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SA Methodist Church formally adopts BDS

TALI FEINBERG

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) formally adopted Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) principles against Israel at its annual conference in September 2019, closely following the Anglican Church of South Africa's decision to do so in September.

The Methodist Church has more than 66 000 members across southern Africa and 40 million followers globally, while the Anglican Church has about three million members across southern Africa and 80 million followers around the world.

"It's no coincidence that the Methodist resolution comes so soon after the Anglican Church's recent synod resolution. Taken together, they are clearly evidence of a BDS campaign to infiltrate churches and use them as pawns in its anti-Semitic political campaign to undermine Israel through a deliberate campaign of distortion and misinformation," says Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein.

"The Methodist Church's stance on this is immoral. The church has been brought into disrepute by supporting BDS, which is acknowledged globally as an anti-Semitic organisation. It's disgraceful behaviour."

MCSA's formal statement directs its members to "boycott, disinvest, and sanction all businesses that benefit the Israeli economy; that all future holy land tours organised by Methodist clergy or persons affiliated to the MCSA [are] to

boycott all Israeli operators and tours and deliberately seek out tours that offer an alternative Palestinian perspective".

The South African Friends of Israel (SAFI), which engages with thousands of Christian supporters of the Jewish State, also condemned the move, calling it an "unholy resolution of hate against the Jewish state of Israel".

Says SAFI National Chairperson Rowan Polovin: "It appears that the MCSA has been wilfully blinded by the medieval doctrine of 'replacement theology'. This anti-Semitic doctrine attempts to deny the

Jewish covenant with G-d and the Jewish people's unbreakable connection with the Bible.

"The modern manifestation of replacement theology is to use the weapons of BDS against Israel in the knowledge that this could undermine the Jewish state and speed up the manifestation of this theology. Those who engage in such nefarious antics, however, ought to re-read the Bible, particularly Genesis 12:3, which warns against cursing the Jewish nation. We call upon all Methodist Church members who wish to see genuine peace in the Middle East to voice their opposition to this resolution which has politicised the church," says Polovin.

"It is important to note that there is consternation and disagreement within the churches (both Anglican and Methodist) on this BDS resolution," he says. "We are engaging both churches at all levels and there is likely to be pushback

from church leaders and members on this issue."

The Methodist statement goes on to say that the decision to support BDS was made after "noting Israel's ongoing ill-treatment and oppression of the Palestinian people; the historic prophetic role played by the church and international community in fighting apartheid and any form of

discrimination and injustice; and as an act of solidarity with the people of Palestine".

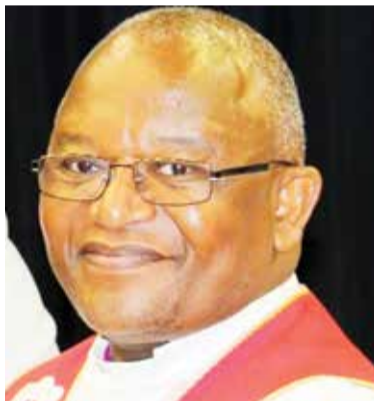
When the Anglican Church also formally adopted BDS some weeks ago, the chief rabbi said it was "morally offensive and based on a complete distortion of history". He said BDS had been declared anti-Semitic by the United Nations, and therefore support for BDS is anti-

Semitic in terms of international law.

The official leadership of the South African Muslim community welcomed the move, saying it "extends its heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the churches..."

A member of the interfaith movement in South Africa, who spoke on condition of anonymity,

Continued on page 19>>



Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa Ziphozihle Daniel Siwa

Ronaldinho takes flak for Israel visit

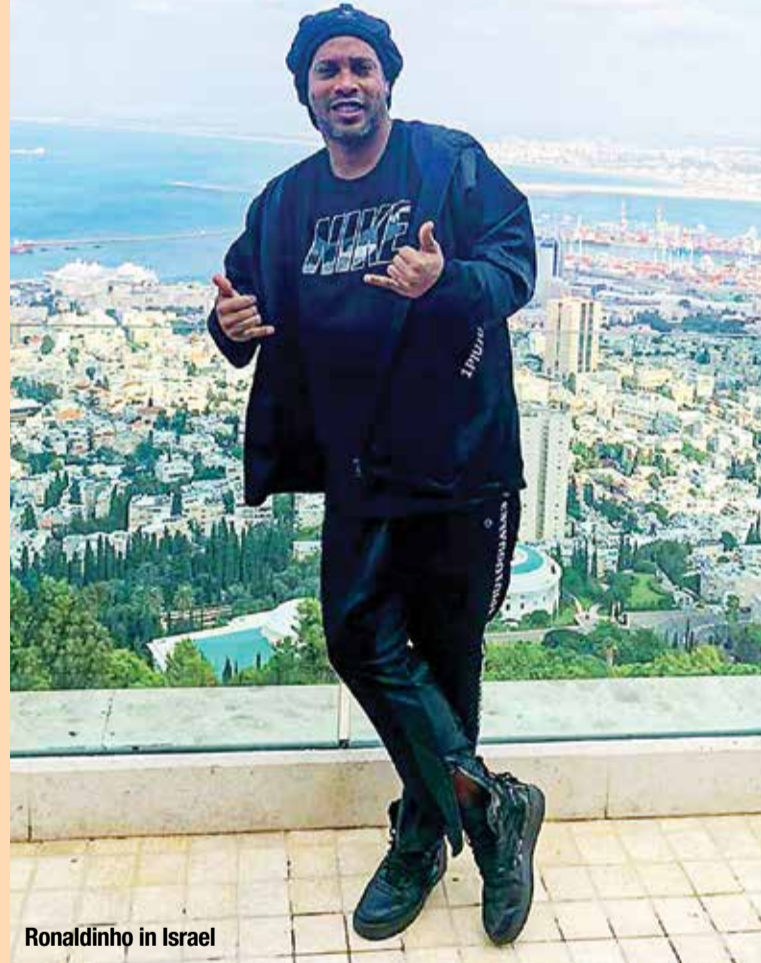
JORDAN MOSHE

When Brazilian soccer star Ronaldinho shared a photo on Twitter this week to let the world know that he was visiting Israel, pro-Palestinian users expressed outrage at him visiting "occupied territory". While this should come as no surprise, the scene behind the football legend was neither Jerusalem nor Bethlehem, but the undisputed port city of Haifa.

The former footballer for Brazil's national team, Ronaldo de Assis Moreira, commonly known as Ronaldinho Gaúcho or simply Ronaldinho, was in Israel this week for a friendly game, pitting himself and other former Brazilian stars against former Israeli soccer stars.

The event, known as the Shalom Game, took place on Tuesday at the Sami Ofer stadium in Haifa, and is part of a sports initiative promoting peace and brotherhood between the two countries.

Ronaldinho posted the picture of himself with the coastal port in the background on Monday with the caption "Shalom" and an emoji of the Israeli flag. Pro-Palestinian social-media users instantly responded to the footballer's tweet, many of them posting rows and rows of Palestinian-flag emojis and other images of anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian support.



Ronaldinho in Israel

Criticism for his visit far outweighed support on social media. "It's sad that you support the Israeli occupation of Palestine," wrote one user. "The Israeli occupation killed thousands of people in Palestine. It's sad

that you act like this." Another user tweeted, "I'm surprised he didn't say 'homeland' like the others. Shame on U. #FreePalestine." Yet another responded, "Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine."

Continued on page 2>>

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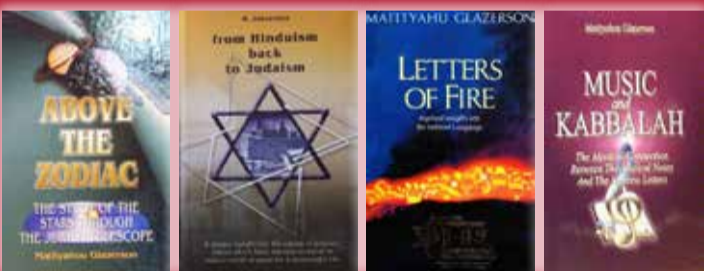


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Israeli rape survivor still struggling

TALI FEINBERG

"When my girlfriend is out in public, she carries a letter from her psychologist with her describing how she was raped. Then, if people ask her how her trip to South Africa was, she can just show them the letter. Most people can't finish reading it," says David*, whose girlfriend Sarah* was raped in a horrific assault in Graskop, Mpumalanga, in September while the couple was on holiday.

The SA Jewish Report is raising funds to help pay for this young woman's counselling, which David expects will continue for at least another year or two. Orit Sulitzeanu, the executive director of the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel, says one year of intense therapy twice a week would cost about \$11 000 (R160 259).

The money raised by the South African community will also go towards providing psychological support for South African rape survivors.

The couple are still struggling to get back on their feet.

"We're both not really functioning. Before the trip to South Africa we lived together, but now we live with our parents. However, her mother has her own problems, and there is often not enough food and so on," says David. He is in Jerusalem and she is in Haifa. He finds himself rushing between the two, trying to support his girlfriend and create stability in his own life.

"I have started working again, but Sarah is in no position to get a job. She stays at home, and lives from one moment to the next, doing Sudoku puzzles. She is progressing, but she is often very down. Her energy is low, and her life is on hold – we don't think about the future. She is on her own, waiting for people to call and check on her. It's been a big blow."

Sarah's family drives her to her treatment at a psychiatric hospital near Netanya twice a week. "It's the best in the country, the kind of facility where they treat Holocaust survivors

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Ian Levitt Attorneys Trust Account, Absa Bank, Rosebank Central Branch. Account number 4046253714. Reference: Israeli tourist.

and people with post-traumatic-stress disorder (PTSD). It's a place no one wants to go!" says David. "It was recommended that we try to get Sarah a government subsidy as someone who is 'handicapped', as she is now not capable of working."

The rape and assault has had a further impact on their relationship. "We sometimes talk about what happened, which is horrible. It's definitely affected our relationship. It also has an impact on those around us. The other day, my mother started crying when we were talking about it."

To the South African Jewish community, David says he and Sarah deeply appreciate all the support they have received. "Please don't forget about us," he says, saying that financial donations will go a long way towards assisting them.

* Not their real names

Ronaldinho takes flak for Israel visit

>>Continued from page 1

Rowan Polovin, the national chairperson of the South African Zionist Federation, pointed out the absurdity of these responses. "Statements that claim that Haifa is 'Palestine' or 'occupied Palestinian territory' reveal the simple truth that the anti-Israel lobby doesn't accept Israel's right to exist, and has no interest in peace or any kind of negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Bigots who make such claims should be rejected out of hand."

Haifa is Israel's third largest city, and the commercial and administrative centre of the north of the country. The principal port of Israel, the city is situated on the northern slopes of Mount Carmel and lies along the Bay of Haifa

overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

The city was included in the Jewish-controlled region proposed in the 1947 United Nations Partition plan, and towards the end of the British Mandate, Jews and the Arabs both attempted to gain control of it. The Haganah took it over, and an estimated 3 000 of its 50 000 Arab residents chose to remain there while the rest, in response to the Arab High Committee's orders, refused to accept Jewish rule and abandoned their homes.

Still, Haifa has for years been Israel's model of a "mixed" Jewish-Arab city. Official figures suggest that Arabs make up 14% to 18% of Haifa's 280 000 strong population.

This isn't the first time the Brazilian striker has visited Israel. Last year, Ronaldinho established

the Ronaldinho Soccer Academy in Israel for children aged six to 16.

"I'm very excited to help Israeli children of all faiths raise their game to the highest level," Ronaldinho reportedly said at the time.

"I see the school as a first-class educational tool that helps in acquiring skills, tools for life, discipline, teamwork and more. Israel has tremendous potential, countless talent, and a great love of the game."

Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
18:06	18:58	Johannesburg
18:56	19:51	Cape Town
18:00	18:53	Durban
18:15	19:10	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:22	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:11	East London

Torah Thought

The bokke brocha

Is their Castle Lager on tap during Torah reading? Will the rabbi be announcing rugga scores instead of siddur page numbers at shul this week? Well, we're there for davening, not Damien de Allende, so – also no.

Is it halachically permissible to set a TV to a timer or casually walk by a bar and watch the game playing there? Still no. The Halacha is clear. That would be a desecration of Shabbat.

So what's the Shabbat blessing of the Bokke?

(And no, I'm not even referring to the Mi Shebeirach (Jewish prayer of healing) that Rabbi Goldman composed last time around – though it worked!)

Well, I'll be straight up. When I first emigrated to South Africa 25 years ago, I used to think that some diehard Springbok fans were a little off the wall. When someone told me that he couldn't keep Shabbos because he needed to watch

the rugby, it sounded more like a crisis of sanity than a crisis of faith. Being *shlepped* (brought) along to a rugby game didn't make it any better. Watching grown men scream, cry, and shout as if their life was in danger every 90 seconds or so left me even more puzzled.

But then, just this week in fact, I realised the extent that we all have for something that (seems) bigger than us. For some it's Bok mania, for others it might be work, WhatsApp, politics, food, or all of the above.

The comfort in the cocoon of sports or any of the above is an illusionary space where everything seems fine. Even if it's not.

Until the pressure inside the cocoon gets so tight, we either suffocate/surrender, or summon the courage to step out.

Or in the words of this week's parsha, sometimes the waters of the flood get so overwhelming that we need to either

Rabbi Asher Deren, Chabad of the West Coast, Cape Town



step out of the flood showers (and in) to Noah's Ark – which the Baal Shemtov explained to mean the words of Torah and prayer in the divine embrace of Hashem's presence – or let the flood/cocoon overwhelm us.

So, after a month of celebrating our deep roots in awe of the high holidays and in the joy of the *chagim* (Jewish holidays), we finally have a chance to show that our love for rugby is not in spite of our faith in Hashem, but because of it.

Through withstanding the test by waiting until after Shabbat to watch the recording of the game, we are celebrating who we really are.

In the words of Captain Siya Kolisi this week, "We've worked hard to get here, and it's awesome to see how everything has come together. Hopefully we can now go all the way."

South African Jewish Report

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Daniel the Musical cast mourns actor's sudden death

NICOLA MILTZ

The cast and crew of *Daniel the Musical* are heartbroken and battling to come to terms with the sudden, untimely passing of lead actor Andile Gumbi who died last week in Israel during the show's premiere run.

"We are in shock," said a distraught Joe Niemand, the show's director.

Niemand, a committed Christian, met the *SA Jewish Report* a few hours after receiving the devastating news last Friday that the talented actor had passed away.

Visibly shaken and bleary eyed, he said he was lost for words.

"One moment Andile was there, skipping like a boxer during warm-ups at rehearsals, and the next moment he was gone. We are heartbroken. It's going to take a long time to make sense of this," he said.

An internationally acclaimed performer, Gumbi, 36, best known for his role in *Isibaya* and for playing Simba in the Broadway and West End hit *The Lion King*, died last Friday morning at the Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem.

Gumbi played the lead role of King Nebuchadnezzar (King Nebu) in the Broadway-scale *Daniel the Musical*, which tells the Hebrew Old Testament story of Daniel with an African spin.

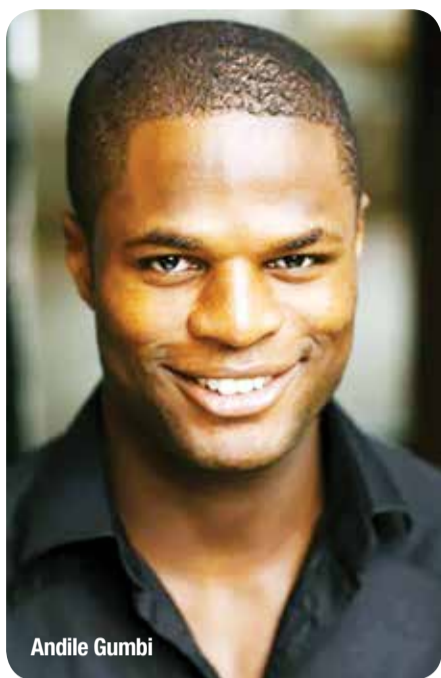
Niemand said that apart from having the talent and the gravitas to handle the challenging role, Gumbi had to answer one question.

"I wanted to know how Andile felt about the state of Israel," said Niemand, who met Gumbi one week before rehearsals started.

"I invited him to my house because it was important for to me to communicate how unusual this project was. There was no point taking a gift to Israel with people who didn't love Israel. I told him it was a gripping story of faith, and asked whether he was the right man for the role given that our aim was to show support for Israel."

"He told me, 'I'm your man,'" said Niemand, who hired him straight away.

Gumbi, who was born in Umlazi, KwaZulu-Natal, fell ill suddenly on Tuesday 15 October complaining of flu-like symptoms, and was taken to hospital. Early the following morning, his condition deteriorated, he suffered a



Andile Gumbi

cardiac arrest, and slipped into a coma. The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement and anti-Semitism curses the world, not only Jewish people," said Niemand, who plays the role of the older Daniel.

From the start, *Daniel the Musical* was a wildly ambitious project which faced numerous seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Niemand refused to give up, claiming that G-d had told him to take the musical to Jerusalem as a blessing from South Africa to Israel.

Niemand said he was sitting on the beach in Southbroom when he "felt that G-d spoke to me telling me to make a musical about the story of Daniel".

He had just recorded an album of songs, one of which, titled *G-d of Heaven*, his wife told him was perfect for Daniel to sing in the lion's den.

Niemand contacted the Jerusalem Theatre, which told him that it was booked up until 2021. So, he flew to Israel for two days with a friend and went to the theatre, whose administrator told them that the

cardiac arrest, and slipped into a coma.

