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# south african Jewish Report

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## Bold hate fest on Facebook causes outrage

NICOLA MILTZ

Lawyers are advising the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) in laying criminal charges after a Johannesburg man went on a shameless anti-Semitic, racist, and homophobic rampage last week using the “k-word” a few times.

Donovan Richard Bold took to Facebook last Thursday afternoon with a string of vile posts including sick jokes about Jews.

Among a host of nonsensical rants about Jews, blacks, and Muslims, he dotted in a few “jokes” about Jews followed by an emoji laughing with tears.

They included, “How do you stop a Jew from drowning? Take your foot off their head”; “What arrives 2 minutes before a Jew? Their nose”; and “What do you call a J\*w under the wheel of a truck? Satisfaction.”

Using the k-word, he described black people as a “stupid bunch of k\*ff\*rs.” In another sick aside he said, “Soweto it is design (sp) to take a bomb designed for that by apartheid. We should use it,” followed by another smiley emoji.

He referred to Jews as slaves, and sex slaves.

One of his posts said, “Sorry slaves it comes from my past readings in religious studies there’s been many slaves. The blacks are pissed because you left them behind but now I see there were more important things than saving k\*ff\*rs What’s that? Killing Muslims,” (followed by a laughing emoji).

It’s unknown what prompted the Randburg-based man to go on the rampage. According to some who know him, he used to be a disc jockey in the underground electronic music club scene. He has several pseudonyms, namely CrayonDon, Don Crayon, and

ElectronDon and his Facebook page is filled with weird and abstract psychedelic images. It appears as if some, if not all, of his posts have been taken down.

His posts caused shock and outrage. One person who wished to remain anonymous said he was furious, saying, “He has had a go at everyone, this guy. Who does this kind of thing?”

It’s understood that one irate man took screen shots of the posts and forwarded them to the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), and that they have reached the ear of Commander in Chief Julius Malema. At the time of going to press, it was unknown whether the EFF was going to pursue the matter.

Johannesburg businessman Saul Joshua Abelson, who knows Bold from his clubbing days and has described him as a “tie-dyed hippie type”, approached him online asking, “Would you mind explaining this?”

To which Bold replied, “Are you Jewish?”

Abelson said Bold seemed to be a well-liked, popular guy on the electronic music festival scene many years ago.

“I wanted to know why he was posting this, but then he climbed into me, Abelson said.

He said Bold became “combative and aggressive”, and at one point called him a “faggot”.

To which Abelson replied, “Excellent let’s add homophobe to the list.”

In one post, Bold wrote, “Jewish sex slaves was an in thing till G-d’s wife got pissed and G-d told you slaves to, ‘Piss off from all creation and creatures Damned from life f\*ck off or you wouldn’t listen.’ You still don’t listen or G-d would give you money can’t you take a hint Stolkhom (sp) Syndrome Jew hahaha

dumb\*asses.”

When the *SA Jewish Report* asked Bold to explain himself this week, he said, “Nothing just that Jews don’t have a sense of humor (sic) and are spoiled because they get money from G-d. G-d is a Jewish man with all the money. He had gunpowder in bible. G-d took the money from the beginning and condemned slave Jews to all condemnation That’s why they get no money G-ds family is safe and Jews get inheritance.”

Abelson said the posts made him angry.

“In a country like ours, why would someone send hate across the airwaves? We don’t need this right now. You can think what you

want, but keep your thoughts to yourself. It’s time to recognise our differences and our similarities.”

Attorney Ian Levitt said that he had consulted with the SAJBD on the matter.

“I indicated that in my view we have a good chance of a successful prosecution, and they have instructed me to go ahead. We are gathering all the information to lay charges of *crimen injuria*.”

SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn said, “Once again, we were confronted on social media by offensive postings, this time targeting Jewish and black people. Social media, unfortunately, provides haters with a platform to spew their noxious venom. The SAJBD is working with its legal

team in exploring the best options in terms of addressing these latest anti-Semitic and racist posts. We will update the community on our course of action once we have decided the best way forward.”

Many responded with outrage, and questioned whether drugs had a role to play.

One person said on Facebook, “He has offended every race, religion, and human. I think he deserves a date with all of us. When we rocking up at his home?!”

Another said, “Not justifying anything, but if you look closely at his posts on his profile, the guy is either on a serious multi-day binge, or he is in some state of psychosis.”

## Standing up against violence



Koleinu (an organisation supporting victims of abuse) co-founder Rozanne Sack and a member of the ANC Women's League protest gender-based violence in Sandton



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## Denver-area students post Snapchat about killing Jews

High school students in suburban Denver recently participated in a Snapchat post that referred to killing Jews.

In the post circulated over the weekend, three students at Cherry Creek High are shown wearing hats in a costume store. The text box below reads, "Me and the boys bout to exterminate the Jews."

A fourth student took the photo and distributed it. The students in the photo said they weren't aware that the fourth student had added the caption.

The school is working with the ADL to formulate a response and investigate the incident, the *Denver Post* reported.

## Gal Gadot called on Israelis to vote



Israeli actress Gal Gadot called on her Israeli Instagram followers to "get out and vote" in a graphic in white Hebrew letters on a black background.

In the first comment next to the image, she said, "So simple and so important. No matter who you choose to vote for. Choose to choose. This is our greatest responsibility as citizens. Let's increase the voting percentage once and for all. Because this is the land of us all."

Gadot, the star of *Wonder Woman* who generally posts in English, has 31.1 million followers.

• All briefs supplied by JTA

## Iowa Hillel's former head charged with sexual abuse

The former executive director of the Iowa Hillel has been arrested and charged with abusing a young boy at Hillel House in Iowa City.

David Weltman, 29, of Skokie, Illinois, was teaching Hebrew to the boy sometime between February and March at Hillel House, according to the complaint laid with the Iowa City Police. The boy told police that Weltman took him into a room, and groped him.

The complainant also said that police had discovered during the subsequent investigation that Weltman admitted to an acquaintance that he was sexually attracted to children between the ages of seven and 12.

Weltman worked at Hillel from July 2016 to July 2019. He was charged with second-degree sex abuse, and is being held on a \$100 000 (R1.4 million) bond in county jail. The charge is punishable by up to 25 years in prison.

## City council head under fire for using term 'Jew her down'

Colleagues of the president of the city council in Trenton, New Jersey, who allegedly used the term "Jew her down" during a closed-door meeting, came to her defence saying the term was "a verb" and not indicative of hate.

Kathy McBride allegedly said that a city attorney was "able to wait her out and Jew her down" to describe the settlement of a personal injury lawsuit at a lower amount. The attorney to whom she was referring is Jewish, *The Trentonian* reported.

"Her comment 'Jew down' was more in reference to negotiating, not 'I hate Jews'," city councilwoman Robin Vaughn wrote in comments on Facebook, according to the newspaper. "Inappropriate in today's PC culture, absolutely, but not-anti-anything."

Councilman George Muschal told the website *New Jersey Globe* that the term was "just a statement of speech".

Reed Gusciora, the mayor of New Jersey's capital city, called the use of the term "offensive". He later told radio station WHYY that both McBride and Muschal had apologised to the city attorney.

## PewDiePie rescinds \$50 000 donation to ADL

Popular video blogger PewDiePie announced a donation of \$50 000 (R736 000) to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), then rescinded it a day later after negative fan feedback.

PewDiePie, whose real name is Felix Kjellberg of Sweden, made the announcement of the donation on Wednesday during an online celebration about surpassing 100 million subscribers, saying he wanted to get past previous "controversies".

One of those "mistakes" occurred in February 2017, when Disney and YouTube distanced themselves from PewDiePie after

he broadcast a video of two South Asian men dressed in green loincloths holding a sign reading, "Death To All Jews." The video was viewed more than six million times before it was removed by Google, which owns YouTube. In addition, the shooter in Christchurch, New Zealand, said, "Subscribe to PewDiePie," before carrying out his attack earlier this year.

Among the comments from followers was the suggestions that PewDiePie had been blackmailed by the ADL to regain his good standing on YouTube and in the media, implying that Jews control the media. They also objected to him giving money to an organisation that had criticised him.

## Torah Thought

### Not so fast – hold off on that produce!

The penultimate portion in the lead up to Rosh Hashanah is Ki Tavo. We search for the essential message G-d is trying to convey to us through the "living Torah", especially in these important days preceding the Days of Judgement.

And, indeed, a profound instruction is conveyed in the opening words for navigating the days ahead.

The commandment is as follows: when the people arrive in the promised land, and will inherit it and settle in it, they must bring from the first of their produce (*bikkurim*) to the national place of worship, and in a state of abundant joy, proclaim their gratitude for bringing them to this time, moment, and blessed situation.

Now, we know that it took 14 years to settle the land – seven years of full conquest, and seven years of settling into all the territories designated for each tribe. Certain tribes settled far sooner, however, as their territories were first in line for conquest and settlement.

It poses an important question about the *mitzvah* (good deed) of *bikkurim*. The *mitzvah* of *bikkurim* is an individual obligation for each farmer and landowner to bring his first produce, and celebrate his success once settled. So why does the farmer who settled right away or soon after entry have to wait another ten to twelve years until the other tribes are settled, and only then bring his *bikkurim*? Should he not bring his first produce right away, and express his great joy and gratitude as soon as he can?

This last week we recalled and celebrated the birth of one of Jewish history's most extraordinary and revolutionary figures, the Baal Shem Tov. At the core of the Baal Shem Tov's legacy lies his exposition of the essence of the unity of the Jewish people. The Jewish nation, he says, is bound in soul on the deepest level and like the limbs of a body, we are only complete when we are united and not fractured. Divine blessing is primarily channelled when

## Rav Ilan Herrmann, Soul Workout & Community Centre



there is unity. Our challenge is to find and embrace unity in spite of individual differences.

The Baal Shem Tov's message, and the timing of his birth corresponding to this week's portion, answers the above question. Why aren't the farmers who are already settled and are farming produce in the early stage of arriving in Israel obligated to bring their first fruits right away, especially as it's an individual commandment? The profound answer is that even though the farmer has his portion of land and produce, and is probably happy and thankful, he cannot fully celebrate until his brothers are settled, and are able to bring their produce too.

This is the preparation for the lead up to the Days of Judgement. To recognise and embrace the unity of our people. To reach out and express love for our fellow Jew. This is the catalyst for the greatest blessings from above.

## Jewish Report

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### Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
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18:23	19:15	Cape Town
17:33	18:24	Durban
17:52	18:43	Bloemfontein
17:54	18:47	Port Elizabeth
17:45	18:37	East London

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# Rape victim has long road to recovery – but we can help

TALI FEINBERG

The boyfriend of the Israeli woman who was raped at a backpackers' lodge in Graskop, Mpumalanga, two weeks ago says she "isn't stable at all", and will need at least a year of counselling and therapy to help recover from her ordeal.

To this extent, the SA Jewish Report has, with the help of attorney Ian Levitt, set up a trust fund to assist the survivor with the financial costs of therapy, and to raise funds for counselling for rape survivors in South Africa.

Views backpackers' lodge before, and specifically chose to end the trip there on Sarah's 22nd birthday as it advertised that it had a working oven, and he wanted to bake her a cake.

The couple met an Israeli friend at the lodge, but on the night of 31 August, the friend went to bed early. The couple stayed up until midnight to wait for her birthday, but at about five minutes to midnight, "they arrived".

"They" were four armed men who silently cut through the fence of the lodge. "Each one was holding a real gun – as an Israeli, I know that they weren't

knock on the door of an Italian couple with expensive cameras, and because the couple knew Dan, they opened the door for him. At this point, Dan told them what was going on, and begged them to co-operate for Sarah's sake. While the thieves were in the room, "a stray gunshot went off", which Dan thinks was a mistake. However, no other guests woke up.

Dan and the Italian couple were taken back to the field where they were all stripped naked and covered with their clothes again. The rapist was sitting on Sarah's back. The three other perpetrators were pointing their guns at Dan, and the Italian couple took the opportunity to escape.

"The thieves debated what to do with us. They then began to back off, and told us to stand up. We ran as fast we could through the thorn field, got back through the fence, and no one knew sh\*t about what had happened," says Dan angrily.

His first priority was to get Sarah to hospital, and from there, the police were called. "It was horrible for her, especially when she had to describe the face of the man who raped

her." However, there was light in the darkness in the form of the people who helped the couple and took them in before they flew back to Israel.

Dan doesn't regret visiting South Africa. He says he was "in the wrong place at the wrong time. What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger." However, some members of his family in South Africa have chosen to emigrate because of the incident.

The Israeli knows that there is a great deal of anger about gender-based

toy guns. They made us go to our tent, and took everything before forcing us through the fence out into a thorn field. There, they made us strip naked and threw our clothes on top of us. I felt like we might be buried, like I was a kidnap victim. I sat naked with three guns pointing at my head. They hit me with their guns."

The intruders weren't satisfied with what they had stolen, so they forced Dan to accompany them back to the lodge to rob more guests. "Sarah begged to come with us, but they made me tell her to 'shut up', and one man stayed behind with her. They pointed the gun at her body. He had been looking at her body the whole time, and I knew exactly what his intentions were," recalls Dan. Forcibly separated, the couple didn't know if they would see each other again. At that point, Sarah was raped.

Dan said the robbers made him



In an exclusive interview with the SA Jewish Report this week, the woman's boyfriend, Dan\* (not his real name) shared how a night that was meant to celebrate the start of his girlfriend's birthday turned into a night of terror.

"My father is from Durban, and I have travelled in South Africa before. I spent four months travelling the length and breadth of the country a few years ago," he says.

"So I wasn't scared of crime coming to South Africa. We wanted to go there after we finished our army service. However, my mother was a little worried, and asked why I was taking my girlfriend Sarah\* there when she had never travelled before," he says. In spite of his mother's concerns, they went ahead with their trip. "We paid for wild card [membership] and visited the national parks. We spent nine days in the Kruger [National Park]."

Dan had stayed at the Valley

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violence in South Africa, and that this incident could be a "tipping point for some".

"I'm not happy that our story is the breaking point. The situation should be better," he says.

At the moment, he says his girlfriend is "mentally up and down – not stable at all. I think it will take a year or two of recovery. She is seeing a specialist twice a week, and she has to travel far to get there. We are both staying with our parents. Her parents are helping where they can, but it's a lot to cover. She hasn't had an easy life."

Orit Sulitzeanu, the executive director of the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, agrees that Sarah needs intense therapy twice a week, which over a year will cost about \$11 000 (R162 000).

