength of civil society in upholding an ethical code, “We should be proud of ourselves. If we look at other countries, we are actually damn good!”

Swartzberg also put a positive spin on the question of job losses in the digital age, suggesting the opposite is true: new technologies, in fact, create many new kinds of jobs.

Instead of fearing change, businesses should embrace the potential it creates. “There are massive changes happening in

### Former Peruvian president considered a flight risk to Israel

>>>Continued from page 3

Alan Garcia committed suicide when prosecutors and police arrived at his home 17 April to arrest him.

Toledo has close ties to the Bay Area. He came to the University of San Francisco on a partial soccer scholarship in the 1960s, studying economics and going on to earn a PhD from Stanford University. Over the past 25 years, he’s spent “at least half” of his time living in the Bay Area, his attorney said, and as recently as 2018, served as an “alumni scholar” at Stanford. The university said his position was unpaid, and didn’t involve teaching.

Toledo is known as the first Peruvian president of indigenous descent, and was credited with boosting his country’s gross domestic product. He’s written a number of books, including *The Shared Society: A Vision for the Global Future of Latin America*, published in 2015.

Citing the extraordinary circumstances of the case, and his belief that Toledo does indeed pose a flight risk, Hixson denied bail pending the next hearing, which will be on 7 August. Hixson is a magistrate judge of the US District Court in California’s Northern District.

“The defendant is not an alleged common criminal, but a political figure, and it’s important diplomatically for us to show that we’ve complied in our treaty obligations to Peru,” he said in court. “If the defendant were to flee, this would be a diplomatically significant failure of the US to live up to its obligations to Peru.”

Peru’s current President Martin Vizcarra was preceded by Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, who had a German Jewish father who fled Nazi Europe. Kuczynski resigned last year after the release of videos showing some of his allies trying to buy the support of opposition legislators.



Photo: Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images

Former Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo



# Celebrating untold stories of Israel’s action heroes

JORDAN MOSHE

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you,” wrote American poet, Maya Angelou. Community members braced the cold to hear the untold stories of Israel and the Jewish people at the Galleria in Sandton this past weekend at the South African Zionist Federation’s (SAZF’s) 49th national conference.

The community celebrated South African Jewry’s special bond with the Jewish state through these remarkable stories.

“We have the privilege and the responsibility to support and defend this country’s connection with Israel,” said outgoing SAZF National Chairperson Ben Swartz. “We continue to stand our ground at the coalface, and make our voice heard.

“We live in a privileged time. Israel is the realisation of a dream of generations of Jews, and we are lucky to be here to live it and see it for ourselves. Yes, some of us live in Israel, and some of us live here, but that doesn’t preclude those of us beyond Israel’s borders



from supporting and being part of this special dream.”

Swartz said we have the responsibility to ensure that we do our part for the Jewish state, and the SAZF in particular must ensure that no

one can deny us the opportunity to fulfil that responsibility.

“We remain at the fore, building and focusing on our mandate to work with the closer and broader community,” he said. “We engage consistently with the leadership structures of South Africa, reaching tens of millions of South Africans.

The Israeli dream and the accomplishments of its extraordinary people were well illustrated by various speakers at the event. Chairman of the Jewish Agency, Isaac Herzog, former Mossad commander Daniel Limor, South African-born war correspondent Paula Slier, and other equally accomplished guests shared their stories and insights with a riveted audience, bringing untold stories to light for all to share in and cherish.

The SAZF also paid tribute to its outgoing leadership, and those who have contributed significantly to the community. These

included Swartz, who is succeeded as national chairperson by Rowan Polovin, the current chairperson of the SAZF Cape Council.

Also recognised was National Director Nicci Raz, who will be stepping down from her position to make aliyah in August. Swartz applauded the staff of the SAZF for their commitment, thanking them for maintaining the bond between Israel and South Africa.

“Thirty years ago, it was all about the blue box,” said Swartz, alluding to the iconic Jewish National Fund money boxes used to collect funds for Israel as it developed. “Israel was still growing, and it needed support. Today, it’s a financial power, and we have moved beyond that.

“We’re responding to a new reality. The job of the SAZF is big, and we need the support of the community. Talk is cheap, so we are not about talking, but doing. It’s about action, and we must continue to engage.”

## Shulman honoured for community work

JORDAN MOSHE

The South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) gave credit where it was due to Benji Shulman, one of our community’s foremost youth leaders.

Shulman received the SAZF’s Herzl Award at the organisation’s national conference last weekend for playing a key role in the

and accepted a Jewish son who in the end wasn’t a doctor, lawyer, or accountant.”

Shulman stressed that it was better be a Jew today than at any time over the past 2 500 years. “We have a democratic state of Israel that is welcoming and strong, reaching out and supporting people around the world. It’s only by supporting it and the SAZF that it can get better.”

The late journalist and pro-Israel activist, Moses Moyo, a close friend and ally of the Jewish community who passed away last year, was also recognised posthumously.

Outgoing SAZF National Chairperson Ben Swartz announced the inauguration of a new award created by the SAFI in Moyo’s honour. It will go to any member of South African society who has shown exemplary commitment to Zionism and the Jewish community. The award will be awarded at the next SAZF conference.

“Towards the end of last year, a dear friend of the Jewish community



Nicci Raz, Benji Shulman, Gusti Yehoshua-Braverman and Ben Swartz

promotion of Israel in South Africa, and for his devotion to the Jewish community.

The award is given to a Jewish person under the age of 44 who has contributed significantly to the local Jewish community, and has strengthened its connection with Israel.

For the past 13 years, Shulman has been at the forefront of promoting Israel, and defending it from delegitimation.

His communal involvement began with his leadership of the South African Union of Jewish Students as national chairperson, followed by involvement in the Jewish National Fund, and election to the SAZF as the youngest ever vice-chairperson.

His work led to the creation of the South African Friends of Israel (SAFI) initiative, and he is currently director of the South African Israel Forum, leading youth leaders, academics, and activists on tours of Israel.

Shulman told the conference that his family had been involved with the SAZF from the very beginning of the organisation. “My great-grandmother raised money for the first merchant ships in the Israeli navy. My grandmother on the other side was a fundraiser for Magen David Adom, and to this day, there is a bike with her name on it scooting around Jerusalem, saving lives.”

He expressed gratitude to the SAZF, and thanked his family for supporting him in his endeavours. “They have put up with odd hours,



Rowan Polovin



Paula Slier, Aviad Sela and Zev Krengel



Ron Brummer, Nicci Raz and Gusti Yehoshua-Braverman

passed away tragically. It was a great blow to us,” Swartz said of Moyo. “We felt there would be no better way to ensure Moses’ legacy was perpetuated than through the inauguration of a new award, known as the SAFI Moses Moyo award in his memory.”

Swartz thanked Moyo’s relatives, who were

present, saying that he would be remembered as a friend, and an incredible activist.

“He kept all of us on our toes, and wouldn’t let us slouch or slumber,” he said. Mostly, he was a *mensh* (person of integrity), and this is our way of saying that we are grateful for his work, friendship, and efforts.”



# The agent, the diver, and the mysteriously missing Ethiopian Jews

JORDAN MOSHE

Undercover identities, secret agents, and confidential operations are usually the stuff of a James Bond film, but to Daniel Limor, they are reality.

A former commander in the Mossad, Limor is responsible for rescuing thousands of Ethiopians from war ravaged villages via Sudan, and bringing them to freedom in Israel.

Limor’s account of Operation Brothers, the Mossad’s secret scuba operation in Sudan, gripped the audience at the South African Zionist Federation conference from the moment he began speaking on Sunday.

In 1982, Prime Minister Menachem Begin was determined to rescue the long-lost Ethiopian Jewish tribe, Beta Israel. It was Mossad commander Limor who spent four and half years devoted to the mission involving Mossad agents and Israeli navy seals. Limor, the mind behind the mission, recounted how the plan was conceived.

“I was sent to Sudan in 1979, and landed in Khartoum on the day of my wedding anniversary,” he said. “We wanted to help get the Ethiopian Jews out, but it wasn’t about us coming in and just picking them up. It couldn’t have been done unless we worked together – it was about co-operation between Jews, Ethiopians, and Israelis.”

This bond inspired Limor to dub the mission “Operation Brothers”, and he found that the similarities between himself and the Ethiopians was stronger than he might have originally thought.

“I sought out a leader in the Jewish community in an Ethiopian village who had to escape because the security service was going to arrest him for being a Zionist leader. When I met him, we worked together to find a solution to bring the people from Ethiopia into Sudan, and evacuate them from there. We became real brothers.”