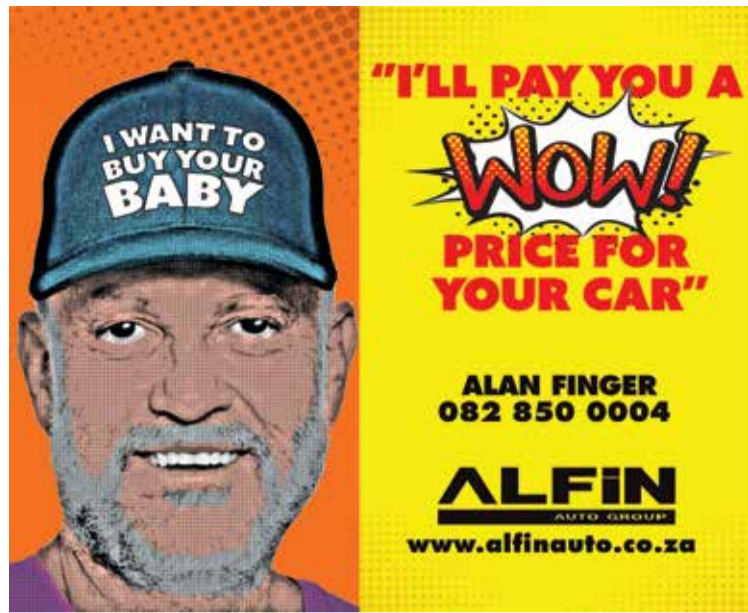
It was a devastating blow for the 30-strong South African cast and crew who had enjoyed a rousing standing ovation on opening night on 10 October at the Jerusalem Theatre. The non-profit production, which was relying on ticket sales at the box office to break-even, immediately suspended shows and prayed for Gumbi's speedy recovery.

"The heart behind the show was always a celebration of Africa and Israel, and a way for these artists to show their support," said Niemand.

Daniel the Musical is a Biblical period piece produced on a massive Broadway-scale. For Niemand, it was more than just a musical, "it was a gift from South Africa to Israel".

"When G-d says in Genesis 12:3 that those who bless Israel will be blessed and those who curse Israel will be cursed, I take this seriously. In South Africa, we have taken a stance against the people of Israel, and I believe through that we have activated G-d's word against us. If we look at our country right now and everything that's going on, I think everyone can agree we need the blessing of G-d.

"I believe South Africa is under a



theatre was undergoing renovation.

"I said to the lady, 'Hypothetically, if I would take all the risk that your building project would finish by the end of September, could I have October?' And she said, 'Hypothetically, yes.' I just grabbed the 'yes' and ran with it."

With very little time to write a script, conduct auditions, rehearsals, raise funds, and advertise the show, he set to work.

"It's the Hebrew story of the Book of Daniel, but we wanted to tell it in an African way," said Niemand. "We went into our culture – the Zulu and Xhosa cultures – and took the rich fabric and colourful soul of Africa and breathed it into the story.

He described it as a two-hour tour de force and musical

production of epic proportions.

"I'm really struggling," he said, "I wanted to stage this in Israel, I took Andile there, and now he isn't with us anymore."

As the team of dedicated doctors tried to save the critically ill Gumbi, rabbis and crew members took turns to pray for his speedy recovery.

After a few days, the cast decided with heavy hearts that the show should go on in Gumbi's honour.

"I took a leap of faith. I don't understand why this has happened. I believe G-d sent Andile to the most important city in the world to be a part of this journey.

"Every person has a certain number of pages in their book. In the same way G-d sent me to Jerusalem, G-d sent Andile even though it was his final chapter," he said.

He described Gumbi as a "consummate professional".

"I was really touched by him, by his humility and talent. To have someone of his calibre on board for this mission to Israel was a true blessing."

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies expressed its heartfelt condolences to Gumbi's family, friends, and the cast of the musical saying, "We have lost a remarkable young talent."

Gumbi is survived by his wife, Hlengiwe, and three-year-old son.

Details of the memorial service will be released soon.



Andile Gumbi as King Nebu with Marisa Drummond in the role of Queen Amytis

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DA shakeup 'not a disaster for the party'

STEVEN GRUZD

There's nothing wrong with resignations and reshuffling at the Democratic Alliance (DA), say its Jewish leaders.

"We are a political party, not a convent," says shadow minister of justice and federal council member, Glynnis Breytenbach. Vacated seats are "not a disaster", nor the death of a party. "It's something all political parties go through," she says.

Breytenbach's comments come in the wake of multiple high-profile resignations that have hit South Africa's largest opposition party. Last week, Johannesburg mayor Herman Mashaba and party leader Mmusi Maimane quit the party. They followed DA Chief Executive Paul Boughey and Federal Council Chairperson James Selfe. Chief Whip John Steenhuisen was obliged to resign from his post, but was then made interim party leader in parliament.

These departures were triggered by the recommendations of a "warts and all" report commissioned by Maimane himself after the DA's disappointing 2019 election results. They garnered 20.77% of the national vote, down 1.36% from the 2014 election. DA seats in the national assembly went down from 89 to 84.

The DA was hurt by former leader Helen Zille's tweets lauding colonialism, the ugly protracted battle to get rid of Patricia de Lille, and the political demise of former President Jacob Zuma. It would probably have performed better had Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma beaten Cyril Ramaphosa in the December 2017 African National Congress (ANC) leadership race.

The *SA Jewish Report* spoke to the DA's Jewish members of parliament and an independent political analyst to understand what's going on inside the party.

Michael Bagraim, DA shadow labour minister and self-described proverbial backbencher, says he has received more than 300 WhatsApp messages from concerned members of the community. "I think the DA strayed a little bit from its core values, its liberal mindset, its constitution, and its policies," he says, but it was nevertheless sad to see Maimane and Mashaba leave the party.

"I see what's happening now in the DA as similar to the cycles in Judaism. Every year on the high holy days, we take stock of where we are. On Simchat Torah, we read the Torah afresh. We need to be reminded of why we exist and see things with fresh eyes. Yes, this has given us a shock, but it's a chance to examine our policies and debate what needs changing."

The DA will choose new leaders at an elective conference in April 2020.

Bagraim sees the election of Zille as the new federal council chair as "a step forward" that will lead to renewal of the party, contrary to media speculation to the contrary. "We need to go back to basics, to *Bereshit*. The only party that can deliver a country we'd all like to live in is the DA. A few people resigned, but the party has stayed intact."

Darren Bergman, the shadow minister of international relations and co-operation, says 2018 was an "annus horribilis" for the DA. "The 2019 election results were a failure, and things needed to change." The report recommended resignations, and that's what happened.

He says the media are creating the perception of chaos in the party, when in fact, the federal council meeting was calmly and maturely handled without any screaming and shouting.

Bergman also hailed Zille's election, believing it will return the party to its liberal roots. He believes the party can recapture the votes lost to the Freedom Front Plus in the elections, but is worried that the current instability could jeopardise the Economic Freedom Fighters' (EFF) support for the DA's control of Johannesburg.

Jewish voters are right to be disappointed with the DA over the past two years, he says, but the party "is in the process of self-correcting. They should be patient, and continue to support the DA as they have proudly for decades."

"The review recommended that leadership takes responsibility for the poor election results," says Breytenbach. The tallest trees attract the most wind, and positions have

been vacated. It's not a disaster. It's not the death of the DA. If the DA fails, South Africa fails. We want to govern well for all South Africans."

Breytenbach says those who resigned "contributed enormously to the project of the DA, and served the



Darren Bergman



Madeleine Hicklin



Michael Bagraim



Glynnis Breytenbach

country with distinction".

Asked if she had a message for the Jewish community, she said, "I spoke at Temple Israel over Yom Kippur, and my message was, 'Please don't leave. Please don't give up on the DA.' South Africa has never needed every single one of us as much as it does today. Jewish people lead, excel, and stand out. We always have. We can contribute immensely to South Africa. We have since 1994, and before 1994."

Madeleine Hicklin, DA MP on parliament's public works and

infrastructure committee, says she is a "big fan" of Maimane, whom she described as "charismatic". "Leaders come and leaders go," she says. We will get stronger if we stick to our principles, our guiding lights. This too shall pass."

These four MPs are clearly all "Zilleites". Political analyst Ebrahim Fakir says, however, the problems in the DA are structural, and go beyond the leaders who have stayed or departed. "The DA's problem is that everything it's for can only be defined by what it's against. It wants to remove the ANC from power, but it's never going to vie for power itself," he says.

He argues that the resignation of well-known black leaders "is not good optics, and it will leave a vacuum. But let's be honest, they weren't the most

significant of leaders. Maimane was inconsistent and prevaricating. He wasn't sure who or what the DA was. Mashaba was xenophobic, and didn't dramatically change service delivery. I don't think it's a great loss."

Zille is not an enlightened liberal,

but a neo-liberal, Fakir says, "in a policy and governance sense. She wants to cut back on state welfare and state control. She may reconsider partnerships with the EFF."

Fakir also believes the media is far too sensationalist about a natural realignment that happens in all parties. He says the DA might be smaller but more effective after the 2021 local-government elections.

The Jewish community will, no doubt, be closely watching developments.

SA chartered accountant jailed in Greece, but friends insist he's innocent

TALI FEINBERG

About 65 people from around the world have raised more than \$8 000 (R116 754) on a crowdfunding platform to help meet bail for Yuval Joshua Abraham, a former accountant from Cape Town currently jailed in Greece.

Just before Rosh Hashanah, Abraham's friend, Perli Kaplan, set up the crowd page, "Let's Save Yuval" on gogetfunding.com. "Yuval Abraham is an ex-South African chartered accountant," she wrote. "His parents are retired academics, and his maternal grandparents were Holocaust survivors. Yuval was raised with the values of honesty and integrity. Materialism is a word that is foreign to him. Yet, he stands accused by his previous company, where he served as chief financial officer, of misappropriating funds to buy luxury items. His assets were frozen, and he was removed from his position.

"All Yuval wants to do is clear his name. He is in a desperate position, and doesn't know where to turn. He is one man against a massive multinational corporation. An expert forensic accountant has given hundreds of hours of his time free of charge to examine the evidence, and is convinced that Yuval is innocent and has been made a "fall guy" by a corrupt institution and corrupt lawyers, including his own defence attorney," she continued.

"Today, Yuval sits in a dirty Greek prison in terrible conditions awaiting an extradition hearing. Doctors have certified that he is in a desperate physical and mental condition. There was a bail hearing, and the Greek judge acknowledged his terrible physical condition and noted that the case against him was 'exceedingly weak'. However, the judge has insisted that in order to attain bail, Yuval must deposit €50 000 (R809 854) with the court as security, saying, 'You are Jewish – you can afford it.'

"To save Yuval's life and help clear his name, we require funds that neither Yuval nor his family have. We are turning to you to assist a fellow Jew in dire need on the eve of Rosh Hashanah. This is a case of *pidyon shuyim deOras*, a *mitzvah* so important that one can even sell a Sefer Torah to finance it," she concluded.

Rabbi Matthew Liebenberg said on Facebook that

Abraham was a former member of the Claremont Wynberg Shul in Cape Town. "This is a real case of redeeming a captive, the greatest form of charity," he wrote.

In July this year, the *SA Jewish Report* reported that Abraham was on the run after being charged with falsifying invoices while he was chief financial officer at Hiscox Services in Bermuda. The story was written after speaking directly to Bermuda Police. Attempts to find contacts to share Abraham's side of the story were unsuccessful.

"The loss to the company is about \$1.8 million [R26.3 million]. A complaint was made to the Bermuda Police Service, and a file of evidence regarding the case submitted to the department of public prosecutions. Information about the allegations was then laid before the criminal court in Bermuda, and a warrant issued for Mr Abraham's arrest, which has been circulated to colleagues internationally via Interpol," said Bermuda Police spokesperson Robin Simmons at the time.

On 26 September, Acting Detective Superintendent Nicholas Pedro of the crime division at the Bermuda Police confirmed that, "following an international appeal for assistance, Mr Yuval Abraham was arrested in Athens, Greece. He is being held in custody pending a hearing on extradition to Bermuda. We would like to thank the media and our partners for their assistance in locating Mr Abraham.

"The Bermuda Police Service uses international

law-enforcement partners in cases such as this that have an international component, and would like to recognise their assistance in this matter," Pedro said.

In August, after Abraham's arrest in Greece, Kaplan wrote on Facebook, "I am sad, disappointed, and disillusioned with the world today. A friend who is very close to my heart has spent the past 16 months being unfairly, unjustly, cruelly, maliciously and evilly [sic] hunted by a huge international insurance company that he worked for. He has been accused of a fraud that he clearly, based on so much evidence, did not commit. An alleged fraud of 1.8 million dollars, where more than four times that amount has been spent hunting him ... this isn't logical.

"So many lies have been written about him, about the case, and about the conditions under which he has been living for the past 16 months. This story came to a climax on Thursday morning [15 August] when he was arrested. He is sitting in a prison cell with real criminals in a country where he is all alone. I am petrified for him. And I am also petrified for all of us ... what kind of a world are we living in? A world where people are so hungry for power and money that they have

no values, no morals, no humanity. Shame on you all who are a part of this despicable behaviour. We will find better lawyers than you, we will put the truth out there, and we will get Yuval justice. Please say a very special prayer for Yuval Yehoshua ben Yaffa this Shabbat," she concluded.

Abraham remains in prison. Only 11% of the €50 000 for his bail has been raised.

The *SA Jewish Report* approached Kaplan and the Bermuda Police for comment, but both chose not to respond.

Yuval Abraham



In a world of anger, it's time to calm down



RABBI JONATHAN PERLMAN — JTA

OPINION

I have been the rabbi of the New Light Congregation in Pittsburgh for nine years. This year, at Kol Nidre services on Yom Kippur, I preached calm.

Our congregation is part of a global maelstrom of anger and extremism. Last year, we and our fellow Jews at the Tree of Life congregation were the targets of one man's anger. Now, it's time for us to calm down.

Trauma is a wound you carry with you forever. Unlike grief, which can go through predictable steps and leave the psyche, trauma has stickiness to it. It makes a home in the mind; it can damage the spirit. It sends reactive impulses throughout the nervous system.



"We discover mindfulness in our daily prayers, marking Shabbat and finding inspiration in our Torah. That is what our martyrs did. We are following their example."

Whenever a car backfires on the street, I feel it in my bones. Some hear a piercing sound and run. Action movies are no longer entertaining. Talk of the "massacre" can break a mood. People take circuitous routes around town to avoid bad memories. Others swear that they won't enter the Tree of Life building ever again.

If one asks the question, "Where are we today?", I would say that we are in a state of repressed shock. People constantly ask me

how I'm doing, and I just shake my head. I know they mean well, but the wound is still fresh, and I just don't want to talk about it.

I would say this is true for many of our members at New Light. I have persuaded many of our members and their children to begin psychotherapy. A large number of members have sought out the services of Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS) and the Center for Victims, even those who have never needed the services of a trained therapist before. I wonder how many Pittsburghers are still talking in the rooms of sensitive therapists to mitigate their own trauma and cope with their own worries.

The fear that something frightening could happen is a repeating curse that Jews see in their own "lachrymose history", scholar Salo Baron put it in the early 20th century. We never thought it could happen in America, yet it did.

I'm heartened by the overwhelming amount of positive sentiment coming our way – donations, letters, art, tokens of love and hope arrive daily from all over the world. In our city, whose citizens registered the attack through tears and sorrow, there were multiple positive responses that can't be counted. Pittsburgh is a city of champions. I have never felt so grateful for the support we received internally from our own Jewish

Federation, JFCS, and Congregation Beth Shalom, and externally from the office of the mayor and city council, sports teams, businesses small and large, schools, and all our neighbours in the five county area that stood with us at rallies and vigils.

a year of members stepping up to continue the rich traditions of our synagogue. We started a Hebrew reading programme. New members have learned how to read the cantillation from the Books of the Prophets.

Adult education classes are fuller than ever. The board is engaging in important existential questions about our future.

There are those who are engaged in memorialisation and others who look for opportunities to bring joy and calm through musical events and suppers. I was delighted to see Leigh Stein, the daughter of our beloved Dan Stein, throw the first pitch to her brother, Joey, at a recent Pirates game. Their father coached them for years at baseball and softball games.

There is something about living in the moment and tuning out the noise, the honking, the cursing, the finger pointing and drama that descended on our brave little city. We are not a metropolis that thrives on that kind of caustic energy. Pittsburgh is different.

We discover mindfulness in our daily prayers, marking Shabbat and finding inspiration in our Torah. That is what our martyrs did. We are following their example.

• Rabbi Jonathan Perlman is the rabbi of the New Light congregation in Pittsburgh.



Photo: Jeff Swensen for The Washington Post via Getty Images

Memorial objects outside the Tree of Life Synagogue

But there is still more work to be done. The United States justice department-funded Center for Victims in Pittsburgh has blundered twice in the past month. It rejected a guilty plea from the shooter who started this horror, insisting on a trial planned a year from now. And it has scheduled the trial four days before Rosh Hashanah, one of the holiest days in the Jewish year.

This trial will certainly re-traumatise the sensitive among us, and bring back the journalistic circus that will increase our pain.

On the plus side, New Light has enjoyed

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In the steps of Andalusian Jews

Sometimes you need to step outside your environment to appreciate what you have. This was the case for me over the past couple of weeks.

I spent time in Andalucia, the south of Spain, which is one of the most beautiful parts of the world. I was extremely fortunate to be there, and loved every minute.