Dan admits that he, too, is in need of trauma counselling and physical and spiritual healing. At the time of writing, no arrests had been made in the case.

The couple is two of an estimated 10 500 Israeli tourists that visit South Africa each year, and two of the 30 000 to 40 000 Israelis who backpack overseas every year after their army service, according to research by Issta, Israel's largest travel agency.

They weren't the only Israeli tourists recently affected by crime. An Israeli tourist whose family

was staying in Hermanus in the Western Cape during the last week of August described how their holiday home was robbed on the night they arrived.

"I heard noises, and saw the back door close. We were robbed of almost everything we had," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We were so traumatised that no one could sleep the next night, and we thank G-d no one was hurt. We think it was an 'inside job', as there is no way that the intruders could have got inside without help. I'm not saying 'no' to South Africa, but the next time we come, we will stay in gated communities rather than random homes." Dan says that he will come back to South Africa one day, but only with his parents.

Sulitzeanu says that Sarah's case is unique because in Israel, 90% of sexual-abuse cases are perpetrated by someone known to the victim. "At the same time, trauma is trauma. Your sense of security is destroyed. Recovery depends on many factors: gaining access to psychotherapy, having supportive friends and family, your own character, and the traumas from your past," she says.

Going through rape and robbery in a country that isn't your own makes it that much more difficult. "It will also take time for her to go back to work, which means she might lose out on income. People do recover, but they often have a 'scar'. If the South African Jewish community wants to help, it would be extremely valuable. She needs it."

\*Not their real names

The SA Jewish Report is raising funds for therapy for the Israeli woman, as well as South African rape survivors.

Donations can be made to the following account: Ian Levitt Attorneys Trust Account, Absa Bank, Rosebank Central Branch. Account number 4046253714. Reference: Israeli tourist.

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# Twits on Twitter usurp real race talk, says Harber

MIRAH LANGER

Media stalwart Professor Anton Harber is the latest target of a racial attack on Twitter, having been accused of defending racists seemingly because he is white.

In fact, Harber told the SA *Jewish Report* this week that his comments about Eyewitness News journalist Barry Bateman, which sparked the furore, were completely misconstrued.

Harber said he suggested that Bateman, who was recently caught on camera insulting Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) leader Julius Malema, must be held accountable for his actions. Referring to the reaction to his comments, he said, "It's rubbish. I'm doing just the opposite. I'm not defending him. What I said, and what I hold by, is that his language and behaviour was unprofessional, and [radio station] 702 was quite right to take him off air and apologise for it immediately."

Bateman was caught on camera insulting Malema after an interaction with the populist leader at a press conference earlier this month.

Bateman was caught on camera calling him a "p\*\*s" in conversation with another journalist.

Following the release of the video in which he made the slur, Bateman was

suspended from work, and is now facing an internal investigation.

Harber commented on the situation during an interview with eNCA last week.

A Twitter user called Rhangani then posted, "This white man @AntonHarber on @eNCA, a founding member of @SAEditorsForum, says there was an invasion of Barry Bateman's privacy. Basically, what he's saying is that racists should be allowed a safe and private space to be racist."

Harber responded on the social-media platform, telling Rhangani that he clearly had not listened to the full interview. "Surely you should listen more carefully before attacking someone? This racism tag is thrown around so easily – and dangerously.

"This is a major distortion of what I said," he posted in another tweet. "On the contrary, I argued that Bateman's words were inappropriate and unprofessional, and he had to account for them."

Rhangani then seemed to take a step backward replying, "Maybe I misheard you, but I swear I heard you say 'invasion of privacy' or something along those lines."

Speaking in the aftermath, Harber

lamented the dangers of a platform like Twitter in which, "it takes one idiot, who isn't paying attention, to attack and loosely use allegations of racism without actually establishing what I said".

He said that his full comment had been that while journalists are entitled to their personal opinion, "you do have to keep in mind that you are a journalist, and there are professional standards for the way you express even private opinions about political

figures that you deal with. [Bateman] breached that line."

Harber said that the subsequent twisting of his comment into an inflammatory attack on Twitter was a worldwide phenomenon on social media.

Yet the particular pity in South Africa was that "there is naturally a particular sensitivity around issues of race".

"The tragedy is that while there are real issues of race, in this case, somebody ignorantly leaps onto a bandwagon, and quickly makes accusations without thought or knowledge. It's dangerous and destructive. We really need to respond quickly, and stop that kind of thing.

"We have to have as open and frank an exchange as possible about race, there's no question about that. But we have to isolate, block, and take on those who do it in a destructive way."

Marius Roodt, the South African Institute of Race Relations' head of campaigns, suggested that in fact, these kind of racially-charged incidents led by "keyboard warriors"

on Twitter bore little relevance to the reality of life on the ground in South Africa.

"Twitter isn't real life. I don't think we should be reporting on what people say on Twitter," he said.

"Our research has shown that in general, white and black South Africans get on pretty well with each other. About 90% of South Africans say that the various racial groups of South Africa need each other to survive and become a prosperous country."

In any case, he said, only a tiny fraction – about 5% – of South Africans even use Twitter. "Most South Africans don't even know what Twitter is, and those that do, don't care what happens on it."

University of the Witwatersrand sociology professor Devan Pillay said race remained a "trigger point".

"Some people exploit it and magnify issues beyond what they need to. It's a question of finding the correct balance."

He said the way in which people's opinions were delegitimised by ascribing them to their race was often

a political tactic. "There are moments where who you are has relevance and a degree of bearing on what you say – but it can be overblown."

Pillay said that on both sides of society, be it the EFF, or those promoting the idea of white genocide, "If you debate with any of them, they immediately point at who you are to delegitimise what you have to say. It's a dangerous political game that is being played, where you try and delegitimise a voice that you don't agree with."

Pillay said that in everyday spaces like the workplace, school, and religious institutes, people in fact interact across racial lines in a much more effective way.

By contrast, social media is a "double-edged sword". On the one hand it is an informative platform where people can air and share views, on the other there is a "toxicity" to it that is worrying.

"As a friend of mine said, when he stopped using Twitter, he found the world was a much more peaceful place," quipped Pillay.

## Underhand tactics in boycott campaign

TALI FEINBERG

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) has criticised the "dishonest tactics" being used to imply support for a University of Cape Town (UCT) academic boycott against Israeli universities.

The SAJBD has noted at least two such instances in the past few weeks.

UCT has been considering a motion adopted by its senate on 15 March 2019, that "UCT will not enter into any formal relationships with Israeli academic institutions operating in the occupied Palestinian territories as well as other Israeli academic institutions enabling gross human-rights violations in the occupied Palestinian territories". The senate is scheduled to review the resolution in late November.

In the first instance, the SAJBD says that last Friday, ahead of a UCT senate meeting, a number of students distributing a pro-boycott petition on campus were wearing South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) t-shirts. It implied that the pamphlets represented the views of SAUJS. The *SA Jewish Report* has photographic evidence of this.

SAUJS has condemned this, and confirms that it is unequivocally opposed to the boycott. "The students were intentionally misrepresenting the position SAUJS holds on this issue presumably in order to fool people into thinking that there exists significant Jewish support for the proposed boycott," said the organisation's leadership.

"We believe in free speech, and Israel's right to exist

in peace and security, something that proponents of the boycott vehemently disagree with, hence the ruse of simply cutting ties with Israeli universities."

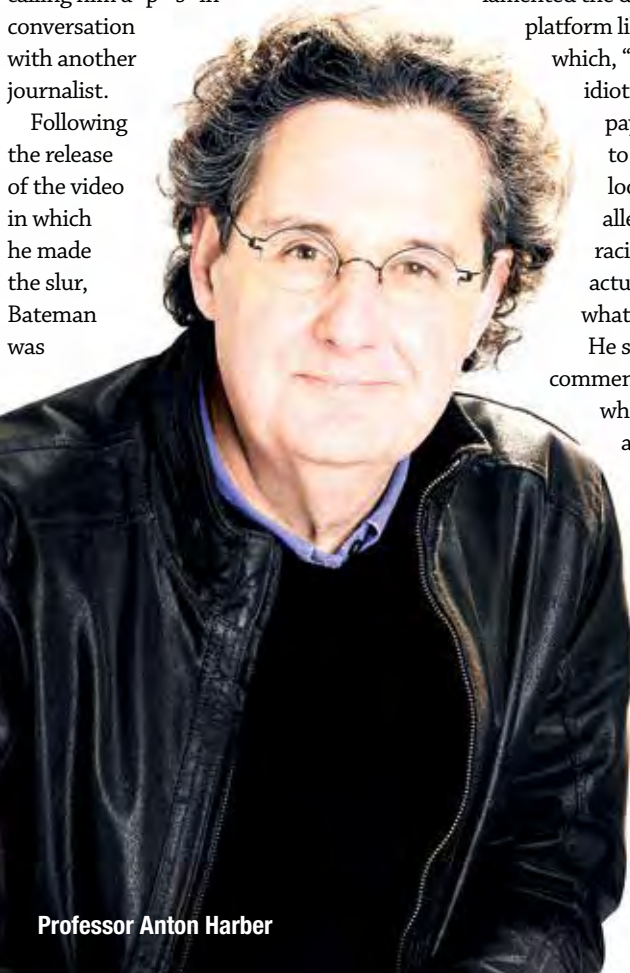
It said that in attempting to deceive others, those handing out the pamphlets had disrespected every member of SAUJS and the senate.

The SAJBD wrote to UCT Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng last Friday.

"It has come to our attention that a letter bearing several dozen signatures and titled 'South African Jews support the academic boycott of Israeli universities enabling the occupation' was sent to all members of the UCT senate last Friday [the letter was also published in the *Mail & Guardian*]. The intention of those responsible is presumably to foster the impression that since some people of Jewish origin endorse an academic boycott against Israel, this view enjoys widespread support in the Jewish community," wrote SAJBD Chairman Shaun Zagoev.

"There can be no reasonable doubt that the vast majority of South African Jews are strenuously opposed to singling out Israeli academic institutions for special punitive action of this nature. As far as they are concerned, the initiative is entirely politically and ideologically motivated, driven not by human-rights concerns as is being claimed, but by headline anti-Israel activists," Zagoev wrote. He noted recent data by the university's own Kaplan Centre showing that only about 1% of the South African Jewish community have negative feelings towards Israel.

Continued on page 8 >>



Professor Anton Harber

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# Vaping is not cool, it can be deadly

JORDAN MOSHE

Several people around the world have reportedly died from a vape-linked lung condition, and about 450 others are believed to be affected by it, according to health experts in South Africa and elsewhere.

The American-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently issued a warning on the dangers of vaping as more people are suffering from this mysterious lung condition. As the numbers rise, the fabled safety of vaping has been called into question, and health experts are urging users – especially youngsters – to stay away.

In the wake of a seventh reported death this week, New York state banned the sale of flavoured e-cigarettes, giving retailers two weeks to remove the merchandise from their shelves.

The vaping culture has gained increasing traction over the past few years, with a spike in popularity with the introduction of a variety of flavoured liquids and trendy handheld devices. An electronic cigarette or e-cigarette is a handheld battery-powered vaporiser that simulates smoking, including the hand-to-mouth action of smoking, not burning tobacco but nicotine. Using an e-cigarette is known as “vaping” and the user is referred to as a “vaper”.

It has had great appeal worldwide, and the problem is equally rife in South Africa, affecting the youth in particular.

“Young adults and teens think it’s fashionable,” says pulmonologist Dr Anton Meyberg. “The machines are sleek, they have an appeal, and they give off a good image. Youngsters see these attractive stands selling the products, and are drawn to it, believing it’s just a flavour and can’t do harm.”

Meyberg says vaping has also become popular with youngsters in the Jewish community, spurring schools to invite him to address pupils on the dangers of the seemingly innocuous habit. “School social workers are picking up on it, and want to address it,” he says. “We think it’s a developing pandemic amongst the youth.”

Daniel Sussman, Habonim secretary general and rosh machaneh, says that in his own experience, vaping is fairly commonplace amongst the youth by the age of 16. He says that by Grade 8, many children are already exposed to vaping.

“A big issue here is that parents place vaping in a separate class to other forms of smoking,” Sussman says. “It may be true that for a long-term smoker, some form of e-cigarette could be a healthier alternative. But, for a 15 or 16-year-old child with no tobacco addiction, we are no longer speaking about the lesser of two evils. Vaping is a gateway form of smoking as opposed to a pathway out of it.”

Meyberg says scholars are known to vape during break, sometimes even in class. A vape is easy to conceal. It’s often made to look like a USB flash drive or something like it which can be hidden easily. “You may not even be able to see the smoke coming out of it. That’s how difficult it may be to spot,” he says.

Vaping is particularly detrimental to young adults, Meyberg says, because their brains are more sensitive to nicotine as their uptake of nicotine is much higher. He says people who develop addictions tend to be young, and they

often move on to cigarettes and marijuana.

“The central problem is that the habit affects behaviour, attention, mood, and impulse control,” he says. “There’s a lot of talk about what the vape contains, the chemicals being heated and inhaled. These cling to the lungs, and stop air from entering, affect the blood stream, and cause plenty of other internal



damage. Still, youngsters see fashionable pictures marketing these things, and become lifelong users.”

He dismisses the often-peddled belief that the habit is harmless, saying that it’s worse, in fact, than smoking cigarettes. “People think it’s safe because it is marketed that way. The assurance that it’s safe doesn’t come from medical circles but from the vaping fraternity itself, which is a multibillion-dollar industry. There’s also the belief that it’s safer than smoking, but in young adults, it’s not. They experience other issues such as nicotine addiction, and could even end up smoking.”

The problem has been given much airspace in the media.

Meyberg says many deaths related to vaping have occurred in a short period of time, unlike smoking-related deaths. “We need time to understand what these things do to you, and it takes time for them to be studied,” he says. “This is why we see the surge suddenly. Studies – many of them by recognised medical journals – have begun, and are exposing the actual risks.”

“We are finding that younger people with respiratory illnesses are often those who vape. It’s common and getting worse.”

He says people are waking up and realising that the habit is dangerous, and more needs to be done to educate about the impact vaping has on one’s health. He

believes we need to start at schools by engaging with children, even one on one, to explain what vaping actually does to one’s body.

“Rabbis, teachers, schools, and shuls need to be involved,” he says. “It’s an enormous and extremely profitable industry, and its products are being spread widely amongst the youth, so it’s going to be very difficult to dismantle. Still, we must educate people about the damage it does, and this is perhaps more necessary than ever before.”

