



Victorian tan-leather button-back reading chair, circa 1880  
**SOLD R17,000**



Jim Dine,  
Two Louisiana Hearts,  
offset lithograph  
on paper  
**SOLD R68,000**

Alexander Rose-Innes,  
Tennant Street, District Six, Cape Town,  
oil on canvas  
**SOLD R70,000**



Conrad Botes,  
Waiting for a Miracle,  
carved and painted  
jacaranda wood  
**SOLD R25,000**



# south african Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

Volume 24 - Number 6 ■ 28 February 2020 ■ 3 Adar 5780

[www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

## Nazi salute never okay nor innocent, says esteemed editor

NICOLA MILTZ

**A**driaan Basson, one of South Africa's most respected Afrikaans journalists and editors, this week said that the Nazi salute and other symbols of racism were never okay or innocent.

"You have to speak out even if you are one person," said Basson.

"Throughout history, symbols have been powerful. You see it with all the genocides – the cockroach for example, the Nazi salute. It's never ok, never innocent. If you let it slip once or twice, it becomes normalised."

Basson was speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* following his reminder on Twitter of an ugly story that occurred six years ago involving first-year students at North-West University (NWU) in Potchefstroom, who were caught on camera doing the Nazi salute.

The *News24* editor-in-chief and author of *Blessed by BOSASA*, was reminded the past few weeks of this messy piece of Potchefstroom history which landed him in the middle of an Afrikaner storm. His decision as then editor of *Beeld* newspaper to run with the story that affected the heartland of his readers was a defining moment for him.

Basson's recent memory jogging

began at the beginning of the month with the denial on national television by former President FW de Klerk that apartheid was a crime against humanity. Then, he read an opinion piece by internationally acclaimed poet, author, journalist, and academic, Antjie Krog. She wrote on *News24* that De Klerk had become "the failed, unrepentant face of white people".

"There were so many parallels," Basson said. "I remembered the events that happened six years ago when I realised the absolute harm caused by people like the former vice-chancellor of the university, Theuns Eloff. He refused to educate children – who may

or may not have known about the offensive, insensitive salute. Instead, he defended the salute to the hilt, calling it a 'Superman' sign."

Eloff, who was subsequently forced to leave NWU, is the executive director of the FW de Klerk Foundation that apologised for a statement in which it reiterated what De Klerk said about apartheid not being a crime against humanity.

Basson took to Twitter to recall the shambolic events that took place following publication of the horrid anti-Semitic pictures of young students – who arguably may have been naïve and historically ignorant – doing the "Heil Hitler" salute.

"It caused a perfect storm. I

became enemy number one for the AfriForum/Solidarity lobby, which accused me and *Beeld* of undermining Afrikaans as the language of tuition at Potch. They called for my sacking, and a boycott of *Beeld*.

"What could have been a learning moment about symbols of oppression and white power was turned into a battle for Afrikaans at Potchefstroom," he tweeted.

There were campaigns to discredit him and his newspaper.

In a further tweet he said, "My line manager at the time called me in and told me I must remember *Beeld* is not the *M&G* [*Mail & Guardian*]. The *New*

*York Times* will never attack its Jewish readers," was his argument. I was startled."

Basson said it was a very difficult time. "It was hectic, I won't lie," he said.

"But I firmly believe the role of an editor is to challenge your readers and their prejudices when it's needed. Max du Preez, Allister Sparks and others did so at a pivotal time in South Africa's history. It was a very tough time, but it was a good learning moment for me as an editor, and a reminder of the massive responsibility, privilege, and power we have as journalists."

His Twitter thread this week has been retweeted, liked, and shared dozens and dozens of times.

Once again, the story has generated controversy, getting a mixed reaction across the board with some lauding him, others berating and belittling him.

"There has been the predictable hateful responses by people who react to anything critical of Afrikaner culture, but I must say, there has been a good push back from everyone – whites, blacks, Jews, Christians, and Afrikaners."

Said David Saks of the South

Continued on page 13>>

Adriaan Basson



## The time of their lives



Israeli girls having fun on the annual Chaiyanu Hope Tour, which gives children with cancer a phenomenal holiday in South Africa, as guests of the local community. These girls are celebrating (above), having just arrived in Cape Town after an international flight.

# STUDY ABROAD EXPO 2020

[www.globaleducationexpo.co.za](http://www.globaleducationexpo.co.za)

CAPE TOWN

JOHANNESBURG

PRETORIA

DURBAN

# 15-20 MARCH

PRE-BOOK ONLINE TODAY

Whether you wish to study for a diploma, undergraduate or postgraduate degree, Global Education will find the right international college or university for you.



FREE ENTRY

PRE-BOOK ONLINE TODAY  
"A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY AWAITS!"



# Advocate harassed by BLF leader at Myeni trial

TALI FEINBERG

Carol Steinberg, the advocate up against Dudu Myeni, the former director of South African Airways, was harassed by Black First Land First (BLF) leader Andile Mngxitama and a group supporting the former SAA director. Mngxitama is the same person who praised the Nazis for allegedly making lampshades and soap from remains of Jews they had murdered.

“They screamed at her, saying she was a racist, and that OUTA [the Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse] was a front for the Democratic Alliance,” Steinberg’s attorney and OUTA lawyer Rashaad Pandor told the SA Jewish Report. He was describing the abuse on Friday, 21 February, that led Steinberg to ask for extra security from the judge.

Steinberg is representing OUTA and the SAA Pilots Association which took Myeni to court to have her declared a delinquent director following Myeni’s “plunging of the national carrier into chaos during her tenure from 2012 to 2017 as board chair”.

After the incident, Steinberg told the court, “There are members of the public in the gallery here that are verbally and physically assaulting members of the plaintiff’s legal team. I, for one, feel threatened and scared. This isn’t a conducive atmosphere for me to do my work”.

Judge Ronel Tolmay criticised the confrontation, saying, “Every litigant should feel free in a democracy to bring their case to court, and present it ... and feel safe in doing so.” She agreed to inform the judge president, as well as the police, and to request extra security. She also warned, “I have the power to put you in jail. And I will do that.”

Describing the chain of events on Friday, Pandor said that during a recess at the high court in Pretoria, Steinberg and her team saw Myeni go and converse with her lawyer.

“Dudu Myeni was under cross examination. The rules are that you can’t consult your attorney during cross examination, but Myeni appeared to be doing so. When Carol Steinberg approached them to raise this, Mngxitama and his supporters started recording the argument on their cell phones, so one of our attorneys, Greg Harrison, took out his cell phone to record it as well.

“It was at this point that one of Myeni’s

supporters hit his phone out of his hand, physically assaulting him and verbally harassing Steinberg.”

Harrison said Mngxitama and two others told

enterprises, where she is in a position to receive a high income and has the ability to siphon money. Yet, if we are successful, she will be banned for life from serving on the boards of any private or public company.”

He said that Myeni had abundant resources, “and we all knew the risks when taking on this case. This includes our witnesses, who I think are the bravest of the lot of us. But since the physical confrontation on Friday, we don’t rest easy. There is definitely a heightened sense of awareness. Yet we bear that risk, and carry on.”

Back in August 2017, Mngxitama tweeted, “For those claiming the legacy of the holocaust is ONLY negative think about the lampshades and Jewish soap.” In another tweet, his bizarre and anti-Semitic rant continued, “I concur with @helenzille that the aroma of the burning flesh from the furnace of the holocaust may wet [sic] the appetite of the S.A. cannibals.”

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies took Mngxitama to court over the tweets in 2017. The case has yet to be heard. The far-left BLF party was de-registered after the Freedom Front Plus lodged a complaint in court, and an appeal against de-registration was denied in November 2019.



Advocate Carol Steinberg

him to “go back to Holland”, and that they were “no longer slaves. One of them repeatedly asked me if I thought he was a monkey. They tried forcibly to take my phone from me.”

Said Pandor, “Security was called, we notified the judge about what happened, and there has been increased security in the building since Monday. Mngxitama hasn’t been in court this week, but the man who hit the cell phone out of Greg’s hand has been there.”

Pandor said that the “stakes are high” for Myeni and her supporters, and their support is “blind loyalty. They don’t like the fact that she is under pressure.

“Their support doesn’t waiver, even after developments in court. She is still on the boards of a number of companies and state-owned

## Shabbat times this week

Starts	Ends	
18:15	19:10	Johannesburg
19:07	19:58	Cape Town
18:13	19:03	Durban
18:15	19:21	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:29	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:18	East London

## Rabbi Dr David Nossel



## Torah Thought

### What makes you happier?

Great news! From this week onwards, we’re going to be happier. Why? Because we have just welcomed the Jewish month of Adar, and our sages tell us, “When Adar enters, we increase our happiness.”

Now that we’ve heard the good news, aren’t we joining all those people who are breaking out into song with the sages’ original Hebrew words,

“*Mishenichnas Adar marbin besimcha?* (When the month of Adar arrives, we increase our joy!)”

Have we not put up decorative posters on our front doors emblazoned with these wonderful words? And if we’re not the singing or decorating type, aren’t we at least happier for having

heard this good news?

If not, something sagacious has gone very wrong. Somewhere, we’ve lost the plot.

It’s likely to be the following: we have bought into a paradigm, a view of life, that sees happiness as a response. According to this paradigm, we can be happy only if something has happened to make us so. Accordingly, we need to find something that happens with the entrance of Adar that makes us happy. And what is that something? Is it Purim? No, that’s not at the entrance of Adar. It only happens about two weeks later. So what is it?

To tap into the wisdom of the sages is to realise that the only thing that happens when Adar enters is just that: Adar enters. And that itself makes us happier.

This is how Adar does it. The Hebrew word *adar* means mighty. We find a form of this word used at a *chuppah* when *Mi adir* (Who is mighty? [referring to G-d]) is traditionally sung. An *aderet* is a cloak of mightiness. The month of Adar is a ritual reminder of a valuable virtue: to be mighty.

If we’re mighty, we realise that being a happier person doesn’t depend on external circumstances. Happiness isn’t a reaction, it’s a “pro-action”, a choice we make in life.

If we’re truly mighty, we know that we need to muster up our might to adopt an attitude of happiness in our lives.

If we’re truly mighty, we carry our own inextinguishable and indefatigable supply of happiness around with us.

When Adar enters, say our sages, we increase our happiness.

When the month of mightiness enters, we are reminded that mightiness allows us to generate not only our own electricity, but far more importantly, our own happiness.

This is what brings us to celebrate, sing, and place a poster on our front and fridge doors (and generators). For what greater news can there be than this?

**Appliance Repairs on Site**  
 Fridges, Dishwashers,  
 Washing Machines, Stoves  
 Tumble Dryers & more  
 Call Jason  
 082 401 8239 / 076 210 6532  
**FREE QUOTATIONS**

**A TAXI SERVICE IS BACK!**  
 Let me take care of all your transport needs  
  
**Warren 074-891-9423**  
 warrenpogorelsky@gmail.com

**ARLUK MEMORIALS**  
 Please note change of landline number  
**Landline 011 485 0511**  
**Mobile 082 849 9054**  
 Email: bobbifayarluk@gmail.com

**VEHICLES WANTED**  
  
**Any make, any model, any condition**  
**Accident damaged vehicles and non-runners also wanted**  
**Arnold Orkin 082 823 7826**  
**AUTO AFRICA**

**Jewish Report** Editor Peta Krost Maunders – editor@sajewishreport.co.za • Sub-editor Julie Leibowitz • Journalists Nicola Miltz • Tali Feinberg Jordan Moshe • Editorial co-ordinator Martine Bass – editorial@sajewishreport.co.za • Proofreader Kim Hatchuel • CEO Dani Kedar  
 ceo@sajewishreport.co.za • Advertising Britt Landsman: 082 292 9520 – britt@sajewishreport.co.za • Design and layout Bryan Maron/Design Bandits – bryan@designbandits.co.za • Distribution Sandy Furman • Subscriptions Avusa Publishing (Pty) Ltd. Tel: 0860 525 200  
 Board of Directors Howard Sackstein (Chairperson), Dina Diamond, Herschel Jawitz, Shaun Matisonn, Benji Porter.  
 Advertisements and editorial copy do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff and board of directors. Tel: 011 430 1980.

The SA Jewish Report subscribes to the Code of Ethics and Conduct for South African Print and Online Media that prescribes news that is truthful, accurate, fair and balanced. If we don’t live up to the Code, within 20 days of the date of publication of the material, please contact the Public Advocate at 011 484 3612, fax: 011 484 3619. You can also contact our Case Officer on khanyim@ombudsman.org.za or lodge a complaint on their website: www.presscouncil.org.za

**We buy and sell cars**  
  
 www.samotorcorporation.co.za  
**11 Republic Road, Bordeaux, Randburg Tel: (011) 326-1954**  


# Leaked security brief spotlights anti-Israel lobby

NICOLA MILTZ

A leaked South African State Security Agency (SSA) intelligence brief dated over seven years ago has shed light on the local anti-Israel lobby, its effect on the Jewish community, and on security in the country.

The top-secret document, titled “Growing Anti-Israel Lobbying: Security Implications for South Africa”, was written by the domestic branch of the SSA in September 2012.

It was leaked via news agency *Al Jazeera*, which together with the *Guardian* newspaper, published what came to be known as the “Spy Cables” in 2015.

The Spy Cables comprised a digital leak to *Al Jazeera* of hundreds of secret intelligence documents from the world’s spy agencies. They included documents written by global intelligence agencies including Israel’s Mossad, South Africa’s SSA, Britain’s MI6, Russia’s FSB, and others.

The SSA intelligence brief, a copy of which is in the possession of the *SA Jewish Report*, offers a glimpse into the effects of the rising anti-Israel lobby led by the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions South Africa (BDS-SA) movement, and the resultant security implications for the country.

The brief highlights a string of incidents having “an explicit anti-Israel slant” which took place in 2012. These incidents “failed to elicit a significant reaction from Jewish organisations in South Africa”, the brief states.

Instead, the community’s “frustration and anger” was manifested in concerns about “intimidation and the possible targeting of Jewish interests” in the country.

“Despite growing levels of frustration experienced by the Jewish community, no violent retaliatory threats have thus far been evidenced,” the report said.

It went on to list the “security and diplomatic implications” should the

“status quo” worsen.

“The risk exists that an escalation in current anti-Israel initiatives in South Africa may significantly increase polarisation between the Jewish community and pro-Palestinian

could be affected. “Given the global geopolitical landscape and the fact that the US is a major ally of Israel, deteriorating diplomatic relations with Israel could put a strain on existing US/SA relations and jeopardise South

Africa’s future participation in various global economic and development forums,” it said.

If the situation worsened, the report said, the implementation of stricter travel measures to Israel and Palestine could be imposed. Israel could impose stricter

travel measures on South African nationals wanting to travel from South Africa to Israel and Palestine.

The intelligence brief concluded, “Although it’s expected that any counteroffensive by the Jewish community in South Africa and even Israel will be subtle and calculated in nature rather than violent or disruptive, the rising levels of frustration and anger within the Jewish community in South Africa should be noted.”

The brief details the anti-Israel incidents which took place in 2012.

Among them, it said, BDS-SA had “expressed its satisfaction” in August over the cancellation of a planned trip to Israel by a delegation of mayors and KwaZulu-Natal municipal employees aimed at facilitating contact with Israeli experts in the fields of agriculture, science, and technology.