“The Ethiopian Jews were Zionist before Theodor Herzl,” he said. “They managed to survive probably for 2 700 years because they believed they were the last Jews in the world, and their dream was to return to Zion. It was their reason for living.”

Their passion for Israel spurred Limor into action. He made undercover trips to Ethiopia to begin making arrangements to extract the Jewish tribe. Their situation was dire, he said. “They would walk during the night, not knowing how far they had to go to reach Israel. They lacked food and water, often arriving barefoot.”

Their plight moved him, and Limor crossed into Ethiopia one night undercover, painting his face black with charcoal, and stealing into communities to meet their leaders to put his case to them. After doing so, he returned to Sudan, and began preparing an elaborate cover for the operation.

“In the beginning, my cover was as a French anthropologist,” he said. “That’s how I got my visa to Sudan – pretending I was studying tribes in the area. We decided to work with the navy through the Red Sea, and looked for appropriate beaches on which the seals could operate.”

To their surprise, the team stumbled upon a disused diving resort built by Italians years before, who had pulled out after their business failed. Said Limor, “They just abandoned it, and it went over to the ministry of tourism. I visited the minister, and declared that I had finished my research, and wanted to make money. Israel gave me cover in the form of a shell company, and I became the manager.”

The operation began in earnest. Not only did the team renovate the complex, but they operated it as a legitimate resort, one where all the staff were actually undercover agents.

“We operated the complex for five years,” said Limor. “It gave us the perfect cover. One of the diving instructors was recruited from

the Mossad, but most of the team were former navy seals. I needed agents who could bring Jews over, but also be legitimate diving instructors.”

With the resort open, Limor and his team actually made a brochure, distributed it, and started to attract tourists. “In our third year, we earned more than \$250 000 (R3.5 million). I asked the office back home if I could give dividends to the team, but that didn’t go so well.”

All the while, they worked tirelessly to extract Ethiopian Jews to Israel across Sudan, and over the Red Sea. The team would cross raging rivers and cover hundreds of miles with groups of Ethiopians, using the cover of darkness as they moved them from refugee camps using a jeep Limor had bought for this purpose.

“When I arrived in Khartoum, I found there was no car rental company. A Mossad agent that can’t rent a car is handicapped. I went to the market, found an old Defender, negotiated with the owner, gave him good money, he gave me the keys, and that was that. He also gave me a piece of wire because the door on the driver side had no handle.”



Limor and the team moved people through Khartoum using the vehicle, often telling officials who stopped them that they were “relocating” them by order of the United Nations. “We always worked at night, and never stopped at checkpoints,” said Limor. “Some of the Ethiopians working with us were caught and tortured for information, because in the camps most refugees were not Jews. Non-Jewish Ethiopians could recognise them, and often went to the security services and reported them. Ethiopian Jews disappeared in numbers overnight.”

Limor developed close relationships with many Sudanese officials, including the deputy-minister of tourism, and the head of camp security, neither of whom ever suspected he was working undercover. He recounted, “The head of security once told me Israelis were stealing Ethiopian Jews to take to Israel, and he didn’t know how they were doing it. He thought I was an anthropologist.”

Operation Brothers ended abruptly in 1984, when an Israeli politician bragged publicly about the mission. The Israelis evacuated the resort

overnight, leaving behind plenty of scuba-diving tourists who would wake the next morning to find that the entire senior staff had deserted them. The operation increased the number of Ethiopian Jews in Israel more than 5 000%, and became the precursor to subsequent daring rescues.

Today, there are more than 130 000 Ethiopian Jews living in Israel. Said Limor, “Most of the immigrants became leaders in society in every branch of Israel. They decided on their own that they wanted to be a part of Israel.” The triumph of Limor’s mission has recently been brought to life on Netflix with the launch of *The Red Sea Diving Resort*, a film inspired by the operation.

Limor is retired, but continues to be actively involved in and beyond Israeli society. He founded the first non-orthodox pre-military school for social leadership in Israel, and engages with remote Jewish communities in South America and Africa.

“As a senior citizen, I can stay at home and watch TV, but what gives me strength are the young Jews I meet and work with. These are the future leaders of Israel.

“I look at young Jews around the world and I see that we are all brothers. Colour is not an issue. If we are united, nothing can stop us.”

## Jewish women taking life by the horns

JORDAN MOSHE

Prejudice against women remains rife even in the 21st century, but some women don’t allow it to stand in their way.

The founder of Israeli Flying Aid (IFA) Gal Lusky; conflict journalist Paula Slier; and the head of the department of diaspora affairs at the World Zionist Organisation, Gusti Yehoshua-Braverman, all of whom have gone where angels fear to tread, shared their remarkable exploits and affirmed their Jewish identity at the South African Zionist Federation conference on Sunday morning.

“What choice did I have?” says Lusky. “I had to do it.” Her words, although in reference to her aid work, were equally applicable to her fellow speakers.

Businesswoman Dina Diamond co-ordinated the discussion about what drives these women, and why they chose the paths of humanitarian aid, journalism, and Zionist activism respectively.

Slier says it was her Jewish identity that launched her career. “Being Jewish and wanting to change the world is what motivated me to become a journalist,” she said.

“I attended Waverley Girls High. Sometimes I think that because I attended a school where there were only three Jewish girls, it made me very Jewish.” Reporting behind enemy lines has brought her into contact with hundreds of people, many of whom wouldn’t take too kindly to learning of her Jewish identity.

With the proliferation of information over the internet, it has become increasingly difficult to keep personal information confidential. Slier says she feels increasingly vulnerable as a journalist today. “Sometimes I feel it’s just a matter of time before something happens to me, and at other times, I think it’s down to fate. If I didn’t believe in fate, I’d feel very scared.”

Lusky’s refusal to hate set her upon the path of humanitarian aid. She founded her organisation after her brother was badly wounded in Lebanon during army service. At the time, she bargained with G-d that if her brother recovered, she would do something to help others receive the medical support that he did.

“Nobody asks permission to kill, we don’t ask permission to save lives,” says Lusky. “I could choose to feel hatred or compassion, and although the latter is harder, it achieves far more. Isaiah said that one needs to commit oneself to taking up the plight of the oppressed, and it is a duty to bring relief to people.”

Like Slier, Lusky is a proud Jew and Israeli, and though she often works undercover, she believes that she shows people Jewish values when she carries out her work.

“When we help people, they see who we really are without knowing it. We are given the chance to ensure that ‘never again’ is something we can do as Jews. No one was there for us during the holocaust, but we can be there for others today.”

Lusky delivers aid to whoever needs it – from Syria to Haiti and everywhere in between – if they are victims of war or natural disaster. These include countries that don’t have diplomatic ties with or are hostile

to Israel. It also includes places where other aid agencies have pulled out for safety or diplomatic reasons. “Whether they love or hate Israel, we still have a command to save lives,” she says.

Like Lusky and Slier, Yehoshua-Braverman frequently journeys into hostile territory, but her battleground is words and ideas. “My battle is to engage people in dialogue about Israel,” she says. “I fight for a better future for Israel that will secure a better future for Jews around the world.”

Yehoshua-Braverman’s theatre of war extends into spaces within and without the Jewish community. Aside from promoting Israel and Judaism among people of other faiths and political persuasions, she engages with Jews from across the spectrum about what it means to be Jewish.

“Often I present myself as a Jew and Israeli by choice,” she says. “Being raised in a Jewish home in Israel, I initially assumed all Jews and all Israelis were the same. But, there is a spectrum of both, and this means that we need to ask what it means to be a Jew in a Jewish state. It’s my challenge to make more people conscious about what that means, wherever they live, and no matter how religious they are.”

Because this spectrum is so broad, Yehoshua-Braverman says she doesn’t seek to educate people, but to engage with them.

“I can’t educate people who live a different reality, and have different views,” she says. “Their [experience] is as valid as mine. I need to engage people in discussion because they come from a different perspective, facing the reality of the diaspora or Israel, which is not the same.

“Israel isn’t a perfect state. No country is, but I’m proud of it.”

Yehoshua-Braverman, Slier, and Lusky all agree



Dina Diamond, Gusti Yehoshua-Braverman, and Paula Slier

that representing Israel is increasingly challenging.

Says Slier, “Future wars in Israel will not necessarily be fought on the battleground, but in the media. It’s no longer just about whose army will win, but whose story.”

With ongoing instability in the Middle-East, Slier says her main goal is to stay alive in coming years, and to become more involved in promoting Israel in the media. She says her job as a foreign correspondent might cease to exist in the next 10 to 15 years, as news will go online, meaning people will need to redefine their roles in the profession.

These three heroines remain committed to one aim: giving a human face to the Jewish state and its people, within and without.