“Absolutely no good can come from exposing people to this substance,” he says. “It’s addictive. We need to strike while the iron is hot. I’m hoping that people will take note. Teens must not see vaping as cool, it’s not. It’s deadly.”

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PUBLIC STATEMENT  
ISSUED BY: YESHIVA COLLEGE  
DATE: 18 SEPTEMBER 2019 / 18 ELUL 5779

## RESOLUTION BETWEEN YESHIVA COLLEGE AND THE PALUCH FAMILY

Yeshiva College issues this statement with the consent and support of the Paluch family, having come together to resolve issues and chart a way forward.

Hugo Paluch died tragically on 5 June 2017 as a result of injuries sustained when a goal post fell on him on the Yeshiva College football field.

The parties agree that this should never have happened.

The College acknowledges that Hugo’s death occurred under its watch and offers its profound apologies to the Paluch family. It deeply regrets the pain and distress caused to the family.

It recognizes also the distressing impact of Hugo’s death on the learners and staff at the College and indeed on the wider school community.

Hugo stood for truth and chesed (kindness) and the College is committed to promoting his legacy.

It has committed to a program of remedial action and healing. Towards achieving this, it has and will continue through various initiatives to honour Hugo and champion the values for which he stood.

It will focus on ensuring that an incident of the nature which led to Hugo’s death never happens again. It is committed to ensuring the safety of its learners and the safety and integrity of its sports equipment.

It will collaborate with other schools in lobbying education authorities to strengthen the regulations applicable to sports equipment in schools.

Robbi Avraham H. Tanzer מנהל ראשי ישיבה רבבי לרון בנסימן Managing Director

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## The scourge of social media

I fear for our youth, what with the ugly face of social media. This week, there seems – unwittingly – to be a theme to this newspaper. It's how social media gives people a licence to say and do the most dreadful things, and get away with it. I don't believe most people would do or say the same things face to face, but on Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, apparently anything goes.

When reading the story on our front page about the man who let rip last week about Jews, Muslims, black people, and homosexuals, I kept wondering why he would do such a thing. What was he thinking? He clearly didn't see a potential lawsuit coming his way, and he obviously felt invincible.

Apparently, social media makes people feel this way. They vomit out the worst things, happily insulting and naming and shaming people – being judge, jury, and often hangman too. People are accused of the most horrendous or humiliating things, guilty or not!

The words of professor Anton Harber, one of the most seasoned editors and media educators in this country, were recently twisted so that the meaning of what he said went from censoring someone to defending them. All this led to him being called a racist. Now, I know Harber, and one thing he isn't is a racist.

And, after publishing an article last week questioning digital vigilantism on social media, my integrity and that of the newspaper was questioned on social media.

In the story, we asked experts about this dilemma, after a teenage girl gave a blow by blow account of being sexually violated by a teenage boy on Twitter, naming and shaming him.

Our story questioned the legality, morality, and efficacy of this type of behaviour. It certainly doesn't allow for the legal principle of "innocent until proven guilty".

Social media is not a court of law and, while naming and shaming might be punitive, it certainly isn't restorative. It won't stop the scourge of sexual violence in the way that an effective legal justice system can.

Rapists walk free all the time. It's incumbent on us in this country to make sure that rape survivors are able to report the attacks safely, and see justice done through the criminal justice system. This is a massive task, but one we have to take on and make work. We literally have no choice.

Social-media vigilantism makes it way too easy for people holding a grudge against someone to defile their name and reputation. Once it's done, there's no turning back. Once you're labelled a rapist or sexual predator, it's almost impossible to walk away from it.

My experience this week of being challenged on Facebook was unpleasant, but then I'm a grown woman with my integrity and self-confidence intact.

However, this has made me feel so concerned about the young people of today who are in the firing line of the viciousness spewed all over social media.

What of a young teenage boy who is being bullied? What of a young girl who kisses the wrong boy, and whose name is sullied on social media? What of the guy whose homophobic buddies decide he is gay, and post things about him on social media? What of the boy who



is caught on camera doing something embarrassing, and it goes viral on social media?

I could go on and on ... It frightens me!

People are taking things too far. It's so easy to destroy a life, and it could even lead to someone being brutalised or opting for suicide. It's becoming way too common. What are we doing to each other? How can we do this? Why do we want to make fun of or demean other people?

I understand that women and young girls who are raped or sexually abused feel helpless. I understand that more than most. And I also understand why putting it on social media feels like an easy outlet and a way of naming and shaming without having to go through the emotionally exhausting and painful experience of going to court.

But social media vigilantism is a dangerous game to play. There are other ways of doing it that have a sustainable, restorative outcome.

We need to make sure that the police and courts work properly so that justice is done. Rapists and sexual predators must not be allowed to walk free.

### Heritage Day

As we head towards Heritage Day (known to many as Braai Day), I wonder about our legacy in South Africa. Is misogyny part of our heritage? I recently spent time with a woman who told me how she was happily married, but after years of not becoming pregnant, her husband left her. He told her she wasn't a real woman because she couldn't bear children. We can really only be free of the rape culture that perpetuates South Africa when men see women as human beings. See the insight of Dr Yael Ziegler on page 10.

In terms of our heritage, do yourself a favour and read about the Jewish heritage tour of Doornfontein on page 14, and celebrate the fact that Terry Kurgan's book about her heritage won the Alan Paton Award for non-fiction.

So much of our heritage is beautiful and well worth preserving, but some old habits need to change to enhance our future and that of our children.

While social media has brought people together from all walks of life and made our world a global village, let's route out the dark and dangerous side so that doesn't become part of our heritage.

### Shabbat Shalom and Happy Heritage Day!

**Peta Krost Maunder**  
Editor

## Second time unlucky for Netanyahu?

After a decade in power, incumbent Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu might soon have to vacate the country's top office.

At the close of national polls on Tuesday night, he proved unable yet again to secure an outright victory, making it near impossible for him to form a majority coalition government.

He needs 61 out of 120 Knesset (parliament) seats, and exit polls showed him falling between four to seven seats short of achieving that.

Perhaps Netanyahu is cheered up in knowing that his main rival, Benny Gantz, the former Israel Defense Forces (IDF) chief and leader of the centre-left Blue and White party, is in the same situation.

While final election results will be announced only next Wednesday, the tally is unlikely to differ much. While some polls placed Netanyahu in second position to Gantz, others saw the two as neck-and-neck.

It's now up to the country's president, Reuven Rivlin, to move the process forward. He's responsible for tasking the leader with the most number of votes to form the next government. With neither Netanyahu nor Gantz seemingly able to do so, questions are being asked if Israelis could be headed to the polls for a third time.

This is uncharted and unprecedented territory. In spite of concern about voter apathy keeping people away from the second election in six months, the turnout was 1% to 3% higher than the April ballot.

It speaks volumes about the commitment of citizens to shaping the future of their country. It also shows their trust in democracy and democratic institutions.

Still, many Israelis believe these elections were unwarranted, unnecessary, and expensive. It will be difficult to convince them of the need for a third round. Rivlin says he will do everything in his power to prevent that from happening, including, if necessary, granting an extension to the coalition-making process.

Back in April, it was Avigdor Lieberman, the leader of the Israel Our Home party and a former defense minister, who put the spoke in Netanyahu's plans. By refusing to join the prime minister's coalition over the issue of religious Jews serving in the IDF, Lieberman in effect forced Netanyahu to dissolve the parliament and call for a new election.

Six months on, and Lieberman has doubled his support base, making him the ultimate kingmaker. Winning twice as many seats this time around compared to April, he can, to a certain extent, dictate the makeup of the next government.

Lieberman's agenda was to thwart the growing monopoly of the ultra-Orthodox on Israeli politics, something evidently many Israelis support. His strong showing indicates that aside from the usual issue of security, many voted on the questions of religion and state.

Interestingly, though, the exit polls also showed an increase in the ultra-Orthodox, which in essence is a mirror image of Lieberman's strength and political power. While such parties find a natural home with Netanyahu, should he be unable to form a majority – even with their support – analysts suggest that the ultra-Orthodox will explore a coalition with Gantz. It makes for unnatural bed partners, and it will be a very difficult coalition to maintain, but it shouldn't be ruled out.

Well aware of his political clout, Lieberman addressed his supporters a short time after polls closed on Tuesday, proposing a unity government between himself, Netanyahu, and Gantz. But because there is so much bad blood between the three leaders, it's questionable whether this can really happen.

The most likely scenario is a change within Likud that would result in a new chairman being elected. In such a case, he might be able to form a government with Gantz in which there is a rotation of prime minister between Gantz and whoever the Likud will elect. But it's all speculation at this stage – and Netanyahu's not relinquishing his power just yet.

### DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Paula Slier



Of all the party headquarters, it was Lieberman's that on Tuesday night was the most cheerful.

Netanyahu tried to put on a brave face, promising his supporters that he would fight on and form a "strong Zionist government without Arab parties".

It's not the first time the premier has referenced the country's 20% minority, and he warned again on Tuesday that Arab turnout was higher than usual. This was the same tactic he used back in the 2015 election when he (in)famously said that Arabs were "going to the polls in droves" in an effort to encourage his supporters to cast their ballot. It worked then. It doesn't seem to have worked as well this time around.

The Arab parties did well, garnering third position in the exit polls. While there was concern that calls for a boycott from within their community would result in many Arabs staying away, voter turnout was higher than six months ago, hitting the low sixties.

What it shows is a change in behaviour in the Arab population from virtual apathy a short time ago to high levels of involvement. Nonetheless, it's highly unlikely that they will join a governing coalition.

Typical of a politician fighting for his political survival, Netanyahu made a lot of promises in the run-up to these elections. Most recently, he vowed to annex settlements in the West Bank and Jordan Valley, putting the final nail in the coffin of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks which have already been dead for five years anyway.

For the Palestinians, it's irrelevant whether Gantz or Netanyahu becomes the next premier. Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh explained that for them, the difference is small, much like the "difference between Pepsi Cola and Coca-Cola".

United States President Donald Trump also wasn't particularly helpful to Netanyahu during these elections. By comparison, just prior to the April poll, he made the bold announcement that the US recognised Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights. That statement was intended as a gift to



Benny Gantz

Benjamin Netanyahu

Netanyahu and was received as such, viewed by many Israelis as proof of the strong relationship between the two leaders. Netanyahu's campaign was not shy to plaster posters of him and Trump standing together on all the country's major highways, but this time around there were no dramatic statements from Trump who is busy with Iran, and to be fair, Netanyahu's relationship with the US is already factored in by voters.

In essence, Israelis find themselves now in the same position that they were in April. The country is entering a period of political uncertainty, and for Netanyahu, the coming weeks are only just the beginning of his troubles. In spite of consistent attempts by his legal team to postpone the corruption trials he's facing, Netanyahu will next month be forced to shift his attention from political concerns to legal matters as he faces the courts. Had he won another term in office, many believe he would have used his power to obtain immunity from prosecution.

Now, what remains to be seen is how he will be remembered in the history books. Will his legacy be that of Israel's longest serving prime minister to date, or will he end his career facing the justice system and possibly prison?



# Bibi's sun is setting fast

OPINION

BIKO ARRAN



The results of the second Israeli election this year are still fresh and undetermined. It seems like a deadlock. None of the major parties can easily form a government – neither Benjamin Netanyahu and Likud, nor Benny Gantz and Blue and White.

Avigdor Lieberman, the former defense chief and the leader of Israel Beitenu (the secular, right-wing party started for Russian immigrants) is the kingmaker, but still insists on a unity government of both Likud and Blue and White. The two big parties' supporters were not popping champagne at their headquarters on Tuesday night. Lieberman probably was toasting, but with vodka.

What's clear is that Bibi's gamble of a second round of elections was the wrong choice for him. Likud is going to be smaller, and without a 60-seat block of right-wing and haredi parties. The long-lasting, strong, and charismatic magician (Bibi) is coming out of this campaign wounded and beaten. His wounds make him black and blue versus Blue and White – and the latter is in much better form.

Bibi now has fewer cards to play. He can look forward to a long political process in which his only tool is to try to prevent others from taking leadership. And, we haven't said anything about

his legal problems. Netanyahu's best advocate was the support he enjoyed among the electorate in spite of allegations of corruption. No more!

Netanyahu from a long distance seems like a superhero. He's a Sabra (born in Israel), the son of a prominent intellectual, the former captain of an elite unit of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and the brother of the late Yoni, the glorious fighter who died while rescuing survivors of Operation Entebbe. Good looking, telegenic, a great English orator. A well-rooted ideologist. An intelligent, charming person. A bright politician. All of those compliments and superlatives can be seen in Israel. They are the reason he managed to overtake David Ben-Gurion in the duration of his 13-year term in one of the most sensitive and complicated leadership positions in the world.

But over the past few years, the price of him staying in power became unbearable for Israel. Netanyahu was inspired by Trump, and other populist leaders in Eastern Europe like Viktor Orbán of Hungary. He caused dissent between Arab and Jewish citizens. He made deals with right-wing racist extremists. He attacked the press and the legal system. He appointed "yes men" as high officials. He broke the across-the-

board American support for Israel in order to get photo opportunities and headlines. With lots of poison, he attacked his opponents and politically eliminated any successor or sign of opposition, even among party colleagues. He lied with fake news, and misled and patronised common people. Last week, he was even close to sending Israel into a politically motivated war in Gaza, ignoring the legal need for cabinet hearing.

**"A long time in office makes a person lose focus. It can contaminate them. Drain them. And these are just the natural positive scenarios."**

And we haven't said a word about his upcoming criminal charges, the allegations of people around him, and the behaviour and acts of his close family.

Netanyahu was always a sophisticated poker player, but in order to stay prime minister, he crossed the line a long time ago. He started his career as a hardline but hawkish and democratic, open-minded figure. He was a revolutionary finance minister who broke up monopolies. He was even

a calm leader on military issues. His international experience and time in office also made him a well-recognised global leader.

But there is a good reason for the 22nd American constitutional amendment preventing a person from running for president for more than two terms. The same restrictions exist in South Africa. A long time in office makes a person lose focus. It can contaminate them. Drain them. And these are just the natural positive scenarios. In fact, remaining in power too long usually has far worse effects.

Rabbi Shai Piron wrote on his first day as Israeli education minister a few years ago, "Hasidism has an interesting tradition that claims that whoever rises to greatness needs a stone in their shoes. A stone, to remind him of where he came from. A stone that will hurt him so much, he doesn't forget that many people are in pain, and many need help. So, too, I put 'a stone in the shoe'. Small, but painful."

Bibi lost his stone a long, long time ago. The only agenda was and – still is – his survival on Balfour Street, the premier's residence in Jerusalem. That's not right or left-wing policy. It's an agenda that's only about Bibi's well-being.