But there are very few Jews living in the areas I went to, particularly Granada and Seville, which were once centres of Jewish life in the world. In fact, the Jewish community was once so central to the city, it was called Garnatha al Yehud (Arabic for Granada of the Jews).

When we arrived in Granada and asked how to get to the Realejo area, the person at the information desk at the station said, "Aah, you want to go to the Jewish quarter!" It turned out that any Jewish reference was pure history, and the only evidence of Jewish life in Granada was the single Jewish man living there who had created a tiny museum in his house.

In Seville, we also found little evidence of Jewish life.

There are no shuls – as we know them – in either city today.

In Seville we sought out the only Jewish guide there, a wonderful man called Jorge Gershon, to enquire about the Jews of Seville. As it happens, before the Spanish Inquisition, there were 23 magnificent shuls in a community that numbered an estimated 50 000.

It turns out we were sitting at a coffee shop in the Barrio de Santa Cruz – what was once the Jewish centre – just metres away from Crosses Square. It was here that an estimated 4 000 Jews were murdered in 1391 just because they were born to our faith and not keen to give it up. I felt quite sick as I looked around and saw no trace of our history other than a small museum called the Centre of Interpretation of the Jews of Seville. In its pamphlet, its owners wrote, "We feel duty-bound to dedicate a place in the heart of Seville to the Jewish-Spanish tradition, to the Sephardic memory." I understood the need to make a Jewish mark, however small, where none remained.

As we sat with Gershon, I asked about the Jews who live in Seville today. He told us there are about 32 families, and anyone over the age of 40 is an immigrant or there only temporarily. Some are from Argentina, Venezuela, the United States, France, even Israel. More than 50% of them are involved in education. They number so few that if you ask Sevillanos if there are Jews living in Seville, they will probably say no. Also, quite simply, those who live there don't proclaim their Judaism very loudly...

As Jews do, I asked about Shabbos services, and Gershon told me we were welcome to join them for Friday night service, but for safety, we needed to email a request.

So, come 18:30 on Friday evening, we found ourselves at the address, which looked like a beautiful Medieval Muslim palace or mansion. We certainly didn't see anything that resembled a shul or a collection of Jewish people dressed for Shabbos. Eventually, I went to a Spanish woman at the front desk to ask if she knew where the Shabbat service was. At first she looked at me quizzically, and she said something that sounded like "Jewish" and "Jorge", and motioned for us to follow her.

We walked up a few flights of stairs, along a number of corridors, down a few stairs and another passageway before eventually finding a room not much bigger than a child's bedroom. There were seats all along the walls and on one wall, I saw *machzorim*, *siddurim*, and *tanachim* in a bookcase and knew I was in the right place. Our guide handed us over to Gershon, who seemed happy that we came.

Every one of the 12 casually-dressed people – mostly women – were very welcoming. As we walked in and *siddurim* were passed our way in Spanish, Hebrew and phonetics, I began to feel comfortable. And once Gershon began what sounded like a very traditional Shabbos service, I felt quite emotional.

Here we were, a long way from home, having heard about what had happened to the incredible Jewish population of southern Spain, and we were surrounded by our people. All strangers, but not strangers at all. We shared a long, long history, and so much more.

After the service, we went for a drink, which is clearly their tradition before going home for dinner. None of them were specifically observant, but all were traditional and wanted to be with fellow Jews over Shabbos and festivals. They make a real effort to keep the community together and keep their tradition and culture alive.

I left feeling happy to have had the experience, but so grateful for what we have in South Africa.

Coming home meant coming to our community, where if I wanted to, I could go to any number of incredible shuls near or far from my home. We have so many thriving congregations, each with their own character and dynamic rabbis.

We also have a thriving greater community, where none of us are afraid to say we are Jews. We are loud and proud, and should anyone say or do anything against us, we come down on them like a ton of bricks.

Coming home to this community is precious, but I can't help feeling seriously disconcerted to learn that the Anglican and Methodist Churches in South Africa have joined hands with BDS (the Boycott, Divest, Sanctions movement) against Israel.

After learning what was done to the Jews in the name of the church in Spain, I don't believe we should ignore this.

Having said that, I have no doubt our small but powerful, close-knit community will do whatever it can to preserve what we have.

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunday
Editor



Paralysed Israeli politics makes third election increasingly likely

Albert Einstein defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results. Unless something dramatic happens, the political scene in Israel is paralysed, and for the third time in one year, Israelis could be headed for the polls.

Previous elections in April and September saw neither incumbent Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nor his main rival, the former military chief and leader of the centrist-left Blue and White party, Benny Gantz, able to form a majority coalition. Nothing significant has changed since then. Should a third election be held at the beginning of next year, the results are expected to be much the same, give or take one or two extra seats for the main parties, which is not enough to end the impasse.

Israelis are increasingly fed up with the situation. Each time an election is held, it costs the country between 3 billion to 4 billion shekels (R12.3 billion).

Last week, Gantz was tasked with trying to form a government after Netanyahu failed and returned the mandate to Israeli President Reuven Rivlin. Should Gantz prove incapable of doing so by 20 November – and as the days pass, it seems increasingly unlikely he'll be able to form a majority coalition – Israeli law dictates a three-week period during which Israeli parliamentarians can ask the president to task someone else. Once this period has passed – and presumably it will end unsuccessfully too – the Knesset (parliament) will automatically dissolve, and new elections will be called for.

Netanyahu currently has a coalition of 55 Knesset seats compared to Gantz's 54. Each needs a minimum of 61 (out of 120) to form a majority. The right-wing parties have signed a commitment paper declaring they will join only a government headed by Netanyahu and will never sign up to one established by Gantz. To date, they've refused even to meet with the Blue and White party leader as he tries to cobble together support.



Israelis are increasingly fed up with the situation. Each time an election is held, it costs the country between 3 billion to 4 billion shekels (R12.3 billion).

This leaves Gantz with two options. Both go against his election pledges of "just not Netanyahu", and the promise that there will not be a partnership with the Arab parties.

First would be to form a national unity government with Likud that would result in a rotation between him and Netanyahu in the position of prime minister. The latest polls show that most Israelis – 56% – like this option best. But for it to happen, either Gantz or Netanyahu would have to agree to serve second in the rotation, and both refuse. It would also mean that Gantz would need to backtrack on his insistence that he'd never serve under a prime minister facing grave charges of criminal wrongdoing.

There is talk that Gantz could be swayed on both these points, but the other leaders in his party, especially his number two, former journalist Yair Lapid, refuse to budge. They don't trust Netanyahu to relinquish power when his round is up, and believe he wants to retain the premiership "not for unity but immunity". There is nothing in Israeli law that prevents a sitting premier from being on trial, and Netanyahu won't have to vacate his seat should the attorney-general decide to go ahead and indict

**DATELINE:
MIDDLE EAST**

Paula Slier



him. This is part of the reason Netanyahu is so keen to hang onto his position.

In Netanyahu's defence there are many who point out that Gantz has no experience in government, having entered politics less than a year ago. Being the second to lead a rotation would give him the chance to sit at the government table and better understand how things work.

Another problem for any kind of partnership between the two is that Likud would need to relinquish its alliance with right-wing religious parties and/or Gantz would need to relinquish his partnership with the left-wing Zionist party Meretz and/or the Arab parties. This will never happen – and these parties could never sit together.

The only other possibility for Gantz therefore would be to form a minority government with Labour and the Democratic Camp (44 seats in total). Such a government would not need 61 votes to begin its tenure, and would secure a Knesset majority with backing from outside the coalition of the Arab parties (10 seats) and Avigdor Lieberman's right-wing Israel Our Home party (8 seats).

While there have been minority governments in Israel before, there has never been one formed following an election. The few cases of minority governments occurred after one or more factions withdrew from a coalition mid-term.

It's a difficult predicament for the Blue and White leadership. In the past two elections, Gantz and his colleagues avoided the Arab elephant like the plague. While the majority of Arab parties gave Gantz their nod to form the next government – and he needs their votes – he's acutely aware that Netanyahu is using this against him. And will continue to do so in another election campaign.

Netanyahu has pointed out that prominent members of the Joint List – an alliance of the main Arab-majority political parties in Israel – have repeatedly expressed support for terrorism and refused to condemn harm brought to Israeli soldiers and civilians. One of the leaders, Ahmed Tibi, was Palestinian Liberation Organisation leader Yasser Arafat's former advisor, and refuses to see Hamas as a terrorist organisation. Another, Ayman Odeh, sees himself as part of the Palestinian national resistance against Israel.

Netanyahu has asked, "How will the state of Israel be able to act against the terrorist organisations, with its government dependent on the voices of Tibi, Odeh? How can the state of Israel act against Iran and Hezbollah when Knesset members and supporters of Hezbollah can overthrow the government? Establishing a minority government that relies on the Joint List is an anti-Zionist step that would jeopardise our security."

Such comments have made an impact on right-wing voters.

But, at no point has Gantz expressed any intention to form a minority coalition. Such a government would be very shaky as it would not have a Knesset majority and would thus constantly have to bargain for the support of other factions in order to pass laws and decisions. The Israeli public is unlikely to regard such a government as legitimate.

However, the very real threat of a third election could make politicians and parties desperate. With his back against the wall, Gantz might be forced to go the route of a minority government or some of Netanyahu's right-wing coalition partners might break rank and join the former army general.

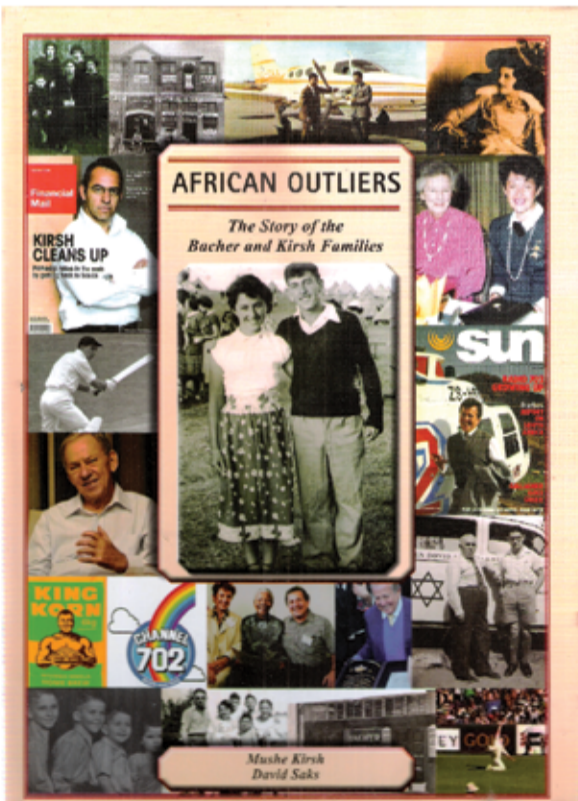
Israelis might not want another election, and as insane as it might seem to hold one, there might be no other option.



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You are cordially invited to join us in celebrating the launch of **African Outliers: The Story of the Bacher and Kirsh families** by **Mushe Kirsh** and **David Saks**.

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Beautifully produced and copiously illustrated, *African Outliers* tells the story of two remarkable South African Jewish families and the diverse, path-blazing roles its members played in the saga both of South Africa and of its Jewish community, from Chabad to Cricket, MDA to Madiba, Torah to Talk Radio and in multiple other areas. The book traces the history of the Bacher and Kirsh families, from their origins in Lithuania and other parts of Eastern Europe through to their arrival in South Africa and the new lives they built for themselves there. These stories are told against the greater backdrop of the dramatic historical events of those times, in South Africa and further afield.



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Proposed changes to SAJBD constitution questioned

TALI FEINBERG

Proposed changes to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies' (SAJBD's) constitution ahead of its national conference on 10 November are being queried by some members of the community who say these alterations could potentially "threaten the democratic nature of the SAJBD".

The proposed changes appear to grant the SAJBD's national executive committee (NEC) the ability to remove the membership of constituent bodies if they "cease to further the objects of the board", and could allow the NEC to allocate any number of delegates to a constituent body unrelated to the number of its members. A third change proposes that if the NEC's members are "inadvertently not notified about a meeting", it can go ahead.

All major Jewish communal bodies in South Africa are affiliated to the SAJBD, including schools, shuls (orthodox and progressive), women and youth groups, and the main welfare organisations and Zionist bodies, amongst others.

SAJBD National Chairperson Shaun Zagnoev said the proposed changes were in the interest of improved governance, efficiency, and transparency, and would address certain deficiencies in the constitution.

"The NEC of the board mandated a sub-committee including three lawyers, each of which sits on the NEC and comes from different regions, to review the constitution and recommend amendments. The [amendments] haven't been subject to the scrutiny of the NEC or the conference. They may be completed rejected or amended by the NEC and/or the conference. At the moment, they are merely the views of a few people, and don't carry any authority or represent any official policy.

"It's intended that these amendments be debated and adopted or rejected at the NEC meeting which precedes the conference," Zagnoev said. "If adopted, they would then be taken to the conference for ratification. We are comfortable that this is a fully democratic, fair, and transparent process. Should the NEC and/or conference not agree with the suggestions, we will continue with the current constitution."

Advocate Mark Oppenheimer points out that the changes could cause unforeseen issues in future. "One such objective of the board is to promote harmonious relations between the Jewish community and all sections of the population in the republic. While

the aim is noble, it's ambiguous. A constituent body [for example, a shul] could be accused of creating some form of disharmony. For example, if a position was taken of accusing the Anglican Church of adopting an unfairly anti-Israel stance, the constituent body might then be viewed as acting in a manner that is 'disharmonious' and be removed as a constituent member." Ironically, the above concern about the Anglican Church was recently expressed by South African Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein.

Zagnoev said the requirement that an organisation further the objects of the board had been included as an amendment, "as it would be incomprehensible for an organisation with antithetical views to the board to be a member of it. The converse is that if an organisation ceases to satisfy these requirements, the NEC should be entitled to terminate its membership. The right to revoke membership is, in any event, in the current constitution and not a new concept."

The second proposed change is that "the national executive in its sole and absolute discretion has the right to allocate a number of delegates to a constituent body which is unrelated to the number of its members".

Said Oppenheimer, "This means that a very small constituent organisation could be granted an indefinite number of members in order to rig a vote. So, because each delegate enjoys one vote, and the constitution could be changed with the assent of two thirds of the delegates present, this would entitle the national executive to 'stack' the congress in a manner that suits its preferences."

"The reason for the insertion of this clause is to cater for situations where extremely important organisations – such as the Chevrah Kadisha in Johannesburg – do not, for technical reasons, satisfy membership criteria," Zagnoev said. "In such an event, the NEC will be capable of exercising its judgement as to whether such organisations be accorded representation and the extent thereof."

Another change proposes, "An inadvertent omission to give the notice referred to any person entitled to such notice or the non-reception of such notice by any such person shall not invalidate any proceedings at any such meeting."

Zagnoev points out that this would enhance governance at the NEC. "The operative clause is that the omission needs to be inadvertent. In today's electronic-communication environment,

it's possible that an invitation to a meeting isn't delivered. Theoretically, were that to happen, the NEC meeting could not proceed. This clause has been inserted to ensure the validity of a meeting that proceeds in such a scenario. As stated, the omission needs to be inadvertent, and needs to be proven to be inadvertent if challenged. An intentional omission would not be acceptable. This, in my view, supports good governance."

Though Oppenheimer doesn't believe this is problematic, he warned about the dangers of changing a constitution.

"While it may be the case that those who are currently in power bear no ill will and intend to act in a just manner, it's possible that future generations of leaders may abuse the power that they have been granted and may run a pernicious agenda in a manner that would

not be approved of by the current leadership. Any changes to the constitution ought to be thoroughly considered and debated to avoid an undemocratic and unfair outcome."

Said Zagnoev, "The power to make these types of decisions rests in the hands of the NEC, a large body representing a diversity of interest groups and views, and fully represents the regions. It's voted in democratically, and is mandated with safeguarding the interests of the Jewish community."

Turning to the democratic nature of the board as a whole, Zagnoev said that the SAJBD had various regions, and each of the councils in these regions was subject to contested elections on an annual or biannual basis. Each of the regions then appointed a defined number of members to the NEC in terms of the national constitution.

"The only election that happens

at the national conference is for the ceremonial role of president. The practice for decades, almost without exception, is that the retiring national chairperson (typically after his/her second term) is elected national president. Mary Kluk is the current president, and is likely to make herself available for a further term."

Entry to leadership of the board therefore sits in the regions, where elections take place regularly.

"In addition, the constitutions of both the regional branches and national board allow for co-opting a certain number of people onto their committees based on the specific expertise that such individuals are able to bring to the board."

Zagnoev maintains that the SAJBD's democratic processes "are exceptionally well developed, time honoured, and rigorously protected."

Belgium's first female prime minister is Jewish

Belgian Prime Minister Sophie Wilmes at her office in Brussels



Photo: Vincent Duterne/Getty Image

CNAAN LIPSHIZ – JTA

Sophie Wilmes is the first woman and the first Jewish person to become the prime minister of Belgium.

Wilmes, a mother of four from the Brussels region, replaced Charles Michel on Sunday in the top post. The centrist politician will head a caretaker government during negotiations on the formation of a coalition, which in Belgium has been known to take months.

Michel's cabinet collapsed last year, and Wilmes replaced him when he left for a European Union position. Both are members of the centre-left MR (Reformist Movement) party.

Wilmes' mother is Ashkenazi Jewish and lost several relatives in the Holocaust, Philippe Markiewicz, the president of the Consistoire organisation of Belgian Jewry, confirmed on Monday to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

"She hid her Jewish identity, though it seems to be a private detail from her biography and not something connected to any policy-making aspect," he said.