Says Slier, “So often, I want to reach across the table, just hold someone’s hand and say, ‘You hate Israel so much, yet here I am sitting as a Jew, and there’s no difference between us.’ At that level, we can make changes, because on a human level, we are the same.”



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# In turbulent Middle East, Israel’s enemies are now its friends

JORDAN MOSHE

The Middle East has changed dramatically over the past decade, and the facts which were once certain are today no longer relevant.

The Arab Spring, regional conflicts, and the rise of extremism are among the factors that account for the shifts witnessed in recent years, but the situation remains highly changeable.

So said four experts involved with the country: Nir Boms, Middle East expert and analyst; Israeli Ambassador Lior Keinan; Jewish Agency head Isaac Herzog; and Ron Brummer, the executive director of operations at Israel’s ministry of strategic affairs.

They weighed in on Israel’s status quo in a panel discussion held at the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) conference on Sunday morning. Moderated by political analyst Jamie Mithi, the panel fleshed out the current realities of the Middle East, and explored the potential future of the Jewish state in an uncertain political climate.

“Ten years ago, terms such as Brexit and identity politics didn’t exist,” said Boms. “They weren’t issues. However, with their

introduction into the political space along with several others, the landscape has changed, and every stable constant which once existed is no more. We are in a new political era. The Middle East is a prime example.”

Keinan agreed, saying that the Middle East was engaged in a difficult struggle. “Moderates are up against extremists, and Israel is caught squarely in the middle,” he said.

It’s not about Israel anymore, though, said Keinan. Regional blocs are forming alliances along new lines, working together in an alignment of interests to regain stability in the region. Arab countries are turning to Israel in the stand-off against Iran, affirming Israel’s role as a key power in the region.

“Israel is seen as less of a problem, and more of a solution in the Middle East of today,” said Keinan. “The Arab states want to address the problems on their hands, and because Israel is a major presence, they are forming strategic ties with it to make progress.”

Herzog agreed, dubbing the Middle East a “rogue region” in which no country was safe. “There is no mercy for the weak,” he said. “The region has changed,



Photos: Jason Crouse

The four panellists: Isaac Herzog, Ambassador Lior Keinan, Ron Brummer, and Nir Boms

and new players are stepping up to confront reality.” He said that the United Arab Emirates, along with its major ally, Saudi Arabia, had emerged as a key player in confronting Iran, and had identified Israel as a fitting partner.

“There is definitely a desire to move towards broader stability,” he said. “The Arab states see in Israel a powerful ally, and even those states which were once enemies are reaching out to establish ties. One example is Egypt, which has become Israel’s partner in combatting terrorism.

“More players are going to emerge as we progress, and we need to be aware of who is playing the game.”

This new reality is a boon to Israel, affording it unique opportunities to forge connections which were never possible before. “Israel is in its best time for establishing diplomatic ties,” said Brummer. Unfortunately, the same is not true at grassroots level. This is where the hearts and minds of people have fallen prey to anti-Israel rhetoric. Said Brummer, “In the eyes of many people, Israel is

not as good as it used to be. As good as its diplomatic ties are, liberal progressives on the ground are exposed to what [American politician] Ilhan Omar and others like her have to say about Israel, and therefore develop a negative perception.

“Youngsters are being exposed to a different narrative through social media and YouTube. Ten years ago, this would have been unheard of, but today it’s a real problem, and it’s where we need to invest the most effort.”

The key is to expose the untold story of groups such as the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. Said Brummer, “People believe that BDS fights for the rights of oppressed people. The untold truth is that it is, in fact, a hate campaign which denies the existence of the Jewish state, is involved with terror organisations, and is actually nothing more than a new form of anti-Semitism. This needs to be repeated again and again until the true face of BDS is unmasked for all to see.”

Both in Israel and beyond, those who support the Jewish state need to maximise their networks, and connect with people who can share the truth about Israel, and promote its ties to other countries.

On a governmental level, Herzog believes the election of Boris Johnson as British prime minister is advantageous for Israel, but his prioritisation of Brexit means that Israel is not at the top of his list. As for the proposed peace plan of United States President Donald Trump, Herzog seemed doubtful about its implementation.

Boms said countries like the US and United Kingdom were simply too busy with their own domestic issues to direct their attention towards Israel and the Middle East. “The ultimate success of the stand-off in the Middle East depends on buy-in from regional players themselves. The main challenge in the region is to bring moderates together, and for countries in the Middle East to muster forces themselves, and take the lead.

“The rest of the world is just too busy. It’s up to us to do something. Our partners are looking for solutions to the Middle East’s problems, and we need to get involved.”

## Israel must support embattled SA Jewry, says Jewish Agency chair

JORDAN MOSHE

South African Jewry has been unwavering in its support for the state of Israel, be it through raising funds or defending its right to exist. The Jewish state is today a force to be reckoned with thanks to this commitment, and it’s therefore Israel’s responsibility to return the favour and lend support to diaspora Jewry, especially South Africa.

So said Isaac Herzog, the chairperson of the executive of the Jewish Agency, and the former leader of Israel’s opposition Labour Party. Herzog was keynote speaker at the 49th annual conference of the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) last Saturday night.

Herzog’s own family has had a close connection to South Africa over time. “From my maternal side, my great grandfather was a pioneer who came to the dry swamps in Hadera, but during a huge famine at the beginning of the 20th century, he left his family for South Africa with his brother to participate in the Boer War by opening a bakery. They collected money, and returned to Israel,” Herzog said.

Herzog’s mother was born in Egypt, and when Rommel approached during the course of World War II, she and her family came to Johannesburg for two years. “She studied at Wits [the University of the Witwatersrand] where she was the only woman in her class,” said Herzog. “South Africa gave them shelter, as it did to many Jews.

Additionally, Herzog’s late grandfather and the former chief rabbi of Israel, Yitzhak HaLevi Herzog, travelled via South Africa, and met the Jewish community on his way back to Israel after meeting then American President Theodore Roosevelt. His late father visited the country with Ben-Gurion in the 1960s and again in the 1970s, as did his uncle as director general of the prime minister’s office. Herzog even claims South African-born diplomat Abba Eban as an uncle, mentioning the important role he played in the community here.

“I feel at home here representing these

generations, who had their own strong connection to the Jewish community of South Africa,” he said.

Moving on to the broader connections between Israel and South Africa, Herzog said that Israel’s security was no longer only a domestic challenge, but an international one.

“A coalition led by Iran against Israel on one side, and an alignment of states against Iran on the other is the new reality in the Middle East. The United States, Russia, Turkey, and



other foreign countries are entering the game as well. This has an impact on the entire world, and it’s therefore important that the case for Israel is strong everywhere.”

This reality has an impact on the broader Jewish population beyond Israel. Said Herzog, “The challenges are intertwined. The situation in Israel is part of a bigger picture, which is that of the greater Jewish people. For the first

time in years, Jewish people are being targeted and killed for being Jewish. In addition, there are internal problems along with the external: questions about Israel’s policies, questions about the identity of a Jew, issues concerning Zionism, problems caused by anti-Semitism and its language of ignorance and hate. Jewish communities today are faced with dozens of new situations.”

The reality is no different in South Africa, he said, where the Jewish community is often at the frontier of many of these problems because of our geopolitical reality.

“You face the same problems as other communities, and these are in addition to your own local concerns. Your community leadership and the SAZF do incredible work. You also have incredible young leaders here. Despite all your challenges, you continue to overcome.

“Many of your expatriates are leaders all over the world. One of the greatest leaders of our era, whose picture I see every day in my office, was Mendel Kaplan. Your community has contributed substantially to the well-being of Jews, and has strengthened Israel in every sphere of life. You are one of the stones in the wall of Israel.”

However, South African Jewry can’t do it alone, Herzog said. “You need your allies and partners. Israel must extend its hand to your community. We are here to develop projects with your community. I’m happy to lead a delegation here, and together with the head of our mission here, Liat Amar, *shlichim* and other emissaries, we are adamant in our desire to strengthen and empower this community.”

He stressed the need for new partnerships, projects, and innovative ideas, saying that together, Israel and the community of South Africa could meet the challenges of the day.

“We must discuss how we will improve the political and strategic relationship between Israel and South Africa as well as the standing of the Jewish community here. We need to enable and sustain Jews to practice their Judaism and Zionism with pride and without fear throughout the country.”



# Holocaust survivor portraits speak volumes

MIRAH LANGER

“Don’t be fooled by the smiles.” This is the stark observation photographer Julian Pokroy makes about the depth of emotion behind the photographic portraits he has captured of a number of Holocaust survivors in Johannesburg.