This week, with the election of the 22nd Knesset (parliament),

the era of the monolithic, hands-on rule of Netanyahu is about to end. Any new government (even with Bibi in it) headed by another Likud leader or by Gantz is going to be a government of reconciliation. When the elections ended this week, it left bloody wounds and social ruptures in Israel. This has had an impact on ultra-Orthodox people. Arabs. Settlers. Left-wing supporters. The discourse in Israel is so polarised, that any new administration will have to address the problems Bibi left.

And there are the other challenges every other country has: an economy with a humongous deficit, and collapsing health and education systems.

Bibi won't be remembered as a prime minister with a unique footprint. He will be remembered as a confused trainer dealing with 'the elephant in the room'. He will be remembered for signing agreements with Arafat, giving away Hebron, and talking about a two-state-solution but doing the opposite, with no clear direction.

*• Biko Arran is an Israeli social entrepreneur, lawyer, policy advisor, and ex-journalist. He has been living in South Africa since his wife, Liat, took up her position as director of the Israel Centre.*

## ADVERTORIAL

### Things you need to know before getting the ball rolling for reinstatement of Lithuanian citizenship



**DAINIUS AMBRAZAITIS**  
Advocate/Partner  
Head of the Citizenship Practice at  
IN JURE Law Firm, Vilnius, Lithuania

In my legal practice, I encounter many different clients. Some, motivated by the final result, i.e. approved Lithuanian citizenship, dive into the procedure without hesitation. Others are more cautious and curious about what the procedure will involve including but not limited to the list of the factors I discuss below.

The first thing you need to decide is whether to hire a professional attorney or someone who has gone through the process and is offering their assistance. I discussed this question in a previous article in the *SA Jewish Report* (13 September).

Second, what's your budget? The prices and conditions for this type of service vary. Some assistants require upfront payment, some apply an hourly fee, whereas my legal assistance is based on an all-inclusive-success-fee basis. In other words, the client pays only after - and if - the application is approved. The fee is as originally stated in spite of any unexpected difficulties requiring additional time and effort. If the application is rejected, there is no fee.

All expenses on the Lithuanian side such as archival investigation, government application fees, and document translation are covered by IN JURE with no obligation to compensate. Clients incur additional costs only for the tasks we cannot carry out in/from Lithuania such as postage costs when sending us documents; the cost of sourcing and notarizing documents needed in the client's home country; and getting a passport at the local embassy.

Third, there is a misconception that you have to have the original documents of your ancestors to be eligible to proceed. Be assured that in nine out of 10 cases, my clients don't have such documents. This is completely normal, and is definitely not a problem. Knowing that at least one of your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents hail from Lithuania is the only essential condition to successfully initiate the

process. Clients who have all or some of the original documents are afraid that we might take them away from them, or they might lose them. We don't ask for originals, but notarized, certified copies. Still, if it's necessary, we send the documents back to clients, for example, after they are lodged with the migration department.

Fourth, applicants should take the timeline of application into account. Those who expect quick results will be disappointed. The application takes two to four months on average to prepare. The actual time taken mostly depends on how fast clients can get the necessary documents from their country of residence. It takes 12 to 15 months for inspectors at Lithuania's migration department to process the application. Thus, the entire procedure normally takes from 14 to 19 months, even longer in some complicated cases.

The fifth thing to consider is the eligibility of other family members such as spouses and children. After the client gets Lithuanian citizenship, their spouse, unfortunately, will not automatically get Lithuanian citizenship. However it often turns out that the spouse's family or part of their family also hails from Lithuania. It's worth investigating whether she/he might be eligible to apply separately.

Regarding child eligibility, there are two different scenarios in which children can acquire Lithuanian citizenship. The first is when a child is born before at least one of the parents restores Lithuanian citizenship. The second is when a child is born after at least one of the parents restores Lithuanian citizenship. In the first scenario, the parent and child follow the same procedure for application for reinstatement of Lithuanian citizenship. The duration of the procedure will essentially be the same. In the second scenario, the child automatically becomes a Lithuanian citizen. I have discussed this question in more detail in one of my previous articles.

Lastly, there is the question of dual citizenship. The Republic of Lithuania permits dual citizenship in exceptional cases. Ancestral Lithuanian citizenship is one of the exceptional cases in which the reinstatement of your Lithuanian citizenship is possible without losing your existing citizenship.

South African citizens are required to apply for the retention of South African citizenship (Lithuanian citizenship would be a second citizenship) at the home affairs department. This procedure can take several weeks, and must be completed before you are granted Lithuanian citizenship. Other countries apply relevant procedures as well.

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# Quintessentially Jewish book wins Alan Paton Award

**Terry Kurgan** won the Alan Paton Award for non-fiction earlier this month, for her book *Everyone is Present*, a fundamentally Jewish book. The SA Jewish Report caught up with the artist and writer this week.

**What inspired you to write *Everyone is Present*? The project grew out of my multimedia art practice, which has always focused on vernacular and family photography, particularly the way in which these photographs mediate the stories we tell ourselves about the past. My aim was to try writing as an approach to certain preoccupations with the dark history of 20th century Europe that have been with me for as long as I can remember. My family came to South Africa in 1942 as refugees from Central Europe. Their lives had been disrupted by racism, discrimination, and ultimately genocide, and they lost their home, friends, families, possessions, and professions. The past was never discussed, but the intergenerational transmission of their traumatic experience was powerful, and always felt a part of me at a “cellular” level. I was driven by a need to attempt a retrieval of sorts. Through a forensic examination of photographs and other family objects with their origins in the past, I try and go back through three generations to where something once was.**

saw and what I knew, and therefore invited me to imagine experiences and stories that had resisted integration into the story my family had always told itself about itself. This treasure trove of material suggested many different paths, and in order to design a manageable project, I decided to limit myself to the writing and images that he made during the years 1939 to 1945.

**What was the most surprising thing you uncovered in your research?** On a research trip to Poland, I came across an audio archive of Holocaust-survivor testimonies, recorded in the 1990s, which had never been made available online. Among them was a recording made by my mother’s cousin Arthur, whose childhood memory of a single fact – the name of the hotel they had holidayed in year after year in the Tatra mountains – enabled me to construct the first three essays of my book. I had grown up with the story, “During the war, after their parents were shot by the Gestapo, ten-year-old Arthur walked his six-year-old sister all the way across Europe



Photo: Mark Lewis

Terry Kurgan

later, that list is pared down to a shortlist of five books. I was over the moon to discover I had made that cut!

**What do you believe the appeal of your book is for a Jewish audience?**

My book tells a story that many second and third-generation South Africans with roots in Eastern and Central Europe will strongly relate to. It also recreates and evokes an unusual aspect of Jewish secular life before the war in Poland.

**What do you believe is the appeal for a general audience?** The book also engages with universal contemporary themes and

concerns, and tells a compelling story about racism, migration, love, and secrecy, which is at the same time an analysis of memory and family photographs. It’s also a detective story!

**Why do you believe it was chosen as the non-fiction book of this year?** It would be wonderful to know what the judging panel might have said and thought about my book. But in the absence of that, I presume it met the following published criterion: “The Alan Paton Award will be bestowed on a book that presents the illumination of truthfulness, especially those forms of it that are new, delicate, unfashionable, and fly in the face of power ... and that demonstrates compassion, elegance of writing, and intellectual and moral integrity.” Looking at this again, I feel totally elated that my book won.

**What does winning the Alan Paton Award mean to you?** It’s the greatest honour, and so affirming to have been added to the company of the many extraordinary writers who have previously won what is considered to be the most prestigious literary accolade in the country. And then, I think, it will make raising funds to research and write the next book a little easier!

• *Everyone is Present* is published by Fourthwall Books, Johannesburg. To order the book in South Africa, email [sales@jacana.co.za](mailto:sales@jacana.co.za), or you can buy it at independent bookstores Love Books in Johannesburg, and Clarkes Bookshop and The Book Lounge in Cape Town. To order the book internationally, email [idea@ideabooks.nl](mailto:idea@ideabooks.nl), or buy it off [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)



Tusia Kallir, Leonia Kallir and Dr Lax, Tatra Mountains, Zakopane, Poland, 1939

Photo: Jasek Kallir

**Describe your thinking from conceiving the idea to actually sitting down to write the book.** I have my mother, Leonia Kurgan, to thank for handing me the gift that ultimately became this project. She was four years old when they fled Poland, and had often told me her own version of certain stories, and those she didn’t tell or know, were certainly delivered at birth into my unconscious! But she also preserved her father’s photographs, diaries, and papers, and spent years working on her own memoir. My grandfather was a melancholy, introspective intellectual, and kept daily diaries from the first day of World War II until he died in 1973 in Cape Town. When my mother handed me guardianship of his personal effects, I began to think about writing in relation to his writing and photographs, and started the process of raising funds to have all 35 years of the diaries translated. His photographs, which I had worked with in a range of museum and gallery exhibitions over the years, had always compelled me, because they brought into view a striking gap between what I

to family in London.” In fact, their parents had sent their two young children into hiding alone – they had no choice – and were hiding elsewhere in the city under even more difficult circumstances. Among other things, the recordings describe two years of the young children enduring deprivation and suffering during which time Arthur took heroic responsibility. Although they didn’t know it, their parents had indeed been rousted out of their hiding place and shot by the Gestapo. This was a surprising discovery, and important for me because my book elucidates how difficult it is to arrive at the truth. It’s precisely about the facts and the fiction that eventually become family truths. The story of Arthur’s courage and daring had been invented so that it fit him perfectly.

**How did you find yourself on the Alan Paton Award shortlist? Were you nominated by someone?** Publishers are invited to submit nominations to the *Sunday Times*. Some months later, a long list of twenty-five books is announced. Two months

## Underhand tactics in boycott campaign

>>Continued from page 4

A Jewish person who signed the pro-boycott letter denied that it claimed to be from the majority of South African Jews. He said they wanted to make the point that there are “South African Jews who are committed to their Jewish identity and the principle of boycott in the name of supporting the Palestinian cause”.

“Our public letter,” said the person who would speak only on condition of anonymity, “went out on Tuesday, 10 September, with a deadline of Thursday, 12 September. In that short space of time, 65 Jews signed their names.”

He said the SAJBD was attempting to silence Jews who support Palestine from speaking openly. “Those of us who do, are regularly ostracised, and thus often self-censor.”

“Our first intention was to let the UCT senate know that an academic boycott is an internationally recognised and non-violent method of responding to the human-rights abuses that Israel commits against Palestinians in the West Bank. Our second intention was to make it clear to them that this is not an issue which is split on religious lines. There are Jews in South Africa who are critical of the Israeli occupation, and support

strategies to end it.”

In the second instance, the SAJBD said that in flagrant violation of university rules, the UCT senate was spammed with a letter that contained a legal opinion on the boycott motion from someone who is not part of the UCT community.

UCT’s Elijah Moholola confirmed that the statement and petition were not circulated to members of the UCT senate via official university channels. The legal opinion was circulated by email (from a Gmail account) on 13 September 2019 ahead of the senate meeting, to “undisclosed recipients”.

SAJBD communications head Charisse Zeifert said, “It says much about the mounting desperation of the proponents of this boycott initiative that they have felt the need to resort to such underhand and unethical tactics in order to push their radical anti-Israel agenda. If their cause was honest, as they claim it to be, they would surely play by the rules.”

“The SAJBD reiterates its opposition to the proposed academic boycott against Israel, and its opposition to academic boycotts in general. They are not in the interests of the university, nor our country, and would most likely have devastating negative implications and consequences for both.”

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# Want to reduce crime? Start by abolishing minimum sentences.

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

Minimum sentences have no effect on curbing crime, but long sentences aren't the answer either, Emeritus Justice Edwin Cameron told the Annual Rabinowitz Lecture at the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Law Faculty last Wednesday evening.

Law alumnus and benefactor Ben and Shirley Rabinowitz established the Annual Rabinowitz Lecture in 2009 to encourage the participation of leading local and international lawyers in the intellectual life of the faculty.

Addressing the crisis of criminal justice in the country, Cameron said there were no quick solutions.

While he didn't see long sentences as the answer, he said minimum sentences

were "no response at all" and an "extravagant mistake" in trying to curb crime.

"They are useless and counterproductive. Prisons are not places of rehabilitation." The answer lies instead in fixing "our dismaying lack of institutional competence" and a focus on institutional regeneration – improvement in police intelligence and response, and prosecutions.

"There is absolutely no point in calls to bring back the death penalty, and I honour those politicians who have had the courage to say it," Cameron said.

During the first decade of democracy, crime increased 30%, pulling the rug from under the belief that apartheid was the cause of crime. It generated calls on the new democratic leadership for a tougher stance, resulting in the adoption of minimum sentences, harsher punishment, limiting access to bail, and the United States model of supermax prisons.

"Even the un-outspoken apartheid judiciary spoke out against minimum sentences," Cameron recalled, pointing out that they lack consistency and coherence. The minimum sentencing regime was initially introduced for a year, but 20 years later, it's still with us. "Its impact is evidenced in the great number of people detained, and the period they are detained for."



Photo: Brenton Geach/University of Cape Town

Emeritus Justice Edwin Cameron

"In spite of that, we have people calling for harsher sentences. I'm not saying there shouldn't be harsh sentences, but minimum sentences are entirely and utterly misdirected."

The prison population is up 50% since 1994, and the vast majority are those serving minimum sentences. In addition, 18 000 are serving life sentences – one out of every five prisoners. In 1995, there were only 400.

"In most cases, those life sentences are pointless," Cameron said. The "tough on crime" approach has led to a larger prison population with overcrowding and a negative impact on prisoners.

Referring to the high rate of recidivism, he said, "We have to take stock of what we're doing. Because of overcrowding, prisons are creating crime, not preventing it. Minimum sentences simply don't work, and

have seriously clogged up our prisons."

Institutional disintegration has occurred as a result of criminal syndicates taking over the government and institutions at the highest level. "That's what happened in the nine years preceding the Ramaphosa administration," Cameron said.

There was a "catastrophic loss of focus and capacity" in the police and National Prosecuting Authority at this time, with the result that public trust in the police and the administration of justice had been lost.

"Crime has become rampant because of corrupt police officials and crime intelligence," he said, pointing out, "I have no doubt that the absence of crime intelligence has had an impact on the surge of xenophobic violence."