Wilmes' father, Philippe, was a lecturer at the Catholic University of Louvain, and isn't Jewish.

Markiewicz described Wilmes, who has attended Holocaust commemoration events and highlighted them on her personal website, as "an industrious and committed politician".

A source from the Jewish community, a member of Wilmes' party who spoke to JTA on condition of anonymity, said that Judaism had only recently become "a more important factor than before" in Wilmes' life.

Michael Freilich, a Belgian legislator for the NVA (New Flemish Alliance) party and the former editor in chief of the Antwerp-based *Joods Actueel* Jewish newspaper, said Wilmes' appointment was an "historic event that makes me feel proud".

The key to kindness is a simple gesture

TALI FEINBERG

South Africans often believe that others are "out to get them" or that people will not act in good faith, but reality tells otherwise. Every day, people in this country help each other with the simplest of gestures – like returning a set of keys to their owner.

Two weeks ago, Graham Sonnenberg was enjoying watching the ducks and geese on the Sea Point promenade when he realised he had lost his car keys. "There was a hole in my jacket, and the keys had slipped through. I searched everywhere but couldn't find them. In the meantime, I went for lunch

at Hussar Grill (a steak house in nearby Green Point)," recalls Sonnenberg.

When he returned to his car – an old blue Hyundai – in the hope of



Migael Dannhauser

finding the keys nearby, he saw a note inside it saying, "Found your keys, call this number." The person who found the keys was Migael Dannhauser, a young man who had noticed the keys on cycling past, picked them up, and continued on his cycle to Camps Bay.

Sonnenberg contacted Dannhauser, and caught an Uber to meet him and retrieve his keys. "The keys had dropped out really near the car, so it could well have been stolen. It's just amazing how someone bothered to do this. People still have time and manners," he says.

"The car belonged to my father, John Sonnenberg, who was a doctor. He died in January at the age of 90, so the car

has sentimental value. My dad worked until he was 87, doing many house calls in this car. It has a low mileage, so I hope to drive it for a few more years."

Dannhauser, who is 22 years old, says that he was out "car spotting" with friends – a trend where people walk or cycle around spotting exotic and expensive cars, which they post photos of online.

"We rented bikes, and were cruising along when I spotted the keys. I pressed the unlock button, and saw the car was about 50m to 100m away. I went to the nearby Shell garage to ask them for a piece of paper and a pen to leave my details in the car. Graham called me about an hour later. He



was quite panicky and on edge about it, so I was glad to help out," says Dannhauser. "It's great because its good news, which is not spoken about, but happens all the time."

Tale of two Moses in miracle birth

NIA MAGOULIANITI-MCGREGOR

To say Yoni Moshe, aka Johnathan Moses Raichlin, made a dramatic entrance into the world 23 years ago would be an understatement. What with flashing lights, sirens, broken speed limits, and his mom Michelle on the floor of their Toyota Cressida lifting her head in between deep breathing to shout out directions for the Marymount Maternity Home, this was a far cry from the planned soft-music-with-candles water birth.



Moses Molohe and Yoni Raichlin

Yoni was born in that Cressida in the hospital parking lot, his father Hugh transforming from attorney to doctor for a few precious minutes to help deliver his son before calling for a nurse with a clamp to cut the umbilical cord.

Later, flash bulbs popping, Hugh, Michelle, and infant made the front pages of several newspapers including The Star, Pretoria News, Durban Daily News and The Argus because of that birth. With the family in the photo was Moses Molohe, then 27, traffic officer and guardian angel.

That picture spoke a thousand words.

Michelle's due date for her fourth child was still two weeks away. "It was the July school holidays, and the three children and I went to Rosebank for an outing."

She says she ignored some "twinging", but by the time she and the kids arrived at the mall from their house in Sydenham, she was in "a lot of pain".

It was also a Friday, and Michelle thought she'd better get some cakes, because "my friend had said, 'What happens if you give birth before Shabbos and it's a boy, do you have anything at home for the shalom zachor [welcoming the male]?' So, by the time I got home two hours later, it was really bad."

Husband Hugh rushed home from work, dropped the kids at a neighbour, and the young couple drove off.

"The problem was that although I had some idea, we weren't 100% sure where the Marymount hospital was," says Michelle.

"I drove up Sylvia's Pass, not entirely sure where I was going," says Hugh. "We drove through Cyrildene, and I saw a JMPD [Johannesburg Metropolitan Police] car." Instinctively, Hugh cut him off, rolled down window and said, "Officer, my wife is going to have a baby. Can you give us an escort to the Marymount?"

Michelle was beside herself. "What you doing? Don't stop!" she kept shouting.

The officer didn't hesitate. Although also not sure about the Marymount's location, he said to Hugh, "Your wife can tell you where to go, I'll drive behind you, and as soon as you get to an intersection or a robot, I'll come in front of you, put on my siren, stop all the cars, and then I'll tail behind you again."

"There were 10 red robots!" says Michelle. "When we got to a robot, he'd go to the middle of the road, put on the siren, and stop the other cars so we could drive through. It was like a movie. He did this 10 times. I could already feel Yoni's head protruding."

"Hugh said, 'hold it', but you can't hold it!"

"Finally," says Hugh, "we saw the hospital sign, I gave the thumbs up, and the officer disappeared. As I found a parking, Michelle said, 'The baby's coming!' I didn't even switch off the car, I ran around to Michelle's side and guided Yoni out into the world."

"I was crying while I was wheeled inside to have my placenta delivered. I couldn't believe what was happening," says Michelle.

At the baby's bris, Hugh and Michelle named him Yonatan Moshe – Johnathan Moses – "Yonatan for 'G-d has given' because it was a miracle birth, and Moshe after my great

uncle Moshe Rosenstein, a famous rabbi in Poland," says Hugh.

Weeks later, they managed to trace the traffic officer. "When he said his name was Moses Molohe, I said, 'Moses, you won't believe it, but our son's second name is Moses!'" It was an amazing coincidence.

"I was the child that was born in the car," says Yoni. "G-d's hand was there."

"I was born under hashgacha pratit, which means divine providence. It was erev Shabbos. The roads were full. I

wouldn't have been born near a hospital if there hadn't been a traffic officer who happened to be at the right place at the right time, who took the time to help us, and even then, I still came into this world in the parking lot. But we were close enough to get medical attention immediately."

The Raichlins invited Molohe to Yoni's third birthday party with his wife, Puleng, and daughter, Tshhegofatso. Says Yoni, "We tried to find him to come to my Barmitzvah, but it didn't work out."

"My whole life, he's always been there. In my childhood room, there's a photo of Moses holding me as a baby. He was

there whenever we spoke about my birth, whenever I saw all the newspaper pictures on my dad's office wall. I never forgot about him."

When Yoni and his fiancée, Bruria, decided to get married recently, Michelle and Hugh had a brainwave. "We had to find Moses and invite him."

Molohe says he almost didn't recognise the voice on the other end of the phone after they tracked him down. "And when I did, I was so honoured to have been remembered like

this. Sometimes we take what we call the little things so lightly, and yet others appreciate what we do. Hearing that the life I helped get to the hospital had grown into a man about to be married made me feel very emotional."

The plan that was he would wear plain clothes until the speeches. Then, he would change into his old uniform, (Molohe now works as a superintendent in security for the City of Joburg) and surprise Yoni after Hugh's speech.

As Hugh was finishing off his speech, he said to Yoni, "There's someone who wants to wish you Mazeltov". Then the doors opened, and Molohe entered in his uniform.

Yoni was overcome. "He nearly jumped over the table," says Molohe. "He looked so happy to see me. And I was happy that for the first time, we could talk to each other. It brought it all back to me. It was post '94, and when a white man cut me off, I didn't know what to expect. But when I heard his wife screaming – I wasn't sure if it was at him or me – I knew it was alright."

"It was my first Jewish wedding. The dancing, energy, excitement, I enjoyed it all."

"Molohe will always be a significant human being in my existence," says Yoni. "The fact that his name is also Moses was further proof to me of divine intervention. It was a highlight to be able to show my gratitude, to shake the man's hand. It was shleimut – a huge sense of completion."

"I'm probably going to have my own kids so stick around, Moses, we may need you again!"

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Brexit or not to Brexit, that's the problem

PAULA SLIER

If you think you're confused by Brexit, you're not alone. At this stage, both the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) are preparing for all outcomes.

After British Prime Minister Boris Johnson requested an extension to the UK's exit from the EU, the block agreed to a "flexextension" (flexible extension) until 31 January. On Tuesday night, the UK parliament voted overwhelmingly for a Christmas election which is due to take place on 12 December. Campaigning has already begun, with it being billed as the Brexit election.

Jenny Manson, the co-chairperson for the Jewish Voice for Labour, the party headed by Jeremy Corbyn, isn't surprised by how events have unfolded. Like so many British Jews who arrived in the UK after World War I or during the 1930s after fleeing Nazi persecution, Manson's mother's family were immigrants. It was this background that motivated her – and she believes the majority of British Jews – to vote in favour of remaining in the EU.

"It's a certain universalistic view of the world and connection with Europe," she says. "For me, the language of Brexit is extremely uncomfortable, especially the language of anti-immigration. People naturally move to where there is work and they're able to practice their religion."

Lance Forman, a Jewish Brexit party politician, couldn't disagree more. He was elected in May to the European Parliament on behalf of this anti-EU party, having jumped ship after being a Conservative party supporter for almost 40 years.

"Why would one want to be part of Europe today?" he asks. "There's massive youth unemployment, Germany's going into a recession, Italy hasn't grown for the past 10 years. The single currency is killing Europe, and is causing a great dependency culture that breeds resentment and extremism."

While agreeing with Manson that most British Jews favour remaining in the EU, he believes they've read the situation superficially.

"Instead of approaching Brexit from an economic perspective, they're considering it from the standpoint of wanting peace in Europe and avoiding anti-Semitism. My analysis is the opposite. Jews say they're afraid of nationalism and that it leads to anti-Semitism, but I say if you don't believe in nationalism, then why do you believe in Israel? If Israel had existed in the 1930s, there wouldn't have been a Holocaust as Jews would've had somewhere to go. There is nothing wrong with a nation state so long as it's a liberal democracy. Nazi Europe wasn't liberal."

The SA Jewish Report caught up with two former South Africans living in the UK to gauge their opinion.

Beauty therapist Dalia Beifus, 43, left South Africa in 1996 as a 20-year-old backpacker looking for travel and adventure. She returned to Cape Town twenty years later with a husband and three children.

Last year, she moved to the UK after her husband, who has a German passport, was offered a job there.

"I can't believe people voted to leave. It goes against everything I believe in like inclusivity, collaboration, and creating more co-operation in the world," she said.

"What I also can't believe is that there wasn't the requirement for at least a 60% majority to make such incredible changes to the country. All this mess over 4%, and even then the people voted only for a concept, and did not know what a messy process it would be. What about all the people that leave everything to try and make a future for themselves and their families in a new country? Immigrants work harder than anyone else to earn their new life. Having lived in so many countries myself, I'm extremely conscious of being an expat or the 'right kind of foreigner' in these countries."

Johannesburg-born journalist Hayley Bentley (not her real name) moved to the UK 16 years ago after



Dalia Beifus

being hijacked and feeling "very uneasy about the high levels of crime and lack of job opportunities" in South Africa. Married with a toddler, she was fortunate to have a British passport and a job waiting for her in the UK.

Bentley voted for Brexit "because I believe that the European parliament – which consists of people who are not voted into their positions and certainly not voted in by me – has so much sway over decisions and laws in the UK. For example, if someone commits a crime in the UK and the courts here find him guilty, that person can go to the European courts of appeal and more often than not have their verdict overturned."

Bentley was also worried about the prospect of Turkey joining the EU. "There was always the possibility that Turkey would join the EU after [German Chancellor Angela] Merkel decided to let everyone into Germany. I know that sounds racist and it's not meant to be, but I was concerned by what this would mean for the UK."

"While I have a lot of sympathy for refugees, and I do think we should be letting them in, I was unhappy with the way it was being handled."

I believe that a lot of the people who were let in as refugees weren't actually refugees in the proper sense of the word. Instead, they were running away from economic or political hardship. Enough of them were also criminals. You can see that from what's happening in Germany today, with a lot of criminal behaviour being carried out by refugees.

"Even if they weren't criminals, I was concerned that a lot of refugees would come into the UK and that we had no plan for them, so they would end up living on the fringes of society and turn to crime."

"In retrospect, I think Brexit was probably a bad idea, not because the idea was bad, but because of the way it's been handled by the government."

Bentley is mostly worried that another election will bring Labour to power "which would be the worst thing ever, with Jeremy Corbyn as prime minister. I disagree with having another referendum because I don't think you should keep having referendums until you get the answer you want. People have voted, and that should be respected."

Stepping into a Holocaust painting via virtual reality

TALI FEINBERG

Have you ever wondered what daily Jewish life was like in Europe before the Holocaust? Soon, you will be able to experience the closest thing to time travel using virtual reality.

"To improve the impact of Holocaust education, we need to understand the vast Jewish life that existed beforehand, and how Jews have lived for centuries," said Leora Raikin, the director of the David Labkovski Project, in a presentation to the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre. A native of Cape Town, Raikin lives in Los Angeles and uses her great uncle's vast body of artworks to educate people around the world about the Shoah.

"You will wear special glasses to step into the art and become part of the painting. We utilised the skills of a gaming designer to bring these pictures to life. The script comes from testimonies of Jews who lived in Vilna and survived the Shoah. You will be able to walk around the house, light candles, pour water, pick up the challah ... even pet the goat! You'll be able to go into the Vilna marketplace and experience everyday life. Studies show that 20 minutes of virtual reality is equal to a three-hour lecture in terms of learning," said Raikin.

She said her great uncle's vivid paintings were up on the walls of her grandparents' home in Sea Point, so his art has always been part of her life. Labkovski was born in 1906 and raised in Vilna, which at that time was the centre of the Jewish world. All he wanted to do was paint and draw, and he went on to work at the prestigious State Jewish Theatre in Moscow before being accepted as one of 500 applicants at the Art Academy of Leningrad.

It was there that he learnt everything about being an artist, from mixing paints to anatomy and architecture. But it all came crashing down when Stalin rose to power, arresting anyone suspected of anti-Soviet activity. Labkovski was imprisoned in solitary confinement for 10 months and then sent to Siberia. His future

wife, Rivka Spektor, was also sent there. "The fact that many Jews survived the Holocaust because they were sent to Siberia is one of the greatest untold stories of this era," says Raikin.

But Labkovski told the story through his art. His paintings depict the horrors of life in the gulag – sub-zero temperatures, starvation, slave labour, and a brutal existence. They form part of the small archive of documentation by those who were there. Labkovski survived because he became a tattoo artist for rival gangs and painted portraits.

But that wasn't the end of the story. When he returned to Vilna after the war, the world as he knew it had vanished. Ninety five percent of the Jews in the city had been murdered, including

spoons (Raikin was eventually given one of these silver spoons as a wedding gift). They settled in Tsfat in Israel where they exhibited the paintings, but they were not well-received by the Israeli public, which was not ready to look back on what had been lost.

The couple were not able to have children, so they kept the paintings as a complete collection, almost like their own "children". When they passed away in the 1990s, much of the art was looted and stolen. It turned into a 22-year-long court case that eventually reached Israel's Supreme Court. Eventually, some of the art was recovered and divided up amongst the family. Although they appreciated the art, it was mostly stored away from the public eye.

One day, upon telling friends about her great uncle, Raikin realised she had to use this art to educate others about the Holocaust. She founded the David Labkovski Project, which now travels the world educating schoolchildren, adults, and professionals. The project is unusual in that it allows participants to make their own exhibitions of the work, therefore becoming curators and docents of these exhibits. "In turn, they teach their own communities," she said.

Raikin said that as soon as this responsibility is given to pupils, they absorb knowledge and lessons that might otherwise pass them by in traditional classrooms. "It's multi-disciplinary and non-judgemental. Art is universal – anyone can access it," said Raikin. She hopes to eventually train teachers in the programme. The original art has also been exhibited in Lithuania – taking it "home" to the place it originated from.

The virtual reality aspect of the project is time consuming – it's a 15-minute experience and can be experienced by only one person at a time. But whenever Raikin has presented it, there have been lines of people waiting patiently to try it. People are so interested in it, she believes, because "art is universal, it is multi-disciplinary, it appeals to kids and adults, and it explores life before, during and after the Holocaust. Ultimately, this is the future of learning."



Leora Raikin explaining the Holocaust education work

Raikin's great grandparents, great aunt, and her five-year-old twins. Most had been shot in the nearby Ponar forest. Jewish life that had existed for 500 years had ended.

Yet it lived on in Labkovski's paintings. He began to paint everything he remembered about Vilna – from the family home to the marketplace. These are the paintings that will now be explored in virtual reality, which Raikin hopes will be ready within the next year. He also depicted Jews being persecuted, forced to wear yellow stars, and eventually being led to their deaths, imagining in horrifying detail what happened to his family and community.

Labkovski's life continued on a tragic path that echoed the events of the 20th century. He and Rivka fled Vilna, which was now communist, with a few paintings and silver

King David principal, an accomplished ‘sports junkie’

SAUL KAMIONSKY

When King David High School Linksfield Principal Lorraine Srage blew out 60 candles on her birthday cake on 21 October, most celebrated her achievements as a principal, but few know of her achievements in sport.

This four-time Comrades Marathon medallist is what she calls a “sports junkie”. She is also an accomplished swimmer who represented her province (then Transvaal) in the pool, and still gyms and runs when she is not running the school.