According to the brief, during that year’s Israel Apartheid Week, pro-Palestinian groups hosted convicted terrorist Dr Abdul Aziz Umar, who was involved in the 2003 Café Hillel bombing that killed six Israelis and one Palestinian.

It mentions the controversial announcement by then Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies to re-label products from Israel. Davies announced in May that year that products from the West Bank would no longer be permitted to carry a label saying “product of Israel”.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal cancelled a lecture by Israeli Deputy Ambassador to South Africa, Yaakov

support groups in South Africa, resulting in isolated incidents of violence against Jewish interests.

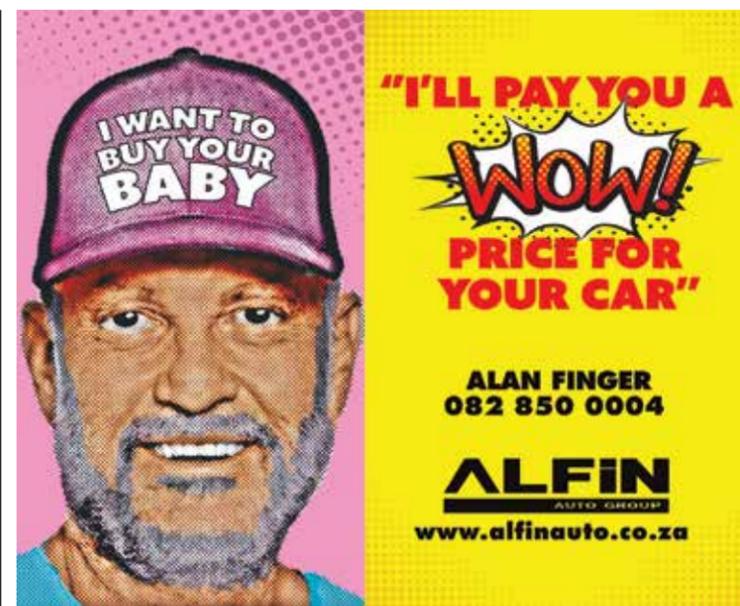
“Although it’s to be expected that the Jewish community will continue to voice its disapproval through accepted constitutional means, there is a growing feeling within the local community that the anti-Israel sentiment is gaining momentum, and that Jewish interests could in future be targeted.”

The SSA said it knew about the activities of the Community Security Organisation (CSO), pointing out that, “Even though the CSO has not been linked to any violent action in recent years, it’s likely that the CSO will respond to any direct threat to Jewish interests.”

Other implications of increased anti-Israel sentiment included increased pressure by the pro-Palestinian lobby on the South African government to “harden its stance and impose economic and cultural sanctions against Israel”, which has since played out. Also, it spoke of the potential of a deterioration in diplomatic relations between South Africa and Israel if the government “intensifies its anti-Israel stance”, which has also played out.

“It’s expected that the Mossad will continue to approach the SSA aggressively on issues critical to Israel’s national security interests, such as planned terror attacks by Hezbollah against Israeli interests in South Africa,” according to the report.

The brief also predicted that relations with the United States



Pinkelstein, after pressure from pro-Palestinian student organisations.

During the June 2012 African National Congress policy conference, delegates reaffirmed their intention to increase support for the Palestinians, and called for the boycott of Israeli goods, the report said.

It also mentioned the anti-Israel statements made by a number of representatives of the South African government. It suggested that should things worsen, there could be attacks on South African

information technology and telecommunications infrastructure.

“It’s possible that Israeli nationals active in the IT and telecommunications environments can penetrate and deliberately compromise South Africa’s IT infrastructure,” the report said.

The report further concludes, “Current information doesn’t indicate the likelihood of any incidents of violence against Jewish interests in South Africa in the short term, but the situation will be closely monitored.”

## Visiting rabbi impressed by local community

JORDAN MOSHE

A visiting international rabbi says he is bowled over by the South African Jewish community’s installations, infrastructure, and rabbinate, which he claims are the envy of overseas communities.

“I was impressed by the calibre and unity of the rabbinate here,” said Rabbi Shaul Robinson, who visited South Africa for the first time last week as a guest of the South African Rabbinical Association at its training seminar. Robinson, originally from Glasgow, Scotland, has been senior rabbi at the Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan, New York City, for the past 14 years.

“You don’t find something like it outside of South Africa, certainly not in America,” he told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“The level of unity and mutual respect amongst Orthodox rabbis of different backgrounds and ages, be they Chabad or Mizrahi, was remarkable. There is a real sense of collegiality, friendship, and a shared mission.”

Over two days at the seminar, the rabbis discussed the challenges facing communities across the globe including helping congregants in crisis, coping with the anxiety of the time, and how to address the reality of declining communities.

“The community is shrinking, causing real anxiety about how big it will be in a few years’ time and how many institutions will remain viable. The rabbis are certainly anxious about the future, and how to address the challenges lying ahead.”

In spite of their anxiety, Robinson said he felt a certain energy amongst the rabbinate that he had never experienced elsewhere.

He said he knew little about South Africa or its community beforehand. “I knew that the issue of apartheid had been complicated, and that former Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris had been a good friend of [Nelson] Mandela. I knew that the community here has experienced waves of emigration to various places worldwide, and I was also aware that there has been a unique increase in religiosity within the community.”

Continued on page 7 >>>

JAWITZ

PROPERTIES

INVEST IN PROPERTY IN ISRAEL  
FROM R5 MILLION

Contact Herschel Jawitz in strict confidence  
082 571 1829 | herschel@jawitz.co.za

REAL  
LIFE

Real Estate.



NEW RELEASE | ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY  
**GLENHAZEL | R 1.699 MILLION**  
Modernized, neat Duplex offers a comfortable space for your family. Modern kitchen, 3 Bedrooms, 2.5 renovated bathrooms (mes), guest loo, Patio, neat garden, garage, carport, plus extra parking, communal staff accommodation. Directions: Follow pointer boards from Northfield Ave into Queens Place into Mansion Street.

3 2.5 Web Ref: RL62660  
Joel Harris 082 926 0287 National Sales Consultant of the Year  
Laureen Shalpid 083 789 0229



ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY  
**GLENHAZEL | INVITING BUYERS FROM R 1.499 MILLION**  
Asking More. Stunning 2 bedroom garden townhouse. Top class 24 security in this well run complex. Lovely eat in modern kitchen. Tiled living areas plus separate study onto private walled garden, 2 modern baths (both en suite), secure parking. Great location. Directions: Follow pointer boards along George Avenue.

2 2.5 Web Ref: RL1429  
Joel Harris 082 926 0287 National Sales Consultant of the Year  
Laureen Shalpid 083 789 0229



ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY  
**OAKLANDS | R 4.950 MILLION**  
A special family home offering comfortable and tranquil living! Featuring 3/4 receptions, eat-in, country-style kitchen, 4 beds (mes), 2nd bathroom, guest cloak, cottage, staff, pool, double garage, layered security measures & energy efficient attributes. Directions: South along Park St from Pretoria St, left into Stella.

4 2 Web Ref: RL61481  
Chrissie Hammer 082 568 0440



NEW RELEASE | ON SHOW THIS SUNDAY  
**MORNINGSIDE | R 3.850 MILLION**  
Wonderful youthfulness is the theme that is played out throughout this home. The 4 bedrooms and open-plan living areas give way to airy, delightful living. With this gem we offer the impossible, a modern cluster at an affordable price! You'll only get one chance, as this home will go quickly! Directions: Rivonia Rd, into Alon Rd, into Michelle Street, follow pointers.

4 3 Web Ref: RL62357  
Norma 082 554 7260 | Romaine 082 685 5177

# Life under the spectre of Covid-19

JORDAN MOSHE

As the feared Covid-19 virus continues to make headlines around the world, Professor Cheryl Cohen remains on watch almost 24/7 to ensure the well-being of South Africa.

Cohen is the voice of coronavirus in South Africa. Her team has been working around the clock to safeguard the public, striving to make sure that we remain healthy and kept up to date on the latest developments.

She is the head of the Centre for Respiratory Disease and Meningitis at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) in South Africa, where her daily duties effectively put her at the coalface of coronavirus. As a result, her routine and personal life have been turned upside down over the past few weeks.

“It has been a totally absorbing experience,” says Cohen, a specialist in microbiology and viral disease. “We’ve had to clear our schedules, effectively put our lives aside, and focus entirely on the demands of the outbreak. We’ve pulled in people from across departments, and we’ve been absorbed into a single effort.”

It all began in December, when she and her team first got wind of the virus in China. “We picked up information about a cluster of pneumonia cases which seemed quite worrying. They were all said to be linked to a live market in Wuhan, China, and it seemed at the time that they were caused by a zoonotic disease, one which typically starts among animals, crosses the species barrier, and affects humans. These types of events do happen occasionally, especially in China.

“We were worried,” Cohen says. “As epidemiologists, we want to understand the extent of the possible threat posed by something like this, whether it can spread through close contact or through animals only. So, we continued to monitor reports for evidence of human transmission, and by January, word of household cases emerged.”

As the disease became a global concern, the institute’s departments began establishing laboratories and dedicating research to the outbreak. Staff who returned to work in January had their hopes of a quiet transition dashed when their routine changed dramatically.

“An event like this wipes you out,” she says. “We tend to use

indefinitely, Cohen says all her professional plans for the year have been suspended. The changes have also had an impact on her personal life, and while she strives to maintain a healthy work-life balance, she has experienced understandable strain.

“Balancing family and work is always difficult, but something like this affects one’s life entirely. When the outbreak was declared, I worked for two weeks straight. Our team is regularly left exhausted, and you feel like there’s no break from work because you devote yourself to the disease completely.”

Cohen was raised in Corlett Gardens in Johannesburg, and attended Sandringham High School, located across the road

professional calling.

“I really didn’t want to be confined to a laboratory. Just like clinical medicine restricts the number of people you can see in a day, it can be quite restrictive,” she says. “I chose to go to London and study epidemiology, a field which teaches you about who gets certain diseases and why.

“Because of the scope it offered, it became my passion. It allowed me to make an impact on public health at a broader level instead of being limited to one patient at a time.”

After completing her master’s degree in the United Kingdom, Cohen returned to Johannesburg and took up a position at the NICD as one of four staff members in a very

small epidemiology department. She went on to pursue a doctorate at Wits, and was subsequently appointed head of the Centre for Respiratory Disease and Meningitis at the institute.

“The NICD was established with a public-health focus,” says Cohen. “Its aim wasn’t just to diagnose diseases but to understand who can get them and why, adopting an integrated approach which uses research to reduce and control them.

“When I first joined the institute, there weren’t many people trained in epidemiology. It was an exciting prospect to work on a range of diseases and make a difference.”

Cohen says that a key aspect of her job is to balance the control of epidemic respiratory diseases which typically cause death in South Africa (primarily via illnesses like pneumonia) with monitoring and responding to emerging pathogens.

“There’s always a high

possibility of new pathogens emerging where respiratory diseases are concerned,” she says. “One of the centre’s roles is to monitor across the country for the presence of new respiratory diseases. We’re part of a global network which shares information about new diseases, and are always reviewing reports of anything unusual.”

While Cohen says her routine has normalised somewhat since the outbreak, she admits to being out of her comfort zone, as she is the type of person who appreciates a set schedule into which she can insert work and family. “I like my structure,” she laughs. “I’ve been working in this job for more than ten years, and the outbreak has made me do things I wouldn’t normally do, from constant engagement with the media, to being at work more.”

Fortunately, she says her family and friends have been exceedingly understanding and supportive of her work. This includes her wife (who also works at the NICD), nine-year old daughter, and twin boys aged six.

“Because our time is so restricted, my wife and I have had to negotiate sharing responsibility for caring for our children,” says Cohen. “We’ve explained to them what we’re doing, and why we have to be away so much. I always talk to my kids about my work and disease in general, and I know I can rely on my wife as we share responsibility at a very difficult time.”

While South Africa is still unaffected by the virus, Cohen says she has learned much from the changes caused by the outbreak.

“Having a team to work with makes all the difference,” she says. “You discover what it means to do your best, to manage under very difficult circumstances, and that you can pull through only by working together. I work with excellent people, and while we’re all feeling stressed, we still take over for one another when we need to.

“We’re individuals trying to live, work, and handle a virus outbreak at the same time,” she says. “But we’re in it together, and that makes all the difference.”

“

“It has been a totally absorbing experience,” says Cohen, a specialist in microbiology and viral disease. “We’ve had to clear our schedules, effectively put our lives aside, and focus entirely on the demands of the outbreak. We’ve pulled in people from across departments, and we’ve been absorbed into a single effort.”



Professor Cheryl Cohen

January to catch up on papers and projects but had to clear our schedules completely and take on training, managing adjustments to the health system, communication with professional medical organisations, and engaging with the media.

“The idea of a new disease is frightening, and it comes with demands that need to be addressed.”

With her routine interrupted

from the NICD where she works today.

“My mom is a doctor, and she used to take me on her rounds of the infectious-diseases ward at Rietfontein Hospital (today Sizwe Hospital) when I was a medical student,” she told the *SA Jewish Report* this week. After studying medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), she became fascinated with infectious diseases, and found her

[www.Xtremebowling.co.za](http://www.Xtremebowling.co.za)

011 440 1160

**X**TREME  
BOWLING

NEW

**KALEIDOSCOPIC BOWLING**  
TO BLOW YOUR MIND!!



# Budget a pre-Purim gift

OPINION

ANTHONY CHAIT



It is indeed a good omen that Minister of Finance Tito Titus Mboweni delivered his budget speech in Cape Town on Rosh Chodesh, the first day of the month of Adar. Within the next two weeks, we celebrate Purim and the minister had plenty of *mishloach manot* (gifts) for all – or almost everyone.

Probably the biggest gift for South African Jews is that those making aliyah to Israel will now no longer need to apply to the South African Reserve Bank through their local bank to emigrate.

In addition, Mboweni announced personal income tax relief through an above-inflation increase in brackets and rebates. This means that if your salary goes up through inflation or a cost-of-living increase, you don't pay a higher rate of tax as a result of the raise you have been given by your employer.

The adjustment to tax rebates means less tax if you are over 65, and even more if you are over 75. The amount of tax relief is R2 billion. The tax threshold before you start paying tax for someone under 65 increases from R79 000 to R83 100. The bulk of the benefit accrues to taxpayers earning less than R500 000 a year.

After a decade of weak economic performance, Mboweni tells us that South Africa still boasts deep and liquid capital markets, strong institutions, the most diversified economy on the continent, and a young population.

income tax rate has remained unchanged at 28% for more than a decade. Countries which are our main trading and investment partners including India, the United States, and the United Kingdom have cut theirs to below 28%. The government, he says, is committed to reduce South Africa's corporate income tax rate to encourage businesses to invest and expand production.

This year's budget has renewed the debate about whether tax incentives really work. These relate to subsidies that offer favourable tax treatment to individuals and businesses to encourage specific behaviour or activities. For example, there are incentives in our tax system to invest in certain infrastructure like our railway system. It's often argued that these can compromise the principles of a good tax system by creating complexities and inequities between individuals, sectors, and activities by giving rise to distortions in the taxes paid by different taxpayers who should be treated fairly and equally, according to Mboweni. Most of all, they reduce the tax base.