“I see the pain behind your eyes,” Pokroy told Dutch survivor Don Krausz, who was in attendance at the launch event, “and I pay tribute to it.”

Krausz shared his story at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC) in Forest Town during a recent event reflecting on his photographic exhibition, “Portraits of Holocaust Survivors in Johannesburg”.

The exhibition, which will run until 29 September, displays the portraits of 29 survivors. Three more survivors have recently been photographed, and their portraits will be added to the exhibition shortly. The photographs were taken over a number of years starting in 2013. Since then, eleven of the participants have died.

In fact, Pokroy, an attorney, said this was a key motivation for his work. “[The survivors] are not going to be with us in perpetuity. We have to preserve the memory not just of who perished, but who survived.”

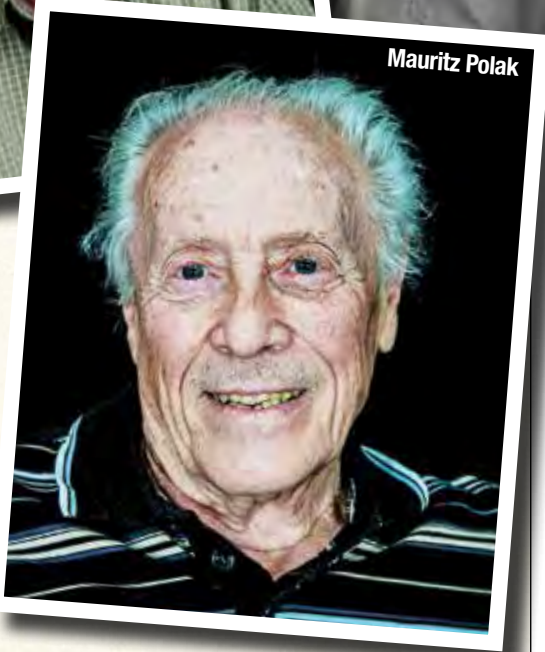
Pokroy said his photographic projects were guided by his “incredibly inquisitive and enquiring mind”, a quality he has had since childhood.

His association with the JHGC was initially as a volunteer photographer. When he started photographing survivors at functions, he began to conceive of creating a series of formal studio portraits of them. “It has been a road of passion as a photographer, and an emotional road of learning more about the Holocaust. This project has taken me down the road of awareness of a bleak history, and the path of revelation.”

Pokroy said that when he started the project, the survivors, many of whom had not yet given testimony about their experiences or spoken about them, were seemingly reluctant. Yet, slowly, trust emerged.

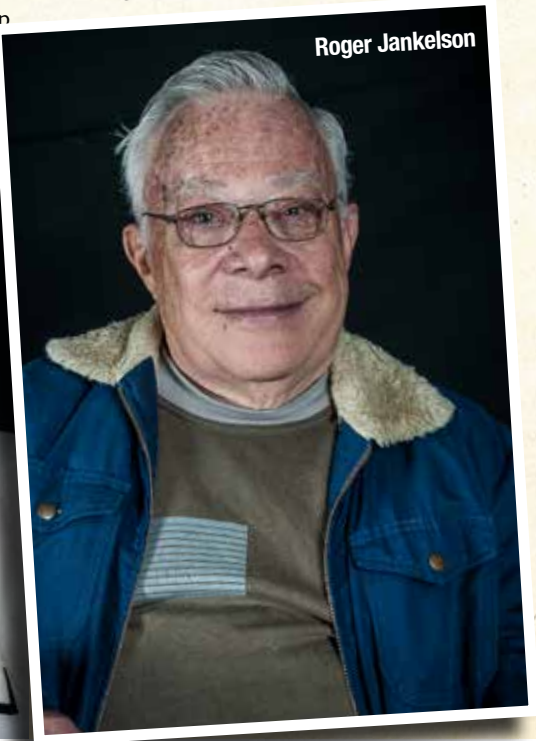
“As I started doing the photographs, a lot more people started opening up to me. Now, every month or two, I’m finding new stories.”

Pokroy said he chose a particular look for the photographs. “I chose a black backdro



because it’s a bleak time in history. I also used subtle lighting to get that message across.”

He said the experience of photographing survivors was life-changing. “I’ve got to know all of the survivors. It’s been a privilege and an honour.”



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# Putting heart and soul into helping others

JORDAN MOSHE

Where others see deprivation, Phillip Shapiro sees the opportunity to uplift and inspire. His commitment to seeing others thrive is expressed in Build the Future, a unique project which brings hope to hundreds of people daily.

“If you’re doing something for others, you need to put your heart into it,” Shapiro says. “When you commit yourself completely, you’re not only making a difference, but inspiring others to do the same in whatever way they can.”

Shapiro, 44, has been involved in community work for the past two decades, and founded Build the Future in 2006. Together with his partner, Clive Wetherill, he has successfully launched a preschool and combined feeding scheme in Kya Sands, as well as an after-school feeding scheme in Motsoaledi in Soweto.

Beyond providing more than 500 meals daily, the organisation uplifts these areas with yoga classes, music, and ongoing engagement with volunteers, all geared towards improving the lives of hundreds of people.

Shapiro’s passion for helping others blossomed at the age of 17. “Friends invited me to join them in helping at a soup kitchen in Alexandra. I was an only child, and grew up with everything I needed. When I arrived in Alex and saw how people lived, and how much they needed, I experienced my turning point. I went home, opened my cupboard, and took out enough clothes to fill two refuse bags. I had to do something to help.”

He went on to involve himself in various development and charity projects, frequently working with American volunteers who visited South Africa for the sole purpose of helping others. It was while working with volunteers in Kya Sands in 2011 that Shapiro felt a longer term and sustainable project was required in the area to make a lasting impact.

“We needed something more permanent,” he says. “The organisation heading up efforts in the area pulled out, and I felt something long lasting should take its place. I met a landowner who happened to have vacant space available, and had actually been waiting for an opportunity to put it to charitable use. He told me how badly the area needed such a project, and that I was the person he had been waiting for.”

Although he had no financial support for the project at the time, Shapiro says he was determined to make it work, and invested money of his own in the undertaking. “If you run your own business and don’t invest your own money in it, your heart isn’t in it either,” he says. “I saw a need, and had to fill it, hoping funds would be found soon enough to ensure the project could continue.”

What began as a single rented shipping container in Kya Sands soon grew into a preschool, library, and feeding scheme. The success was replicated in Motsoaledi,



Phillip Shapiro

Soweto, with the creation of an after-school feeding scheme run from a small kitchen behind the Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital with only two staff members. Ninety percent of those who rely on the scheme are children, and Shapiro strives to reach as many as possible.

Beyond the initiatives in Gauteng, Build the Future also established a school in KwaZulu-Natal three years ago, having identified a need in rural Ndwedwe about 45 minutes from Ballito. The school accommodates 45 children, and is the first preschool in the area. Additionally, Shapiro’s organisation has adopted an existent primary school, providing meals and other resources.

All this is accomplished in spite of the fact that Build the Future has never had a full-time fundraiser. Shapiro says that much of the funding for his work comes from the United States, as does most of the volunteers who assist. He works closely with donors and contacts abroad, co-ordinating volunteer visits to South Africa that typically last a week.

volunteers find it difficult to make time to become involved. “It’s actually difficult to get South Africans involved. Those who want to get involved often don’t have time in the week. Some of the areas in which we work have a negative reputation, and people are fearful. Some are just apathetic. I’d love to see more locals get involved.”

He says a few local organisations have supported the project, among them Chabad House’s Miracle Drive, which sponsored half of the library in Kya Sands. However, Shapiro urges more people to commit themselves to projects like this, and make a tangible difference wherever they can.

“It’s not easy to support a project like ours,” he admits. “There are roughly 280 000 charities in South Africa in need of support and funding, making the US contribution important.

“That doesn’t mean we mustn’t do our best here. I want to provide the youth of our country with the resources they need now so that they

can become part of the solution to South Africa’s problems in the future. We have our issues here, and if you can identify a problem, you have the responsibility to address it instead of complaining about it.”

Shapiro concludes that while we can’t help everyone, we must do what we can for those around us. “Judaism teaches that if you save one life, you’ve saved a world,” he says. “You need to find the place where you’re passionate about making a difference, and do it. It’s that simple.”



Volunteers building the school in KZN

## Farewell to a peri-peri giant who made people smile

ANTONY SEEFF

When you sit down for your next Nando’s meal, you might wonder how a Mozambican peri-peri flavour became such an iconic South African flavour. And as you savour it, you’d have Max Solomon Brozin’s love for chilli and Mozambique to thank. Max was instrumental in building this global brand to what it is today.