In 1991, Srage and three times Comrades champion Frith van der Merwe were part of the women’s team for Rockies who won the Gunga Din trophy (awarded to the winning team at Comrades). And as a member of staff at King David, she coached the hockey, swimming, and tennis teams.

Srage, who became principal in 2015 after being a history and physical education teacher for thirty years, has always loved sport. “The real influence for my love of sport was my dad. I became the son he never had because I was one of three daughters, so he schlepped me to rugby. I was always just part of his love of sport.” Her father, Fred, was part of the group that formed Rocky Road Runners (one of the oldest and most established running clubs in South Africa).

Srage started playing sport in primary school. “I got involved in swimming and that was my real love,” she says. “Then, at Waverley Girls High School, I played hockey and tennis, but swimming remained my main sport. I was fortunate to swim at provincial and national level.”

It required considerable commitment. “I don’t think I ever went away in the December holidays because that was the height of training since the championships were always in February.”

Srage, however, was never able to swim at the Maccabi Games as South Africa was excluded due to apartheid. But in 1975, when she was 16, she went on a goodwill tour to Israel with a group of Jewish and some non-Jewish scholars. “We stayed at the Maccabi Village, swam a little bit. It was probably one of my fondest memories.”

She swam through her time at the University of Witwatersrand. “I was lucky enough to be given half-blues for swimming at university, and my love for sport got me to major not only in history, but in physical education.”

Srage made good use of the latter qualification. “I coached a whole lot of sport such as swimming and hockey at King David, but I always had one foot in the academic classroom.”

Srage was already teaching when she started running. During her first Comrades Marathon in 1987, she ran with her father on a scorching hot day. “He couldn’t believe that he had to put up with all my moaning and groaning,” she says. “I had run a lot of road races, I had run Two Oceans Marathons and I was placed a few times, but I don’t think I ever really understood the enormity of the Comrades. From then on, the Comrades and road running just became part of who we were as a family.”

In her fourth Comrades in 1991, Srage demonstrated her true running ability with a time of seven hours, 48 minutes, 32 seconds, which was just less than 49 minutes slower than the time recorded by that year’s fourth-place finisher, Diana Terreblanche.

Because Srage ran into her shoes, she often took them off to find her nails “absolutely exploding” and needed to have the nails cut in order to release the blood.

“After one Comrades, I remember somebody said to me, ‘I have never seen a worse pair of feet. You shouldn’t run to a

sandal sale.” But Srage has since hung up her Comrades trainers. “I think, with commitments, to run the Comrades would be a bridge too far.”

You will often find Srage at rugby and cricket stadiums as a spectator. “I love sport and follow it, and I still love exercise. Given the constraints of this job, I keep as fit as I can but, to be honest, I’m not doing enough exercise any longer.”

In her younger days, Srage admired the likes of nine-time Olympic swimming champion

Mark Spitz; World Golf Hall of Fame inductee Gary Player; former top-ranked doubles tennis-player Ilana Kloss, and any women who ran the Comrades.

Srage’s leadership skills captured the attention of then Maccabi SA chairperson, Raymond Hack, who in 2005 appointed her as head of junior delegation for the South African team at the Maccabi Games.

“I felt like I was on a giant ulpan. But it was perhaps the most magnificent experience

to see a stadium full of Jewish athletes from all over the world. Even when I think about it now, I get goose bumps.”

But Srage’s real love is school sport, “which when played well, is fantastic”.

“If I look at the students who are involved in sport in this school, they are balanced kids who have time for everything. They understand what it means to work in a team and play fair.”

At 60, she looks forward to more balance between sport and academia.



King David Linksfield Principal Lorraine Srage crossing the Comrades finish line with her dad, Fred

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Empire of the sun

HOWARD SACKSTEIN

When Sivan Ya'ari left the stage, there were audible sobs from the audience of 1 500 who had crowded into the Singularity University (SingularityU) South African Summit in Kyalami in October.

Ya'ari reduced the audience to tears with her heart wrenching account of bringing Israeli technology to Africa, providing nearly 1 600 000 people with fresh water in rural villages.

No one expected the elegant, diminutive Israeli kitted out in pink high fashion to tell a story of poverty, determination, and salvation. The contrast of her elegance with the story she told elicited a deep-seated visceral reaction.

When Ya'ari finished her Israeli military service, she met the owner of American based fashion brand Jordache Jeans. He declined her a job because her English wasn't good enough, but on discovering that Sivan spoke French, he offered her a job at his factory in Madagascar. And so, 21 years ago, with no connection to the

continent, Ya'ari left for Africa.

"I was poor in Israel, but when I arrived in Africa, I realised what it meant to have nothing," Ya'ari said. She was shocked by what she saw. "Because there is no energy, there is no refrigeration, which means there is no access to vaccines and medicines."

No energy means no access to good education. The students in the first row of school brought money to pay for the kerosene in the lamp, the rest of the kids sat in the back in the dark. Students were too weak to walk to school. Still today, more than 620 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa live without electricity.

"No energy means no access to clean water. People are forced to walk for hours in search of water. Yet, there is plenty of water right beneath their feet, a few meters deep in the aquifers. The only thing that we need is energy, energy to pump the water."

Ya'ari realised that solar panels in schools could dramatically improve education. "We brought in two solar panels which powered 12

lights and a fridge."

The school could sell its excess electricity to charge mobile phones and even, in one instance, power a barber shop. The money could be used to replace burnt-out globes.

"I decided then, with Golda Meir as my inspiration and Israeli technologies as the solution, to go back and to find a way to help. I founded Innovation Africa with a very simple goal: to bring Israeli technology to remote African villages.

"Energy is one thing, but access to clean water is truly everything. With the help of the community, we brought a drilling machine, a few solar panels, a solar pump, and a water tank, and in only a few days, clean water was flowing to different taps that we installed throughout the village. Within months, drip irrigation allowed for better nutrition, better health, and most importantly, economic growth."

Today, Innovation Africa operates in 10 African countries including South Africa. In the past year and a half, Ya'ari has

brought fresh water to 50 South African villages particularly in the Bushbuckridge and Mpumalanga area. Much of her work in South Africa is funded by the Kirsh family and Investec Bank.

"Growing up, not having much, pushed me to do what I do," said Ya'ari, "but I didn't do anything special. Sometimes the source of the problem is the solution. I took things that already existed. I took solar panels to a place where there was sun, and I took them where they were needed. They merely pumped out the water that already exists, it was simple.

"It doesn't take much to help others. Sometimes the technology already exists. You don't need to invent when you can work with what is already around and useable. The result is that the impact is so much greater.

"We are committed to bring water where there is drought, to bring light where there is darkness, to bring hope and dignity where there is despair." And with that, the diminutive Israeli, turned on a gasping audience and left the stage. More than a thousand business executives at SingularityU finally understood the teachings of the Mishna: "Whoever saves a single life is considered to have saved the whole world."



Sivan Ya'ari

Small step turned into giant leaps for A-man

HOWARD SACKSTEIN

Today Adam Pantanowitz is an iconic biomedical engineer, entrepreneur, and university lecturer. But that was not always the case for this tomahawked techie. Speaking to an enraptured crowd at Singularity University in Kyalami, Pantanowitz took the audience on a journey from disability to triumph.

Afflicted with a neuro-degenerative disease at a young age, Pantanowitz lost his ability to walk. At the age of 13, surgery appeared to be the only option, but the operations didn't go well, and doctors quietly whispered to his family that he would probably not be able to walk again. A photo of him lying face-down on a bed, his legs mummified in bandages, overwhelmed the audience.

Dependent on his family and feeling increasingly isolated, Pantanowitz withdrew from the world. His excruciating pain confined him to bed, and he started missing school.

His grades began to suffer, and he overheard his parents question how he would ever be able to hold down a job. For him, work was a distant problem, all he had to do was get through the next day. "Pain can consume you," he says. "I was isolated from my peers and despondent."

"We went on holiday as a family, and my father had to carry me in and out of the holiday home."

In Grade 11, surgeons decided to give it another shot, but this too did not go well. In Grade 11, Pantanowitz skipped the entire year of school.

He searched for answers in traditional medicine and alternative care, but all of this lead nowhere. The drugs administered to him resulted in mental decline, and he lived in his family's TV room, unable to climb the stairs back to his bedroom.

In the corner of the TV room was the family computer, and it was there that he found solace. The computer was attached to the world through the internet and through its copper wires, Pantanowitz

could "slip the surly bonds of earth, touch the face of G-d". He started hacking away at the internet, writing software, and taking his computer apart. It was much easier to take things apart than it was to put them back together.

Pantanowitz made a fundamental decision about his life. His pain medication was leaving him in a constant haze, he needed to break free, and clear his mind. He went cold-turkey on his drugs, and with sheer grit, moved from crawling to crutches, from crutches to walking with a limp, to a barely noticeable gait today.

It took him some time, but Pantanowitz wrote matric and arrived at the University of Witwatersrand unsure of what he wanted to do with his life. During orientation week, he heard that biomedical engineering was one of the most difficult courses on campus – and he loved a challenge.

The course was oversubscribed, and Pantanowitz's grades were not good enough, having missed a big chunk of high school. Emboldened by determination and sheer *chutzpah*, he set up camp outside the office of the dean of engineering until the dean agreed to admit him in class.

Pantanowitz described the fear that he was an "imposter", ill-equipped to compete with the geni who sat next to him at university.

Four years later, Pantanowitz graduated top of his class, having been the top student in each of his years of engineering, and winning the Dean's Gold Medal.

Pantanowitz gives back. He lectures in electrical engineering, bio-medical engineering, and medicine. He gyms, and has competed in the 94.7 cycle race. He has also been involved in a number of start-up businesses including Tariffic and Aura.

One of his most notable achievements was "hacking the human brain", a project which attached a human brain to a computer network and using sensitive electrodes, accurately read and understood the brainwaves of its human subjects.

Today, Pantanowitz is a faculty member of Singularity University, telling the story of his triumph over adversity, and talking philosophically about how technology can enhance the human race. When he walks onto stage, his minor limp is barely noticeable, but his inspiring story of triumph is a giant leap for all mankind.



Adam Pantanowitz

The future is going to be weird

HOWARD SACKSTEIN

When Shayne and Mic Mann brought Singularity University to South Africa, the journey took the two brothers to Singularity summits around the globe. Listening to some of the world's leading experts in disruptive technology has turned the Manns into experts in the field.

Mic relates the story of Julius Yego, the Kenyan field and track athlete who won the Commonwealth Games gold medal in javelin after teaching himself to throw the shaft by watching YouTube videos. Kyle Giersdorf, the 16-year-old

world Fortnite champion, won a title prize of \$3 million (R43.7 million), earning more than the winners of Wimbledon. Clearly your kids should get off the tennis court and start playing computer games! More than 40 million people competed for the championship, and the title was crowned before a capacity crowd in the Arthur Ashe stadium in Flushing Meadows, New York.

The world is clearly changing. Traditional tertiary institutions like universities are fast being replaced by online courses from the Kahn Academy and websites such as Udacity. Education is becoming democratized and accessible. Education is no longer the exclusive province of the elite. Today, all you need is a cell phone and an internet connection. And that is why cheap data is a fundamental prerequisite for growth in the developing world. Once you allow mass access to education and take it beyond the stuffy ivory towers of dated institutions, you can move from scarcity to abundance. Udacity now enrolls more than 50 000 students a year, registered in its online nanodegree paid programmes, a far cry from the days when people approached the few monks of the Catholic Church to write letters home to their

families.

How we earn our money is also changing. Tyler Blevins is a professional gamer with more than 14 million followers, people who pay to watch him play computer games. Last year, his earnings topped \$10 million (R145.7 million). But all of that fades into insignificance next to Ryan Kaji, the eight-year-old toy reviewer who brought in a whopping \$22 million (R320.5 million) from his YouTube channel. Nice work if you can get it as an eight-year-old. Eat your heart out Shirley Temple!

The Chinese love their "Live Streamers", people who show live video content about crucial life-saving topics like make-up and clothes. Some of them make more than \$5 million (R72.8 million) a year. The world has become voyeuristic – and not in a good way.

The new 14-second music video sharing app, TikTok, is now valued at more than \$75 billion (R1 trillion), not bad for an app that's only two years old, and more than twice the value of South African mining giant Anglo American.

Taddy Bletcher's Maharishi Institute in South Africa is training a new breed of job seekers to be "data labellers", people who teach artificial intelligence to recognise objects. A small child might automatically understand what a cat looks like, but an artificial intelligence computer might have to see millions of images of a cat before it understands what those furry, sulky things are. We just hope that the AI computers pay their slaves well for these menial tasks.

Mic concludes with a lesson on the three skills that we will all need for the future: agility to change, the creativity to perform tasks that computers will be incapable of, and trusted reliable networks of people to rely on.

The future is upon us, and it may be a lot weirder than we ever imagined.



Mic Mann

Proud to be LGBT and Jewish

OPINION

ADAM SCHLOSBERG



The biggest city in the rainbow nation was a sea of rainbow flags last weekend for the Joburg Pride parade in Sandton, Gauteng, on 26 October.

Thousands of members of the LGBTI+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and more) community as well as straight allies gathered to celebrate what it means to live openly as your true self with pride and without fear or shame.

There was also pride in celebrating how far society has come in terms of tolerance, understanding, inclusivity, respect, and support of the LGBT community.

This year marked the 30th anniversary of Joburg Pride, and the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York, protests by members of the LGBT community who had had enough of being arrested, harassed, and fired for simply being who they are. Those riots marked the beginning of the gay rights movement.

In South Africa, the rights of the

LGBTQI+ community were made constitutional in 1996, making it the first country in the world to grant legal protection to the community, and later the fifth country globally to recognise same-sex marriage, a fact of which South Africans can be incredibly proud.

The Pride festival was held on a specially closed-off section of Rivonia Road outside Sandton City, and it was made possible in part through generous donations by major corporations which occupy the office buildings in the area.

The fact that some of the largest and most powerful companies in the country are happy to donate to and actively support Pride is in itself an incredible testament not only to their social responsibility, but to the progress South African society has made in changing its views of LGBT people.

Growing up as a gay boy in the Jewish community was difficult. Being bullied in school and feeling terrible shame, sadness, confusion, and isolation was a reality not only for me, but many little boys and girls like

me not only at Jewish schools, but in schools in general.

Thankfully, as the world has moved forward in its attitude to the LGBT community, so too have schools improved their approach to bullying and LGBT education.

After “coming out” the closet at 19 years old, I felt like my life had gone from black and white to technicolour, as I was finally able to live happily as my true self. I am grateful that my parents and family are 100% supportive of me, even though it may have been difficult for them to

overcome some of the stigmas and preconceptions they had grown up with. I was incredibly lucky, but I’m aware that not everybody has such a positive coming out experience, and that is something we can all work to change.

Being a part of both the Joburg Jewish and Joburg LGBT communities is a wonderful experience. The two actually have many things in common such as treating others as you wish to be treated yourself; welcoming and including everybody like Avraham

did into his tent; giving back to and helping others especially those less fortunate; and using one’s unique gifts and talents to be a good person, lead the best life possible, and make the world a better place. As a young, gay Jewish man I confidently wave the Israeli and the rainbow Pride flags with pride.

• Schlosberg studied finance and moved to New York where he worked at an investment bank. He left finance to pursue a career as an artist.



At Joburg Pride

SAUJS wins best society award

JORDAN MOSHE

The University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) branch of the South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) was recently recognised as the university’s most outstanding religious society and most outstanding society based on initiative.

The prestigious honours were conferred at an award ceremony on 10 October at the university’s Origins Centre. Key speakers included Vice Chancellor Adam Habib and acclaimed actor, director, and playwright, Dr John Kani.

“Out of all the societies at Wits, student governance picks out the ones that displayed excellent student leadership, ran engaging and relevant events, emphasised acts of volunteering, and created spaces of solidarity,” said outgoing SAUJS chairperson Liora Katzew.

Wits is one of the most diverse campuses in the world, she said, making navigating student politics a significant challenge. “Our thinking this year was about bringing people together. We wanted to create events that pull and engage a wide range of students.”

Before the awards were conferred, a litany of SAUJS’ achievements were shared. These included an event at Constitution Hill on reconciliation which involved the Wits Law society and Amnesty International; a Women’s Empowerment workshop with the chief financial officer of Peregrine Holdings; a partnership with the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre focusing on the dangers of “othering”; and various cash or cans campaigns to raise money for the Wits Food Bank.

“As a religious society, highlights included our daily minyan and the celebration of all *chagim* [Jewish holidays] like handing out matzah on Pesach, celebrating Purim with a photobooth, or handing out menorahs on Chanukah. In all these celebrations, we made an effort to welcome the broader Wits community.”

Her personal highlight was participating in the #AmINext campaign in which SAUJS was given the opportunity to say a prayer and speech at an interfaith gathering on campus against gender-based violence.

“This really shows that we fulfilled our goal to extend SAUJS beyond the so called bubble, and create a space for SAUJS members to be active agents of change.”

Most Jews of Polish and Lithuanian origin are entitled to EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT

A common misconception is that South African Jews of Ashkenazi heritage are of Lithuanian descent, and that only those who are able to prove their eligibility for Lithuanian citizenship are able to obtain a European passport. The fact is that most South African Jews do qualify for European

citizenship, whether they can prove their Lithuanian lineage or not, and most South African Jews of Sephardic heritage are also eligible for European passports.