The 2020 budget applies sunset clauses, effectively giving adequate notice of the withdrawal of several incentives dealing with airport and port assets, rolling stock, and loans for residential units. The urban-development-zone incentive responsible for much of the upliftment of central business districts in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban will remain for one year while it is reviewed.

The taxman has eventually caught up with hookah or shisha heated tobacco smokers, also known as hubbly bubbly pipes. These will now be subject to excise tax at a rate of 75% of the cigarette excise rate with immediate effect. Electronic cigarettes have escaped the net for now. Vape or e-cigarettes will be taxed in 2021.

Mboweni spoke of how plastic shopping bags continue to litter our oceans at an estimate of 12.7 million tons in our seas. National Treasury is focusing on all single-use plastics used for retail consumption, including plastic straws, utensils, and packaging. For now, plastic bags remain public enemy number one, and the levy doubles from 12c to 25c per bag from 1 April 2020.

There is indeed a Purim gift for residents who earn foreign remuneration abroad. While the exemption for those who are out for more than 60 days continuously and 183 days in aggregate in any 12-month period is to be withdrawn, the exemption was to be subject to a cap of R1 million. Because it is the merry month of Adar, this cap has been increased to R1.25 million. Thank you, minister!

Probably the most significant aspect of this year's budget speech is the serious desire on the part of the government for all South Africans working abroad to maintain their ties to South Africa.

Many advisers believed that the only means to sever residency ties with South Africa was to emigrate financially through the Reserve Bank. In an unprecedented move, the concept of emigration has now been abolished. The days of blocked accounts of emigrants and having to apply for settling-in allowances in your new country of residence are now behind us. Whether you choose to live in or out of South Africa, for exchange control purposes, you will now be treated the same.

With the problems which have beset Eskom, South African Airways, and other state-owned enterprises, our economy has become fragmented and is thought to be disintegrating.

This year's budget, in the tradition of Purim's *mishloach manot*, will certainly bring cohesiveness, *parnassa* (income), and harmony to the South African economy.

• Anthony Chait is the chief executive of Zeridium, a niche tax and exchange-control consultancy. [www.zeridium.com](http://www.zeridium.com)

“Plastic bags remain public enemy number one, and the levy doubles from 12c to 25c per bag from 1 April 2020.”

The South African Revenue Service (SARS), Mboweni says, is a reformed entity under new Commissioner Edward Kieswetter, and our tax refunds (especially VAT) are paid out nowadays on time and with a smile.

The Davis Tax Committee, under the sage guidance of Judge Dennis Davis, is being re-established. The committee was set up to make recommendations to government on future tax policy. The committee and its excellent work was hopelessly undermined by previous SARS Commissioner Tom Moyane, who Cyril Ramaphosa fired during his early days in the presidency.

While economic growth averaged 3.6% a year in the fifteen years after 1994, this has slowed, and Mboweni forecasts that the South African economy will grow by 0.9%. Inflation will average 4.5% in 2020, well within the range of 3% to 6% which is the mandate of the Reserve Bank.

Unstable electricity supply, he says, is an impediment to growth, and it's restraining the forecast to average at just more than 1% over the next three years.

Mboweni announced that the pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) system and personal income tax administration is to be reformed. Over time, most individual salaried taxpayers won't have to file personal tax returns.

He also increased the annual limit on tax-free savings accounts from R33 000 to R36 000 from 1 March 2020. So, you can now invest R36 000 in a special account with your bank and not pay any tax on the interest.

While transfer duty on property transactions, which was last adjusted in 2017, is being adjusted for inflation, transfer duty will no longer be liable on the purchase of a property with a value below R1 million.

Mboweni says that South Africa's corporate

## A LINK TO YOUR PAST... A DOOR TO YOUR FUTURE...

Recent amendments to Lithuanian citizenship laws have removed most of the barriers between Litvaks and Lithuania. This means you may be eligible for reinstatement of citizenship. Grab the opportunity to meet with a visiting Lithuanian expert Ms. NIDA DEGUTIENE to advise you and verify your documents.

Ms. NIDA DEGUTIENE has consulted in many countries, including South Africa, Israel, UK and Australia. Through her vast knowledge and expertise, she has successfully assisted many people to obtain their Lithuanian citizenship and passport.

A Lithuanian passport allows you to live and work in the European Union. This allows access to world-class Universities across Europe as well as to one of the best healthcare systems in the world. Lithuanian passport – the best investment in your children's future!



Take the next steps, book a free top-level consultation:

**Cape Town:**  
4,5,6 March | 9h00 - 16h00

**Johannesburg:**  
10,11,12 March | 9h00 - 16h00

Call a representative of Next Steps Ericka on 078 886 1800 or send an email to [ericka@nandos.com](mailto:ericka@nandos.com) to schedule your appointment and receive all necessary information.

**NEXT  
STEPS** | Heritage  
and  
Beyond

### Who is managing your real estate in Israel?

Creative Estates offers professional and comprehensive property management services all over Israel, including:

- Management of Investment Properties & Holiday Homes
- Rent Collection
- Recruiting Tenants
- Legal Contracts
- Property Maintenance
- Payment of Bills
- Tax & Accounting Support
- Monthly Reporting

**We care for your property as if it was our own!**

Contact Shaun Isaacson, Advocate, MBA  
[Shaun@CEIsrael.com](mailto:Shaun@CEIsrael.com) 052-652-1096



**Creative Estates**  
Israel Property Management Services  
[www.CEIsrael.com](http://www.CEIsrael.com)

## South African Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

### The challenge of being inspirational

This week, a former editor of mine, who inspired me to pursue great journalism and to make a difference through the work I do, passed away suddenly. And while Shaun Johnson wasn't a part of this community, remembering him invoked in me what it means to inspire others. Also, I realised how important it is for us to have people in our lives who inspire us to be better.

Astonishingly, some people even look to Julius Malema for inspiration. Now, that's really concerning considering his often threatening and racially divisive rhetoric.

However, inspiring others often means stepping out of your comfort zone and taking a stand for what you believe. Perhaps Malema does that, but at whose expense? This week he apparently flouted the law by not appearing in court when he was ordered to be there. So, a warrant for his arrest was issued.

He is the leader of a political party, and this is the example he sets. This is hardly inspirational.

Inspiring people is about expecting the most from them, and allowing them space to fulfil your expectations. It's about challenging people to be the best they can be. It's about taking a stand for what you believe in, and having the courage to change course if need be.

Often inspirational people aren't public figures.

This week, my colleague brought to my attention a story of a Jewish woman from Iran who was sentenced to death in absentia. This soft-spoken woman emigrated to the Netherlands in 2012 from her native Iran. She was volunteering at the local Chabad House in Utrecht when she was condemned back home. Now 62, she was sentenced to a public execution for running an underground organisation that found housing for women with abusive husbands who were unable to get divorced.

This woman left Iran a year prior to the sentencing to help her daughter – also a political refugee – with a difficult pregnancy in the Netherlands.

Although she was battling to get residence in the Netherlands and desperately missed her husband in Iran, she had no regrets about helping abused wives. She said she would do it all over again.

This woman is truly inspirational. Her life certainly wasn't enhanced by what she did for others, but she did it anyway.

Her antithesis is the evil that is Harvey Weinstein, who this week was found guilty of rape and criminal sex acts in the United States. Here is a man who was lauded in the film industry for his work as a producer. However, he used his power to sexually abuse vulnerable women. Not one but more than 100 women came forward with allegations of abuse. Now, people have made many an excuse for him and claimed that the women knew what they were getting into, but nothing can excuse this man.

More than that, he paid people to enable him to corner the women he wanted to abuse, and to make sure they couldn't do anything about it afterwards.

Instead of being an international inspiration, he is a global disgrace, and the reason behind the #MeToo campaign.

In the same industry is movie director Steven Spielberg, a man who has used his power in the industry for good. Not only is he an icon for dyslexia, having had a lifelong struggle to read and write, but he has made sure that 52 000 Holocaust testimonies were filmed in perpetuity and housed at the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation that he founded.

I guess we all choose our paths in life. We can safely be followers and lead upstanding lives with integrity, but still play it safe. There's nothing wrong with that. Or, we can stick our heads above the parapet, and do our best to do something substantial with our lives.

The latter path is never easy, and people always try to throw stones at tall poppies. Being inspirational or going against the grain for the right reasons is never easy.

We look to our leaders – those who have chosen to occupy ultimate positions of power – to step up to the challenge of doing what it takes to heal our country.

Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni this week proved inspirational. As the country was convinced he would slap on more taxes, he chose instead to find the necessary money by reducing the public-sector wage bill. Well done!

As for our president, Cyril Ramaphosa, I still believe him to be a man of integrity. However, we need him to be inspirational. We need him to challenge his government to do so much better, and then to have the courage to change the course of this country. He needs to be seen to be tough and determined.

As I see it, he's between a rock and a hard place. He doesn't have an easy task. However, he appears to be hamstrung by the members of his own party. It's time to choose South Africa over the party, and be the inspiration this country needs.

It's time for Ramaphosa to stand up and stand out! It's time for him to show us leadership, and steer this ship in the right direction.



## Third Israeli election in a year – one big yawn

Israel has never held two successive elections, let alone three. And with most people in Israel believing next Monday's ballot won't break the deadlock, the country seems headed to a fourth election. Maybe I can just re-publish this column again next week? And then again in a few weeks' time?

The latest public opinion surveys show Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party overtaking Benny Gantz's Blue and White for the first time since the most recent round of elections were called for.

But even this doesn't significantly change the size of the parties. They remain deadlocked, with neither able to form a majority coalition government. The deciding factor – if any – will be voter turnout, which has become increasingly difficult to predict. Most Israeli voters are disinterested and more disgusted with their politicians than ever before.

A lot has happened since the previous election in September. In November, Netanyahu was indicted for fraud, bribery, and breach of trust. He is the first prime minister in Israel's history to be indicted while in office.

Last month, American President Donald Trump revealed his much-touted peace deal that Palestinians immediately slammed as "the slap of the century". And just this week, Netanyahu announced that he would re-open a long dormant controversial project to build 3 500 homes east of Jerusalem.

The prime minister made similar pledges before both previous votes. In April last year, he said he would annex all current settlements, and in September, he promised to go further by claiming sovereignty over a third of the entire West Bank. But these efforts didn't translate into changing numbers.

In another effort, he reportedly hired a private intelligence firm to dig up dirt on Gantz. Netanyahu denies the claims, and Gantz denies any wrongdoing in alleged shady business deals between the Fifth

Dimension cybersecurity firm he headed until last year and the Israeli police. As things stand, the state prosecutor's office may advise the attorney general to launch an investigation.

This dirty political tit-for-tat means that even if Gantz is found to be clean, he has now been stained with uncorroborated allegations of corruption. No surprise then that Israeli voting apathy is on the increase.

Netanyahu, whose own corruption trial begins on 17 March, took a jab at Gantz by posting a tweet that, "this is a sad evening for the State of Israel". It was identical to a tweet Gantz himself had posted two days earlier after the opening date of Netanyahu's trial had been announced.

Three elections in one year have exhausted any real content of the political parties under discussion. When I talk to Israelis, most tell me the elections are about whether or not to keep Netanyahu in office. Not only is there voter fatigue, there is also "Bibi fatigue".

Meanwhile, the Arab Joint List, an electoral alliance of four predominantly Arab-Israeli parties, is hoping to repeat – or even improve on – its showing in the last election, when it won 13 seats. Anger at the Nation State Law, which defines Israel as an exclusively Jewish homeland, was a key reason for increased Arab turnout in September. Many pundits suggest that anger against Trump's

**DATELINE:  
MIDDLE EAST**

Paula Slier

plan will potentially make that number even higher.

A growing number of Israeli Jews, long-time supporters of Zionist parties such as Labour and Meretz, are reportedly planning to break ranks and, for the first time in their lives, vote for the Joint List next Monday.

If in the past Arab parties could count on Jewish voters to hand them the equivalent of a single Knesset seat, now they could win as many as two thanks to disillusioned and angry leftwing Jewish voters.

For the first time ever, the Joint List is also going after the ultra-Orthodox community with campaign adverts in Yiddish. While at first it might seem strange that a haredi Jew would vote for an Arab party, both share common grievances such as ostracisation from mainstream Israeli society for not serving in the military. Adverts placed in religious neighbourhoods declare, "Your vote against the compulsory draft."

As part of this intersectionality campaign, the Joint List has also been targeting Ethiopian Israelis, another community where it has identified common ground. Arabs and Ethiopian Jews suffer disproportionately from police brutality. The billboards, in both Hebrew and in Amharic (the Ethiopian language), declare, "Your vote against police violence."

None of this should surprise anyone. Yesterday I walked past a high-profile meeting happening in broad daylight in front of the television building in Tel Aviv. Likud member of parliament Miki Zohar was chatting with prominent Arab politicians. Such co-operation is common in Israel – you give us votes, we'll give you benefits.

All of this comes against a flare-up in violence between Israel and Gaza over the past few days. At the moment the situation is calm, and Netanyahu has threatened strong retaliation if it erupts again.



The hostilities began on Sunday when Israel came under an intense barrage of rockets. According to the Israeli army, 26 rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip and 13 were intercepted by the Iron Dome missile defence system.

Later on Sunday night, six people were reportedly killed in midnight airstrikes in Syria. The Syrian army said that the strikes emanated from an Israeli aircraft that operated outside its airspace. Islamic Jihad later confirmed that two of the dead were their operatives, while the independent Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said four others were from Iran-backed militia.

Normally such violence would have been welcomed by the prime minister just days before an election, but now Gaza is an embarrassment that is best swept under the table. Like the elections, the Israel-Gaza situation is more of the same – one big yawn.

# Never again, says Lithuanian ambassador

OPINION

SIGUTĖ JAKŠTONYTĖ



Since the time of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to the present, Lithuania has been a multinational, multilingual, and multicultural country. Jewish history has been an integral part of Lithuanian history, and the Jewish community has made a significant contribution to the development of Lithuania's statehood, history, culture, and science.

The 600 years of history shared by the Lithuanian and Jewish communities includes joyful and painful moments. The 20th century brought immense tragedy, a tragedy for Lithuania and the entire world. About 95% of Lithuanian Jews perished in the Holocaust. It's distressing that some Lithuanian citizens were also directly involved in the mass killings organised by the Nazis.

Lithuania will never forget this tragedy. President Gitanas Nausėda paid his deepest respect to the victims of the *Shoah* (Holocaust) killed by the Nazis and their collaborators during his recent visit to Oswiecim in Poland to attend the commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp.

"We cannot revive the innocent victims. We can hardly ease the pain of those who lost their loved ones. The only thing we can and must do is keep the memory alive and search for the historical truth," the president said.

Lithuania learned its lesson, and resolved to fight against anti-Semitism, to educate a

tolerant citizenry, to restore justice, and to ensure that such human tragedy will never happen again.

The turning point in this respect was 1995. Then Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas visited Israel to ask for forgiveness for the actions of those Lithuanians who together with the Nazis brutally killed, banished, and humiliated Jews. The truth, although difficult to accept, was voiced. Independent and democratic Lithuania recognised its historical responsibility towards the Jewish community. The work on historical memory started.

Lithuania will never forget the Holocaust and its victims. We are proud of thousands of Lithuanians who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Today, more than 900 Lithuanians have been recognised as Righteous Among the Nations.