As for solutions, none offered a quick fix. "The real and only solution to the crime rate is to recognise that the sole inhibiting institutional response to criminal conduct is the certainty of detection, the certainty of follow-up, the certainty of arraignment, the certainty of prosecution, and the certainty of punishment. The length of sentence plays no role whatsoever," Cameron said.

Improving police capacity was a "long, slow process" not necessarily about numbers but about improving "competence, responsiveness, and skill."

Cameron believes minimum sentences should be abolished. "We can scrap them right now for all lower-level, non-violent crime, and all drug offences, for a start."

Next, he proposes releasing elderly offenders, each case to be assessed individually. "Men commit violent crime 99% of the time, but once they reach 50, the risk of that same man becoming recidivist diminishes."

Third, he would like a more just bail system. "The point is not to refuse bail, but to make it more efficient." This is critical to reducing overcrowding – a third of the prison population consists of remand detainees.

Changing bail legislation could decrease

the prison population markedly. By not incarcerating those who can't afford cash bail, we could reduce the prison population by 5% immediately. "Bail should be based on the danger to society, not on the ability to afford it," Cameron said. The economics of incarceration is an added factor. It costs R10 000 a month to keep a single prisoner in jail.

Fourth, a sentencing council should be established to lay down sentencing principles, and allow for flexibility.

"I'm not blind to the harsh reality of crime and its horrors," Cameron assured the audience. "The fact is that our current system is unproductive. Futile responses don't reduce crime."

## Community Notice: JHB Jewish Cemeteries

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## Mom overcomes tragedy and inspires others to survive

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

In March 2015, Pippa Shaper got the call no mother wants to get. By that stage, she had already buried three members of her family.

It all started 20 years ago. Her daughter, Lucy, aged four, had come home from school with a tummy ache. The family had gone to Scarborough for the weekend, but the little girl was "clearly off colour", she recalled, though she had no temperature.

As the doctor arrived, Lucy stopped breathing and died. Lucy had been the victim of a "sudden catastrophic virus" about which nothing could have been done. "I joined the club that no-one wants to join," Shaper said.

Shaper, a life coach, was addressing the topic, "Authentic resilience – surviving tragedy" at a Nechama breakfast last Tuesday. Nechama is a Jewish organisation that offers counselling for the bereaved.

She was born and educated in London, working as a buyer for Marks & Spencer before coming to live in South Africa.

Four years after Lucy's death, her husband,

internationally renowned songwriter Hal Shaper, was diagnosed with a rare lymphoma for which there was no cure, and passed away soon afterwards. Shaper was left a widow at 38, with three children aged 5, 11, and 12.

She recalls how tough it was getting back on her feet and becoming independent. At the time, "the wheels fell off Jack" (12) who became "very, very rebellious", she said.

Eight days after Hal died, Shaper's sister and only sibling, Helen, died of a brain tumour. "When I needed my mom and dad, they were with her in London, and I couldn't go there because the kids needed me," she remembers.

In addition, her daughter Pia was born with a craniofacial abnormality, and has had 23 surgeries. She has almost died on a number of occasions.

But back to that call in 2015. Jack, then 24, was in a much better space, and had just called Shaper on the eve of her 50th birthday.

Ten minutes later, she received another call to say that he had had a very serious car accident, and she should get there immediately. Rushing to

Continued on page 10>>



# Social implosion can be avoided by treating people like human beings

JORDAN MOSHE

If you want to pull society back from the brink, the teachings of Tanach might be in order. The key to saving a society on the verge of disintegration is to see other human beings as people, something found in biblical texts, says leading scholar Dr Yael Ziegler.

Ziegler, an international speaker and associate professor of Tanach at Machon Herzog in Jerusalem, shared insights into the continued relevance of biblical narrative with an Academy of Jewish Thought and Learning audience in Sandton on Monday night.

She explained that the book of Shoftim (Judges) captures a difficult period in Jewish history, one fraught with breakdown on multiple levels. “Joshua had successfully led the Israelites into the land, and people were determined to build a strong society,” she said. “Unfortunately, it all starts to unravel on a religious level, but also on a social level.

“The nation falls apart. The twelve tribes are fractured, and the book contains numerous accounts of interpersonal disputes, even multiple civil wars. Leadership standards worsen, and societal conditions deteriorate.”

While many scholars focus on the religious problems which beset the Jewish people at this time, Ziegler believes that the problem begins and ends with leadership. Desperate for leadership, the people elect twelve individual judges to guide them over time. Unfortunately, this fails as the leadership deteriorates with time, and the judges use their positions to promote their own personal goals.

“The people are desperate to find someone to step up. However, they fail to set up good leadership structures,” said Ziegler. “The final refrain of the book sums it all up: ‘There was no king in Israel. Everyone did what they wanted

to.’ The final chapters illustrate social and religious collapse, and the Jewish people become its own worst enemy. It self-implodes.”

At the end of Shoftim, few characters carry a name. They are instead referred to as “man” or “woman”. This, says Ziegler, is the catalyst for



Dr Yael Ziegler

the collapse of society. “Ultimately, the kind of society they create is one in which people don’t see each other. They see objects. This isn’t a viable society, and what began with individuals spreads across the nation. Betrayal and self-interest take hold.”

A society sunk to such depths might seem beyond help, but Ziegler suggests that the solution can be found in yet another biblical text: the book of Ruth.

“The book of Ruth pulls us out of the morass, and back onto the track of effective leadership,” she said. “It’s not G-d’s intervention which does it, nor is the book’s narrative merely a bubble of goodness in a larger setting of chaos. Rather, the power of individuals to change society comes to the fore, and it effects dramatic change.”

The book of Ruth is, at its heart, a story of social responsibility. Although often presented as a love story between Ruth and her redeemer, Bo’az, Ziegler stressed that it’s a narrative which illustrates how the actions of the individual can create seismic shifts in a seemingly hopeless world.

“The word *ga’al* [redeemed] isn’t a common one in the Torah, yet it’s mentioned 23 times in Ruth. It doesn’t appear once in Shoftim, because no one takes responsibility. Bo’az becomes the redeemer of Ruth, and not only cares for her physical well-being, but provides for her emotionally and psychologically. He instructs his workers not to embarrass her or molest her. He doesn’t overlook Ruth the way the other people do when she arrives with Naomi as he understands social responsibility.”

According to Ziegler, Bo’az keeps his name when people around him are losing theirs. Bo’az is named and described as a man of strength and integrity. Contrast this with the nameless people who come out to see Naomi return, and with the aptly-named *ploni almoni*

(literally John Doe in biblical terms), and you find a man who deserves to be named.

Not only does he have a name, but when he arrives at his field, he doesn’t concern himself with business, but with enquiring into the well-being of others and knowing people’s names. “He greets his workers as soon as he arrives at the field,” said Ziegler. “After that, he asks for Ruth’s name. He is the only person to see people, and so he is given a name because he gives names to others.”

This, concluded Ziegler, is the secret to repairing a society which finds itself on the brink. “Bo’az turned Ruth from an object into a subject. He shows us the power of the individual to affect change in society, and the ability to see other people as people.”

Ziegler reflected on an insight gained on her trip to South Africa. “I learned this week that the Zulu greeting when you meet another is ‘sawubona’. In English, this means ‘I see you’. This greeting, which she pronounced confidently to applause from the audience, captures the essence of the solution to the climate we find ourselves in, she said.

The co-founder and dean of the academy, Rabbi Ramon Widmonte, closed by commenting on the uncanny relevance of Ziegler’s message to South Africa at the moment. “We are faced with the challenges seen in the Tanach today,” he said. “We are re-enacting the book of Judges. As we have seen, we cannot allow people to be transparent, and treated as objects. We need to see them as people, and take up our social responsibility.”

## Mom overcomes tragedy and inspires others to survive

>>Continued from page 9

Stellenbosch Hospital, she found him fighting for his life.

“Once again, I had the experience of knowing exactly when my child’s soul left his body,” she said, referencing Lucy’s death. “Jack had been into Buddhism, and I could hear him saying, ‘Mom, just breathe.’”

“After years of asking, ‘Why? Why me? Why again?’ I knew there was no answer,” she told the audience.

Asked how she has coped with her many losses, Shaper said, “Grief is unique to every single one of us and the death we’re going through. We make a mistake in saying how grief should be.”

Describing the five accepted stages of grief as “a most dangerous thing”, she said, “The truth is grief is messy, it goes all over the place, and you can’t say you go from one stage to another. We do ourselves a disservice when we say we’re not grieving properly.”

Two years after Hal died, Shaper befriended a woman who had also been widowed with three kids. The two formed the Widows Club with the intention of offering hope and inspiration to others in the same position.

“Family, faith, and friends are the things that get you through,” she said. “Friends for me have been unbelievable – they have become my lifeline. One of my friends organised three funerals for me. I said that the least I could do was let her organise my wedding for me,” referring to her second marriage to Sean 10 years ago.

“Harry was only nine months old [at the time of Lucy’s death], and it was a joy to have a baby who knew nothing of what was going on. That kept me going. My late husband Hal also kept me going.

“When my son Jack died, I was so fortunate to have Sean [her second husband] to keep me going. I have been so fortunate to marry into two fantastic families.”

Monday night dinners have always been a “big thing” for the family, and they continue to this day. “Jack’s friends still come, and it makes me feel as if Jack’s still at the dinner table with me.”

As for her faith, she said it had become smaller

and stronger. “It’s been tested to the hilt, and I know that I can’t lose it. Writing has always been extremely important to me – and humour. People find a creative place for their grief, and I’ve realised it’s an important part of resilience.”

She went on to say that her daughter, Pia “is the most resilient young woman. She has moved to London, and is studying to be a social worker.”

Three years ago, Shaper co-authored the Resilience Workshop with Gabi Lowe

(who lost a daughter) where they teach the “ten Rs of resilience” through concrete examples and exercises so that individuals learn not only how to survive the adversities of life, but how to thrive even in harsh conditions.

“You’ve either been through a bereavement, or you will go through one,” Shaper said. “No-one gets away unscathed.

Know this: you will survive, you are stronger than you think.

“I want you to hear my story and say, ‘If she can do it, so can I.’”

Asked if she was afraid that others around her would die, Shaper said, “Nothing in life is permanent. Everything we have and love can go at any second. I’ve been close to death once – I was hijacked and had a gun held to my head, and I thought, ‘Oh, it’s my turn now.’”

“I live my life with such joy and acceptance, and appreciate everybody I love because it can go at any second.”

She conceded, however, that anger had been her primary emotion. “I went into deep therapy for three and a half years after Hal died, and I still see a therapist now.”

Fourteen years ago, Shaper co-founded Home from Home, a non-profit organisation that provides supervised community-based foster care for vulnerable children. At present, it is running 36 family homes in the Western Cape.



Photo: Shana Isserow

Pippa Shaper



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## Deutsch one stride closer to representing Israel at the Olympics

JORDAN MOSHE

**B**eatie Deutsch, the first haredi woman to win an international athletics competition, took eighth place in last week's 42.2km Cape Town Marathon. With a time of 2:36:41 (a personal record), the former gymnast and a black belt in Taekwondo blazed across the finish line on Sunday.

It means that she has not only met her goal of achieving a world championship time of 2:37:00, but that she is a step closer to the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics.

She wrote of the race on social media, "In my final kilometre, I sprinted to the finish, breaking 2:37. Looking at the stats before the race, it [didn't] make any sense for a runner like me with a time of 2:42 to come eighth when there were eight women with sub 2:29 marathons, and seven others who had run faster than me before."

She wrote that she was determined to stay positive throughout her 42.2km, no matter what difficulties came up. "With every marathon, you are bound to face challenges, but it's your perspective that can make all the difference. I made sure to smile at every person I passed. I ran with a huge grin plastered to my face, blew kisses to the kids, and pumped my fists at supporters. Because when you run with joy, your body responds in kind."

Deutsch is a mother of five, and lives in Israel. Raised in an ultra-Orthodox community in New Jersey, she made aliyah in 2009, and is known for running in modest clothing including a skirt, shirt sleeves below her elbow, and a headscarf.

She won the 2018 Jerusalem Marathon and the Tiberias Marathon in January. She ran the Tel Aviv Marathon in 2017 while seven months pregnant, and this year, qualified for funding from Israel to be an Olympic candidate in 2020.

"My goal is to encourage other women to pursue distance running, and improve our field in Israel," Deutsch told *Canadian Running Magazine* earlier this year. "I want to empower women. I didn't even realise how much I needed this outlet as a mom."

"So many women have told me that I've inspired them to start running, and to take time for themselves. What's the expression? You can't pour from an empty cup."

## Israel's 'cyber road show' in Botswana

TALI FEINBERG

Six Israeli cyber security companies last week led the Israeli ministry of trade and economics' first business delegation to Botswana.

Dubbed a "cyber roadshow", Israeli companies Verint, Checkmarx, Cybereason, CYBONET, Radware, and Rafal went to the country with two main goals: to engage with Botswana government officials with whom they could initiate business relationships, and to engage with the market leaders of several business markets," said Elliott Black, the trade office's representative for cyber security.

The first day was taken up with meetings with government offices, including the Botswana defence force, transport ministry, police service, and financial authorities.

The second day was devoted to a "B2B cyber engagement" event. It was packed with representatives from Botswana's leading ICT companies, tech distributors and integrators, the country's banks, financial service providers, and many more. "Several people and companies had to be turned away because of the fantastic response to the invitations," said Black.

Hundreds of meeting took place between the cyber security companies and attendees. Black gave a presentation on the ways in which Israel is a cyber nation and leader in cyber security, addressing how and why Israel excels in this field in terms of business, influence, leadership, innovation, and dialogue.

The presentations also focused on the way Israel nurtures its human capital to find, train, and nurture leaders, innovators, and disruptors in this field. It resulted in many new relationships being formed between Israel's trade and industry ministry and public and private offices in Botswana.

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# Discovering Doornfontein's lost Jewish world

STEVEN GRUZD

Doornfontein was once the heart and soul of Jewish life in Johannesburg. Nestled to the south of Berea, Yeoville, and Bellevue in a valley in the shadow of Ponte, this suburb housed many shuls, iconic kosher eateries like Krystals, Nussbaums and Wachenheimers, and the Chevrah Kadisha. Today, you have to search to uncover this derelict suburb's rich Jewish history.

"If he moved quickly, on Simchat Torah, a young boy could collect chocolates from seven different shuls in half an hour," said Ishvara Dhyan, a chef whose company African Secrets runs walking tours around Johannesburg. He brought to life the old days on his recent Jewish tour of Doornfontein.