Ashkenazi: It is important to understand that until 1918, all of Eastern Europe was divided between three empires: Russia, Prussia, the Austro-Hungarian empire. Neither Poland nor Lithuania existed until 1918.

At the end of WWI, the territory was divided, and countries like Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and others were born/reborn. Only then did residents become citizens of these countries. As a result, people who, for example, were born in Riga (nowadays Latvia) could actually be Lithuanian or Polish.

Horesch advises that eligibility for a Lithuanian or Polish passport depends on the city from which your grandparents (or their parents) hailed.

Horesch says many South African Ashkenazi Jews of Lithuanian origin have been refused Lithuanian citizenship because their heritage is actually Polish. They would, accordingly, be entitled to Polish citizenship and a EU passport.

After World War II, the borders in Europe changed, resulting in cities changing

nationality. The resultant effect for descendants of Jews who were born in Vilnius, for example, is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined, but an application for a Polish passport may very well be successful.

Sephardi: The descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are most likely eligible for a Portuguese passport. If applicable, Horesch is able to obtain an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which an application for European citizenship can be made and will most likely be successful. Portuguese citizenship enables one to enter the United States without the need to apply for a visa.

In addition, Horesch is filing many applications for descendants of Sephardi origin who arrived in South Africa from Greece, Turkey, and North Africa. Descendants from other countries in the Middle East – even Holland – are also potentially eligible.

Horesch resides in Israel, but has spent seven years in Poland, and is recognised as a



leading lawyer in the field of European citizenship, with a full understanding of local immigration laws.

Living in Israel – a four-hour flight from Warsaw and Vilnius – offers him quick and easy access to Poland and Lithuania, Accordingly, he is able to work closely with local professionals who assist him in tracing the documentation required for successful applications for European citizenship.

In addition, and as a result of his close ties with Portuguese authorities, to date he has had a 100% success rate with applications for Portuguese citizenship.

Horesch is available to discuss your specific details. He is often in South Africa, and can meet you in person to discuss your specific needs.



Destroyed Warsaw, January 1945



Avi Horesch

citizenship, whether they can prove their Lithuanian lineage or not, and most South African Jews of Sephardic heritage are also eligible for European passports.

Adv. Avi Horesch has in-depth knowledge of the applicable legislation and in his experience, the majority of South African Jews have ancestors who were illegally deprived of citizenship. As their descendants, these Jews are eligible for European citizenship which will result in



I will be in Johannesburg from 14 to 20 November and then in Cape Town until 28 November. Please contact me for an appointment. My South African phone number is +27 64 745 5273 • Email me on adv.avi.n.horesch@gmail.com

BRCA mutation increases breast cancer risk in men

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

It's estimated that one in 40 people of Jewish Ashkenazi descent test positive for the mutated BRCA 1 and 2 cancer gene. Men with these genes risk mostly breast, prostate, colon and pancreatic cancer.

Both genders also face increased risk of gall bladder and bile duct cancer, stomach cancer, and malignant melanomas. "BRCA1 and 2 gene mutations are not restricted to women, and they're not restricted to breast cancer," says Professor Bernardo Leon Rapoport, a specialist physician and medical oncologist in-charge of The Medical Oncology Centre of Rosebank and extraordinary professor at the department of immunology, faculty of health sciences, University of Pretoria.

In a study conducted at the Rabin Medical Center in Israel, a centre dedicated to men with BRCA mutations, it was found that men with these mutations developed eight times as many cancers as would have been expected in the general population.

"There is a misconception that men can't get breast cancer," says Johannesburg-based genetic counsellor, Kara Stoler, who also works at the Malka Ella Fertility Fund. "But they're also at risk. Men should do breast examinations, and any concerns need to be investigated.

"BRCA2 cancers are more commonly associated with men," says Professor Carol Ann Bann, a South African expert on breast cancer.

"It's also important for men to test, because if they are carriers of a cancer gene, their children are then at risk," says Stoler. The same BRCA gene test – done via blood or saliva – is used for men and women. The test is now more accessible as costs have decreased over the past few years, says Rapoport. "You test once in your lifetime. Only Ashkenazi Jews with a history of cancer in their families are advised to be tested for the gene."

A male medical doctor in the community, who wishes to remain anonymous, tested positive for the BRCA gene a few years ago. "Virtually from childhood, I'd known about aunts who had had breast and ovarian cancer," he recalls. "One of my cousins who was much older than me had practiced as a doctor in America. He wrote to us to say that you can now do a gene test, and that we should do it. The question was when.

"I have daughters, and told them we needed to be tested because my mother had died young of breast cancer which meant she probably had the gene. But I told them to wait until after they'd finished having their families."

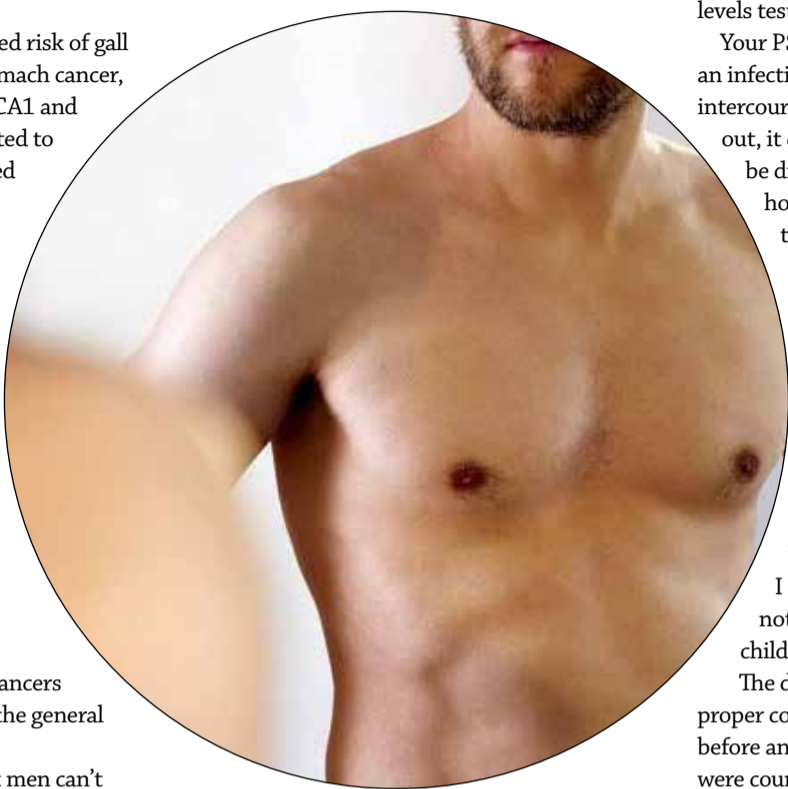
This is because once you determine that you are a carrier, depending on which guidelines you follow, you may decide to have a hysterectomy and bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy (the removal of the ovaries, uterus, and fallopian tubes) and a mastectomy to mitigate your ovarian and breast-cancer risks.

For men who test positive, there are also significant risks to consider. The lifetime risk of breast cancer for an average man is extremely remote – a hundred times less than the average woman. Yet these risks increase if they test positive for the BRCA gene mutation – at up to 8.9% for those with a BRCA2 mutation, and up to 1% for those with a BRCA1 mutation.

Men who test positive for either gene also face a 20% lifetime risk of developing prostate cancer. While there are no preventative operations for men with BRCA gene mutations, they do need to be screened regularly for breast and prostate cancer via mammograms from the age of 35 and prostate checks from between 40 to 45 years old annually or every six

months. There are also constant advancements in the use of PARP inhibitors. This is a new class of cancer drugs, a targeted therapy that is particularly effective for patients with BRCA mutations, says Rapoport.

"The older you get, the greater your risk of



prostate cancer and the lower your risk of breast cancer," says the doctor. "Initially, I screened vigilantly for prostate cancer but as I've got older, I've been a bit remiss. If I had to give advice, I'd say go to a urologist frequently to have your PSA (prostate specific antibodies) levels tested."

Your PSA levels are raised when there is an infection or you've recently had sexual intercourse. Yet, if those factors are ruled out, it can indicate cancer. Cancer cannot be diagnosed through the test alone, however. "You've got to be examined, the doctor has to feel and ultrasound your prostate to see if it's enlarged. If there's any worry, then a biopsy is needed.

"It's a dominant inheritance, so you need only one parent to be a carrier to potentially pass it on to your children, male or female," says the doctor. "I'm positive, and both my daughters are carriers. I was tested because I needed to know for them, I didn't want to know for myself. If not for you, you've got to do it for your children and your children's children."

The doctor stresses the importance of proper counselling before being tested, and before and after receiving your results. "We were counselled properly throughout by a

professor of genetics who I know well. It was quite a shock that all three of us were carriers."

There's a lack of awareness when it comes to testing men, he says. "When I tell people with a family history to check their children, they say 'but not my boys'. You have to check boys and girls – but only once they're old enough to get tested – in their late teens or 20s."

"Male breast cancer in the family is highly indicative of there being a BRCA-gene mutation," says the doctor. "With prostate cancer, even if it affected only previous generations, you need to be checked." According to the *World Journal of Oncology*, prostate cancer is the second most frequent cancer diagnosis in men globally after lung cancer. In 2018, it caused 3.8% of all cancer deaths in men. Prostate cancer is also the fifth leading cause of death worldwide.

The emotional toll that a positive BRCA gene mutation test takes is undeniable. "It's difficult to explain that you feel guilty, even though as a carrier you've done nothing wrong," says the doctor. "But I feel a great sense of guilt. It's caused a lot of heartache, and I'm sure it's going to cause heartache in the future. But you can do something about it. Treatment is much better than it was ten or even five years ago. You just need to consult the right medical professionals."

Joburg Jewish artists jam on Sukkot

STEVEN GRUZD

Amidst soulful music, the spirits of biblical ancestors were summoned to a sukkah on the pool deck of the Genesis Centre on a warm Johannesburg night.

The Sukkot tradition of *ushpizin*, an Aramaic word roughly translated as "guests" or "hospitality" follows a Kabbalistic tradition in which various biblical figures are invited symbolically into the sukkah each night to dine with the family. The fourth night's guest is Moshe, and on this occasion, the matriarch, Leah, joined him. The evening of musical performance was a collaboration between two relatively new organisations in the city's art scene – 9th Street and Creative Gatherings.

Singer and artist Leigh Nudelman said that the seeds for 9th Street were planted when she attended the Nahum Goldmann Fellowship in Saldanha Bay in May 2018. There, she had some profound discussions about what it means to be a young Jew in South Africa today. "How do Jews fit in?" she asked, "Where do we locate ourselves? We live in bubbles, inside and outside the Jewish community."

She also felt a distinct generation gap, with older people not understanding the dislocation and dilemmas facing Jewish youth.

To carry on these conversations, she invited Jewish artists and friends to her house, and 9th Street was born to promote Jewish artists in the city.

The name refers to the 9th Street Shul in Orange Grove, nestled between Paterson Park and the bustling Louis Botha Avenue.

"Art and culture play a huge role in finding ways of belonging, and narrating Jewish identity in Johannesburg today," Nudelman said. "We want to nurture high-quality Jewish artists and their art. 9th Street provides a vehicle to present their work, get feedback, and provide support."

Nudelman says it has about 70 members, with roughly 20 attending monthly meetings. *Ushpizin* was its first major public performance.

She and guitarist and singer, Farryl Roth, presented a reinterpretation of the story of Leah, the sad sister that Jacob was duped into marrying. The Azuri Street Orchestra summoned its African ancestors into the rooftop sukkah with its mesmerising melodies.

Roth, whose day job is in physiotherapy, said, "Joburg lacks cultural centres for lots of mediums. We want to create a cultural hub for Jewish artists to collaborate. We all feel isolated as artists in the city. I think we've found a home in 9th Street. It's important that artists use Joburg as a creative local space.

"We want to walk in the city, reclaim its spaces. We want to explore and rejuvenate old Jewish buildings, interesting shuls. Some are deserted, unused. We want to use them again, reignite them through music and art." In future, they hope to do "curated" walks in Johannesburg, where participants will encounter performance and



Leigh Nudelman and Farryl Roth



Yael Shapiro, Moshe Singer and Alon Cohen on drums

exhibitions on their journey.

For the *ushpizin* performance, 9th Street partnered with Creative Gatherings, a network that gives ideas and support to artists, inside and outside the Jewish community. One of its founders, the aptly named Moshe Singer, describes Creative Gatherings as "a community-building art and music project". It was started two years ago by Singer (a drama teacher), music therapist Yael Shapiro, and Alon Cohen, who handles the

technical aspects.

"Creative Gatherings has a simple philosophy of bringing people from all backgrounds together through collaboration to build community. Its goals include professional development and forming a social and support group."

This was its first joint gig with 9th Street, and all agreed it was a tremendous success, showcasing amazing artists deep into the night. "Everything we do is an experiment," said Nudelman, "and from each thing we do together, we learn and develop as individuals and as a group."

How to help not hinder your children during exams

TALI FEINBERG

Many of our children are writing exams. It's a tough time for them and a tricky time for parents who aren't always sure how best to support them.

Should we hover and help, or stay away? Should we cancel all outings and extra-murals, or encourage breaks and exercise? How do we know that our children are studying enough, and how can we tell if the pressure is getting to them?

Cape Town based parenting coach Laura Markovitz says that at the outset, it's important for parents to manage their own association with exams so that they don't project it onto their children.

"Exams may have been incredibly stressful or really easy for them, but they need to remember that their children need to find their own way around exams. Parents, as much as they want to, can't control their children's study habits," says Markovitz.

"Different children study differently, and each child may require varying levels of support from parents. It's important for parents to try to dance the difficult dance of helping to motivate kids but not completely stress them out. There are such high levels of anxiety in children and teenagers today, so it's important to keep things in perspective" she says.

"Our role can be facilitative rather than controlling and interfering.

"Help children plan how they are going to study – when, where, and how long. Let them be part of working this out, so that parents are not dictating the plan. Make sure that it's not all about studying during exam time.

"Most importantly, ensure that they get enough sleep, that they are exercising and eating well. Stay connected to them; remember to empathise when they are having a tough time," she says.

"If exams go well or badly, make time to reflect on what worked and what didn't so that they can learn for next time. This can give them space to self-evaluate, and learn how they are learning. If we come down hard and criticise them, they are more likely to shut us off or get defensive," says Markovitz.

Maintaining a positive relationship with your child so they can access you for support is the most important factor during exam time, says clinical psychologist Renske Esterhuysen. She advises following the Dialectic Behaviour Therapy acronym of "GIVE" to maintain a positive relationship with your child:

"G" focuses on being gentle. Be kind, respectful, and communicate in a non-threatening manner.

"I" is to stay interested. Listen without giving advice, maintain eye-contact, don't interrupt, and seek to understand.

"V" is for validation, which doesn't mean that you agree or approve of your child's behaviour – it means that

you are able to recognise that their behaviour might be a way to try and communicate their feelings.

Finally, "E" is to have an easy manner. Know when to agree to disagree, and try to "be the calm you want to see".

In addition, she recommends that you have realistic academic expectations. "Keep in mind their abilities. If you find that your child is consistently not meeting your academic expectations, it may be a good idea to have the child formally assessed by an educational psychologist."

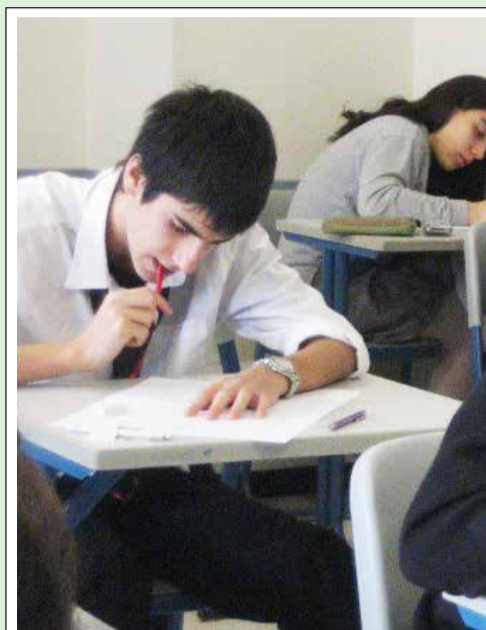
Esterhuysen says that creating a positive environment for your child is key. "Keep the emotional temperature of the home as cool as possible. Conflicts can easily erupt due to parent's worries that a child is not spending enough hours studying. It could be helpful to set concrete goals or expectations with your child before the exams and decide on rewards for meeting study goals or consequences for under-performance."

She emphasises that consequences should be positive and might, for example, involve extra classes during school term. However, under-performance should be effort and not performance (grade) based.

"For example, agree beforehand the amount of hours needed to study for a particular paper, and work towards success in that way. Avoid emotional

consequences such as anger or disappointment aimed at your child for grade-based underperformance. This may create despondence, feelings of inadequacy, helplessness, and in turn depression."

Esterhuysen recommends that you create opportunities for your child to engage in age-appropriate social interactions during exam time. This can be anything from spending time at a friend's house to



participating in extra murals.

"It's important to maintain real-life connections and engage in enjoyable activities during exam time to encourage the release of oxytocin – a neuro-hormone which acts as an anti-stress mediator. It acts as anti-inflammatory in the body

and promotes growth and healing, reduces blood pressure and cortisol levels, and aids in the process of recovery that the long-term effects of stress may cause.

Another practical tool is to create enjoyable sensory experiences for your child during this stressful time. "Cook healthy, enjoyable meals, encourage them to engage in self-care such as taking a hot bath or shower, use lavender oil for its relaxing

properties, and create a calming sleep space [dark, cool room, limit screen time to an hour before bed-time, use bed only for sleeping] to promote good sleep hygiene."