Every year, the entire country commemorates Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January, as well as the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Genocide of the Lithuanian Jews on 23 September. Thousands of people of all ages march on that day in numerous Lithuanian cities and towns to visit the sites of Jewish massacres.

The government of Lithuania is implementing a policy of zero tolerance towards anti-Semitism and all forms of racism.

Lithuania was among the first countries to endorse the definition of anti-Semitism used

by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

Academic institutions devote a great deal of attention to researching the history, culture, and heritage of Lithuanian Jews.

Vilnius University hosts the Centre for Studies of the Culture and History of East European Jews. A Judaica Research Centre has been opened in the Lithuanian National Martynas Mažvydas Library.

**"We cannot revive the innocent victims. We can hardly ease the pain of those who lost their loved ones. The only thing we can and must do is keep the memory alive."**

It's difficult to overestimate the impact of the activities undertaken by the Secretariat of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, which has been operating since 1998. The commission did an enormous job of researching the Holocaust in Lithuania.

Education is a critical part of the solution. Teaching about the Holocaust in a global and Lithuanian historical context is compulsory for Grade 5, 6, 10, and 12 students. A total of 147 Tolerance Education Centres of informal education about the Holocaust operate within

the country.

Every year, Lithuanian teachers come to Yad Vashem to improve their expertise. More than 300 of such experts are now working with our kids in schools throughout Lithuania. Leading Lithuanian journalists come to this unique centre to deepen their knowledge about the Holocaust.

To cherish the history of Lithuanian Jews, Seimas, the Parliament of Lithuania, proclaimed the year 2020 as the Year of Vilnius Gaon and the History of the Jews of Lithuania.

The government and its embassies abroad have approved an extensive plan of events to commemorate Jewish culture and history throughout Lithuania. From international scientific conferences to the exhibition of the works of Marc Chagall and Samuel Back, from publishing a book *Holocaust History in Lithuania* that will summarise a 20-year work of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, to a series of events on the input of the Lithuanian Jews into world literature at the Vilnius Book Fair, just to name a few.

Since the opening of the Lithuanian embassy in Pretoria in 2015, numerous cultural events dedicated to Jewish cultural heritage have been organised by the embassy in collaboration with the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre, the Cape Town Jewish Museum, and the Durban Holocaust & Genocide Centre.

A photo exhibition by famous Lithuania photographer Raimondas Paknys, *Sounds of Silence*, has been exhibited in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, as well as Lithuanian contemporary art exhibition *Zakhor! Imaginations of the former Jewish Vilne in Modern Lithuanian Art*, and an exhibition dedicated to Jewish history in Lithuania, *One Century of Seven. Lietuva. Lite*.

In South Africa, a commemoration of the Vilna Gaon and the History of the Jews of Lithuania kicks off at the end of March with a documentary film by Johnathan Andrews *Because of Stalin*.

In conclusion, there is no place for anti-Semitism in my country. Concerted efforts need to be made by the entire international community to safeguard against any form of xenophobia, bigotry, and hatred.

We all share the responsibility to make sure such a tragedy will never happen again.

• *Sigutė Jakštonytė is the Lithuanian ambassador to South Africa.*

## Visiting rabbi impressed by local community

>>>Continued from page 3

However, he wasn't prepared to encounter a united rabbinate which operated within a solid Jewish infrastructure that thrived in spite of the relatively small size of the community.

He stressed that this sense of unity isn't merely a consequence of the community's size. "In relatively small communities all over the United States, it's often the case that the realms of Chabad, Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox remain separate, and tend not to mix. It's not just because they're competing for donors, but because of ideological incompatibilities that are often emphasised and present obstacles to any sort of interaction.

"Rabbis in England, for instance, have co-operated before, but this tends to happen among an extremely narrow band which comes together because of some formal affiliation. In Johannesburg, I saw a genuine sense of co-operation which extended beyond the fact that the rabbis were affiliated to the Union of Orthodox Synagogues."

A *melava malka* (informal post-Shabbos gathering) on Saturday night hosted in a rabbi's home was a case in point. "You'd never see something like that in New York or in London," said Robinson. "To see rabbis voluntarily socialising and getting together? It doesn't happen.

"It's not just because the community may be shrinking, and people need to fall back on each other. It's clearly a culture."

He believes this culture extends beyond the rabbinate. "In the rest of the world, 'chevrah kadisha' refers to the volunteers who prepare a body for burial," he says. "In South Africa, 'the Chev' is an amazing social-service organisation that looks after the welfare of the entire community.

"Before Shabbat, I had a chance to visit Sandringham Gardens with Rabbi Jonathan Fox. The home cares for more than 1 000 people. When I visit old-aged homes elsewhere, they're often either private and thus extremely expensive, or public, down at heel, and reeking of neglect."

He was even taken aback by how easy it is to

keep kosher in Johannesburg. "It's easier to keep kosher in Johannesburg than it is in Manhattan. I stayed at the Genesis Suites, and was blown

away by the fact that a small supermarket one level down had a kosher bakery and take-out counters. The range of kosher restaurants and infrastructure is astounding."

Based on his interaction with community leaders like Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein and the chairperson of the SA Rabbinical Association, Rabbi Yossi Chaikin, Robinson believes that our rabbis' engagement with the community is driven by

genuine interest. This is in spite of a sense of anxiety, personal and professional.



Rabbi Shaul Robinson

Free of charge consultations  
on LITHUANIAN PASSPORT  
assistance

March 10 to 14  
in Johannesburg /  
March 16 to 17  
in Cape Town

Book an individual meeting with me and we will discuss the following:

- If you qualify for ancestral citizenship restoration
- What information and documents are required for procedure
- Step-by-step reinstatement procedure
- Any other questions or concerns you might have



Adv. Dainius Ambrazaitis  
Head of the Citizenship  
Practice at INJURE Law Firm

Knowing that at least one of your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents was from Lithuania is the only essential condition to successfully initiate the process. Archival investigation is my job!

My professional legal assistance is based on the All Inclusive Success Fee basis, i.e. the client pays only after – and if – the application is approved. The fee is as originally stated in spite of any unexpected difficulties requiring additional time and effort. If the application is rejected, there is no fee.

With Lithuanian passport you can travel to more than 170 countries without a prior visa. To visit Australia, Canada and United States you are required an online registration (electronic authorization) only – no visa.

I have more than 10 years of professional legal experience in providing direct legal citizenship services – no intermediaries are involved in the process. You would benefit with useful innovative suggestions regarding possible sources of information and verification.

**INJURE**  
CITIZENSHIP EXPERTS  
Law Firm, Vilnius Lithuania

# New Nedlac head, Lisa Seftel, ready for career challenge

NICOLA MILTZ

**L**isa Seftel, the recently appointed first female executive director of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) is bracing herself for the career challenge of a lifetime.

The daughter of well-known medical personality and radio doctor, Professor Harry Seftel, 91, told the *SA Jewish Report* this week that she sees her appointment “as an honour and a privilege”.

“I’m excited about it,” she said, pointing out that she is well aware “there will be some challenges”.

This is possibly an understatement given that Nedlac is currently facing a “crisis of legitimacy and confidence”.

Nedlac was established 25 years ago primarily as a platform for social dialogue for stakeholders from government, business, labour, and the community to agree on the direction taken by the country’s economy and labour.

But in recent months, stakeholders have questioned whether the organisation, which has had its fair share of leadership challenges, is still relevant in the face of the country’s dire socioeconomic crisis.

Seftel, 60, an anti-apartheid activist and a former campaign organiser of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), strongly believes it is.

“The national-minimum-wage legislation, for example, was initiated at Nedlac,” said Seftel, pointing out that it’s “an acknowledged institution where some very good protocols have been developed, for instance no labour legislation goes to parliament without having come here”.

Seftel, whose employment record in public

service dates to 1995, said that she hoped to play an important role in the implementation of President Cyril Ramaphosa’s vision of a social compact.

“Social partnerships are South Africa’s bread and butter, and Nedlac is a unique institution which can only be as strong as its social partners. My challenge is to strengthen the partners.”

“There isn’t really a coming together on what business, organised labour, and government believe is the right way for the economy to grow. There are still political and ideological differences. In a sense, people occupy parallel universes,” she said.

Sadly, this reflects our enormous levels of inequality, spatial segregation, and significant racial tension.

“One of the things it was envisioned Nedlac would do was build a more organised social compact. In a sense this didn’t happen.”

Asked whether she was daunted by this new challenge, she quipped, “I suppose daunted is one way of putting it, but I’m not unconfident.”

“I’ve been an activist. I’ve worked in government for 25 years. My last job was a very difficult one – working with the minibus taxi industry to transform public transport, establishing the Rea Vaya from Soweto to Joburg. I can manage big challenges. I’m a doer, I’m an implementer.”

Until her appointment at Nedlac, Seftel was the executive director of transport in the City of Johannesburg.

She has also worked at COSATU and the department of labour.

Insiders say she is well equipped to shift leadership gears to enable the organisation to work towards achieving its vision of promoting growth, equity, and participation through social

dialogue.

Unlike her warm, charismatic father, Seftel is measured and guarded about her personal life, and is direct in speech and behaviour.

“I like discipline without being a disciplinarian,” she said, pointing out that a good leader is someone who “listens, listens, listens”. This is a strength Seftel has honed over the years as a LifeLine counsellor.

A leader, she said, must also “respect and value other people but have the ability to make decisions, be authoritative, and have feet on the ground”.

The mother of two adult children, a son, 32, and a daughter, 24, she matriculated from Sandown High School, and attended the University of the Witwatersrand.

She lives in Parkview, Johannesburg, where she enjoys daily walks in the neighbourhood and surrounds, cooking for friends and going on the occasional hike. She is registered for a masters by dissertation at the Wits School of Governance.

Her stint at Nedlac will last five years, and she’s aware she has her work cut out for her.

Her role, which she is still figuring out, includes playing a facilitative role in chairing meetings between social partners, as well as playing an operational role in getting the organisation to function properly, making sure there is an improvement in productivity and service delivery.

“Nedlac is a hub, the place where government comes together with organised business, organised labour, and organised community

groups on a national level to try to reach consensus on issues of social and economic policy to promote the goals of economic growth and social equity,” she says.

“Being in touch with local reality is very important, and that’s what I appreciated working in local government. Effectiveness in the boardroom is about having the ability to understand the pulse of our nation and the different constituencies. I hope I get an opportunity to experience the realities of the other social partners.”

In her curriculum

vitae, Seftel describes herself as “a strong, assertive personality who is not fearful to take on difficult challenges”. She says that she has a “high capacity to think out of the box for implementable and sustainable solutions”, and that she is “able to resolve complex problems and address conflict situations” – all traits she will no doubt rely on in the next five years.



Lisa Seftel

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

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

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

At the end of World War I, 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, Latvian 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 an 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, 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, Latvia 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.**



Destroyed Warsaw, January 1945



Avi Horesh

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

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



I will be in Johannesburg March 5 and March 20 to 26, and in Durban March 6 to 9, and in Cape Town March 9 to 15  
WhatsApp me on +48 783 953 223 • Email me on [adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com](mailto:adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com)

# OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON YOU

**DONATE NOW!**



## We need your help!

The IUA-UCF is the fundraising arm for the SA Zionist Federation, SA Jewish Board of Deputies, Israel Centre South Africa, SA Friends of Israel and SA Union of Jewish Students. Our future depends on you!

From protecting Jewish student life on local campuses to allowing your children to celebrate our beloved Israel, these organisations are vital in ensuring that our community can thrive.

DONATE NOW and show your support!  
<https://www.payfast.co.za/donate/go/iuaucf>

For more information  
[iuaucf@beyachad.co.za](mailto:iuaucf@beyachad.co.za) 011 645 2554/25



# SA Jews in Israel vote against apathy

TALI FEINBERG

Most South Africans living in Israel and voting in Israel's third national election in a year on 2 March are voting for change, while others are voting to keep things exactly as they are.

Paul Mirbach, who is 60 years old and made aliyah in the 1980s, says that he is as determined as ever to vote in this election.

"I see it as the last opportunity to save Israel from abandoning democracy as its defining character, from normalising endemic corruption and institutionalising our oppression of the Palestinians through unilateral annexation. This would mutate my dream of Zionism into something monstrous and morally unacceptable. This is the last opportunity we have to repudiate [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu, his corruption, and his autocratic tendencies," he says.

Glenda and Abel Levitt, who are in their 80s and made aliyah in 1979, say they are not fed up with voting. Rather, they feel "despair at the consistent disregard of so many Israelis by our prime minister's manipulation into staying in power with extremist right-wing parties". "We aren't excited to vote once more, but we are deeply concerned and determined to exercise our democratic right in the hope that enough people come to the voting booths and aren't apathetic. Apathy about voting and making a change are our greatest dangers." They say they haven't changed their vote since September.



Liat Hoffman

"When we made aliyah in 1979, we supported the elected labour government. We experienced a brief time of optimism and hope until Rabin was assassinated. Our dream is to return to the quality of life of those days. To be going into an election where the sitting prime minister has been indicted on multiple charges is deeply disturbing. We do believe that there are enough Israelis who can tip the balance and enable the formation of a coalition which will recognise equality for all citizens of Israel and not be manipulated and intimidated by extremists."

Brandon Treger, who is 49 years old and made aliyah in 2016, says he will vote to the right of Likud. "It's great to vote here – you feel part of the process," he says. As a South African, he has a deep appreciation for the way Israel is run, and sees Bibi [Benjamin Netanyahu] as a "phenomenal manager of the country". To him,

"the schooling is fantastic, the healthcare system is excellent, we get amazing benefits, there is stable infrastructure, and the country is always developing. Things get fixed, the streets are clean."

Gadi Cohen



He doesn't want this to change, and thinks Israelis often get hung up on "petty" issues like corruption scandals or Bibi's family's expenditure, which is preventing them from voting on "the fundamentals" and a country that works.

Gadi Cohen, who is 38 years old and made aliyah 16 years ago, says he is neither fed up nor excited to vote this time round. "I say that with the knowledge that it's likely the results will be similar to the last two elections and a fourth election is likely too – if a bit less likely than before. In spite of being pretty annoyed, I will cast my ballot out of a sense of huge

national responsibility. I will once again be voting centre-left.

"My vote is a vote against corruption, against division and incitement, and against the assaults on Israel's democratic foundation and justice system. It pains me that such a broad public is willing either consciously or unconsciously to 'look the other way' on the actions of their candidate so long as he is just that," says Cohen. "The Israeli people and the Jewish nation at large deserves so much better. That's why I'm adjusting my travel plans, for the third time in a row, to be back in Israel in time to vote," he says.

Liat Hoffman, who grew up in Cape Town, is 33 years old and made aliyah from the United States in 2018. "The current deadlock could possibly continue for a very long time, so I wish that Israel's democratic process had a mechanism to resolve this kind of situation," she says. "I've heard that it's difficult for social services here to approve changes in budget as there is no ruling

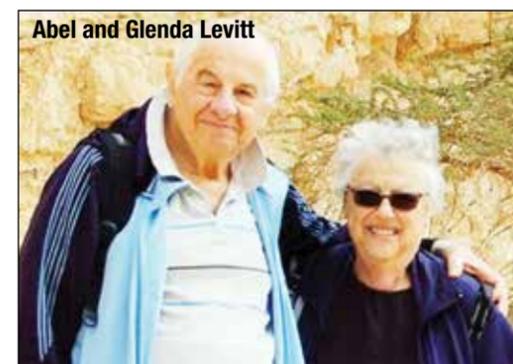


Paul Mirbach

coalition, and even though this hasn't yet affected me, in the long term it could be detrimental to the country."