Brozin was loved and respected by all who knew him. When he spoke to you, you felt you were the only one in the room, and couldn’t help leaving a chat with him with a smile on your face.

Sadly, there are fewer smiles this week as he passed away on 29 July, at 89 years old.

Brozin was born in Middelburg in 1930. He grew up in a traditional Jewish household, the second eldest of six siblings. Middelburg had a large Jewish community at that stage, and the Brozin family, led by Brozin’s parents, Nochum and Rosy, played an integral part in it.

Even though Brozin moved to Johannesburg when his children were young, Middelburg was always in his blood, and he even held the post of deputy mayor of the town (rumour has it he was only deputy mayor because they wouldn’t allow a Jew to be mayor).

A chartered accountant and astute businessman, Brozin relished the corporate world. And, although he would interrogate each number in a company’s financials, if he liked the people who ran the business, he would do business with them, and none of the rest mattered.



Max Brozin with his great-granddaughter Sara Seeff

businesses, Nando’s and Brimstone. He was always around to act as a sounding board or offer advice, and worked side-by-side with global business leaders in his life.

When he wasn’t devouring a set of company financials or investing in a hot new Israeli start-up, Brozin could often be found in the kitchen cooking some kippers and eggs, preparing sashimi, or making his famous marinated chillis (which no-one besides him could seem to handle).

Always active, he became an avid runner in his 40s, completing seven Comrade Marathons (once even running while having a gout attack). In later years, he chose to spend time at the gym, spinning or lifting weights. You’d struggle to find many other great-grandparents who exercised as much as Brozin did.

A family man through and through, Brozin, or “Oupa” as he was affectionately known, would relish the time he spent with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Family was the most important aspect of his life, and he put his commitment to family above all else.

Whether it was singing and dancing to *La Bamba*, taking his great-grandchildren to feed the fish, or just sitting and having a *le’chaim* (toast) in “Oupa’s corner”, Oupa was always a larger-than-life force in his family’s lives.

Having two daughters living in California didn’t stop him from being just as close to them and their families, and Brozin and his wife, Vera, spent many happy months in America over the years. Even though he was the patriarch at the head of the Brozin family, he was a confidante to each of his family members as well. He was also a hopeless romantic, and was forever obsessed with Vera, his devoted partner of 64 years.

He had a love for *Yiddishkeit* (Jewish life and customs), and was a standard fixture sitting near the *Aron Kodesh* (holy ark) dispensing sweets to his great-grandchildren at Chabad Illovo, where he was a founding member. Judaism for him was a passion, not a chore, and he was often found sitting with various rabbonim or reading the weekly *parsha* (portion) quietly in his corner.

He was proud to be South African, and whether it be following South African sports or politics, he always had his finger on the pulse of the country. One of his special places in South Africa was Plettenberg Bay, and if you were in Plett at any stage in the past 50 years, you probably saw Brozin suntanning with his family on Robberg Beach.

Israel was also always close to his heart, and he realised his lifelong Zionist ambitions when he and Vera made aliyah a few years ago.

Although he was incredibly charitable, the humble, dignifying way in which he gave was inspirational. He saw it as a *brocha* (blessing) to be able to help, and was often heard thanking charities for the honour of being able to give to them.

His dignifying demeanour didn’t stop there though, and whether you were the chief executive or the tea lady, he showed the utmost respect for every human being he dealt with.

Brozin is mourned and already dearly missed by his devoted wife, siblings, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and all who knew him and were touched by him.

• Antony Seeff is married to Max Brozin’s granddaughter, Justine.



# Gripping South African novel poised for TV series

TALI FEINBERG

You’ve watched Israeli television series *Fauda*, *Shtisel* and *When Heroes Fly*, and soon you may be watching one based on the book *Train In the Distance* by ex-South African Larry Butchins.

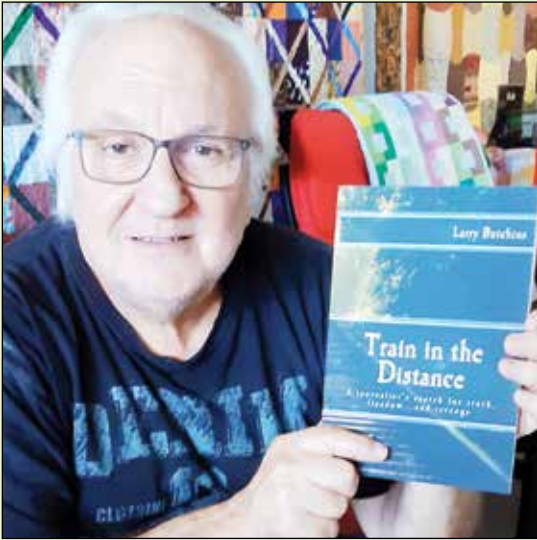
Butchins, who lives in Israel, and Main Man Films of Denver, Colorado, have signed an agreement to collaborate in the development of a television series based on Butchins’ novel.

The book is based on Butchins’ harrowing true-life experiences. These included being an anti-apartheid journalist in the 1970s and 1980s, and losing two family members in the Dizengoff Center suicide bombing in the 1990s. The latter occurred soon after he made aliyah.

“I’m part of a forum for writers, producers, screenwriters, and people in the media industry. I was approached by Art Thomas, a producer and media consultant in Colorado, who said my book has real potential to be turned into a TV series or film.”

Thomas is currently pitching it to various players in the industry. “Larry’s story is gripping and poignant. Events based on his personal experiences in the robust world of newsroom journalism make for an action-packed drama. It specifically raises issues that have generally received very little attention, namely the role of white victims of apartheid,” says Thomas.

“This is our first collaboration with a writer from Israel, which is fast becoming a source of internationally-acclaimed TV series and movies. I’m excited to collaborate on this project, and help identify the talents necessary to put *Train in the Distance* in front of audiences everywhere.”



Larry Butchins with his book *Train in the Distance*

Butchins says it will be a while until we see the series on our screens as it is a huge project, “almost like building a city. We need to build the foundations, and get the funding, but we are positive that we will get there.”

Butchins describes the story as action genre, based on reality and readers have described it as addictive. “It’s a fictionalised version of my experiences as a journalist in South Africa at the *Natal Mercury* and *Sunday Tribune*. Many of the characters are based on real people in history, like Ahmed Timol, the activist who was pushed out the window while in prison. Many characters are an amalgamation of a number of people.

“The first section is called ‘Years of struggle’, and the second section covers real events like the capture of Saddam Hussein and the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. After the Dizengoff Center suicide bombing, it becomes a story of the main character being out for revenge.”

Butchins’ mother-in-law, Sylvia Bernstein (74), and his sister-in-law, Gail Belkin (48), were killed in the Dizengoff Center suicide bombing. On 4 March 1996, a bomber detonated his explosive belt on the fourth white stripe of the zebra crossing at the intersection of King George and Dizengoff Streets in downtown Tel Aviv.

Gail was born in Zimbabwe, and made aliyah from Durban in 1987. Her elder daughter was due to be married in two weeks, and on that day, she had accompanied her to fit her wedding dress. Gail had remarried a year before the tragedy. Sylvia was born in Lithuania, and emigrated to South Africa and then Zimbabwe as a young girl. In her later years, she lived in Johannesburg, where she worked for the Union of Jewish Women. She made aliyah in 1994, and lived with her younger daughter in Hod Hasharon.

Thirteen people were killed in total, including five children. It was the eve of Purim, and the youngsters had come to Tel Aviv to celebrate the holiday.

Butchins says the unfathomable loss shaped the life of himself and his wife, Marlyn, who has created a memorial quilt in honour of the victims.

“It’s one of those flattening, shattering life events that leaves you completely bereft and totally at a loss to understand. Even 23 years later, it’s still with us every single day. But it also gave us perspective, and we have always been against violence.

“In spite of the fact that it obviously deeply affected us all, we never put any limitations or restrictions on our kids. We never said, ‘Don’t go to Tel Aviv. Don’t come home late.’ That’s not to say that we weren’t often sitting with our

hearts in our mouths at 02:00, waiting for them to come home.”

For those who want to write a book, Butchins’ advice is to, “Just start. It’s probably the loneliest thing you can do as you are baring your soul to the world. The most important thing for any type of book is to make sure that everything is credible. Everything you write must move the story forward. As Robert Frost said, ‘No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader; no surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader.’ In other words, writing is organic. It should never be mechanical; it must come from the deepest level of emotion if it’s to have any impact.”

Letters

JEWISH TOMB RAIDER CAUSES ANGER AND SORROW

The article “Tomb raider caught out in Cape cemetery” in the 26 July edition of the *SA Jewish Report* elicited emotions of sorrow and anger that a fellow Jewish stonemason could vandalise and desecrate graves for his personal financial gain.