Esterhuysen says that a quick way of dealing with anxiety is to use this grounding exercise: "Help your child to identify five things they can see, four things they can hear, three things they can touch, two things they can smell, and one thing they can taste. Repeat the exercise until the child is feeling calm. This exercise can be done anywhere and anytime. Creating a grounding box with meaningful items that can be used during the exercise can also be helpful."

She concludes, "If parents can implement the abovementioned for their children, not only will children learn to trust that their bodies are trying to help them in stressful situations, they will also know that they have your support, and that they don't have to do it alone."



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A life of generosity and community – RIP Isaac Reznik

ROBYN SASSEN

Fondly known as South African Jewry's walking encyclopaedia, Isaac Reznik deeply respected tradition. He was unstintingly generous, and expressed in his actions the humility and dignity of a good man. Reznik worked for his community, not for the sake of awards, but for the sake of his fellow man. He died on 25 October 2019 from heart failure. He was 83.

His was a life filled with the value that giving brings. Never having had wealth or children of his own, Reznik invested love in many directions. He was a good friend, a careful listener, and an incisive facilitator who could make other people's dreams come true. Over the years, he wrote hundreds of beautiful obituaries for community members, and was punctilious in remembering *yahrtzeits* (memorial anniversaries).

Reznik was like a father to many. He raised his four nephews and a niece from the 1980s when his sister became too ill to take care of them, and later passed away. Julia, the child of his domestic help, was seven when her mom died. Reznik became Julia's guardian, and raised and educated her.

An amateur photographer, Reznik loved cooking, and started the first gym in Johannesburg's northeast suburb of Cyrildene in 1969, where he pooled the talents of local judo and karate experts, espousing the value of yoga.

From 1978, he was the owner of Goldberg's Jewish Book Shop, which had branches all over the country and established a bookshop model for Wits Medical School. The seeds of what is today Sukkah Mart were sown by Reznik in the 1980s when he imported kosher lulavs and etrogs.

Schooled at Athlone Boys' High, Reznik, the son of a butcher, was born on 14 October 1936 in the downtown Johannesburg suburb of Fairview. After matriculating, his interest in politics was ignited. At 18, he was the youngest member of the central committee of the United Party. He studied pharmacy at Johannesburg Technical College, but worked in the Melrose Cheese factory.

After 10 years in the Jeppestown Hebrew Congregation, where he served as treasurer, Reznik, his siblings and parents moved to Cyrildene in the 1960s, and lived in two neighbouring houses. He became a committed congregant of Cyrildene Shul under Rabbi Dennis Isaacs, and they had a deep association, sincere enough to be critical. In 1991, Reznik was elected gabbai at Cyrildene Shul. He had friendships with South African Jewry's great rabbonim including Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz, Rabbi Yirmiyahu Alloy, Rabbi BM Casper, Rabbi Cyril Harris, and Rabbi

Dr Warren Goldstein.

In the 1970s, Reznik was managing editor of the *Zionist Record*. Over the years, he helped many people publish their own books.

He was for several years, the editor of *Jewish Tradition*, a quarterly Union of Synagogues publication. For 36 years, he was committed to the UOS where he was director between 1986 and 1990. During this time, he was also involved with the Zionist Federation and the Federation of Synagogues. Furthermore, his spare time was occupied with cemetery assistance and attending to Jewish prisoners as a

chaplain. He was a staunch supporter of Israel.

Reznik was never shy to speak his mind, but respected leadership implicitly. He was like a bridge to the community's past; he touched many lives; he had place in his heart

for everyone.

For five years, he presented two weekly radio programmes on ChaiFM: *Talk of the Town* and *Art of the Cantor*, the latter focused on *chazonnus* (cantorial singers). Both were popular. When he left ChaiFM,

he started an online streaming service, 20Chai, assisted by his nephew Adrian Jacobson.

Reznik leaves his twin brother, Maish, and sister-in-law, Lorraine, nephews, nieces, adopted daughter Julia, and their families.



Isaac Reznik

Friend to all the chief rabbis

Isaac Reznik had close relationships with all the chief rabbis of his time. Here are personal tributes from Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein and Ann Harris, wife of the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris:

Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein

Isaac Reznik served with four chief rabbis and generations of *dayanim* (judges) at the Beth Din. He was someone who could draw on his remarkable memory, and tell you the traditions and decisions of Chief Rabbi Louis Rabinowitz, Chief Rabbi Bernard Casper, and Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris. He would always pop into my office with interesting pieces of information and news clippings. If ever I wanted to know what the precedent was for something and how my predecessors had handled similar situations, Isaac was always there to provide the information with a smile and a sparkle. History excited him. The traditions of our community excited him.

With Isaac, there was never a dull moment. He was fascinated by life and by the community, and totally dedicated to preserving its ethos and vision. He knew what generations of *dayanim* used to do, how they handled cases, and what the policies were of generations of *Batei Din*. He was always so animated

and excited in these discussions, and always had something invaluable to share. He was a real bridge to previous generations of South African Jewish life. I feel sad at his passing because as a community, we have lost his connection to our past.

Isaac was a loyal and dedicated servant of the community and of Hashem. He served with humility, dedication, and real passion to serve. May his memory be a blessing.

Ann Harris

Isaac Reznik was director of the chief rabbi's office when Rabbi Harris took office in 1988. He was the first link between the new chief rabbi and the community. Isaac knew everyone, and had an encyclopaedic knowledge of South African Jewish history, both of which were invaluable to the new incumbent. Rabbi Harris was not the easiest of taskmasters. He was a perfectionist, and Isaac was his first target for grumbles. But Isaac's good humour, patience, and loyalty never wavered so that the uneven path became a level playing field on which the community thrived.

Isaac was our family's first friend in a new and challenging life. We will never cease to remember and appreciate his kindness to us all.

The highs and lows of Cape Town's cableway

TALI FEINBERG

Table Mountain is the emblem of Cape Town, and October marks the 90th anniversary of its aerial cableway (known colloquially as "the cable car"). Those who have visited from near and far have fascinating memories of this iconic adventure up the mountain.

In its nine decades of existence, there have been only a few mishaps, but no accidents or injuries.

Table Mountain itself is about 260-million years old. Stone Age people roamed its hills, and later the San and Khoi people called it Hoerikwaggo – Mountain in the Sea.

The cableway officially opened on 4 October 1929, and is part of the Table Mountain National Park and a World Heritage Site. It has transported more than 28 million people to the summit.

In the late 1870s, there was a proposal for a railway to be constructed as a means of getting to the summit. Then, a funicular railway was envisioned. However, it was only in 1926 that Norwegian engineer Trygve Stromsoe proposed the construction of a cableway.

He built a model of his idea and took it to Sir Alfred Hennessy, who got fellow investors Sir David Graaff and Sir Ernest Oppenheimer on board. Construction took two years on the rugged cliffs of the mountain.

The Barnett family has two legendary cable-car stories. The first occurred about 20 years ago, when Cecile Barnett, now in her 80s, her daughter, Lauren Dorfman, and her grandson, Greg Dorfman, decided to go up the cableway. The Dorfmans were visiting from Australia.

"Greg was about three or four years old. It was the old cable car – it was rectangular, and we all stood at the front looking over the city. Next to us was a young man with a haversack. We're halfway up the mountain, when suddenly this young guy started climbing up on the windowsill. I got a fright; I thought maybe they were doing repairs.

The next thing, he jumped out the cable car, and out of his pack came a parachute!" recalls Barnett.

Those were the days when the cable car still had open windows.

"It was dangerous, because he could have been caught in the wire."

Greg, now in his 20s, still has clear memories of this moment in his childhood. "I remember seeing the paraglider jump out of the cable car. I have this image in my head of this guy jumping out and seeing a 'balloon coming out of his head' because that's what I thought was happening."

A few years later, Barnett, Dorfman, and her other children, Kim and Jaime, were back at the cable car, hoping for less drama this time. They were wrong. "We were going to see the sunset, and it was a full moon, so there were queues of people to go up. I believe there were 1 000 people on the mountain," says Barnett. "It was about 20:00, and we stood in the queue to go down the cable car.

Suddenly a woman said over a loudspeaker, 'We have a problem.' There was an electricity outage, so we had to wait to go down."

Mothers and children were allowed to go into the children's area in the cableway station called the "Dassie's Den" while they waited. "They offered us drinks and food on the house."



Eden and Roey Saban stuck in the Table Mountain cable car in Cape Town

Barnett remembers that people started coming into the room. They told her that they had been about to go down in the cable car when the electricity went out. There was a tiny gap as the car had just started moving, and they had to evacuate or they would have been left hanging in mid-air.

Somehow, someone managed to find a piece of wood or an old wooden door, which was placed between the cable car and the side of the building, and everyone had to walk over it back onto the mountain. Staff told them, 'Look into my eyes, don't look down!'"

Jacqui Biess, the owner of the well-known Charly's Bakery in Cape Town, remembers filming season two of the TV show *Charly's Cake Angels*, which looks at the daily life and activities of the bakery. In one episode, they took

their staff around Cape Town.

"The last thing we did was to go up Table Mountain. Most of our staff had never been up the mountain or on the cable car, even though they lived in Cape Town. We got permission to bring a live music band to the top of the mountain for the first time ever. Hot Water, a well-known South African band, played their song *Wamkelekile* which means "welcome" in Xhosa, and it was absolutely spectacular."

Eden Saban, who is from Israel but lives in Johannesburg, has a rare harrowing story to share from February 2012.

She and her husband had gone up Table Mountain as a last activity with their young children before they headed for the airport. But, as the cable car went down, there was an issue with the alignment, and it was forced to stop. The car was suspended in the air while mechanics worked urgently to fix it.

"We were stuck dangling in the middle of the cables for about two hours, with a toddler and an infant. They couldn't get the lines aligned, so the car couldn't dock. The cable car was jam packed, so we had to stand all that time, while people around us were crying – probably in addition to our two babies! The windows were opened to get some air in. As the sun started to set, my husband prayed the Amidah, and right afterwards, the technicians got the cable car to work! When we were finally rescued, we rushed straight to the airport to catch our flight home, and caught it just in time!"

She says this experience is rare, and people should enjoy the cableway as a unique Cape Town experience. However, she plans to hike up the mountain if she visits again!

Sydenham Preschool helps Cause 4 Paws

The staff of Sydenham Pre-Primary School visited Eikenhof in the south of Johannesburg last week to help Rene Parker of Cause 4 Paws to improve the well-being of dogs and cats in Jacksons Drift squatter camp by sterilising, vaccinating, and conducting outreach programmes.

The Sydenham team helped rescue a litter of puppies as well as bath, feed, and entertain the resident dogs. A sizeable donation of dog food, collars, leashes, blankets, plastic bowls, and cash was handed to Parker. We salute her and the Paw Rangers for their tireless efforts in spreading kindness to our voiceless furry friends.



KDL Pre-Primary has a lulav time in the sukkah

King David Linksfield Pre-Primary School pupil Judah Swill holds the lulav and etrog in preparation for Sukkot. The children enjoyed learning about the sukkah, and the mitzvot and traditions associated with this wonderful holiday.

Singing in the sukkah at Rosabelle Klein



Grade Rs outside the sukkah with creations made for sukkahs at home. Back: Max Antunes, Saul Grup, Sophie-Grace Rubin, Jesse Shalem, and Sienna Dodo. Front: Tali Stein, Aleya Swart, and Ben Hack.

Children at King David Rosabelle Klein Nursery School love building the school's mini sukkah, and then spend all their time in it – eating, drinking, singing, and playing.

King David dominates maths olympiad team

King David Schools' pupils featured strongly in the International Teen Maths Olympiad (ITMO) held in mid-October in Lucknow in the north of India, with four of the 11 South African team members hailing from the school network.

Samara Jay, from King David High School Linksfield entered the key stage III competition for seniors. Her sister, Zoe Jay, from King David Primary Linksfield took part in the key stage II competition for juniors, together with Mandy Wu, also from King David Primary Linksfield, and Samuel Blou from King David Sandton.

The South African delegation was among 18 countries that took part, mainly from Europe, Africa, and Asia, some sending up to seven or eight teams to compete.

The team was led by Kitty Phillips from Durban; Leigh Pleass, the head of maths development for King David schools and executive board general secretary of the International Mathematics and Science Olympiad; and Nicole Spector, the head of maths at King David Primary Linksfield.

Out of 280 delegates and 70 teams, South Africa walked away with three runner-up trophies, 14 bronze medals, and three merit certificates, not to mention the non-mathematical trophy for the most exuberant team.

Each delegate won bronze for the team challenge; three boys won bronze for the individual competition including Samuel Blou; and Zoe Jay and Mandy Wu won merit certificates for the individual paper



Michael Rubin

Grade 12's vector project wows judges

King David Victory Park Grade 12 student Michael Rubin came first in the practical category at the 2019 Information Technology Showcase held at Redhill in September. The competition features the Grade 12 IT projects of top students, and the judges included faculty members from three universities and industries such as Microsoft South Africa. Rubin's software, written in Java, is designed to teach physical science students about vectors and projectile motion.

Most South African Jews of Sephardi origin are entitled to EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND, ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT

A common misconception is that South African Jews of Ashkenazi heritage are of Lithuanian descent, and that only those who are able to prove their eligibility for Lithuanian citizenship are able to obtain a European passport. The fact is that most South African Jews do qualify for European citizenship, whether they can prove their Lithuanian lineage or not, and most South African Jews of Sephardic heritage are also eligible for European passports.

Prussia, the Austro-Hungarian empire. Neither Poland nor Lithuania existed until 1918.

At the end of WWI, the territory was divided, and countries like Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, and others were born/reborn. Only then did residents become citizens of these countries. As a result, people who, for example, were born in Riga (nowadays Latvia) could actually be Lithuanian or Polish.

Horesh advises that eligibility for a Lithuanian or Polish passport depends on the city from which your grandparents (or their parents) hailed.

Horesh says many South African Ashkenazi Jews of Lithuanian origin have been refused Lithuanian citizenship because their heritage is actually Polish. They would, accordingly, be entitled to Polish citizenship and a EU passport.

After World War II, the borders in Europe changed, resulting in cities changing nationality. The resultant effect for descendants of Jews who were born in Vilnius, for example, is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined, but an application for a Polish passport may very well be successful.

Sephardi: The descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are most likely eligible for a Portuguese



Avi Horesh

passport. If applicable, Horesh is able to obtain an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which an application for European citizenship can be made and will most likely be successful. Portuguese citizenship enables one to enter the United States without the need to apply for a visa.

In addition, Horesh is filing many applications for descendants of Sephardi origin who arrived in South Africa from Greece, Turkey, and North Africa. Descendants from other countries in the Middle East – even Holland – are also potentially eligible.

Horesh resides in Israel, but has spent seven years in Poland, and is recognised as a leading lawyer in the field of European citizenship, with a full

understanding of local immigration laws.

Living in Israel – a four-hour flight from Warsaw and Vilnius – offers him quick and easy access to Poland and Lithuania. Accordingly, he is able to work closely with local professionals who assist him in tracing the documentation required for successful applications for European citizenship.

In addition, and as a result of his close ties with Portuguese authorities, to date he has had a 100% success rate with applications for Portuguese citizenship.

Horesh is available to discuss your specific details. He is often in South Africa, and can meet you in person to discuss your specific needs.



Adv. Avi Horesh has in-depth knowledge of the applicable legislation and in his experience, the majority of South African Jews have ancestors who were illegally deprived of citizenship. As their descendants, these Jews are eligible for European citizenship which will result in them obtaining an EU passport.

Ashkenazi: It is important to understand that until 1918, all of Eastern Europe was divided between three empires: Russia,

I will be in Johannesburg from 14 to 20 November and then in Cape Town until 28 November. Please contact me for an appointment. My South African phone number is +27 64 745 5273 • Email me on adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com

Shabbat and the Rugby World Cup Final

I don't remember which "breakthrough" agreement it was. But it was important. The Israelis and the Palestinians were finally about to reach an agreement on the White House lawns, and peace was about to come to the Middle East. At last. The only problem was that it was all to be announced on Friday afternoon in Washington, which meant that Shabbat would have already started in Israel (which is where we were that weekend).

We had probably been married for about 11 years, which meant we were still getting to know each other. It might even have been that weekend when we finally declared the honeymoon phase over.

And all because I suggested to my bride that perhaps, given the gravitas of the event, we might consider leaving the television on. We wouldn't be transgressing any rules, and could even leave the sound down so that we wouldn't disturb the peace of the day.

It didn't go well. Not at all. I would have thought that the given that the conversation was all about sanctity, she would have avoided the type of language that followed.

Which is why when my one son wondered if there would be anything wrong with leaving the television on this Shabbat to watch the South Africa-England game, I smiled at him sweetly and said, "Why don't you go and ask mom?"

There is something 1995 about this Rugby World Cup final. The camaraderie and togetherness is immensely powerful. In the past few months, many South Africans have made a deliberate choice to shun negativity and embrace each other. The fact that we are in the finals plays perfectly into this.

When South Africa played in the finals in 1995 it was also on Shabbat. I recall it so clearly. We were staying at my parents for Shabbat, and had all decided that we would not get the result, but rather watch it on Betamax. The plan was ridiculously naïve given that Observatory is so close to Ellis Park where the finals were being held. It meant that

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



without knowing the score, we would be informed.

Nevertheless, that was the plan. That was until some-time in the afternoon when I could take it no longer. And so, while everyone was sleeping, I snuck quietly down the stairs to our housekeeper, Jane's, room, where I knew that she and her friends would be watching the game.