Former Capetonian Amy Meshi, who is 36 years old and made aliyah from New Zealand in 2009, sees the continuous rounds of elections as "a bit of a farce". She appreciates the day off, but feels it's "quite depressing how people chop and change their vote", which she thinks is the reason the country is at this stalemate. Particularly on the left, "parties are formed or break up all the time, which means there is never enough of a majority.

Not enough people are voting strategically, and I think it's causing all this chaos."



Abel and Glenda Levitt

## The boy who raised funds for Hatzolah

TALI FEINBERG

At the age of seven, Michael contracted meningitis after an ear and sinus infection crossed his brain barrier. He endured two lumbar punctures before recovering. As he lay in hospital, he witnessed first-hand the work of Hatzolah, the community's medical emergency service. So, when he went home, this young man made a commitment: he was going to raise funds to support the organisation.

The result was incredible. In six months, Michael – whose parents asked that his surname not be mentioned – raised more than R20 000. "We have had other volunteers raising this amount of money for Hatzolah, but certainly not someone his age," says the organisation's executive general manager, Darren Kahn.

"Hatzolah Medical Rescue is a non-profit medical-rescue organisation which services the emergency needs of the Johannesburg Jewish community. It's staffed by full-time Jewish employees as well as more than 100 volunteers who provide a free service to all," says Kahn. "The organisation is supported by – and relies on – donations from the community. No patient or family member of a patient who calls on Hatzolah is charged for the



Michael with his parents Jordy and Wendy, completing his fundraiser at Hatzolah's offices

service. Over the past year, Hatzolah has responded to more than 2 500 emergency calls, saving countless lives."

Speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* from his home in Johannesburg, Michael, now nine, is just like any other kid. "I've always loved emergency vehicles," he says. (His mother, Wendy, points out that he had three birthday parties at the fire station.)

"When I was recovering in hospital, I saw so many ambulances pulling in. I was really inspired by how Hatzolah did their job, even on Shabbos," says Michael. His parents say that Hatzolah volunteer paramedic, Avi Joseph, went "above and beyond" in visiting Michael, forming a close bond with him.

Michael also found it amazing that Hatzolah stocked hospital cupboards for Jewish patients who were there over Shabbos or *chaggim* (Jewish holidays). "There was everything you need, even matzah and Pesachdike sweets and treats because I was in hospital over Pesach," he remembers.

Michael launched his fundraiser in 2018, a year after his recovery, and in his birthday month of September. "We had a party to thank Hashem and celebrate my anniversary of getting better, and I asked guests to donate to Hatzolah. My school, Sandton Sinai, allowed me

to give a speech at assembly, and also gave me a table at the gate where I asked people for contributions." Everyone pitched in. His aunt shared the fundraiser on Facebook, many community members gave what they could, and Hatzolah gave the youngster tzedakah boxes, magnets, keyrings, and stickers to hand out.

Michael's father, Jordy, thinks that his youth helped with the cause. "People definitely donated more readily as they wanted to support a child. He was eight when he started raising funds, and people

really responded to that. Also he was persistent. For example, to stand at the school entrance asking for contributions was brave."

His parents say that organisations and adults should take children seriously, as they have a lot to offer. A highlight for them was when Hatzolah's leadership met Michael, and treated him like any other adult, hosting him in its boardroom, and giving him a business card.

"Their warmth and enthusiasm, and [the fact that they] took him seriously



Michael enjoying a ride in a Hatzolah vehicle shortly before he contracted meningitis

for what he could offer was really meaningful," they say.

Says Michael, "My primary aim was to create awareness about Hatzolah, and what it does." For example, he informed people about QR codes, which allows registration of medical details with the organisation. "You get a sticker with a code that you can stick on the back of your phone, and if *chas vesholem* [heaven forbid] you are in an accident and can't speak for yourself, Hatzolah can scan the code and will have all your medical details." He says a number of people took QR code forms from him to fill out.

Michael's parents say how important it is for parents to support their children in doing this kind of thing, and to believe in them. When Michael was six, he donated his pocket money to the organisation

Blind SA, which responded with a letter "like they would have written to someone had they donated a building", says Wendy. It creates a culture of giving, and boosts a child's confidence to do more.

Indeed, Michael may just become the community's next top fundraiser. He recently joined a telethon, single-handedly raising R6 500 for the Community Security Organisation, which was trebled by backers to become R19 500, and he says he really enjoys supporting organisations

in this way.

"Words can't express our thanks and appreciation of Michael's amazing achievement," says Kahn. "It's thanks to the generosity of people like him, without whom we wouldn't be able to operate. What's unique about Michael is seeing how a young child has such sensitivity and passion for wanting to help us help others. Most kids his age ask for things for themselves, and aren't mature enough to worry about the needs of others."

Michael and his family "haven't specifically requested that we use the money for a specific project, so it will be used to fund our amazing organisation", he says. To Michael, he says, "May Hashem bless you and your family, and may you be able to continue doing such amazing things for the rest of your life."

# Where the streets bear our names

TALI FEINBERG

The U2 song may talk about a street with no name, but did you know that there are many roads, avenues, boulevards, and streets across South Africa that are named after Jews?

How did their names come to be on those street signs? While some – like Helen Suzman Boulevard and Joe Slovo Drive – are named after obvious anti-apartheid icons, some are more mysterious. What follows isn't a complete list, but a small sample of some of the streets with a Jewish connection.

Rabbi Mirvish Avenue in Vredehoek, Cape Town, is named after Moses Chaim Mirvish. In 1908, he was brought to South Africa to be the minister of a synagogue then situated in District Six. He was the first fully qualified rabbi with *smicha* (ordination) in the entire Cape Colony.

In 1939, this shul moved to Vredehoek. Rabbi Mirvish became an icon of the Cape Town Jewish community, founding many of its organisations. On 17 August 1947, he collapsed and died on the steps of the Vredehoek Synagogue after officiating at a wedding. Some months after his death, the street alongside the shul was renamed Rabbi Mirvish Avenue by the city council.

MH Goldschmidt Avenue, just a few roads further up the mountain from Rabbi Mirvish Avenue, is the home of Herzlia Middle and High School. The street, formerly known as Mynor Avenue, was re-named in honour of the late Meyer Hirsch Goldschmidt, one of the founders and supporters of the school.

According to the *South African Jewish Times* in 1984, "The changing of a street name is seldom agreed to by city authorities, who acceded to the school's request in view of the great contribution by Mr Goldschmidt."

Also in the Cape, a number of streets were named by Jewish philanthropist Isaac Ochberg, who bought 17 hectares of land in 1929 in what is now Claremont, Newlands, and Bishopscourt. He named Balfour Avenue after the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which promised a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Angelina Avenue, Bertha Avenue, Isabel Avenue, Noreen Avenue, and Robinson Avenue are all named after family members. Princess Avenue may be after the pet name he used for his daughter Ruth, whose death at the age of 17 left him devastated.

Also in Cape Town, a number of roads in Camps Bay were developed and named by wealthy entrepreneur Isidore Cohen. One street, Rontree, is named after his son, Ronald, and his wife, Theresa. There is also a Theresa Avenue. There are streets named after Ronald's children, Barbara and Amanda, and after his second wife, Susan. The story ends tragically: In 1970, Ronald murdered Susan in mysterious circumstances.

Cape Town roads Martin Hammerschlag Way and Solly Freedburg Street are named after city councillors, and both Louis Gradner and Fritz Sonnenberg roads are named after Jewish mayors. The *SA Jewish Chronicle* in 1935 reported that as mayor, Louis Gradner "always preached the doctrine of racial equality". The *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* reported on 12 September 1951 that, "Fritz Sonnenberg, a prominent figure in South African Jewry, was today elected mayor of Cape Town. He had been a member of the city council for 13 years, and served as deputy mayor during the past year."

AZ Berman Drive in Mitchells Plain was named after a Jewish politician and civic leader. Born in Russia in 1894, he came to Cape Town as a young man and became a successful

businessman. He entered the city council in 1932, and served for 42 years. In 1960, he was elected a United Party senator.

There is a Sol Cohen Road in the Cape that may be named after Dr Solly Morris Cohen, who was born in Cape Town in 1904 and became an expert on vascular disease. He was the first president of the Society of Vascular Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland.



Levy Street in Aliwal North

Dr Edward Rubenstein Drive in both Gauteng and KwaZulu-

Natal are named after the doctor and Glen Anil property magnate. In turn, he named streets after family and friends as he developed numerous South African suburbs across the country, from Strathavon in Johannesburg to Zimbali on the Dolphin Coast, to Betty's Bay in the Western Cape.

Many of these landmarks start with the word "Glen", such as Glenhazel, Glen Ashley, and Amanda Glen, or "Danya", which is a combination

of the names of his grandchildren, Danny and Yaron. Minerva Street is named after his wife, who most people knew as Minnie, and Dayan Glen in the East Rand was named to honour Israeli general Moshe Dayan.

According to research done by Durban Jewish community member Colin Plen in 2001, three streets in Highlands North, Johannesburg, are named after Herman Joseph Rosen, a Jewish boy who fought for the British in the Boer

War and was killed. "Rosen's father went to the Johannesburg council and explained that he had lost his son in war. He would pay an amount of money if the council could find a way to commemorate the boy. So they named these three streets after him: Meyer, Joseph, and Rosen," wrote Plen in *Jewish Affairs*.

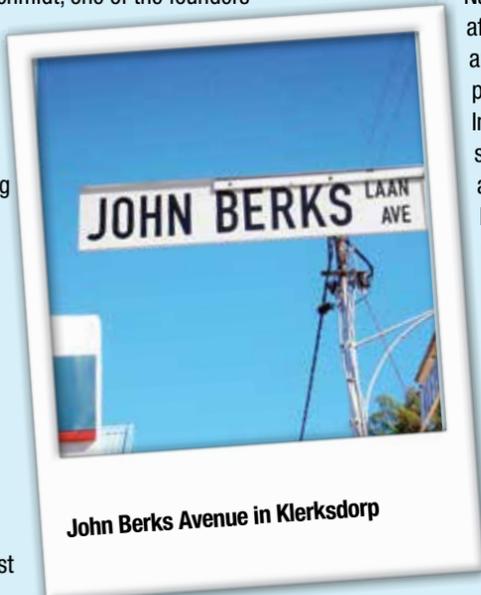
Plen also reports that Kensington Drive in Kensington is named after Max Langermann. He was given the honour because he was chairman of Kensington Estates. In Sandton, there is a Fredman Drive and a Chabad Street, so called because there is a Chabad shul there. Fredman was a councillor and developer. In Boksburg, there is at least one street named after councillor Issie Kramer, and in Germiston, at least one named after councillor Mannie Baker. In Mindaloro and Krugersdorp, there is a Geffen, Ruben, and a Saul Jacobs Street, he writes.

"In Roosevelt Park there is a Mendelssohn Road, named after the South African mining magnate and bibliographer, Sydney Mendelssohn. In Montgomery Park, there is a Langley Levy Street named after Joseph Langley Levy, who was editor of the *Sunday Times*, and a Max Michaelis Street named after the mining magnate." Plen notes that property developers across

Johannesburg named streets after family and friends.

In rural areas, there are numerous roads named after Jews. In Paarl in the Western Cape, there are Berman, Kaplan, Rabinowitz, and Zetler streets, and also a Synagogue Street. In Aliwal

North near Bloemfontein, there is a Levy Street, named after the town's first mayor, Benjamin Levy, and in Klerksdorp, there is John Berks Avenue, named after radio personality Jonathan Berkowitz, who was born there.



John Berks Avenue in Klerksdorp

**A Celebration of Jewish Musical Maestros**

You are invited to be a part of this special fundraising event in support of several community outreach initiatives

**Sunday 29 March 2020 @ 15:00**

**The Middleton Hall, 3 Middle Road, Morningside**

**For more details call: 011 7837117**

**Online booking: <https://bit.ly/2GSPMNV>**

**FRANK SOLOMON HEARING CENTRE**

**Have a love at first sound experience.**

**Phonak Audéo™ Marvel**

**A new all-in-one solution that improves your hearing in everyday life and even in the noisiest environments.**

- Experience exceptional sound performance
- Connect seamlessly to Bluetooth® devices
- Rechargeable so you'll always stay connected
- Remote Support for the ultimate in convenience

**SPECIAL PRICE FOR PENSIONERS**

**CONTACT US TODAY:**  
**(011) 849-6256**  
**082 953 4628**

**Fairmount**  
 6 George Ave,  
 Sandringham

**Additional branches in Benoni and Germiston**

Treatment approved by the American ENT Association

**18 - 27 FEBRUARY 2020**

**CAPE TOWN & JHB**

ALSO AVAILABLE FOR STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL PRIVATE MEETINGS

IPN Jerusalem  
IPN Modiin  
IPN Beit Shemesh

IPN Bat Yam  
IPN Tel Aviv  
IPN Herzliya

IPN Ra'anana  
IPN Tel Mond  
IPN Netanya

IPN Zicron Yaccov  
IPN Hadera  
IPN Tzfat

**Sabrina Ziff**  
Israel Property Network

**Ari Kruger**  
Financial Advisor

**Or Akiva**  
from 1.3 million NIS

**Tel Mond**  
from 2.4 million NIS

**Modiin**  
from 2.4 million NIS

**Ashkelon**  
from 1.7 million NIS

**Herzliya - IDC**  
from 2.95 million NIS

**Bat Yam**  
from 2.1 million NIS

**Ra'anana**  
from 2.1 million NIS

**Tel Aviv-Jaffa**  
from 2.6 million NIS

**Jerusalem**  
from 2.1 million NIS

**South Africa's award winning prestige financial advisor together with Israel's most referred property network are BACK!**

**For more details & to book call Ari 083-564-9073 or email - [ari@israelpropertynetwork.com](mailto:ari@israelpropertynetwork.com)**

**[www.israelpropertynetwork.com](http://www.israelpropertynetwork.com)**

# Gay, equal – and married

OPINION

DAVID BILCHITZ AND RUVI ZIEGLER

When a child is born in the Jewish tradition, their parents bless them that one day, they will get married. For same-sex couples, that aspiration hasn't been a possibility until recently.

While we hope that holding a same-sex wedding will be commonplace in the future, we recognise that for many people across this continent and within the Jewish community, it remains unattainable. In this light, we are grateful for the public affirmation of our love that we received from close family, friends, and colleagues, who fully embraced the joy of our marriage.

Our story feels like it has an element of *besheret* (the preordained) in it. A chance meeting in a hotel lobby in Seoul, South Korea, prior to the World Congress of Constitutional Law, brought us, two legal academics (one South African, the other British-Israeli) together. Since then, our journey has crossed continents and countries, oceans, and mountainways, and straddled the boundaries of time and place.

It has taken us on trains, planes, cable-cars, boats, and many a stroll through the countryside and cityscapes. At times, we were physically apart but remained emotionally connected. Technology, sensitivity, and common purpose always brought us closer. We are both rooted in our communities in Johannesburg and Oxford, and yet share the enchantment of connections, cultures, and cuisines, reaching beyond the limits of territorial boundaries. Our values extend beyond us, from deep distress at social injustice, to an active commitment to advancing the flourishing of every sentient being.