A cemetery is a holy place. As a cantor and stonemason, I have the honour and privilege of manufacturing tombstones in respect of the deceased who have passed on to the next world.

First and foremost, I consider it a great *mitzvah* (good deed) to carry out this special holy work. I have been informed by families, for whom I have made tombstones over the past decade, that the *matzevah* (tombstone) gives them much comfort and peace when they visit their relatives at our Jewish cemeteries in Cape Town.

I trust that this will never ever happen in the future, and that our loved ones may rest *b'shalom* in peace. – **Ian Camissar, Cape Town**

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1939 = R10 000 Up to R30 000



**30**  
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1931 = R10 000 Up to R50 000



# Breaking the silence around peri-natal distress

LAUREN SHAPIRO

It’s not something most people want to talk about. In general, mental illness is still a taboo topic in many circles, but depression during pregnancy – supposed to be one of the biggest blessings and happiest life events – is even more unmentionable.

Until now, it’s been swept so far under the carpet, most people weren’t even aware it was possible. Well, let me tell you, it’s a thing.

What used to be called post-natal depression is now being termed peri-natal distress (PND), as psychiatrists recognise that it can occur during and after pregnancy as either depression or debilitating anxiety.

I didn’t know that when, during the first trimester of my third planned and prayed-for pregnancy, I found myself sinking into a pit of despair that threatened to consume me.

I’d been through pregnancy twice before, and loved every minute of it. I’d glowed and radiated, whiling away the nine months tenderly polishing my growing bump with organic coconut oil and singing to it.

So, I was completely unprepared for what came next. Joy bled out of my life. Fear took its place. I cried constantly, and suffered severe panic attacks.

I told myself it would pass. My psychologist told me it would pass. But instead of improving, it got worse. I realised something was very, very wrong, but I didn’t know what to do about it. One hospitalisation, two medical professionals, many months of therapy, and several psychiatric drugs later, mercifully I made it out the other side.

Most people don’t speak about PND, and so it continues to tear apart lives and families across our nation. One in three families is affected by PND in South Africa, according to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG).



Lauren Shapiro

That translates to about 50 000 women a year.

I tried to talk to my family and friends about what I went through, but how could they understand? How could I explain it? So I decided to write a book, immersing readers in my journey through the illness from pre-pregnancy to full recovery.

It’s an intensely personal story, so I was nervous of the potential social and professional consequences. As I was finishing the first draft, I happened to join a book club. None of us knew each other very well, so at the first meeting, we introduced ourselves.

“I’m Lauren, I have three kids, I’m a journalist, and I’m writing a book.” Of course, they wanted to know what it was about. “It’s about my experience of PND,” I responded with false confidence. It’s hard to put that out there about yourself, especially to virtual strangers. There was an awkward silence, then one lady confided, “I had that too.”

“That’s the thing,” I said, capitalising on her honesty. “It’s actually so common, but no one likes to talk about it. And if we don’t talk about it, we can’t support each other. Statistically,” I continued, doing a rough head-count around the room, “there should be at least one more of you who’s suffered from it.” Slowly, silently, not one but two other hands went up. It made me realise I had to see the project through.

The writing process was arduous, though I was able to draw on the journals I kept during my illness. I’m blessed with a supportive spouse who ran the breakfast shift, so I could write from 05:00 until I took the kids to school at 07:00 (after which my “real” workday began). While sometimes it felt cathartic, it was difficult to revisit that harrowing time.

Nearly a year later, once I had a complete(ish) draft, I nervously shared it with a few friends and family, who gave invaluable feedback. I approached SADAG, who supplemented the manuscript with professional advice to help readers recognise and address PND. I edited it about six times before mustering the courage to submit it to publishers. Yup, me and JK Rowling – rejected or ignored by everyone.

After nursing my ego, and budgeting for a leap of faith, I found a self-publisher to guide me through a modest print-run. It’s been well received, and today, I am totally involved in raising awareness of this under-diagnosed but highly treatable illness. I’ve appeared in print, online, on radio and television, given talks and webinars, and participated in conferences, festivals, and advocacy events.

My mission statement was that if the book started even one conversation that led to helping someone conquer PND, then I would have achieved what I set out to do.

But I’m not stopping there.

• *Through the Window: How I Beat PND* is available from [www.laurenshapiro.co.za/books](http://www.laurenshapiro.co.za/books) and on Amazon Kindle.

# Cycalive riders accelerate into the future

SUZANNE BELLING

Siphiwe Mngadi was one of the Grade 11 cyclists from Pace Commercial Secondary School in Soweto who rode Cycalive in 2013.

Today, he refers to it as being “the most incredible week of my life”, and one that changed the course of his life.

In 2013, he joined Torah Academy dean and Great Park Shul Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, the originator of Cycalive, and other cyclists from Pace, Moletsane High School (also in Soweto), and Beth Shemesh in Israel. Together, they rode the 700km annual relay cycle ride from Johannesburg to Durban in a mammoth charitable effort.

It was while traversing the back roads to their destination that the charismatic Mngadi was inspired by those he met – people different from his fairly alienated township upbringing – to become a leader and apply himself to achieve.

“Cycalive operates in the spirit of togetherness and humanity,” says Mngadi. “Based on our differences, we are united on a mission,” he told people at the launch of this year’s Cycalive last Sunday morning, 28 July.

“When I cycled to Durban, it was [to realise] a vision. My legs were giving up, but I didn’t.” He said he was motivated by “a deep desire and hunger for education”.



It was this hunger that led him to getting a position soon after his initial Cycalive with South Africa’s Life Skillz Development Programme. The programme, Mngadi says, helps young people to become trained facilitators, and use their skills to educate, mobilise, and stop the spread of HIV/Aids in schools around Soweto using soccer as a tool.

By 2015, Mngadi had reached out to more than 1 000 pupils around Soweto, conducting life-skills sessions in schools.

In the same year, he got a coaching licence from the South African Football Association, as well as a facilitator licence from the Sports Science Institute of South Africa. He was later promoted to the position of community responses programme facilitator.

He also joined the Clinix Health Group as its brand ambassador.

In recognition of his achievements, Mngadi was last week awarded a bursary by Boston City Campus and



Business College to further his studies.

Mngadi has done a lot of work to help young people find their path. And, he is certainly not the only young man who has been given a springboard to a successful future through one week on Cycalive.

As the 22nd Cycalive team took off on Sunday, Mngadi accepted the responsibility of finding other Cycalive alumni who have succeeded following the tour.

This year, the cycle challenge was joined by young cyclists from Orange Farm through Afrika Tikfun.

Cycalive left for Durban from the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory in Houghton. The cyclists were escorted out of Johannesburg by Steelwings and Rolling Thunder on their Harley Davidsons, and the Johannesburg Metro Police Department.

En route to Durban, they visited Newcastle Hospital, and the Ethembeni School in Hillcrest, KwaZulu-Natal for students with disabilities, as well as various rural schools along the way, where they distributed care packages, including stationery and refreshments for patients and students.

The cyclists arrived in Durban on Thursday to a welcome from civic dignitaries and community leaders.

Cycalive aims to build bridges and form bonds among young South Africans, inspire *ubuntu* (compassion and humanity), and optimism for the future of South Africa. It also raises funds for much-needed education projects, highlights the importance of road safety – especially for cyclists – and encourages leadership, personal challenge, and self-confidence.

Torah Academy and Cycalive were recognised earlier this year by being awarded the Gauteng Premier’s Award for promoting racial integration through sports and recreation.



Photos: Ilan Ossendryver

# Beit Luria – Joburg’s newest progressive congregation

Beit Luria Shul in the Willows Estate in Johannesburg has joined the South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ), becoming the youngest and newest progressive congregation in southern Africa.

The shul started in 2016 following encouragement from many members of the community, who indicated that they were looking for an alternative service and believed it was time for a Johannesburg shul to be led by a female rabbi.

At first, services were held at the home of Rabbi Julia Margolis, her husband, Greg, and their two daughters, but the community grew rapidly. From Kabbalat Shabbat services, to weddings, Bar/Batmitzvahs, baby namings,



Beit Luria Shul

study discussions, and more, the rabbi’s home simply couldn’t accommodate the number of the people, so the shul eventually moved into the beautiful clubhouse of the estate.

Beit Luria holds two Friday evening services a month, and a Shabbat Shaharit service. Its congregants have been increasing slowly but steadily over the past year, and the community now numbers

about 40-50 people, with about 25 members attending each service.

The shul looks forward to working with the SAUPJ to advance and promote the traditions and values of progressive Judaism within our community, and by extension, our country and the worldwide movement.