I found it full of people. Jane and her friends, a few of my friends, and some of my brothers' friends had packed themselves into what was not a large room. Together, we all watched the end of the finals.

But it was an unforgettable experience. The day became a symbol for me. It was 1995, we were just post-apartheid and indeed, bridges could be built.

As much as I'm excited about the finals and as much as I care about the outcome, I have no intention of leaving the television on or watching the game. I have no intention of finding a "halachic" way to do so, and I am more comfortable than I have ever been about this.

For years, I allowed the negative anxiety of the outside world to infiltrate and pollute the day (even in my mind) and it's only with maturity that I realise that we can't have one without the other. If I allow myself the joy of this game this Shabbat, there will be something else to tempt me from keeping Shabbos next week, and so it goes on.

It doesn't mean that I won't be thinking about it and that it will be easy. But should I find myself wavering at any time, all I'll do is ask my wife what she thinks.

Go Bokke and Shabbat shalom!

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Has DA crisis burst white bubble?

As the Democratic Alliance threatens to implode, the sense of security it has given the small white population of South Africans, many Jews among them, gets shakier. In spite of its flaws, its existence represented a political home in a confusing context where they struggle to find another. This isn't ideological in terms of helping to build a great country to tackle the misery of the masses, but mainly about a personal standard of living and security.

To put it more crudely, can they still preserve their box of privileged life amidst mass poverty? The DA seemed to offer this. Everyone knows that the white liberal minority on which the DA depends is small in number, but immensely powerful in wealth and influence.

Whites who teach in universities and work in managerial positions in business and elsewhere report a pervasive anger among young blacks today towards whites, and accusations of racism based on minor incidents. Whites who weren't born during apartheid are accused of blocking transformation, and made to feel unwelcome in this country. Their response is, "Yes I know the terrible history of black oppression, but what do you expect me to do now? Is the only route for me to accept your rage and leave?"

After Sharpeville in 1960, some whites left the country because they felt it was destined to plunge over the precipice and didn't want to raise families in such a place; others left for moral reasons because they didn't want to be part of the racist apartheid system. Apartheid is gone, but the essentials of this racial disparity still exist.

Where do Jews stand in this scenario? Must they follow the white exodus, for safety or moral reasons?

Three categories of whites and Jews remain here. First, there are those who would like to leave, but for whom emigration is impossible for financial or other reasons. They are reconciled to staying and making the best of it, knowing they will never be truly African. They live in a bubble,

TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin



developing their own communities and institutions, and limiting their engagement with broader society, government, and national bodies to a minimum. They build their own schools, welfare organisations, and financial institutions. In a sense they have "left" the country but remain here.

Second, there are those who aggressively stand their ground as African, declaring to all that they are fully South African in spite of being white, and intend staying. They insist on participating in the non-racial project and broader society on an equal basis no matter how much rejection they experience from black pan-Africanists, and in spite of the anger and accusations that they are still privileged white colonialists.

Third, there are those who drift around in the middle, bouncing between the poles in search of their identity, longing to leave but knowing they can't, trying to feel more for the South African project but knowing that they will never feel truly African. It is this third group who are the most miserable.

And then, of course, there is a group which doesn't have to be counted here: those whose applications for emigration to Australia or other places are already in process, and are simply waiting to go.

The fact that the debate about the predicament in the DA is happening every day around white dinner tables shows how unsettling the problem is. The party may yet regroup, but rather than see this crisis as a collapse of the political landscape that gave reassurance to whites, it could present a significant opportunity to realign the mindset of South African whites and clarify why and on what terms they are living here.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

SAJBD conference debates critical issues

Preparations for the South African Jewish Board of Deputies' (SAJBD's) biennial national conference, to take place at the Houghton Hotel on 10 November, have entered their final stretch. As suggested by the title of this year's event, "Unpacking Reality", the aim is to explore honestly and rigorously various questions relating to the situation in which our country finds itself.

The main part of the conference will take the form of a panel debate, moderated by acclaimed journalist and author Mandy Wiener, focusing on critical issues such as the economy, education, social upliftment, and human rights. We have put together a distinguished panel of acknowledged experts in their fields comprising business leaders Dr Reuel Khoza (also renowned as an author, academic, and thought leader) and Robbie Brozin; Wits Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib; Judge David Unterhalter; and SAJBD president and World Jewish Congress executive member Mary Kluk.

National conference is also an occasion to honour the members of our community judged to have made a particularly noteworthy contribution to our society, whether that be South Africa as a whole or the Jewish community specifically. This time round, the Rabbi Cyril and Ann Harris Human Rights Award, which recognises those who have advanced the cause of democracy and social justice, will be presented in memory of Johnny Clegg, an iconic figure whose path-blazing music did so much to bring South Africans together during the tumultuous final years of apartheid, and who sadly passed away earlier this year shortly after the decision made by the board to honour him.

The Eric Samson Mendel Kaplan Communal Service Award was introduced at the board's



ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev



centenary conference in 2003 and named after two of the community's foremost philanthropists. The practice has been to present it both to a lay leader and a Jewish communal professional. This year, there will be three recipients: Marlene Bethlehem and Cape Town's Merle Reuben, who between them have rendered more than a century of outstanding service in a lay capacity to the community, and Shirley Resnick, a long-serving member of the professional staff of the Johannesburg Chevrah Kadisha, who truly epitomises the ethos of selfless caring and compassion that has always distinguished that wonderful institution.

In addition to the above awards, it has been decided to pay tribute to the many outstanding lawyers who have devoted their time and professional skills to the SAJBD throughout its history. Specific reference will be made to four towering figures who passed away in the course of the present century, namely Ivan Levy and Harry Schwarz from Johannesburg, and Mervyn Smith and Solly Kessler from Cape Town.

We look forward to welcoming you to this prestigious occasion, which is as much a celebration of what our community is all about as it is about reporting back to our constituency. As seating is limited and bookings are filling up fast, those interested in attending should log on to www.sajbd.org/events as soon as they can to book their places.

• 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

Sukkah party celebrates community service

KosherWorld and the Union of Jewish Women (UJW) held a party at the KosherWorld sukkah in October to honour employees and volunteers in community organisations who are responsible for the organisations' success and continued impact on the community.

The staff and volunteers of Yad Aharon & Michael, Hatzolah, and Kosher Mobile Meals were treated to a delicious dinner made possible by the generosity of local businesses.

The UJW and KosherWorld



Wazza Katz (Hatzolah), Tana Genn (UJW) and Hilly Reuben (Hatzolah)

thank Tendachick, FreshFellas, Hubertos, and Feigels for their generosity in supporting the

evening. UJW is also grateful to KosherWorld for hosting the event.

Advancing Sacred goal of unity and tolerance

Progressive Rabbi Julia Margolis, the chairperson of Sacred (the South African Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity), was recently invited by the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Johannesburg to participate in an interfaith peace symposium and give an address on the topic "unity in diversity".

"It was beautiful to see representatives of so many communities and religions come together to

discuss the importance of the interfaith work in Johannesburg," she said.

"As religious leaders, we have to encourage interfaith communication. It's important not to marginalise people of other faiths, including those who don't identify with faith at all," Margolis says.

"We understand that we won't be able to resolve all our faith-based differences, but we can learn to appreciate others' faiths. In spite of having different beliefs, we should still be able to work together for the betterment of our society to address issues such as homelessness, hunger, job opportunities, and projects in the community of Johannesburg.

"SACRED's aim is to provide a progressive Jewish voice on relevant social, moral, ethical, and religious issues in South Africa, to counteract religious discrimination in all its forms, to advance freedom of religion, and to promote fundamental rights and freedoms through advocacy, activism, scholarly contributions to public discourse and public interest litigation."



Rabbi Julia Margolis with the Ahmadiyya Muslim community

Letters

SA JEWISH REPORT A RIVETING READ

As the former assistant editor of The Johannesburg Jewish Herald (1956-1961), I feel compelled to compliment the editor of the SA Jewish Report, Peta Krost Maunder, on the outstanding quality and relevance of the current weekly SA Jewish Report.

It is surely no exaggeration to describe the content and the style of the publication as a "riveting read", covering the broad spectrum of South African, Israel, and world Jewish socio-economic and political issues from a Jewish/Zionist perspective.

Aspects that stand out include the following:

- The magazine-like, highly informative, in-depth reporting;
- An excellent standard of professional journalism from the likes of Tali Feinberg, Jordan Moshe, and Nicola Miltz;
- Superb editorials and opinion pieces (as well as my favourite columnists Paula Slier, Howard Feldman, and Geoff Sifrin); and
- A great contemporary design/layout and effective editorial co-ordination.

Wishing you all the best at the commencement of another year of good work. – David Abel, Somerset West

PEOPLE OF COLOUR SHOULD BE MORE SENSITIVE ABOUT ANTI-SEMITISM

The most recent edition of the SA Jewish Report – and indeed previous editions – have had their fair share of reports about anti-Jewish sentiment expressed either by government officials or cowardly slime who spew hatred on various social media.

It's very disappointing that there are native African people, people of colour, whether they are in government or not, who are anti-Jewish. White supremacists put black people and Jewish people in a similar category, and hate us both.

Racist Jews are criticised for their beliefs. We Jews were victims of the Holocaust; we were hated based on being Jewish by birth, something that cannot be changed (regardless of how hard some tried). Of all people, we Jews should know that discriminating against someone based on their race, or some other category, is wrong.

If this is so, then we must also criticise people of colour who are anti-Jewish. They,

too, have suffered through colonialism, slavery, and apartheid, which discriminated against their race. They must be held to account for the anti-Jewish sentiment that some of them express.

We have a lot more in common than most people in either of these two groups would think. Perhaps we could help each other if we tried.

On another note, there was a letter commending the SA Jewish Report for raising funds for rape survivors. I have said it before, and I'll say it again: women should take self-defence classes. Take them before a life threatening situation arises. Take them so that you learn how to prevent becoming a victim of rape and other crime. Be proactive. Don't wait until something horrible happens, and then react by taking a self-defence class. Because if you survive the assault, you will need therapy as well as self-defence skills. – Michele Engelberg, Johannesburg

Sunday (3 November)

- Open 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, George Avenue, Sandringham. No need to book. Men and women welcome. Contact Linda Fleishman 011 532 9701.

Monday (4 November)

- The Union of Jewish Women hosts Professor Kathy Munro, the chairperson of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation and honorary associate professor at the school of architecture and planning, University of the Witwatersrand, on *The Yeoville Water Tower – an Unknown Part of our History*. Time: 10:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW office 011 648 1053.

Tuesday (5 November)

- ORT SA CareerHub presents an Innate Health



Resilience workshop with Lara Noik and Tova Goldstein. Time: 18:00. Venue: ORT SA Academy, 44 Central Street, corner 10th Avenue, Houghton. RSVP: nelly@ortsa.org.za

Thursday (7 November)

- ORT Jet presents *The Alexander Technique: bringing harmony and contentment into your life* with Caryn Katz. Time: 18:00 to 20:00. Venue: ORT SA Academy: 44 Central Street, corner 10th Avenue, Houghton. Cost: R100 for members, R200 for non-members.
- Hebrew speakers meet at 10:30 on the second floor of Beyachad, 2 Elray Street, Raedene. All welcome.
- Learn Yiddish every Thursday with Tamar Olswang and the UJW. Time: 10:00 to 11:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Cost: R100 per person, R80 for pensioners and UJW members. Includes tea/coffee and refreshments. Contact: 011 648 1053.

SA Methodist Church formally adopts BDS

>> Continued from page 1

said the MCSA's adoption of BDS came as no surprise as some of its leaders have been outspokenly anti-Israel and have hosted pro-Palestinian events at their churches.

However, on social media, some Christian South Africans expressed their disappointment. Kevin M Joubert wrote on the MCSA Facebook page, "Disgusted in my church for supporting the terrorist-aligned BDS movement."

"The Methodist and Anglican Church then can boycott the Bible too because the Bible was made in Israel too. Let them keep their BDS while we keep our Bible with all its prophesy about Israel, yesterday, now, and in the future," wrote Tumelo Thom.



"The church has been brought into disrepute by supporting BDS, which is acknowledged globally as an anti-Semitic organisation. It's disgraceful behaviour."

Pierre De Jager agreed, "The Bible is our highest authority and not the politics in the so-called churches. The Bible commands us to stand with Israel. The Israel-haters in the church brought the curse of G-d on our country, and we can see it every day."

A member of the Anglican Church

and a respected policy fellow at the Institute for Race Relations, John Kane-Berman, wrote on politicsweb.co.za that he rejected his church's embracing of the global BDS movement, "which is dedicated to the stigmatisation, isolation, and ultimate destruction of the state of Israel".

"To this end, it has embarked on a campaign to capture governments, international agencies, newspapers, non-governmental organisations, and academic institutions around the world," Kane-Berman wrote. "One thing is certain, the BDS campaign, whether or not endorsed by the Anglican Communion, will not bring peace between Palestinians and Israelis."

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'The gees is unbelievable' says rugby coach

LUKE ALFRED

Kevin Musikanth, the coach of the Israeli national side and the UCT (University of Cape Town) Ikeys, the winner of the Varsity Cup in 2014, is upbeat about South Africa's chances in Saturday's Rugby World Cup final against England. "We can win it," he says, noting that Bok coach Rassie Erasmus has built on traditional South African rugby strengths of superb conditioning and unremitting physicality. "He's backed his captain, Siya Kolisi, in a similar way to the way that Jake White backed John Smit when Jake first started out as coach, and he's taken the template of White and Kitch Christie and focused on traditional South African rugby strengths."

down to a kicking game and a try here or there."

Evan Speechly, who was the Springbok physiotherapist when Joel Stransky slotted that never-to-be-forgotten drop-goal against the All Blacks in extra-time at Ellis Park in 1995, doesn't think twice when asked about who will emerge victorious in Japan. "There is no doubt that South Africa are going to win this final," he said from Dubai, where he is assisting the Dutch cricket team in an International

Musikanth, whose Ikeys also won the World Varsity Cup in 2015, is a great fan of Erasmus, calling it a masterstroke that he's been able to adapt and extend historical Bok strengths like forward dominance, strong defence, and the kicking game.

That said, he's also a great admirer of the Sydney-born Jones, saying that the quality of England's physical and mental preparation has been truly astounding. "Eddie's going to have good insight into our plans [Jones was part of White's coaching staff when the Springboks last won the World Cup in 2007] because of his

"It means that we've played 20% more rugby than England have, because we played all our pool games," he says. "Eddie realises that what it boils down to is a marathon runner who runs 5km before the start of the main race. That's going to be huge."

While not discounting England, Musikanth remains an evangelist for all that is green and gold. Having showed steady improvement under Erasmus, he's not surprised that the Boks have reached the final, and thinks they can go all the way.

"We really are looking incredibly strong. It's an extremely well-drilled squad and just the gees [spirit], as we say, is looking unbelievable in that side."

Should Kolisi be lifting The Webb Ellis Cup aloft in Yokohama on Saturday, it will be an incredible journey for the youngster from the Port Elizabeth township of Zwide. A boarder at Grey High in Port Elizabeth, Kolisi lost both his mother and grandmother when he was a boy, his path being littered with obstacles that would have hobbled the more faint-hearted.

If Musikanth tends to see things through green-tinted spectacles, he's also Israel's national coach, and bemoans the fact that rugby doesn't have more opportunity for smaller nations. "There was a plan for a promotion-relegation system through what was called the Nations Cup which gave a team like Georgia the opportunity to get into the Six Nations, but it was shelved. I never really found out the reasons why."

Such dynamism would have been good for all the smaller rugby-playing nations, including Israel, because it would have given them something to build for. Israel's next fixture is against Malta in March. Rest assured, they'll be preparing for it with the same kind of intensity the Boks are bringing to Saturday's World Cup final.



Kevin Musikanth



involvement with the Boks. The game is going to be cracker."

He notes that both South Africa and England use an aggressive, in-your-face defence, and this is going to give the final a bruising intensity. "They've got hitters, big tacklers, like Maro Itoje, Billy Vunipola, and Sam Underhill who all showed how Kieran Read and Beauden Barrett were smashed back in those hits in the semi-final. New Zealand were rocked back, and were unable to gain any attacking momentum. We would need to be aware of that."

"England's defence has been incredibly effective in the tournament so far," he says. "They kept New Zealand down to seven points; they kept Argentina down to ten points; Australia – a side which can attack from basically anywhere on the pitch – were kept to 16 points. That's really remarkable."

Musikanth also points out that not playing France (the points were shared when the game was cancelled due to Typhoon Hagibis) will clearly be to England's advantage come Saturday's final.

Cricket Council (ICC) T20 tournament. "We really are looking incredibly strong. It's an extremely well-drilled squad and just the gees [spirit], as we say, is looking unbelievable in that side."

"All of us in Dubai see it as [a Springbok win] about to happen," Speechly said. "The 1995 group are confident it's going to happen, so we are all looking to a great final."

That said, Musikanth believes that the final against Eddie Jones' England in Yokohama on Saturday won't be everyone's cup of tea. It will be rugby for the die-hard fan and aficionado, he predicts, custom-made for those who like their rugby dour and attritional. "This is a rugby purists' dream final," he says. "Everyone would like the flair brought to the game by, say, a New Zealand or a France, but this is going to be

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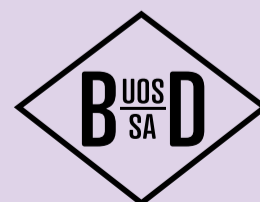
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