Last year, while we were both conducting research in Berlin, at twilight, as the summer sun dipped behind the verdant forest, on the cusp of the shore of the Krumme Lanke waters, we expressed our love and desire to tie our fate through the sacred commitment of marriage. In a city where our Jewish and gay identities would have twice condemned us in the past, we proudly chose to be fully present and reclaim lost spaces for affirmation and celebration.

After months of careful planning, fine-tuning our dancing, and colour-coordinating our attire, our marriage day finally arrived on 16 February 2020. We spent many hours reflecting on what a fully egalitarian, same-sex, religious Jewish wedding looks like.

We chose our *chuppah* to be led by a stellar team of the best and brightest female and male religious leaders of the South African Jewish community. Drawing on the thinking of a feminist scholar, Professor Rachel Adler, we enacted a different legal form to the traditional notion of acquisition in Jewish marriage law, with its inegalitarian dimensions. Instead, we formed a *brit shutfut*, or partnership – a form of relationship in traditional Jewish law that represents a joining of equals. As a signal, we placed our rings in a tallit bag which was held up for the congregation to witness the pooling of our resources in



Ruvi Ziegler putting a ring on David Bilchitz's finger

Photo: Rianka's Wedding Photography

partnership. Our *ketubah* (Jewish marriage contract) in Hebrew and

English, also expressly egalitarianism, representing our commitment to

each other and the betterment of the world – *tikkun olam*. Our ceremony ended with us both breaking glasses in the hope of recognising and repairing the brokenness that many LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people (and others) still face.

Our ceremony was followed by energetic and joyous communal Jewish dancing which made our spirits soar, as did the masterfully created wedding cake (by Impressionist Cakes). We chose to have a vegan wedding, as we didn't want any animals to be harmed for our celebration. We are overwhelmed by the outpouring of affection that we have been receiving from across the Jewish and wider South African communities, and across the world.

We know there are members of the Jewish community and beyond who would not have their families celebrate with them, and who still experience shame about their

sexuality. It need not be like that. There are positive stories like ours – of wonderful families, friends, and colleagues, including those self-identifying as religiously observant – who embrace and celebrate their gay, lesbian, bi or trans children. Events like Cape Town Pride, which takes place this week, are designed to affirm that love is beautiful in all its diverse forms.

We have been lifted on eagle's wings into married life, and are feeling elation, gratitude, and a genuine sense of wholeness.

• David Bilchitz is a professor at the University of Johannesburg; Ruvy Ziegler is an associate professor at the University of Reading (UK). They will present a session at Limmud, Johannesburg in August 2020 about constructing a same-sex, Jewish religious ceremony.

## Parental alienation a heartbreaking reality

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

"I love being a mom. I was never a neglectful or uninvolved parent in my children's formative years. That's why it's so hard to understand why I'm now nothing in their lives."

These devastating words were spoken by an alienated parent who shared her story at a recent talk on the topic.

Considered a form of psychological abuse that not only harms parents but also compromises a child's self-esteem, parental alienation occurs when one parent turns their child against the other. The phenomenon was discussed by Dr Martin Strous, an educational psychologist with a special interest in psycho-legal matters, at an event organised by the Union of Jewish Women in association with the Hebrew Order of David.

"Outrage that a child has been alienated from one parent by the other parent is often voiced in high conflict post-divorce or post-separation situations. In parental alienation cases, a child is drawn into the conflict, and is programmed to become antagonistic toward one of their parents through a programme of active denigration." The resulting rejection extends to the alienated parent's family and friends.

This is what happened to an alienated parent who spoke at the event. She wishes to remain anonymous to protect her family. "I could be any one of you," she said. "Except that I'm not. I have been viciously and completely alienated from two of my children."

When her marriage began to break down, the alienated parent never imagined that her children would be used as weapons to destroy her. While initially she took all of her children when she left her marital home, her oldest son was systematically turned against her by her ex-husband and his mother, who falsely accused her of affairs and worse.

In spite of intervention by psychologists, lawyers, divorce and custody specialists, and the alienated parent's appeals to Jewish community leaders, nothing changed, and her eldest son refused to see or speak to her. His younger brother later followed suit when his father took his side in a discipline issue.

In spite of constant effort by her, both sons have refused contact with their mother for the past few years. "I've been excluded from their Barmitzvahs, birthdays, Jewish holidays, mother's days, and more," she said.

Her youngest child was not alienated, and still has a relationship with both parents, which the mother supports. "If I stopped their contact, I would be teaching my child that if someone hurts

or disappoints you, it's ok to cut them out of your life," she said. "One can't have a relationship that is without conflict. Two of my children have learnt hatred, and the ability to cut out the people they should love. This doesn't allow for compromise or forgiveness. What chance do they ever have of having a healthy, loving adult relationship?"

Strous described the damaging effects of parental alienation. "Children who are told that one parent doesn't love them or isn't a worthy person may internalise these messages in one of the few ways that makes sense to a child by concluding that there is something fundamentally wrong with him or herself. Unsurprisingly, alienated children often present an array of mental-health disorders."



The alienated parent said that even though her unrelenting pain often gives way to self-hatred, she stays as involved with her kids as possible, even attending parents' evenings and repeatedly explaining her situation.

"The pain and grief I feel is no different to any other mother who has lost her children. But I can't go through the stages of grief, I can't get to acceptance, I can't ask for time to heal. My children are very much alive."

Maintaining one-sided communication with the children who have been taught to reject her gives her some comfort, she said. "I write letters to my children all the time. I know they'll never read them, but at least I have the comfort of communication. I also have conversations with them in my head."

In spite of appeals to experts, the mother hasn't managed to resolve the problem. "It appears the law works in favour of the one who has the most money," she said. "As frustrated as I am, I'll never give up. I want to educate the community about this type of abuse. It's real, and I'm far from the

only person that it is happening to. We must stand together.

"Schools, governing bodies, social workers, and the like are being complacent. There should be policies to educate teachers and anybody who works with children to recognise this form of abuse and report it to a team of lawyers and psychologists. These people should be able to assess the situation, and provide help immediately before it has the chance to take hold."

Parental alienation is still a developing aspect of our law, said Claire Thomson, the chief executive and head of family Law at Witz Inc, a specialist family attorney and acting magistrate in the Children's Court in Johannesburg in 2018. "It's widely misunderstood, and the judiciary and lawyers are still catching up."

When an alienated parent contacts a lawyer, they need to provide evidence for their case, said Thomson. "Lawyers aren't trained, can't diagnose or identify parental alienation as a psychological concept, and must rely on experts like psychologists who will be called as witnesses to support a claim of alienation."

In terms of legal resolution, there are two approaches, she said. Both parties must agree to an intervention strategy, to have a psychologist, social worker, or family advocate appointed so that there can be an investigation. "If there's no agreement, the only next available option is to bring an application before court." Parents can either go to the Children's Court, where they can represent themselves or to the high court,

where they need to be represented by a lawyer at considerable expense.

When the court appoints an appropriate expert to conduct an investigation, it then suggests remedies the courts can enforce. These include therapy, family intervention, reintegration therapy – in which the alienated parent is reintroduced into the child's life in a safe, controlled, and therapeutic manner – or the removal of the children from one parent to the other's care.

"No one intervention can be applied to alienation cases," said Strous. "Each family, in spite of the similarity of symptoms, has its own complex interacting and underlying dynamics." In spite of all efforts, sometimes it's impossible to turn alienation around, he cautioned. "The rejected parent is advised only to provide regular opportunities for contact, and always remain open to future overtures from the child."

At the end of the event, a support group for alienated parents was formed. Contact Lisette Datnow on 083 308 5000 for more information.

# Writing a column is easier, but a book is better



JONNY STEINBERG

OPINION

In my working life, I have two regular writing responsibilities: a 700-word newspaper column to be delivered every fortnight, and a 120 000-or-so-word book to be delivered every three or four years. No prizes for guessing that these are two very different endeavours.

The most striking difference, for me, is the question of form. There are maybe three or four choices to make when deciding how to structure a newspaper column. (For instance, start with an anecdote, by all means, but make sure it's done by the end of the first paragraph; the reader wants to know immediately what it is you want to say.) The form is really so simple and thus so limited that the major choices are already made for you.

Not so when writing a book. You have worked for years. You have gathered masses of information. How to shape it into a story? Where in the narrative's

timeline to start the book, for instance? The beginning? Not necessarily. And from whose perspective? The decisions are really quite limitless.

This morning I finished Deborah Levy's new novel, *The Man Who Saw Everything*. Told at its most simple, it's about a man run down by a car in London in 2016; much of the action takes place in his morphine-addled return to a trip he did to East Berlin 28 years earlier while lying in hospital. But if Levy had presented the story in the way I have, nobody would have read it. It would have lost its very *raison d'être* (reason for being). Instead, the reader learns quite late about the book's present time; the result of this strange temporal structure is that we are admitted to the most intimate, the most private biography of a human being.

And so, in choosing how to shape a book, the point is to keep asking, again and again, what's the purpose of this

endeavour? What am I ultimately trying to achieve? These questions crystallise as choices about structure and form: what sort of architecture will give expression to what needs saying? If this is the most challenging aspect of writing a book, it's also the most rewarding. Determining how the purpose of a book expresses itself as form involves such a complicated entanglement of inspiration and borrowing from others, that the two become indistinguishable.

That I write non-fiction doesn't make these questions any simpler. The fact that you are gathering information from the world instead from your head doesn't in any way erase these formal questions. What it does mean is that you need to learn when enough is enough. For unless you draw a line in the sand and stop, you will go on researching forever. The labour is never complete. There is always

another interview to do or another document to discover. In the end, you drag yourself away from the field only to avoid the pathetic, if not bizarre, scenario of researching for ever and ever.

A newspaper column is about a thousand times easier, but so much less rewarding. After all, I barely remember the newspaper columns I read three days ago, and who wants to live a life writing stuff nobody will remember?

• Jonny Steinberg will be participating in two sessions at the Cape Town Jewish Literary Festival on 15 March. In the first, Jonathan Anker will speak to him about apartheid spies, and in the second, Steinberg will discuss his latest book, and how it changed the lives of those involved. For the full programme and booking, go to [www.jewishliteraryfestival.co.za](http://www.jewishliteraryfestival.co.za)

## Nazi salute never okay nor innocent, says esteemed editor

>>Continued from page 1

African Jewish Board of Deputies, "As a genocide expert, Professor Gregory Stanton points out that one of the typical stages of genocide is denial on the part of the perpetrators. He would agree, no doubt, that such denialism is not limited to something as extreme as this, but is typical of perpetrators of other lesser but still severe forms of oppression.

"The response to Basson's whistleblowing includes much denialism, but often goes even further by going the 'shooting the messenger route'," said Saks. "Basson is accused, in quite vicious terms, of being a race traitor, a defamer of Afrikanerdom, and as resorting to crass sensationalism at the expense of his own people in order to promote himself and the paper he works for. Several people, absurdly, claim that the students weren't making a Nazi salute at all. A third aspect of the responses on display is the hyper-sensitivity many Afrikaners evidently feel, so that the exposure of a relatively minor incident is represented as an all-out attack against Afrikanerdom."

In a related column Basson wrote in *News24* this week titled, "Dear white people, it is OK to talk about apartheid and the ANC's failings", he speaks about the time he and his wife met a German couple when travelling abroad.

"The conversation turned to our shared past of shame, and I asked them, 'Do you feel guilt about what your forefathers did during the Holocaust?'" The couple told them that they "weren't moved from a place of guilt, but responsibility". The Germans explained to Basson and his wife, "It's our responsibility to make sure that it never happens again. To build our country, and teach our children about the past, not out of guilt, but because we must."

Wrote Basson, "It was a powerful moment in my own thinking how I, as a white South African who never voted for apartheid but continues to benefit from the inherited privilege of the system, could contribute meaningfully to the future of the only country I call home."

He told the *SA Jewish Report*, "I'm not part of the 'let's move on brigade'. We need to remind ourselves about history so that it doesn't happen again."



## How to get a Lithuanian passport

ADVERTORIAL

Your ancestral link to LithuaniaYour ancestors who were born in Lithuania and immigrated to South Africa, Israel, or elsewhere to start a new life have given you the gift of the ability to obtain citizenship of the country of their birth.

The Lithuanian government is restoring citizenship, giving you the opportunity to broaden your horizons. With more than a decade of success, with clients in South Africa, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States, and Israel, we look forward to sharing our knowledge and expertise with you, and obtaining your European Union passport. **Are you eligible for Lithuanian citizenship?** According to family lore, and occasionally with documents in your possession, you discover that your ancestors immigrated from Lithuania to South Africa. You have heard that Lithuania is reinstating citizenship to people who can prove their eligibility.

You ask yourself, "Am I eligible? Would I be entitled to the reinstatement of Lithuanian citizenship, and thus a passport that will enable visa-free access to more than 150 countries, enabling travel freedom?"

If you are eligible, you can go back three generations. Therefore, if you have a great-grandparent who held Lithuanian citizenship, you should be able to qualify to become a Lithuanian citizen yourself. You will have to prove the family connection through an unbroken chain of documentation all the way up the family tree until you reach your

ancestor with Lithuanian ties.

Following my first conversation with a potential client, they complete an eligibility questionnaire. This enables me to gain an understanding of the ancestry, and provides the framework for assessing eligibility.

The first and most important step in the process of reinstating Lithuanian citizenship is to prove your eligibility.

### What's eligibility?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, eligibility is the fact of having the necessary qualities or satisfying necessary conditions.

**The conditions for assessing eligibility are as follows:**

### Lithuanian Citizenship law:

Under the Law on Citizenship of Lithuania, for descendants to be eligible for the reinstatement of citizenship, it's mandatory that the ancestor held citizenship of Lithuania between February 16 1918 and June 15 1940. On February 16 1918, Lithuania became an independent country with Kaunas/Kovno serving as the capital. Lithuania remained independent until it was occupied by the Soviet Union on June 15 1940, following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

Independent Lithuania was divided into twenty-three districts, and further subdivided into sub-districts.

Our ancestors immigrated to South Africa from many of these districts and sub-districts. These districts are, for example, Alytus, Biržai, Kaunas-Kedainiai, Klaipeda, Kretinga,

Marijampole, Mažeikiai, Rokiskis-Siauliai, Taurage, Telsiai-Ukmerge, Utena, Vilkaviškis, and Zarasai. As an example, one of the sub-districts of Siauliai is Kelme. Uzventis, my ancestral town is in the sub-district of Kelme.

The former Prussian territory of Memel became an autonomous part of Lithuania under the Memel Statute in January 1923 until it was re-annexed by Germany in March 1939. It comprised the three districts of Klaipeda, Pagegiai, and Šilute.

### Archival research:

Rigorous archival research must be done in all Lithuanian archives to locate documents of eligibility. The archival document must show/state clearly that your ancestor was a citizen of independent Lithuania. This clause is part of the citizenship law based on a court decision of October 2017, and can't be overlooked.

If a document is located in the archives showing that your ancestor lost or rejected Lithuanian citizenship, eligibility will be denied. If the conditions of eligibility are met, the process is set into motion.

Once these two conditions are fulfilled, supporting documents are located to create the application package. These documents must demonstrate a continuous thread between you and your ancestor.

I have facilitated successful applications for Lithuanian citizenship in South Africa, Australia, the UK, the US, and Israel; and will be pleased to assist you in your application.