Dhyan sported sandals and a large maroon kippah that matched his loose maroon trousers. The tour began on Beit Street, outside Ellis Park rugby stadium. Named for De Beers founder Albert Beit, this street was a *beit* (home) for Jewish Joburgers. "My dad brought us kids here on Sundays," he said. "Apartheid had ensured that the rest of the city was dead. But Beit Street was alive." By that time in the 1970s and 1980s, the Jewish community had long moved onto greener pastures.

Across from the stadium, Dhyan showed us where the Yiddische Arbeiter Klub once stood. A haven for secular Jewish socialists, it was a hub for Yiddish language, art, drama, and song, before it burned down in 1948. I learned that Ellis Park had once been a vast lake, where Jewish working-class atheists loved to picnic on May Day and Yom Kippur. "Being Jewish was much more than religious," Dhyan said, "It was tribal, ethnic, linguistic – a critical part of people's identity."

Dhyan described the three main types of Jews in the 1920s to 1940s: non-observant working-class people, ultra-orthodox yeshiva *bochers* (students), and materialistic Jews for whom shul twice a year was enough. By 1948, Jews faced the choice of making aliyah, keeping their heads down as "good whites", or (as a tiny minority did) joining the anti-apartheid struggle.

About 22 000 to 30 000 Jews lived in and around the *shtetl* that was Doornfontein. Yiddish was their first language. These *Litvaks* had fled Czarist Russia's pogroms for the gold, diamonds, and ostrich farms of South Africa. There were a few thousand *Yekkes* – German Jews – among them.

Many Jews who were platteland *smouse* (pedlars) and tradesmen sent their children to boarding houses in Johannesburg. One was situated on the Doornfontein campus of the University of Johannesburg (formerly the Wits

Technikon). All that's left now is a towering palm tree amid the ugly pink-and-grey zebra striped university buildings. Another, Herber House, stood in Bellevue opposite Ponte.

You can clearly see the word "tailor" among a triplet of tiny shops backing onto the boarded-up Alhambra Theatre. I tried to imagine my ancestors buying goods from these Jewish businesses in the wide dirt roads where horses and carts plied their trade.

The next stop was the neo-classical Doornfontein Synagogue, better known as the "Lions Shul" for the two golden lions perched on its veranda.

Built in 1905 by the Yekkes, the lions were a



Photos: Tracy Rehse and Steven Gruzd



Magen David in the floor of the former Bet Hamedrash Hagadol, now a gymnasium



Damaged door to the Wolmarans Street Synagogue



Formerly Jewish shops behind the Alhambra Theatre

symbol of the ruling British Empire. The shul displays ornate columns, pressed ceilings, and dark wood pews. Its shelves groan with religious books in Hebrew and Cyrillic script, brought from Eastern Europe over a century ago. The oldest working shul in Johannesburg, it still operates every Shabbat, where 25 to 30 people daven at its 06:00 services. I remember attending on Simchat Torah as a child.

The first Chassidic shul built in 1930 (destroyed in 1964) was not far away. Nor was the Ponevez Shul (1931-1974), built by



The Lions Shul veranda



Outside the Great Synagogue in Wolmarans Street

immigrants from that part of Lithuania. The first Jewish old aged home – the Altesheim – was built across the road in 1927. It had its own shul, before it moved to Sandringham Gardens in 1962.

Old semi-detached Jewish houses are now used for University of Johannesburg departments. "Their *stoeps* (balconies) were an 'early Facebook' where everyone knew each other's business," said Dhyan. "There was no electricity

or refrigeration. Mothers bought fresh food from the market daily, and had live chickens slaughtered for dinner." Many rich Jews built their mansions across Saratoga Street.

The next stop was the grand Beit Hamedrash Hagadol, with its unmistakably churchlike narrow arched windows. A Magen David is imbedded in the black and white entrance hall's paving. Today, it's a gymnasium. It was popularly dubbed the "Berele Chagy shul", after its famous chazan of that name. Jews drove from across the then Transvaal on Shabbat to hear him sing. "South African Jewry is unique," Dhyan laughed. "We have the biggest 'secular orthodox'

population on the planet."

Across streets strewn with garbage, flanked by art deco buildings sprouting satellite dishes like mushrooms, the next stop was the Great Synagogue on Wolmarans Street. In 1914, landlord Sammy Marks provided the money to build this breathtaking domed shul, modelled on the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, a Byzantine church that became a mosque and then a secular museum. Countless weddings and Barmitzvahs were held here.

In 1995, crime, grime, and shifting demographics caused the shul to close. A scaled-down version of this magnificent edifice became the Great Park Synagogue in Oaklands, which opened in 2000.

This shul still praises heaven – in a different way. It's used by the African Zionist Revelation Church of G-d, and it was packed with (mostly Zimbabwean) worshippers, inside and out, when we visited. Oy! What would our *bobbas* and *zeidas*

"If he moved quickly, on Simchat Torah, a young boy could collect chocolates from seven different shuls in half an hour,"

(grandmothers and grandfathers) think? The Magen David is still clearly visible on the cornices, exterior doors, lamp holders, and on the domed ceiling. Across the road, the Hebrew inscription, "Beit Talmud Torah" for the Hebrew High School is still carved across the lintel.

Nearby, Elfreda Court once sheltered penniless German Jews who escaped Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1939, waiting for their possessions to arrive by sea. One was artist Pieter-Dirk Uys' mother.

Across the road was the Jewish Government School, built in the 1890s. "As Jews only believed in half the bible, President Paul Kruger built them half a school," said Dhyan. Now known as IH Harris Primary School, it has heard Yiddish, English, Afrikaans, Portuguese, and French in its lifetime. It caters mostly for inner-city Francophone immigrant children today.

Dhyan said, "We need to know our history, and where we come from. If we don't have roots, what's the point? Joburg Jews don't have that passion. We need to learn this, and hold onto it. It defines us as human beings.

"Johannesburg doesn't value history. It doesn't look after old sites. It's the land of the lotto, of gold, and of getting ahead. It's a little bit soulless. People are here to grab and go. We really need to preserve history better, and hopefully these tours contribute to that."

It seems high time for a Johannesburg Jewish Museum, before there's nothing left to preserve.

• If you are interested in these tours, email [ishvara@africansecrets.co.za](mailto:ishvara@africansecrets.co.za)





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# Kimberley Shul shines in first wedding in almost 30 years

TALI FEINBERG

"I grew up in the Jewish community of Kimberley, and always dreamed of getting married in my own shul, surrounded by the people I know and love. It's a magnificent shul that has a presence," says Ida Horwitz, who married Zach Lieberman in the Kimberley Shul on Sunday, 15 September.

The couple got engaged in January, and planning the wedding in just nine months was "quite an overwhelming undertaking". In addition, the bride wrote her candidate attorney board exams three weeks before the wedding.

While the shul functions all year round, it didn't have the capacity to host such a big

heyday." This was the first wedding he has officiated in this shul.

Silberhaft says the Kimberley Jewish community has an important place in South African Jewish history, and many guests were former residents who had not been there in many years. "Many had their Barmitzva's there, but they hadn't been back in decades, and probably won't return. I took a group of guests to the cemetery where they could pay their respect to relatives, which was very meaningful before Yom Tov."

The Kimberley Jewish community is unique because mostly German Jews settled there, as opposed to Lithuanian Jews in most other parts of the country, says Silberhaft. The shul seats 613 people, and at one stage, there were two shuls and two kosher butcheries in Kimberley. At its height, the community had about 500 families – about 2 000 to 3 000 people.

The wedding's Shabbat dinner was held at the Oleander Guest House, owned by the bride's great grandfather. It was a moving experience to have Shabbos there, 94 years after his own Shabbat dinners under that roof.

The chuppah was presented to the shul in

with the chuppah, we found batches of old, blank *ketubah* (Jewish prenuptial agreement) papers – we used the background design for our *ketubah*."

Kashering the Kimberley Club for a Jewish wedding reception was a particular highlight for Rav Silberhaft. "Despite being so influential, Jews were not allowed into the club when it was first built, so it felt like a great victory," he says.

Special guests included Reverend Joseph Matzner, spiritual leader of the Kimberley congregation in the 1970s; Nachi Ash and Yosef Shishler, who have been conducting high holiday services in Kimberley for the past 19 years; and Rabbi Mordechai Rodal and Mrs Sara Rodal of the couple's current congregation, Chabad of Norwood. "They all assisted as witnesses, saying *sheva brochas* (wedding blessings) and reading our *ketubah* respectively," says the bride.

"People can learn a lot from country communities and how we have survived. I had an amazing childhood – it was just about being together. To see what this simcha did for my community, it was 100% worth it," says Horwitz. "We will be going back for Rosh Hashanah, and the shul will be open for Yom Tov in addition to all year round. If you join



Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft officiates the marriage between Ida Horwitz and Zach Lieberman

Photo: C.J. Harding

The consecration stone for the Kimberley Shul was laid on 31 July 1901, and it opened just more than a year later, on the first night of Rosh Hashanah in 1902. That was exactly 117 years and one day before the wedding on Sunday, and this is the first wedding in the shul since 1991. This year, the 118th consecutive Rosh Hashanah will be celebrated at the shul.

"My aunt and uncle got married here exactly 72 years ago, so it was very auspicious, and we were surrounded by memories," says the new bride. "Home is where your parents are, and I'm lucky that my home-town shul is still open." More than 100 former members of the congregation descended on the town for the simcha.

"We were worried people wouldn't come to a destination wedding, but 160 people flew in from all over the world or made the six-hour drive from Johannesburg. It lived up to my expectations 100% and more! It was very emotional. To see the shul so full was beyond beautiful. It's a symbol of country communities. There is something magnificent and unique about these smaller communities – you grow up in a family, there are no divisions, and you mark every simcha and *chag* (festival) together," she says.

function, so the families brought in Kosher Chef caterer Eric Stern and *mashgiach* Dov Klatsky, who is registered with the Beth Din. They catered the entire wedding weekend, and worked closely with venues and hotels to ensure that everything was done according to halacha. The family also had to hire and bring in all the kosher wine, cutlery, and crockery. They hosted a Shabbat dinner and brocha, a Saturday night havdallah and braai, and the wedding and reception.

Horwitz has known country communities rabbi Moshe Silberhaft since she was two years old, and couldn't imagine getting married without him officiating the ceremony. "He has always been adamant that people must have rites of passage. He put us in touch with everyone, and facilitated everything. He really took a chance, and helped us make a beautiful kosher wedding weekend, meaningful ceremony, and electric atmosphere.

"This simcha was one of the highlights of my 26-year career," says Rabbi Silberhaft. "Everyone who was there wanted to be there. There was an incredible atmosphere of community and warmth. To see the grand shul filled up like that was absolutely spectacular. It was like going back in time, witnessing what the country communities were like in their



The magnificent Kimberley Shul saw its first wedding in 30 years

1962 by the Union of Jewish Women, and has been housed there ever since. "It makes you think about how many couples were married there," says Horwitz. Because it hadn't been used for thirty years, the brass poles had to be polished and the cloth dry-cleaned. "Together

us, you'll get a front row seat! I hope our wedding inspires other small communities to host simchas once again. There are beautiful shuls all over the country waiting for celebrations."

## Drama students capture depravity and destiny of Holocaust

JORDAN MOSHE

A single violin plays hauntingly as figures clad in unnerving animal masks gaze into the distance from the windows. Other individuals with hidden faces then drift around the room, some bearing rifles and others sporting striped prisoner uniforms. Beyond the masks they all wear, they are united in their silence: they watch and walk soundlessly, and an eerie atmosphere pervades.

This was the scene which welcomed guests to the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre in Forest Town, Johannesburg, on Tuesday evening.

In heartrending performances, drama students of King David Victory Park High School captured the raw terror of Nazi Germany's victims, and the mercilessness of its murderers.

The cast of talented young actors presented adaptations of Art Spiegelman's graphic novel, *Maus*, and Edith Eger's *The Choice* in unique productions they wrote and produced themselves.

"When we talk about the Holocaust, we talk about human beings sinking below the level of animals," said amateur historian, tour guide, and lawyer, Hugh Raichlin.

"Every person has a choice in every situation. *Maus* takes us into the depths of depravity, and *The Choice* tells us that within that depravity, we have a choice, and can change destiny. If a person doesn't subscribe to a value system greater than their own anger, the behaviour we have experienced as Jews will keep playing out."

In spite of the darkness Jews have experienced, we have always been the proverbial 'fiddler on the roof', Raichlin said. "We still play the violin, we sing and rejoice in spite of the most terrible tribulations. We're a people that celebrates and symbolises eternal hope for the world."

The two performances certainly captured all this and more. Performing from a script is demanding enough, but the cast also derived unique and demanding productions from the two hefty texts they chose to work with.

*Maus* tells the story of American cartoonist Art Spiegelman's interview of his father, Vladek, about his experience as a Polish Jew and Holocaust survivor. Presenting a chronological narrative, and investing it with tension and emotion while wearing a mask is a tall order, yet the cast did it with aplomb. Whether capturing Spiegelman's difficulty in reconciling himself with his father's story, or channelling emotion in Vladek's reunion with his wife, Anja, the students conveyed Spiegelman's work acutely and with flair.

Emotional investment and tension were heightened as



Erin Midzuk as Eger in *The Choice*

Eger's *The Choice* took to the stage. Eger was a gymnast and ballerina when she was sent to Auschwitz at the age of 16. There, she strove to keep herself alive, dancing for the infamous Josef Mengele, and caring for her sister while keeping her spirit intact.

Her narrative about what courage looks like, and the choice to pay attention to what remains when something is lost, was carried off with talent beyond measure. Tears flowed as an older Eger (played movingly by Erin Midzuk) narrated the life of her younger self, painting a poignant portrait of suffering and loss.

In her final line, Midzuk said, "You can't change what happened, what you did, or what was done to you, but you can choose to live now. My precious, you can choose to be free." As the stage faded to black, the extraordinary cast earned a standing ovation, and left an indelible impression upon their emotionally drained audience.



Camp guards look on as inmates fall in line in a scene from *The Choice*





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# A new way of eating old traditions

With apples and honey being the most synonymous with Rosh Hashanah, it's no surprise that the melodic words, "Apples dipped in honey we do eat; we daven to Hashem to make the new year sweet," roll off our tongues every new year.

While these two foods are found on every Rosh Hashanah table, there are so many other traditional foods, as ancient as the Talmud, that have been passed down from grandmothers to grandchildren.