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\*Cars.co.za, June 2019



# Working through our baggage in the attic

The Shabbat minyan at 07:30 generally attracts a strange blend of insomniacs. These include young parents who might as well go to shul because they have been up since 05:00, and a regular smattering of people who want to finish their prayers by 09:00 so that they can walk to another synagogue.

Those it generally doesn't attract, is a visiting group from the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer questioning) community.

Which is what made this past Shabbat so unique. Following the suicide of Adam Seef a few weeks ago, I devoted my column in the *SA Jewish Report* to the homophobia of some within the orthodox community. The article was terribly received by a few, who went to some lengths to intimidate me, and well received by others.

Rabbi Gabi Bookatz of Waverley Shul was encouraged by the article to deal with homophobia from the pulpit, and Rabbi Jonathan Glass of the Mizrahi early minyan chose to address it in a panel discussion.

The panel initially didn't include representation

from the LGBTQ+ community. Understandably, they weren't comfortable with being "spoken about" rather than spoken to. Rabbi Glass immediately corrected this, and invited Professor David Bilchitz to contribute.

The initial discomfort was palpable. It dissipated when Glass initiated the conversation. He began with two apologies: first, for his initial mistake of not inviting representation from the LGBTQ+ community, and second, for the mistakes he and other panellists were likely to make in the course of the discussion.

He explained that terminology and past socialisation would probably lead to the use of incorrect and possibly offensive comments. He assured the more than 100 people present that the intention and goal was positive, and that this was the first step towards acceptance.

I shared my thoughts, including the story by novelist Shalom Auslander, who, his book, *Hope*, tells the story of a man who feels tremendously burdened by the past. And so, he finds a small town in America where there is no history at all. He further buys a farmhouse that has even less history.

It's only after moving in that he hears noises in

the attic. It's a long story, but (spoiler alert), he finds none other than Anne Frank living up there. She has survived the war, and is trying to write a sequel to her famous biography. Not an easy task considering how the first book ended.

I told this story because I believe that we all have an Anne Frank in our attic. We have grown up in an environment that was openly racist and homophobic. We might cognitively know better, but it will take a tremendous amount of work to rid ourselves of our ingrained prejudice. Like the protagonist, we won't be able to out-run it and find a place that has no history.

I was followed by Professor Bilchitz, who took time to explain the terminology and principles that are required in order to have meaningful dialogue.

Bilchitz grew up in the community, and was part of Bnei Akiva. What followed was an honest and authentic account of his journey. Particularly powerful for me was the statement that his story and that of others in the LGBTQ+ community could have ended the same way as Adam Seef's did.

Rabbi Ilan Raanan spoke about education and acceptance, and Mandy Magid, a clinical psychologist



## INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman

in private practice, gave her perspective. A number of people made powerful, important, and brave statements.

It wasn't easy for anyone. For a community raised and conditioned not to speak of homosexuality, the fact that the conversation was happening in this space might have been particularly uncomfortable.

And, for members of the LGBTQ+ community, who might have felt ostracised by the people they were engaging with, I imagine it must have been particularly hard.

But everyone survived. And, though no one believes "our job here is done", most felt a very important first step had been taken.

The fact that an orthodox community could host such a panel, and do so in the positive, warm and sensitive way it did, isn't to be underestimated.

Perhaps, if we continue on this journey, we will be able to bring Anne Frank downstairs after all.

# Racism or assimilation: the war of the spray can



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

"You're a racist!" is one of the most cutting accusations one can make in these politically charged times, as we drown in a cacophony of hate speech on social media.

To promote racism publicly, even among members of the white elite of the world, is still mostly regarded as disgusting. But the reaction to it is becoming less vehement in many places, from ordinary people to government leaders, including in the Jewish world.

Israel is fertile ground for this, given the complex power relations between parties in the conflict with the Palestinians, and the religious and demographic nature of the conflict.

Graffiti daubed in the Arab city of Kafr Qasim in central Israel on Sunday made no bones about the intentions of its authors. The graffiti went so far as to explicitly endorse racism by saying there were two simple choices for the Jews and for Israel: "Racism or assimilation", and "Death to Arabs".

Things like this are not new in Israel, they go back many years, and have emanated from the Palestinian and Israeli sides of the conflict.

But for Jews, the slogan taps into a hot issue in the Jewish world: assimilation is the biggest enemy for many leading figures, in the rabbinic world and elsewhere, who believe that almost anything should be done to prevent it.

That's why there is such anger towards non-orthodox streams of Judaism, because of their tolerance of liberal streams of Judaism. This anger extends to those who have non-Jewish partners, which supposedly threatens Jewish "purity" and demography.

Some well-known rabbis have gone so far as to say that assimilation is equivalent to another holocaust, and it will essentially finish the job that Hitler started.

This is the context in which the slogan "racism or assimilation" exists for radical right-wing Jews. In other words, to preserve the Jewish people, it's permissible in the West Bank and according to any possible political "solution" to the conflict, to treat Palestinians according to racist principles. Essentially, this is unabashed apartheid, with no pretence at being anything else.

In South Africa, racist talk, such using the "k-word", is classified as hate speech, a violation of the constitution, liable for legal action, and possibly jail. The most famous example of that was the late Cape Town estate agent Penny Sparrow, who drew the ire of many South Africans in 2016 after posting racist Facebook remarks.

leaders. As an example, United States House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has accused president Donald Trump of wanting to add a citizenship question to next year's census because he "wants to make America white again". Such a question would have a chilling effect on who responded to it, thus giving a false, more white picture of the makeup of the population.

In this era of growing nationalist and identity politics, this kind of identity politics is the flavour of the times. In the US last week, the words "Why have Jews been kicked out of 109 countries?" and "Nationalism or extinction" were written in Santa Monica on a public highway, and the "Holocaust is a lie" was found on a bicycle path nearby.

Identity, religious and personal, is hugely important to the human being. But, how far should we go to achieve it?

Are the people who wrote "racism or assimilation" fair warriors in the war for identity, or a dangerous poison? In this war, the spray can and graffiti become a cowardly weapon.

Incredibly, in some places in the world, it has become almost respectable to be overtly racist, even among government

## A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# Turning back the tide of hate

South Africa is hardly the only democratic country grappling with the problems of racism, xenophobia, and other forms of bigotry. That much was made clear during a roundtable discussion on combating hate held under the auspices of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre this week.

Participants included the centre's director, Tali Nates, South African Jewish Board of Deputies National Vice-Chairman Karen Milner and National Director Wendy Kahn, former German Justice Minister Herta Däubler-Gmelin, and Shanelle van der Berg, representing the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). It was an engaging discussion, but also a sobering one. Throughout the free world, hate crimes are on the increase, with a strikingly high proportion of them - in Europe, North America and elsewhere - being motivated by anti-Semitism.

To a great extent, the problem is being fuelled by toxic discourse in social media combined with inflammatory statements by public representatives. Falling into both categories are the threatening and abusive comments made by then Cosatu (Congress of South African Trade Unions) Western Cape chairman Tony Ehrenreich about the SAJBD.

Ehrenreich was directed by the SAHRC to furnish the SAJBD with a written apology for his comments. However, when the apology was finally made, it turned out to be a brazen attempt on his part to justify his unacceptable conduct, in part by repeating his calumnies against the SAJBD, and we had no hesitation in rejecting it.

Our right to speak out publicly on Israel's behalf without being subjected to the kind of threats and vicious abuse that Ehrenreich has been guilty of is non-negotiable, and we have no intention of being fobbed off by a back-handed "apology" that in reality, merely repeats the original offence. We will continue to pursue the matter with the SAHRC.



## ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev



**Congratulations to new SAZF leadership**

Congratulations to Rowan Polovin on his election as national chairman of the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) together with all the other new office bearers. I wish them success in taking this venerable communal organisation forward over the next four years.

Polovin has served with distinction as chairman of the Western Province regional branch, and in recent years, the board has worked closely with him in addressing a number of issues of common concern to our respective organisations.

We were further delighted that Benji Shulman was presented with a special award at the conference for multiple services to the local Zionist cause.

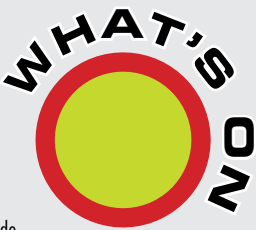
The board's association with Shulman goes back more than ten years, when he was chairman of the South African Union of Jewish Students, and since then, we have worked with him regularly, most notably in the hate-speech case against Cosatu's Bongani Masuku. Shulman was our main witness in the case when it came before the Equality Court, and acquitted himself with the same courage and quiet dignity he displayed, often in exceptionally difficult circumstances, when he represented our Jewish students on campus. We congratulate him on this well-deserved acknowledgement.