Contact me for a free consultation. It will include assessment of eligibility, reviewing documents, discussing supporting documents, and answering questions. I will be visiting Cape Town and Johannesburg in March. Call me on 087 551 0790, or email [rlerercohen@gmail.com](mailto:rlerercohen@gmail.com) to set up an appointment. We can also have a Skype or Whatsapp consultation.

View my website [www.kin-search.com](http://www.kin-search.com) to view my professional services which include Polish, Romanian, German and Sefaradi passports.



### LEVERAGING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

ROSE LERER COHEN PhD  
[rlerercohen@gmail.com](mailto:rlerercohen@gmail.com)

THE GATEWAY TO YOUR FUTURE  
OBTAINING AN EU PASSPORT

## YOUR ANCESTRAL LINK TO LITHUANIA

Your ancestors who were born in Lithuania and immigrated to South Africa, Israel or elsewhere to start a new life and thus broaden their horizons. In so doing, they have GIFTED you, the chance of receiving citizenship of the country of their birth.

The Lithuanian Government is restoring citizenship, they are giving you the opportunity to broaden your horizons. With over a decade of success, with clients in South Africa, the UK, Australia, the US and Israel, we look forward to sharing our knowledge and expertise with you and obtain your EU passport.

# SA-born actor making his mark in New York

TALI FEINBERG

Anyone who has seen a Broadway or West End show may daydream about performing on stage, but Johannesburg-born Dylan Soal is realising this dream in the bright lights of New York City (NYC).

The 23-year-old actor is starring in the play *On How To Be a Monster*. "It's an absurd comedy about four couples competing in a game show to see who is the 'happiest couple' in spite of an ominous presence lurking in the background," says Soal, speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* from the Big Apple.

Soal was born in Johannesburg, and went to Crawford in Sandton from Grades 1 to 10. "When I was 16, my mother and I moved to Lusaka, Zambia, to be with my dad who was working there at the time. In Lusaka, I attended the American International School from Grades 10 to 12.

He went on to study drama at New York University (NYU) for four years, which wasn't exactly his intended path. "Attending the American International School in Lusaka opened my eyes to the possibility of studying at university abroad, and at that time, I believed that America was the place to be for acting, so I applied to four universities: three on the west coast – Stanford, La Verne, and the University of Southern California, and one on the east – New York University. Funnily enough, I didn't even consider the east coast to be an option, and ended up applying to NYU only because my mom loves New York so much and said something like, 'Let's just throw in an east coast option.' I was like, 'Alright, I guess that sounds cool?' NYU was the only place I was offered a spot, which was a blessing in disguise because unbeknown to me at the time, NYU happens to be one of the best acting schools out there. So, thank you, mom!"

Soal says the programme was challenging, but rewarding. "The training helped to break down a lot of physical and emotional blocks, which was difficult to surrender to, especially in front of a group of 20 new classmates who were all struggling to acclimatise to the new college environment. What's amazing about NYU is that there is virtually no distinction between campus and busy, hectic Manhattan, so I was able to integrate what I was learning at NYU with everything I was learning from NYC to create this really rich, full experience. I also see it as [giving me] a head start in my career by [allowing me to] learn about the industry in the city I want to work in professionally."

Soal quips, "I think I knew I wanted to be an actor when I played Austin Powers in my third grade play at Crawford. I wore a green suede jacket that was excessively large, and I was chased across the stage by a group of girls. I didn't have any stage fright, I really enjoyed the attention. I'm not as fearless now as I was then though." His ultimate dream is to be at the 100th annual Academy Awards ceremony – either that, or to be cast in the new *Lord of the Rings* television series!

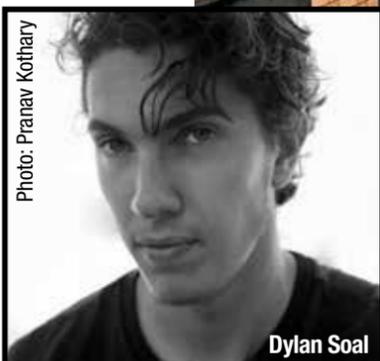
His parents have been supportive of his dream to become an actor. "They were as enthusiastic – if not more – about me coming to the States. I met and formed connections with a huge group of diverse, like-minded people at NYU who are always looking for opportunities to collaborate, which is actually how I came to be a part of the play I'm in. Also, New York offers plenty of opportunities for actors in film and theatre, particularly theatre, so I did my research and just started auditioning for whatever I could find."

Back to the play, he says that it "exposes a lot of hypocrisy within modern society through characters that blatantly avoid controversial issues except when it's most convenient for them. I play a character named John, and am married to Clara. John and Clara are 'a happy couple who like to read, listen to music, and read while listening to music'. That's a direct quote from the game-show host in the play. John is trying to be the perfect husband, but deep down is secretly questioning his sexuality."

Photo: Frederica Bartolighi

The cast of *On How To Be a Monster*

Photo: Pranav Kothary



Dylan Soal

the chance to work alongside the friends he's made to create media together from scratch. "Half of the cast of *On How To Be A Monster* were friends of mine prior to working together, which is such a blessing because it takes away a lot of the pressure to impress or be perfect. Working with friends makes the experience all the more fun and productive." Meanwhile, his biggest challenge is being so far

Soal says the highlight of his journey so far has been

away from his family and dogs back in Zambia.

His advice to other young people who want to succeed in this industry is, "Start now, and be your own biggest advocate, whether you have an agent or not. Knock on doors, reach out to as many people as you can, and do your research so you can increase your chances of getting in the right rooms. Cast your net wide, and don't take rejection personally, for example, someone might get the job over you solely because they have a different eye colour. In the end, there's only

so much you can control."

Going back to his roots, Soal says his Judaism is important to him. "I identify as Jewish. I'm interested in my heritage as my great grandfather came to South Africa from Lithuania in the early 1900s. I think the Jewish tribe will flourish in spite of past persecution and present anti-Semitism. We're all human beings, and I'm hopeful that one day, all discrimination will end. However, this can be achieved only once we start championing equal rights for all victims of persecution."

## Bernard Jay – the man behind the magic

PETER FELDMAN

Bernard Jay claims he has two left feet, is tone deaf, and was never going to be an actor. Instead, he became a producer and a central figure in the South African theatrical landscape.

The world of entertainment is populated by Jews – it must be something in their DNA – and Jay joins a long list of those who have succeeded in their respective fields. Being Jewish has helped him hugely, he says.

As chief executive of Joburg Theatre, he helped to turn this Braamfontein venue into a financial success story. Then, after leaving in 2015, he took up producing. One of his successes was the acclaimed musical, *The Color Purple*. In April, this hit returns for a short, third season at Joburg Theatre, and is scheduled to perform later this year in Shanghai, China.

Taken from the 2018 South African production of *The Color Purple* at the Joburg Theatre



Photo: entroCpics

Born in Huddersfield in Yorkshire, England, Jay's personal journey both as a Jew and a theatre practitioner has been an exhilarating one.

Growing up in the Essex town of Westcliff-

on-Sea, he lived close to the Palace Theatre where at the age of 11, he used his pocket money to see his first play. He was hooked, and knew he wanted to do something which involved being in the theatre but not as a performer.

"I went every Monday night. It was sixpence to sit in the balcony in those days. I fell in love with what I was watching."

After his Barmitzva, his father taught him a lesson which he took to heart, that as a Jewish man, he must make his own decisions from then on. "I knew by the time I was 15 that organised religion the way my parents practised it and brought up their children wasn't really something I could identify with," says Jay. "I'm proud of my birthright, and identify as a Jew, but don't practise the religion in a formal way. I don't have children, so it hasn't become a question in my life."

He admits he disliked school, and

am in heaven.

My parents didn't go to the theatre. At the time, in the 1950s, most people thought that if you were in the theatre, you must be an actor. I knew I couldn't be an actor, and never wanted to be one."

Jay's options lay in theatre management. He was 16 when he first started working at an exclusive London night club answering the telephone by day and stamping membership cards by night. "I was working. I was in the industry. Lionel Bart, who wrote the musical *Oliver*, befriended me. I was meeting famous people. And it happened when I was straight out of school."

At 19, he got his first job as a theatre manager at the same Palace Theatre he had visited as a child after its manager retired after 30 years. He held the position for eight months, and went on to hold several other positions in theatre, fast learning how to become a top theatre manager.

It was the start of a chequered career, which included managing an oversized, gay, New York drag queen named Devine.

Jay came to South Africa in the early 90s to work with Percy Tucker at Computicket as his entertainment director. He also worked for promoter Attie van Wyk of Big Concerts in staging musicals.

"My whole life has turned on a dime," he says philosophically. "I never know what's going to happen next. I just let it happen. I'm so fortunate that things have continued to happen."



Bernard Jay

# Leaving trauma behind, but never forgetting

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

You could have heard a pin drop as Holocaust survivor Ella Blumenthal gave her testimony of survival through the Warsaw Ghetto and Majdanek, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps.

Blumenthal's talk at the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre last Wednesday was part of a series of events to mark international Holocaust remembrance.

Blumenthal was born in Warsaw in 1921, the youngest of seven. In 1940, after the Germans invaded Poland, she and her family were forcibly moved to the Warsaw Ghetto.

"The ghetto was overcrowded," she recalled. "We managed to bring some of our belongings, but the best of our goods were stolen by the Poles.

"But we didn't forget our own Sefer Torah, which my father saved." In the ghetto, there were 10 to 15 people in a room, with sickness and death all around.

One couldn't survive on the food rations, so young boys took to smuggling it in. They were so malnourished, that they managed to squeeze through the walls of the ghetto "carrying their mother's wedding ring, begging for food".

"They were often caught," she related. "At best they were beaten up and the food was taken from them, most of the time they were shot.

People were being deported to what the Nazis termed "labour camps".

"We [initially] didn't believe the rumours going around that people were being killed, but we [eventually] had to face the truth. In the meantime, the roundups were continuing, and the population was shrinking. My own family was getting smaller and smaller – I lost practically every one of my beloved family.

"There were three of us left – my father, eldest niece, and myself. We realised it was no use hanging around, and that we must go into hiding. There was no time for tears," she said. With some friends, they found an abandoned flat.

"We bricked up the doorway leading to the last room in the flat, pushed over a wardrobe, found a spot leading to our room from the flat above, and lowered ourselves into the bricked-up room. We sat there every morning listening to the Nazis shouting, "Where are the cursed Jews?"

"We heard heavy boots on the staircase. The mother of a small child had to cover his face with a pillow in case he cried out. We came out every night to get a little bit of food."

She remembers her father on *erev* (the eve of) Pesach in 1943 sharing pieces of matzah with everyone around them, and praying that G-d would save them as he had the Jews in Egypt. The next morning, the Nazis were met with Molotov cocktails and homemade bombs.

"The Warsaw Ghetto uprising was on. The Nazis were taken by surprise and withdrew – German blood was flowing in the streets of the ghetto."



Ella Blumenthal

Photo: Jurina Boyes of the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre

"I tripped as I walked [in] and was trying to keep up with the others on all fours while a dog was biting into my back. I was waiting to be shot. Eventually the dog was called off when the guards had had enough fun and stopped laughing," she recalled.

At Majdanek, men and women were separated. Mothers with babies, older women, and children were sent to "the showers".

"When my father tried to have a last look at me and my niece, he was hit over the head. I never saw him again."

Then followed a selection: to the right meant life, to the left, the gas chambers. "I lifted my head and shoulders high, and was sent to the right and so was my niece."

Sometime afterwards, their group was sent into the gas chambers. "When the heavy doors shut behind us, we realised poisonous gas would come down at any minute.

"We prayed 'Shema Israel', we were scraping the walls, I was holding my niece's hand, whispering to her, 'Don't be afraid, it won't hurt, I don't think it'll take long, and we'll soon be with our loved ones.'"

At that point, a Nazi marched in saying, "You aren't going to be gassed." The Nazis had received an order to gas 500 – Blumenthal's group comprised 700.

Then followed Auschwitz, where Blumenthal contracted typhus. "I was afraid to be sent to the hospital because Mengele used to order the sick to be sent to the gas chambers," she remembered.

"I decided I must remain in the camp, and take a chance, hiding in the back of the blockhouses and the latrines until my temperature dropped." Eventually she was liberated from Bergen-Belsen by the English army on 15 April 1945.

## Blonde hair and blue eyes, a ticket to survival

MOIRA SCHNEIDER

"My father didn't want us to leave as he didn't believe French Jews were in danger." As a result of this misplaced optimism, Hélène Joffe, now an 84-year-old Holocaust survivor, spent her childhood in hiding in different villages in France following the Nazi invasion.

She gave her testimony at the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre last Thursday.

Joffe recalled a childhood spent in Marseilles, living happily among other immigrants. When she was seven, the area of the old port where the family of seven stayed was closed off by the Nazis.

"I remember going out at night with my sister, hiding, going into cellars and finding people who were selling potatoes or whatever they could get on the black market."

At midnight one night, there was a knock on the door and a French collaborator asked for her father's papers which were stamped "Jew". She recalls,

"He took my father down. My sister stood at the window screaming because she saw my father being put into a police van. They shouted, 'Go in or we will shoot you!'"

At six o'clock the next morning, loudspeakers announced that everyone should come outside, bringing only what they could carry. "I was carrying my little doll which was like my child, I was eight years old. We were all squashed tight, and people were pushing.

"Somebody pushed me, my doll fell to the ground, and somebody stepped on it and squashed its face. Believe it or not, that was a tragedy for me as a child.

"We stood there until night time, with no food, very cold. Then they marched us to a goods train station. Women and men were separated, and we were pushed into cattle trucks. To this day, I can't stand stations or trains."

They were taken to a transit camp, Frejus, where they remained for two or three weeks. There were no doors, and the wind was icy cold. "We were sleeping on the floor on straw, my sister, me, my little brother, and my mother. My sister suffered all

her life from chest problems from that place."

A decision was taken to send the captives to Drancy – "the most terrible camp in France" – a detention camp for Jews who were later deported to extermination camps. Because the family were all blonde with blue eyes – the Germans in fact thought her "white blonde" baby brother was a child her sister had had with a German soldier – a German officer let them go.

"The rest of the Jews disappeared and never came back."

Joffe's father had, in fact, been sent to Drancy and then to the Sobibor extermination camp where he eventually perished.

An Italian family who knew they were Jews allowed the family to stay in a little hut it owned. "We were fearful as we walked at night, and we got to that little hut. There, my mother found some sort of petrol to clean our bodies.

"We were covered in lice. The petrol burned," she remembered.

Joffe's two older brothers had managed to jump out of the train, and had gone to join the French underground resistance.

Her brother's fiancé's aunt had a private castle in Marseilles, where the family was taken while the underground looked for another hiding place.

At their new abode, Joffe started school. "I am now eight and a little girl said to me, 'You know I'm Jewish' and I felt – oh my gosh – freedom, so I said, 'I'm also Jewish.'"

"That night, the underground came and said, 'Leave immediately, you have been denounced.'"

The resistance placed her brother and her with a Catholic family.

As a child of nine, Joffe had to break ice, do washing, and cut and carry heather trees, which harmed her vertebrae.

"Of course, I had to carry my brother everywhere. I had to comfort him. I was a little mother, and I had no right to be scared. If I was scared he would have been hysterical.