Growing up, my mom always told stories of my *savta* (grandmother) and her culinary skills, describing all the dishes that came out of her tiny kitchen in Haderah, Israel. Often, while we prepared traditional dishes for the *chag*, my mom told me tales of how, when walking home from school on the morning before Rosh Hashanah, she would reach the corner on her street and catch wafts of boiling fish heads for gefilte fish, at which point she would turn around and run away. Needless to say, the gefilte fish recipe was not passed down to me.

Although we didn't have gefilte fish, our table was always filled with an abundance

of traditional foods like grilled fish, pomegranates, spinach, leeks, carrots, beets, fennel, dates and, of course, apples and honey. Little did I know that these tradition-rich foods are equally nutrition-rich, and how fascinating it is that these symbolic foods are paralleled with such wonderful health properties.

Apples, a fruit from the garden of Eden, represents the vulnerability yet hardiness of the Jewish people. Apples are a low GI fruit due to their high fibre content, which also promotes gut health. They contain the bioactive ingredient quercetin that helps to "switch on" antioxidant pathways in the body, and helps reduce the risk of chronic diseases and cancers while also promoting longevity. The apple skin also contains triterpenoid which has been shown to have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and cardio-protective properties.

With the sweetness of a little drizzle of honey, we wish each other a sweet new year. Whether dipping apples into honey, using it as a sweetening agent for dressings, or making traditional spiced honey cakes, known as *lekach*, this

flavour lingers on our palates throughout the festive season. Honey contains the bioactive ingredients flavonoids and polyphenols which help with antioxidation, and has anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory effects. One only needs a small amount – a drop of this golden liquid goes a long way.

I love cooking with pomegranates, the *rimon*. Pomegranates are one of the seven species of Israel, and are often used as the "new fruit" for *shehechyanu*, the prayer of gratitude for being alive and celebrating new experiences. Their ruby kernels, symbolising the 613 *mitzvot*, are delicious when mixed into salads, sprinkled over grilled vegetables with a drizzle of tahina, or scattered over fish or meat. These crunchy pockets of juicy explosion contain two very nourishing compounds, namely punicalagin, a potent antioxidant, and punicalic acid, a healthy fat extracted from the seed oil. With research showing the benefits of pomegranates in reducing the risk of heart disease, cancer, arthritis, and other inflammatory conditions, it seems that they not only finish your meal off with tangy sweet pearls of colour, they also give you that added vitality boost.

A traditional Rosh Hashanah meal includes a variety of colourful wholesome vegetables. Carrots, from the Hebrew word *gezer*, meaning decree, symbolise our hope for good decrees for the new year. These root vegetables provide a good source of beta carotene, fibre, vitamin K, and potassium. Whether fresh in salads, blended into carrot turmeric soup, or roasted with pomegranate extract and sumac, carrots promote good vision, immune health, and help build new tissue in our bones, hair, and skin.

Another vegetable with an abundance



## ON NOURISHING NOSH

Hilit Milner

of nutritional power is beetroot. With the Hebrew word *selek*, meaning remove, beetroots are included in the meal to remove all our enemies. Beetroots are a wonderful vegetable full of fibre, minerals, and antioxidant promoting compounds such as betalains. They help support the innate detoxification pathways in our liver, reducing inflammation. They also support our vascular and cardiac system as they are rich in nitric oxide, a natural substance which dilates our blood vessels increasing the oxygen flow around our body.

Although the traditional gefilte fish was not found on our Yom Tov table, we always still had some form of fish. Fish, which spawns in plenty, represents fertility, while the heads of the fish give us the strength to swim headfirst into the new year. Fish is a great source of lean protein, nourishing our bodies with B vitamins, vitamin D, and omega-3 fatty acids (if using fatty fish such as salmon or trout). Omega-3s are potent anti-inflammatory agents, promoting vascular health, healthy cholesterol, reducing the risk of atherosclerosis, and improving brain health.

This Rosh Hashanah, I encourage you to combine symbolism with creativity. Understand the bright new colours of nutritional power that shines through the deep colours of tradition. Move into your new year remembering and respecting the old that has been passed down while adding new flair and flavour for the future. Enjoy all the foods that nourish you and stand you in good stead for a healthy, happy new year.

## Ricotta honey cake

### Ingredients

#### Cake

- 2¼ cups almond flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup cooked quinoa
- ½ cup ricotta cheese (125g)
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons orange juice (¼ orange)
- 1 tablespoon orange zest (¼ orange)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

#### Topping

- ¾ cup ricotta cheese (170g)
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 1 teaspoon honey

#### Method

##### Cake

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180°C.
2. In a large mixing bowl, place

all the dry ingredients, and mix them together.

3. Add all the remaining ingredients into the bowl, and whisk them together with a spatula until they combine smoothly.
4. Pour the cake batter into a lightly greased, rectangular cake tin, smoothing out the top using the back of a spatula.
5. Place the cake into the oven

to bake for 30 minutes until golden brown. Use the "toothpick" test to see whether it's cooked through.

6. Once the cake has cooled a bit, top it off with ricotta cheese icing.

#### Topping

In a small mixing bowl, place all the topping ingredients, and whisk them together until smooth and creamy.



## Beetroot and mint crusted salmon

### Ingredients

#### Fish

- 1kg fillet salmon/trout
- 8 medium beetroots
- 1 cup pistachios
- 1½ cloves of garlic
- 1½ lemons – juiced
- 1 lemon zest
- 1 medium box fresh mint (80g) (¾ for beetroot crust, ¼ for serving)
- Salt and pepper

#### Vegetable base

- 1 packet snap peas (200g)
- 3 small packets asparagus tips (300g)
- 1 packet tender stem broccoli (400g)
- 1 lemon – juiced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

#### Method

##### Fish

- Pre-heat the oven to 180°C.
- Halve and peel the beetroots, and parboil for 20 minutes (they will still be slightly hard).
- In a food processor place the parboiled beetroot,

pistachios, garlic, lemon zest, lemon juice, ¾ of the fresh mint, salt, and pepper. Blend the ingredients together until they roughly combine, leaving a slight texture to the beetroot-crust mixture.

- On a roasting tray, place the salmon/trout, and cover it with the beetroot and mint crust mixture so that the fish is coated evenly and sealed.
- Place the fish in the oven and roast for about 40 to 45 minutes. Turn the oven onto grill, and leave it for five minutes until the crust slightly crisps up.
- Place the cooked fish on top of the vegetable base. Chop the remaining fresh mint and sprinkle over the fish just before serving.

#### Vegetable base

1. Place a wok on a medium heated stove top.
2. Once the pan is hot, add the olive oil, snap peas, asparagus tips, and broccoli into the wok. Sauté for five minutes, squeeze the lemon juice over the vegetables, and sprinkle some salt.
3. Once cooked, place the vegetables onto a serving dish to use as the base on which to place the fish.

(Serves 8 to 9)

## Fresh apple, carrot, and fennel salad

### Ingredients

#### Salad

- 1 green apple
- 3 medium carrots
- 2 fennel bulbs
- ¼ cup crushed roasted walnuts
- 1 bag watercress (40g)
- 2 tablespoons fennel fronds
- ½ lemon
- 2 tablespoons pomegranate seeds
- 1 handful fresh mint

#### Dressing

- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- ½ tablespoon lemon juice

#### Method

##### Salad

1. De-core the apples, cut them in half, and slice them very thinly.
2. Peel the carrots, and using a peeler or mandolin (on the thinnest setting) slice them thinly, lengthways.
3. Using a mandolin, slice the fennel bulbs.
4. Place all the slices into a large mixing bowl, and loosely mix the ingredients.
5. On a serving dish, spread the watercress, placing the remaining sliced ingredients from the mixing bowl on top.
6. Roughly chop the fennel fronds and mint, and scatter

them, as well as the crushed roasted walnuts and pomegranate seeds over the salad.

7. Just before serving, drizzle the dressing over the salad, and add an extra squeeze of fresh lemon juice on top.

#### Dressing

1. In a dressing jar, add the olive oil, apple cider vinegar, lemon juice, honey, and Dijon mustard.
2. Shake until the dressing is mixed well together.
3. Pour over the salad just before serving.







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# Do things because you want to – not for a cause



## INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman

The conversation went something like this. “I really want to climb Kilimanjaro. Do you know any good causes?”

“I know plenty of causes,” I answered, “but why would you need one to climb a mountain?”

“For a cause!” She repeated slowly, but emphatically, as if I was either hard of hearing, or just slow. “For. A. Cause.”

Here’s a thought. We don’t need to know a cancer sufferer for us to climb a mountain. No one has to be in desperate need of an urgent bone-marrow transplant for us to run the Jerusalem Marathon. Diabetes might be a horrible affliction, but we need to accept that running 42km through the boroughs of New York with 50 000 other runners isn’t going to raise the awareness that we think it will. There is even a real chance that the disease might be better known than we are, which is a bit ironic. Maybe even a bit arrogant.

It’s quite possible to do something like running or climbing a mountain just because we want to. Not for a cause. Not for cancer. And not in memory of a child who died tragically. And, whereas it might not seem possible in the world of faux-meaning and duplicitous depth, there is no actual requirement to attach a lofty ideal to it. People, in fact, have been climbing mountains long before we even knew what fibromyalgia was.

We don’t need to emigrate for “our children’s” sake, we can leave because we want to. We can stay in South Africa because we choose to, and not because we feel responsible for the elderly. Similarly, there is no requirement for us to hashtag

“blessed” and “grateful” from our holidays in Mauritius. Sometimes it’s actually okay to let our hair down, revel in the lack of substance of it all, and just have a good time. Because we can. And, whereas it might be ridiculously important to appreciate every moment of the good times, letting everyone know that we do, or at least saying that we do, is pretty meaningless.

Of course, causes are good. And, raising awareness and some money can hardly do harm. It’s unlikely that a whale in Japan would object to someone donning a whale coloured T-shirt with a witty but thought-provoking catch-phrase on it in order to stop fishermen armed with a harpoon and some blood lust. But it’s also hardly likely to prevent it from ending its life in the whale blubber section of a Tokyo supermarket.

Social media along with virtue signalling has prescribed that social causes and search for meaning is valued above all else. Add a healthy dose of Jewish survivor guilt to this, and it’s little wonder that we have become a jabbering, nervous species who thinks that the only way that we can actually do something for the heck of it is if we attach something sad and powerful to it.

It’s time to let that go. It’s time for us to run a marathon with someone’s name on it because we want to. And not because it gives us permission to do it. And not because it absolves us of guilt about the time we spent training, the cost of the trip, and the fact that we are going to enjoy it.

We can climb Kilimanjaro “because it’s there” and because we choose to, not because somewhere, it’s a lesson in leadership.

And when we get to the top, of that mountain, or to the top of anything else, we need to feel gratitude. But we don’t need to hashtag it.

## Letters

### PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKES NEEDED AGAINST HAMAS AND HEZBOLLAH

For years, we have been bluffing ourselves that we can make peace with Hamas and Hezbollah, and we have been supplying these organisations with cement and many more materials which they have used to develop arms and dig tunnels in preparation for war against Israel. We even allow Qatar to give them money, which is supposed to be used for humanitarian causes, but is instead used for armaments.

The constitution of Hamas provides for the destruction of Israel. It openly states this as its primary purpose. It has failed to uphold living conditions in Gaza, and blames Israel’s security barriers as the cause, instead of admitting that all monies received are used for armaments.

Everyone knows that eventually there is going to be a big war between Israel and Hamas. It has no other enemies except for the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which we can’t imagine it going to war with. So why is it producing such a volume of arms and digging tunnels?

Why are we waiting for the inevitable? They are getting stronger by the day as a result of their efforts to build up armaments, and with the arms provided

by Iran.

Why don’t we carry out a pre-emptive strike, and bring them to their knees, capture their leaders, ammunition plants, and install a leadership that is pro-Israel and will not cause any further trouble. Or alternatively, hand Gaza back to the Palestinian Authority under conditions which make future wars impossible.

A pre-emptive strike against Hezbollah is also preferable, as the longer we wait, the stronger it becomes and the more weapons it receives from Iran. We are all aware that its main objective is to eliminate Israel from the face of the earth as it is the proxy of Iran, which has the same agenda.

There is virtually no likelihood of peace being made with these enemies unless the United States agrees to a pact with Israel to come to its assistance if Israel is attacked (which we feel wouldn’t be in Israel’s interest).

Now is also the ideal time as we will have the support of the US president, who will also veto any resolution against Israel at the United Nations. – **David Gaffan, Ra’anana**

**Disclaimer:** The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not reflect the views of the SA Jewish Report. The editor is not obliged to use every letter and will not publish vitriolic statements or any letters with inappropriate content. Letters will be edited and – if need be – shortened. **Guidelines:** Letters are limited to 400 words. Provide your full name, place of residence, and daytime phone number. Letters should be emailed to [editorial@sajewishreport.co.za](mailto:editorial@sajewishreport.co.za)

## A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# UCT boycott campaign resorts to desperate tactics

Last week, the proponents of an academic boycott against Israel at the University of Cape Town (UCT), contrived (in defiance of university regulations) to send a statement titled, “South African Jews support the academic boycott of Israeli universities enabling the occupation” to all members of the UCT senate. This was obviously aimed at creating the impression that South African Jewry is divided on this question, thereby ostensibly validating the insistence by the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) lobby group that the boycott isn’t against Jews, but about standing up for human rights. It emerged afterwards that those distributing the statement on the day were wearing SAUJS (South African Union of Jewish Students) t-shirts so as to hoodwink people into thinking that the Jewish student organisation on campus supported their position. It was also discovered that the statement had (in further defiance of university regulations) been sent to the UCT senate under a fictitious Jewish-sounding name. While disgusted, we weren’t surprised. Such brazen deceitfulness has characterised the UCT boycott campaign from the very outset.

Much of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies’ (SAJBD’s) work this week has necessarily been – in partnership with the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) and SAUJS – to expose these underhanded tactics while counteracting whatever false impressions have been created about where the Jewish community stands on the question of the boycott. This has been done, inter alia, by liaising with UCT leadership, issuing press statements offering the real facts of the situation, and responding in media forums where the offending statement appeared. Fortunately, the requisite facts and figures are readily to hand. We were able to point out that



## ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev



whereas a mere 65 South Africans of Jewish origin had endorsed the boycott, a counter petition opposing it being run by the SAZF had to date garnered just less than 65 000 signatures. Reference was further made to previous rigorous academic surveys conducted by UCT’s own Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies, in which close to 90% of the respondents expressed strong or moderate support for Israel, while only 1% expressed negative feelings. The signatories thus clearly constitute a tiny fringe group, in spite of deviously trying to exaggerate their significance.