- *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

Saturday (3 August)
• Bet David Morningside hosts international journalist Michael Kallenbach on <i>Moving back to Johannesburg after 50 years. What am I thinking?</i> He will share the impressions and influences that helped him to make his decision, as well as his experiences working as a journalist and then as a psychotherapist outside the country. Time: 12:00. Venue: Bet David, 3 Middle Road, Morningside Sandton. Contact: 011 783 7117.
Sunday (4 August)
• Second Innings hosts Gaye Turiel, social worker in private practice on <i>Moving from senseless self-sacrifice to intelligent self-interest</i> . Time: 09:45 for tea; 10:30 for speaker. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, second floor, Golden Acres, 85 George Avenue, Sandringham. Cost: R20 members; R40 visitors, includes tea/coffee and refreshments. Contact: 011 483 7425.
Monday (5 August)
• The Union of Jewish Women (UJW) hosts Adrienne Kollenberg, chairperson of the Friends of SA Country Communities and convener of Jewish Life in the South African Country Communities. Time: 10:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW office 011 648 1053.
• Enhance brain functioning, and have a fun morning with occupational therapist Cynthia Liptz at Chabad Seniors Club, 09:00 at Chabad House, 27 Aintree Avenue, Savoy. No charge. Includes delicious lunch. Contact: rak@chabad.org.za
Tuesday (6 August)
• ORT SA presents its biannual Business Bootcamp of five lectures by experts in their field. Time: 18:00 to 20:30.

Venue: ORT SA Academy, 44 Central Street, corner 10th Avenue, Houghton. Cost: R100 members, R200 non-members. Contact: 011 728 7145.
Wednesday (7 August)
• The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC) presents the international production <i>The Children of Willesden Lane</i> with acclaimed pianist Mona Golabek. Time: 19:00. Venue: Linder Auditorium, Wits Education Campus, Parktown. Tickets available at webtickets.co.za. Contact janine@jhbholocaust.co.za or 011 640 3100.
• Golabek will also perform <i>Willesden Lane</i> in Cape Town on 13 August. Venue: Cape Town City Hall, Grand Parade, Darling Street, Cape Town City Centre. Time: 19.30. Book through webtickets.
Thursday (8 August)
• Join the ORT Jet Women's Day breakfast. Lynn Joffe (Creatrix) will speak on <i>Think like a woman, act like a woman, how to survive and thrive in a man's world</i> . Time: 09:30 to 11:30. Venue: Frangelicas, 2 Long Avenue, Glenhazel. RSVP: tessa@ortjet.org.za. Cost: R250 per person.
• Learn Yiddish every Thursday with Tamar Olswang and the UJW. Time: 10.00 to 11.00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Cost: R100 per person, R80 for pensioners and UJW members. Includes tea/coffee and refreshments. Contact: 011 648 1053.





# From Diller Teen Fellow to leader

OPINION

ERIN MIDZUK



**M**y three-week trip to Israel with Diller Teen Fellows was not just a tour, it was a journey, an experience unlike any other.

Though I arrived in the Holy Land with a passion for Israel, the trip shone a new light on the country. Diller aims to show us the many different faces of Israel, and this was my Diller experience.

Experiencing the reality of this country triggered many questions, but I learnt that questions aren't bad. Questions are the first step to learning. They show that you care enough to search for an answer. Asking questions allowed me to see Israel in a unique, personal way.

I also learnt to value other people's opinions, to remain respectful in spite of

approach encouraged me to remain respectful, tolerant, and listen.

The Diller programme is built on six main pillars: Jewish identity, Israel, *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), peoplehood, pluralism, and leadership. On the trip, I learnt to comprehend, value, and implement these six pillars into my life.

Our experience underpinned these elements. We had the

how my small gesture touched him, showed me the impact a small deed can have.

Our experience began with a week of travelling, from surfing in Tel Aviv to facing the *meshuga* (crazy) alleys of the Jerusalem *shuk* (market), concluding with a Shabbaton at the famous Bedouin tents, where we met 16 international Diller communities.

Our second week was spent with our partnership community, Beit Shemesh Mateh Yehudah, where we were hosted by the families of resident Diller teens, and got to know their community.

to think in unconventional ways, and to challenge myself. I'm so grateful that this adventure gave me access to the leader within.

Unfortunately, my year as a Diller Teen Fellow is ending, but the benefit of Diller is that my journey as a leader is just beginning. I have been given life skills and experiences that will continue to have an impact on me.

I'm deeply grateful to the South African Zionist Federation, as custodian of the programme, for this opportunity of a lifetime, which resulted in me making lifelong new friends, in South Africa and worldwide. I learnt, grew, and was inspired by them. Our year of learning is ending, but a lifetime of growth has just begun.



Johannesburg Diller Teens at the Kotel

I learnt that to strengthen my love for Israel, it's important to be able to explore all aspects of the country, to see the bumps and flaws, and look beneath the surface, while also seeing its radiating beauty, both physical and spiritual.

disagreements. On meeting about 640 teens from 32 different communities, I encountered so many different views and opinions about Judaism and Israel's place in the world. Many of these challenged me, but the Diller

when tested, davening on Shabbat beside Jews from across the globe, were among the moments that highlighted our common Jewish identity. Receiving an email from a lone soldier thanking me for parcels and letters sent, and understanding

In our final week, we were united with all 32 communities, and spent four days in global congress, summing up our year of learning through sessions, conversations, and an amazing race around the Golan.

We then toured with our Beit Shemesh comrades, and spent our final shabbat in Acco, holding on to every last moment before having to say goodbye to our new lifelong friends. Our journey ended at the Kotel – Israel's heart – for tearful and joyful goodbyes.

On my Diller journey, I learned to step out of my comfort zone,

• Erin Midzuk is a Diller Teen Fellow in Grade 11 at King David Victory Park. Diller Teen Fellows is a leadership programme that invites a select group of Jewish students in Grade 10 and 11 from six continents and 32 communities to step up, lead their communities, and repair the world. Part of the programme is a summer experience for the teens in Israel.

## Mazaltov to new 2019/2020 student leaders

### King David Victory Park



Taya Bartal, Alexa Bortz, Danit Cohen, Lauren Gruzd, Jonah Kollenberg, Tzipora Krawitz, Sam Lager, Samul Matisonn, Daniella Meyerowitz, Erin Midzuk (absent), Bethia Milner, Dan Rom, Kabir Singh, Cameron Solarsh, Judd Sundelson, Shayna Sundy, Chloe Valkin, and Samara Wolf.

### King David Linksfield

Erin Atie – head student leader, Daniel Class – head student leader, Anna Kayla Joffe – deputy head student leader, Joshua Pimstein – deputy head student leader, Noah Blau, James Hirschowitz, Ilan Moyal, Tanti Perel, Leora Porter, Kiara Behr, Montana Boon, Gavriel Burgin, Eden Cohen, Micaela Cohen, Daniella Dozetos, Shayna Goss, Demi Gruskin, Shely Hadar, Gabriel Hirschowitz, Noah Kallner, Maya Katzen, Elan Kolman, Branden Kotton, Kayla Kotzen, Aaron Levenberg, Daniel Lurie, Sam Maron, Gabriella Morein, Danielle Ogus, Carly Rachelson, Dina Segal, Danielle Shafer, Shane Silverman, Sarah Swartz, and Gila Taurog.

### Yeshiva College

**Boys Back Row:** Gavriel Feldman, Gadi Kirkel, Yossi Levitt, Netanel Levenstein, Noah Disler, Yonatan Azaraf, Benjamin Lapiner, Aharon Rosenberg, Adam Fisher, Netenel Kacev  
**Boys Front Row:** Gadi Feigenbaum, Dean Chaitowitz, Solomon Feldman, Matan Kaplan, Ben Swartz, Ayreh Katz, Ilan Lazar  
**Girls Back Row:** Alexa Price, Amira Cohen, Raphael Selikson, Yonit Herring, Chani Felsher, Isabella Bardavid, Daniella Sack  
**Girls Front Row:** Levanah Kramer, Ayala Dredzen, Adi Fisher, Gabriella Pokroy, Ella Chachi, Shira Finkelstein, Mira Chazen



### Boys High School



### Girls High School



### Herzlia

Sarah Stein – head student, Sarah Katz – deputy head student, Taro Tomitsuka – deputy head student, Jethro Klitzner – deputy head student, Maya Behrman, Zachary Brivik, Dana Chiles, Ruby Epstein, Eva Maraney, and Kayla Wilck.



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