The fact that proponents of the UCT boycott feel the need to resort to such underhand and unethical tactics to push their radical anti-Israel agenda smacks more of desperation on their part than anything else.

In addition to being self-evidently discriminatory, contrary to the values of academic freedom, and motivated by overt political bias rather than genuine concern for human rights, an academic boycott of Israel would be against the interests of UCT itself, as well as South Africa as a whole. The SAJBD will continue to oppose this pernicious initiative, and urge UCT to decisively reject it when it comes up for consideration once more later this year.

• 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 (21 September)

- Bet David hosts a talk by qualified yoga teacher Carine Delhaye on *Yoga and Judaism – Convergent Paths to Spiritual Mindfulness*. Time: 12:00. Venue: Bet David, 3 Middle Road, Morningside. Enquiries: [admin1@betdavid.org.za](mailto:admin1@betdavid.org.za) or 011 783 7117.

### Sunday (22 September)

- Second Innings hosts singer and musician Jenna Feinberg in *Jenna Feinberg in Song for You*. Time: 09:45 for tea, 10:30 for speaker. Venue: 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.
- Ongoing Nechama – Growth from Grief support group. Time: tea from 09:30, group starts at 10:00 to 11:30. Venue: Jossel Card Room, ground floor, Golden Acres, 85 George Avenue, Sandringham. RSVP: 011 532 9701 or [lindaf@jhbchev.co.za](mailto:lindaf@jhbchev.co.za)

### Monday (23 September)

- Join the Women’s International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) as it pays homage to the recipients of its 2019 Rebecca Sieff Awards. Guest speaker Eden Ben Shitrit is one of the many success stories of the organisation’s Neve WIZO project in Israel. Time: 10:30. No charge. For venue details, and to book your place, contact Lauren 011 645 2515 or [wizojhb@beyachad.co.za](mailto:wizojhb@beyachad.co.za)

### Tuesday (24 September)

- Hebrew speakers meet at 10:30. Venue: Beyachad, first floor, 2 Elray Street, Raedene.

### Wednesday (25 September)

- It’s impossible to live a full life without challenges, but what if everything we need to cope is already inside ourselves? Join social workers Tova Goldstein and Lara Naik for a one-hour talk on how a simple understanding of how our minds work unlocks resilience for ourselves and our children. Time: 19:30. Venue: Mina Lopato Nursery School, 7A Chester Road, Greenside. Cost: R100 per person or R150 per couple including kosher coffee, tea, and biscuits. Limited seats available. Book on 011 447 8028 or [info@minalopato.co.za](mailto:info@minalopato.co.za)

### Thursday (26 September)

- The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre invites you to a special screening of *Leo’s Journey*, a documentary about Josef Mengele’s experiments on twins at Auschwitz, including a presentation by Holocaust descendant Richard Lowy titled *In My Father’s Words*. Time: 19:30. Venue: 1 Duncombe Road, Forest Town. Free admission, donations welcome. RSVP [dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za](mailto:dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za) or 011 640 3100.



### TURN NEGATIVE SA REALITY INTO A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

We live in a country where unfortunately, children are exposed to the worst of humanity, whether it be on the front page of a newspaper, listening to the radio in the car, or on social media.

Our children cannot escape the reality of where we live. Parents should use it as a teaching opportunity. They could introduce their children to the fact that while most people in the world are good, there are some who may look good on the outside, but may not be good on the inside.

Children need to be taught that if somebody makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, they need to tell an adult who can help them.

Even though we want to protect our children’s innocence, we cannot always control what they are exposed to, so it’s far better to give them the skills to keep them safe and help them to know what to do if faced with a problematic situation.

By doing so, we create resilient children who are able to thrive in a world full of challenges. Should you wish to host a talk for parents on how to have this difficult conversation with your child, and on safety tips, call Koleinu on 011 264 0341, or email [koleinusa@gmail.com](mailto:koleinusa@gmail.com)

– **Rozanne Sack and Rebbetzin Wendy Hendler, Koleinu**





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# Birds of a feather drive together.

Congratulations to the 2019 Jewish Achievers Awards winners, go-getters and industry leaders. You continue to uplift and improve the lives of those around you. Your effort has inspired us to do the same. KIA has been ranked best mass market brand for quality, while the Sorento and Sportage have placed 1st and 2nd in the Car Magazine Top 12 Best Buys respectively.\*

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- Sorento. Best large SUV/Crossover in Car Magazine Top 12 Best Buy Awards 2019.
- Sportage. Mid-sized SUV, placed 2nd in Car Magazine Top 12 Best Buy Awards 2019.



The Power to Surprise



## Call for tolerance of gender orientation

Psychologist Leonard Carr has called for compassion in regard to gender orientation.

In a talk titled, "The dignity of difference in relation to gender issues", at the September WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organisation) Forum, Carr said we should treat those with a gender orientation different to ourselves with dignity and compassion. Otherness doesn't entitle us to be superior or behave in a demeaning way, he said, but sympathising with a person's gender orientation doesn't necessarily imply endorsement.

Carr also spoke about the postmodern world we live in, including the prevalence of sexual labelling, the exposure from an early age to the internet, and the general break down of values when young people are able to make decisions to suit themselves.

His talk elicited lively discussion among the audience.



Leonard Carr and WIZO's Yvonne Jawitz

## Israel embassy's sanitation drive improves girls' lives

In 2018, South African president Cyril Ramaphosa launched the Sanitation Appropriate for Education (SAFE) School initiative that seeks to provide facilities for girls across South Africa who don't have access to sanitary towels and are missing school as a result.

Since 2018, an Israeli embassy team has been travelling across South Africa in support of this initiative. Having already changed the lives of thousands of girls in the North West, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and the Western Cape, it aims to reach all provinces in South Africa by 2021.

The team recently collaborated with Palesa Pads to offer hygiene education and sustainable, re-usable sanitary towels for pupils at Tauphuti and Kgagatlou Secondary Schools, and Maijane Primary in Limpopo.

Said Israeli ambassador Lior Keinan, "Every girl should have access to education, which is key to relieving poverty and unemployment. The embassy will continue to co-operate with South African organisations to create a better future."



Deputy Chief of Mission, Ayellet Black, speaking to learners at a school in Limpopo

## Torah Academy boys blow their own shofar

Grade 3 boys from Torah Academy recently visited the Shofar Factory at Chabad House in Savoy, where they had a hands-on workshop in making a shofar, and were introduced to all the various types of shofrot depending on the breed of ram used.



In the foreground, blowing a shofar, are Yitzchak Youngworth, Shneur Rodal, and Ariel Finkel. Organiser Rabbi Pini Pink is in the background.

## Herzlia recognises artistic achievement

Herzlia Middle School held its Culture Awards ceremony on 11 September to recognise pupils' achievements in various fields of arts and culture. Mila Smith and Lila Fleischmann won trophies for outstanding achievement in the arts; Jamie McNally was awarded a trophy for Best All-Rounder in Culture, among other awards; and Shay-Lee Geva won a trophy for Passion for the Arts.

Middle School Principal Shane Branson with head student Mila Smith



Photo: Steven Thistle

## King David wins Discovery Cup



The King David High School Linksfield U14 boys soccer team won the Discovery Cup last week with a convincing win of 7-0.

## Yeshiva College Launches new IT centre

Yeshiva College has turned a classroom into a state-of-the-art computer room for its high school. The computer room will be used to teach information technology and computer applications technology, project-based learning, and various online learning courses.



Milton and Lara Weinberg cut the ribbon of Yeshiva College's new computer room, watched by Academic Director Rob Long and students

It was previously a preparatory school computer room before the prep school consolidated its media requirements into one specifically designed building. Thereafter, it was a classroom, exam, and chess venue. Thanks to a generous donation from the Weinberg family, it has now been furnished with specialised equipment for the high school.

## Pretoria Jews come to aid of victims of Marabastad violence

The Pretoria Council of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, the Pretoria Union of Jewish Women (UJW), and international disaster-relief agency CADENA recently came to the aid of indigent, dispossessed people in Marabastad outside of Pretoria, where civil unrest has destroyed the homes of more than 200 people, local and foreign. The appeal was made by local Democratic Alliance councillor Shaun Wilkinson.

Based on the requests of relief facilitators, 200 mattresses, 1 800kg of mixed staples (mealie meal and samp) and about 6 000 cans of food, together with hygiene kits, plastic buckets, cooking utensils, and a supply of baby food were collected. They were given to relief facilitators by Pretoria Council Chairperson Louis Pearlman, secretary Diane Wolfson, and UJW representative Ciska Lewis in the presence of Tshwane Executive Mayor Stevens Mokgalapa and Wilkinson.



CADENA's Leanne Mendelow; Rabbi Gidon Fox; the SAJBD's Louis Pearlman, and Tshwane Executive Mayor Stevens Mokgalapa

Said Pearlman, "These vulnerable people have been subjected to baseless human cruelty. The only antidote is human kindness. The Jewish community empathises with their plight in that its forebears were subject to similar treatment just more than 100 years ago in the pogroms of Eastern Europe, similarly for no other reason than them being 'other' and 'vulnerable'." Pearlman thanked Dis-Chem and the many other donors who made the project possible.

## Victory Park excels in Wits maths challenge

Five King David Victory Park Primary (KDVPP) School students made it to the final round of the Wits maths challenge at the University of the Witwatersrand on 30 July, and three were placed in the top ten of their category. KDVPP took part in the competition for the first time this year.

More than 1 000 pupils enter the challenge from Grade 4 to Grade 7, and only 300 make it through to the final round, making competition for these spots intense indeed.

The following students received awards on Monday, 9 September: Aaron Dorfan – 9th place in the middle



Nechama Fischer, Karen Maitland (head of academics), Francesca Lewitton, Michelle Rampersad (head of mathematics), and Aaron Dorfan

primary division; Nechama Fischer – 7th place in the middle primary division; Francesca Lewitton – 9th place in the upper primary division (and the top girl in

her division).

KDVPP was placed 5th overall in the middle primary division, and 7th in the upper primary division, with 20 schools competing.

## Redhill whizz-kids go national

Redhill High School pupils Zianda Goldstuck (Grade 11) and Benjamin Weisz (Grade 8) have been selected for the Gauteng U18 and U16 chess teams respectively. Next year, they will both play in national competitions.

Chess whizz-kid Zianda is the captain of the Redhill School chess team, comprising students from Grade 7 to Grade 12, which was victorious earlier this year in the regional 8-a-side chess league. Benjamin remains undefeated in all his chess matches for Redhill this year.



Zianda Goldstuck and Benjamin Weisz



# The right guy to defend Maccabi Tel Aviv's goals

LUKE ALFRED

"He's gone through three shoe-sizes in the past eight months," says Guy Taitz of his goalkeeper son, Zach, who has just returned from a successful week-long trial with Maccabi Tel Aviv. Not only has Zach gone through a recent growth-spurt, always useful for a goalkeeper, but he's growing taller in other ways too.

Zach often plays in age-groups several years above him, and frequently suggests a maturity beyond his years, particularly as he had to cope with the loss of his mother to illness 18 months ago.

His recent trip to Israel was by no means his first overseas trip, and passport control, unfamiliar food, and foreign languages apparently hold no fear for the 13-year-old. "At his age, he's probably travelled overseas more than I have," says Guy. "He was doing his own washing overseas when he was nine, so he's certainly not your normal pampered kid. They say he's an older kid in a younger body."

A keeper with talent beyond his years, Zach was first spotted at age six or seven by former Bafana Bafana goalkeeper André Arendse at Balfour Park in Johannesburg. Two years later, he was selected for a South African junior invitation side that played in one of the early editions of the Robin van Persie Invitational in Rotterdam, a tournament featuring the junior teams of some of Europe's

most glamorous and storied clubs.

During the Van Persie tournament, Zach was approached by Chelsea, Liverpool, and Man City, and subsequently went abroad to train with them for 10 weeks when he was nine. He impressed when in Britain, but for reasons both logistical and financial, was unable to take advantage of subsequent invitations.

"The thing about him is he doesn't dream, he's far more goal-oriented," says Guy. "Kids going overseas often get over-awed. I've seen it happen too many times before. Not Zach. He treats it the same way as if he were playing at home and because of that, he's able to play to his full potential when he goes abroad."

The most recent trip to Tel Aviv was arranged by Ashley Kotzin's Forwardzone Agency. It footed the bill, and Zach was accompanied to Israel by agency employee Jordyn Pack. Guy received Maccabi Tel Aviv's four-page assessment shortly after his boy returned to Joburg, and was proud to say that the club was hugely impressed with Zach's technical abilities and general athleticism.

Keeping an eye on things from afar, Kotzin was similarly pleased. "It was very positive," says Kotzin in Israel to fly home via Addis Ababa [in Ethiopia], and by 08:30, the technical report dropped in my inbox.

"It was thorough and complimentary. Maccabi Tel Aviv are a proper club. Their attention to this kind of detail is huge."

Despite the glowing reports, Zach is still in primary school (at King David Linksfield), and there is a fair bit of developing – and physical growing – yet to do. A decision will be made on his future in due course, with Guy saying that as far as the boy is concerned, overseas is where he ultimately wants to be.

"Although he gets straight As, I still tell him that he's missed more school than most kids in the country," says Guy. "He's not playing much school soccer now, but come next year, one of the conditions of his bursary is that he'll need to play more for the school. He's been chosen for the South African under-13 side to play in the World Futsal Championships in Barcelona next month, but I might just decide to hold him back. I haven't quite made up my mind."

While Zach's abilities have

resulted in him shooting past most of his peers, in other respects, he's still a regular boy. He's good at most

him the other day that he's had it easy as a Liverpool fan," mutters his dad. "He never had to deal with the 1990s and the early 2000s. I've been a fan for 36 years, so I've seen it all."

The cycles of Liverpool's rise and fall aside, there has never been a better time to be an ambitious young footballer in the history of the game. The money, technical wisdom, and sheer know-how on show in most European leagues is simply breathtaking. Some feel, in fact, that the game has become over-theoretical and over-coached, with players now subject not only to the whims of capricious managers, but complex algorithms that plot everything from their size to their work rate.

Goals – and saving them – are one thing, but every young sportsman nowadays arguably confronts a more subtle challenge. We think football is about fame and money, and it is, but only to a limited degree. What really keeps those who are especially good at it going, day after numbing day, is love, for without love, there is nothing. Zach Taitz, a name you will hear more of in years to come, must stay in love with the game.



Zach Taitz and Jordyn Pack, who accompanied him to Israel

other sports, including table-tennis, golf, and cricket and, like Guy, is a passionate Liverpool supporter. "I was just saying to



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