"I hid everything [including] my hunger to protect my brother. He complained of hunger all the time. I gave him whatever I could get."

Then came liberation. "I can't even remember the reunion with my mother. My brother didn't know her," she recalled.



Hélène Joffe

Photo: Moira Schneider

Daphne Kuhn presents

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

Loving You

SONGS FROM THE MUSICALS

Starring SHARON SPIEGEL-WAGNER, LORRI STRAUSS, MUSANETE SAKUPWANYA, LANCE MARON and DREW BAKKER at the piano

Conceived by SHARON SPIEGEL-WAGNER and directed by DREW BAKKER

"Hits the musical mark!" – Peter Feldman

4th – 14th March

AUTO & GENERAL THEATRE ON THE SQUARE, SANDTON

BOOK DIRECTLY 011 883 8606 COMPUTICKET 086 915 8000

theatreonthesquare.co.za computicket.co.za

auto & general THEATRE ON THE SQUARE

# Seriously, who is this artist called Fringe?

South Africa's undisputed king of pop is known to all as Fringe, but nobody actually knows who he is. The *SA Jewish Report* sent this Jewish enigma questions to find out a little more about him and his art.

## What can you tell us about yourself?

I'm an artist, I'm a businessman, and a family man, I'm a Jew, and I'm my own best-kept secret. Okay, maybe not in that order, but something like that. I have always drawn in notepads – doodled actually – which makes me painful to be with. At some stage, I began to take my sketches, which are quite good if I may say so myself, and imagine them in a bigger format against pop backgrounds. That got me on a trajectory where I started to look at what classic pop art had given to the art world. It's fun art that plays with well-known brands and famous people. Then I looked at how so many contemporary artists were incorporating old paper, like newspaper magazines and old books, into their artworks and bingo, I found a style. It's pretty random, but then, so is life.

## How easy is it to live with this secret?

It's a complete mess sometimes. I have to work in a secret space, and wash my hands often, and change my paint-stained clothes all the time. But artists are doing it all over the world now: Alec Monopoly, Banksy, Mr Brainwash, and others. Some of these are my heroes, so I figured if they could be successful at it, then so could I.

## When you see your artwork hanging in someone's home, how do you feel?

I don't really get to go to people's houses to see the works. But I see photographs, and I'm always amazed at how versatile they are. I'm into visual contradictions, banging different elements into one another, so I see that the works can function in a minimalist white space

as well as they work with people's collections of precious old things.

## When people talk about Fringe, what goes through your mind?

There's always a moment where I hold my breath, and wait for them to criticise me. Sometimes there's too much for people to deal with, the anonymity and the fact that



the artworks don't take on South African life headfirst. But more and more people are beginning to understand that we live in a global world, and popular culture is sort of common ground.

## What do your closest friends (who don't know that you are Fringe) think of your work?

Some of them don't even know it exists. Some of them have been to the Daville Baillie Gallery with me, ostensibly just to look at art. Everyone seems to like the boldness, the colour, and the famous comic-book characters. When they comment, I sometimes get good tips about what I should be trying out.

## Why did you adopt a pseudonym? Why don't you want people to know who you are?

It's simple, I can't spend my time dealing with the art scene. I want to make the art piece, and move on to the next. I don't want to explain myself endlessly, and I don't want to parade around as the artist in the room. My family wouldn't deal with it as it is.

## How many times have you almost slipped into divulging who you really are? What happened in those instances?

Never, because I just don't want to deal with it.

## What drew you to art?

Every second of every day draws me to art. I can't look at anything without beginning to ask myself how it would fit in a frame, or how it would look on a plinth. Then, there's the pleasure principle, in which I want to share my vision with the world.

## Do people see you as an obviously arty and rebellious person. If not, how do they see you?

They might see me as arty because I'm always tinkering with things, but they definitely don't see me as eccentric or rebellious.

## How would you describe your art?

It's classic pop art, with a 21st century edge.

## How has your art matured over the years?

I started out producing sketches mixed with collage. Now I regard myself as a copyist and a chameleon. I don't want you to know where reality ends and art begins.

## What inspires you?

My teenage years, my children's lives with the endless need for the new realities being sold to them on social media, the pop-art movement, and the up-and-down world of art collecting.

## What impact does being Jewish have on your art and life?

My grandparents collected art. It was a kind of stereotypical attribute in the earlier part of the 20th century – comfortable Jewish families with well-loved art pieces by amazing artists that hung on the walls. They had a Tretchikoff and a Pierneef. I grew up taking it for granted that the Jewish home was a place of art. I didn't even pay attention when my parents became collectors because I just saw the pictures, and not their pastime as art lovers. I'm aware that the Jewish community has given us some of the most committed art collectors in the country and the world. I can't separate myself from the community from which I come, and I think we are very lucky that we Jews support the arts, which makes my job infinitely easier.

## What does this particular exhibition mean to you?

The new exhibition is called "No Seriously", and it's my most challenging to date. It's full of visual contradictions, heavy works with light-hearted themes that hopefully will make you reflect on how the process of ageing is so alienating. The frivolity of our youth comes back to bite us as we grow older. I want it to be serious artistically, but it must also give the child in us a great big hug.

## What do you think about being compared to Banksy? Other than the hidden identity, do you related to his work at all? If so, how?

Banksy is a master of understatement. I hope that one day I can use plain and simple symbols and characters to such great effect. Right now though, I seem to be heading in another direction. Come and see the exhibition to find out what that is.

• *Fringe's solo exhibition, 'No Seriously' runs from 1 to 28 March at the Daville Baillie Galley, Victoria Yards, 16 Viljoen Street, Lorentzville, Johannesburg.*

# Art makes impact in Graaff-Reinet

ROBYN SASSEN

The quaint Karoo town of Graaff-Reinet seems an unlikely place for new art forms robust enough to change the game yet, home to the illustrious Rupert family, it's a microcosm of South Africa.

Six finalists for the inaugural Social Impact Arts Prize (SIAP2020) based in this town were announced last week, and the awarded projects will be named soon. Among the finalists is Johannesburg artist Kim Lieberman.

Two years ago, Roelof van Wyk, SIAP's co-director with Hanneli Rupert, reimagined the Rupert Museum in Stellenbosch. They pondered "a museum without walls", which led him to think about "what it means to open up the spaces to make them not specific to the elite, enabling communities to feel that their stories are being told in it".

But, slow is the operative word. "We can't change the world in one go, but we can slowly nudge a big boat a tiny bit in one direction if we all work together, pushing, until it becomes a movement."

Today, under director Robyn Cedras, the Rupert Museum often hosts 300 children weekly, for free. It's still about art, but it's also about having fun.

SIAP's inaugural finalists are: Gustav Praekelt and studioMAS with *Hello Wolk!*, which connects the ancient San people's drawing practices with a contemporary digital community; Lieberman and Paragon Architects' *Revealing the City*, which uses lace and giant pins to reflect how society meshes; Kasthuri Naidoo

and Ayesha Mukadam's *Long Table*, considers how sharing food can puncture social boundaries; *PLANTED* by Lorenzo Nassimbeni, Andrew Brose, and Casper Lundie gives new visibility to traditional medicinal plants; the mass choir, *Tears become Rain* by David Brits and Raiven Hansmann; and *Mirage*, by Studio August, a public-space idea.

Described by Van Wyk as "an ecology of funding foundations", the Rupert Art Foundation, a non-profit educational institution, backs SIAP. Pushing the wall-less museum idea further, Van Wyk explains how this concept can create new opportunities for art practitioners who don't make work for traditional retail art galleries.

"Our galleries can accommodate maybe 1% of this country's talent. Not all art practices in this country can stand their own in a retail art market appropriate for a highest-bidder auction house. Most South African artists are in communities. They teach and make art – and when I say artists, I include musicians, poets, stargazers and scientists."

And, global issues are the buzz. "There's one big equaliser; it's going to erase all our differences: Climate change. We are part of a global *zeitgeist* (spirit) We cannot leave it for the politicians to plan or decide."

The "carrot" in SIAP is the Rupert Art Foundation's wherewithal to realise creative dreams to solve global problems, whether it is about getting 4 000 choristers to sing off the same page, or the technicians to make lace in augmented reality.

The organisers commissioned six industry, museum, and technology heavyweights from as far afield as Greece and the

United Kingdom to judge the entries, chaired by former Business Arts South Africa head Michelle Constant.

Judging was not about uploading a digital picture for a curatorial team to mull over. Artists no longer wish to make pretty pictures, they want to change the world. "And this shows why SIAP differs from any other South African art competition," says Van Wyk. "We're trying things out."

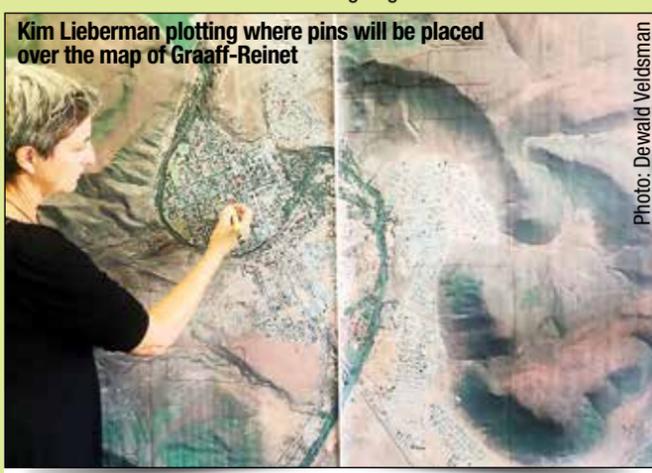
Lieberman, a veteran conceptual artist, is delighted to be a finalist. "This project is very much a part of my artistic conversation. It enables me to look at my whole life as an artist, but also to look at other artists whose work has had an impact on mine." She cites Joseph Beuys's 1980s project of 7 000 trees in Kassel; the sound sculptures of Canadian artist Janet Cardiff in the 1990s; and how French conceptual artist Sophie Calle interviewed people at the former sites of fascist or Nazi statues, as examples.

In *Revealing the City*, Lieberman works with Anthony Orelowitz, Dewalt Veldsman, and Kirsty Fick of Paragon Architects. "When I first met them, they were working on a wellness centre in Nirox. Very green. Very conscious. [My project] fitted their priorities as well as mine."

Lieberman is no stranger to Graaff-Reinet. In 2017 she did a project with the Royal Block neighbourhood in uMasizakhe, the Graaff-Reinet township. But SIAP has little to do with the town's existing projects, says Van Wyk.

The Rupert family's investment in Graaff-Reinet ultimately aims to benefit everyone. "The family wants to bring people together in this town," says Van Wyk. "It's about crossing the divide, and encouraging different community members to engage with one another. It's about developing compassion."

• *The finalists' exhibition opens at Stellenbosch's Rupert Museum on 7 March. The projects will be announced at a public gala event at the museum on 12 March, and the awarded projects will be installed in Graaff-Reinet between April and July 2020.*



Kim Lieberman plotting where pins will be placed over the map of Graaff-Reinet

Photo: Dewald Veldsman

## Help for Kliptown flood victims

It's the middle of the night, and you're woken up by the sound of a loud bang and water gushing through your home. In your sleepy state, you run to check that your children are safe. As you manage to get your family to safety, you watch helplessly as the personal belongings that you worked so hard for are washed away. This was the harsh reality of many residents in Kliptown, Soweto, recently. Photographer Ilan Ossendryver has appealed for assistance for the residents of Kliptown affected by the recent



Corinne and Ilan Ossendryver helping Kliptown children

flooding around Gauteng. The Union of Jewish Women was able to help by supplying a large quantity of clothing and toys. For many, it was a ray of hope in rebuilding their homes. For more information, or to get involved, email [info@ujw.co.za](mailto:info@ujw.co.za).

## Wonder of water at KDVP



KDVP Pre-Primary pupils display their pictures. Back: Julia Lewis, Reo Connors. Front: Rafael Shishler, Jordi Fleshel.

Water is everywhere in our lives. Without much thought, we bathe in it, drink it, cook with it, and wash our hands on a daily basis. But in spite of its everyday status, there's still something mesmerising about it, especially for children, who will scoop, pour, and explore, over and over again. Grade Rs at King David Pre-Primary School Victory Park recently created magical art with water, part of the grade's theme of "See, think, and wonder".

## Sydenham completes a book of Talmud

Rabbi Yossy Goldman's weekly Talmud shiur group held a catered dinner at the Sydenham Youth Bayit on 18 February to celebrate the completion of the entire Tractate Sotah, which deals primarily, but not exclusively with marital infidelity and the ceremony of the bitter water. It was attended by students and their wives, as well as the *gaboim* (supervisors) of Sydenham Shul.

This shiur has unusual longevity, having been taught by Goldman to Sydenham Shul members every Tuesday night at his home for more than 30 years. For just as long, Rebbetzin Rochel has been entertaining her weekly guests with her famous chocolate chip cookies after the shiur. Many books have been completed, and much wisdom of our sages has been passed down to generations of students, including lawyers, advocates, even a judge of the high court.

The guest speaker on Tuesday was Rabbi Dayan Gidon Fox of Pretoria, and the newest *dayan* (judge) on the Johannesburg Beth Din. Rabbi Osher Feldman brought greetings from Cape

Town, and shared a short but very relevant *vort* (word). Russell Kilov delivered an impressive dissertation on behalf of the students, and Goldman did the official concluding *siyum*



Photo: Dovi Crouse

Rabbi Yossy Goldman and his Talmudic class at Sydenham Shul

(completion), followed by a special *kaddish* (blessing).

In its never-ending quest for wisdom, the class will now move on to the challenges of Bava Metziyah, specifically the chapters focusing on fairness in trade and commerce, usury, and labour law.

"I'm very proud of the success of this particular shiur," said Goldman. "Most shiurim don't last for more than three decades. I'm not sure if they come for my teaching or Rochel's baking, but they keep coming, and we are honoured and gratified."

### Monday (2 March)

- The Union of Jewish Women (UJW) hosts Tom Johnson, vice-principal and senior geography teacher, King David High School Linksfield, on the repercussions of climate change and its global impact. Time: 10:00. Venue:

1 Oak Street, Houghton. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW office 011 648 1053.

### Thursday (5 March)

- The next meeting of Hebrew speakers at 10:30 at Beyachad building, 2 Elray Street, Raedene.
- 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.



# WANTED!!! TOP PRICES PAID



## Free Evaluation & Buying on:

- South African & International coins and banknotes
- Medals and Militaria
- Silver and Gold Jewellery in any condition
- Silverware
- Collectable Items
- Pocket and wrist watches

Remember your I.D. and banking details if you wish to sell your items

**Collectors Investments**  
Dealers in Coins, Medals & Banknotes

### Enquiries:

Tel: 011 880 9116 / 076 741 8801 • WhatsApp: 079 784 0101  
1st Floor, Illovo Muse, 198 Oxford Road, Illovo, 2196, Johannesburg

[www.collectorsinvestments.com](http://www.collectorsinvestments.com)

### AUTHORISED FINANCIAL SERVICES PROVIDERS

**GARRUN GROUP**  
Insurance Brokers

*Your Business Made Personal*

#### DOMESTIC

- Car & Home
- General Liability
- Asset All Risk

#### AGRICULTURE

- Crop
- Assets
- Vine
- Weather

#### COMMERCIAL

- Marine
- Body Corporate
- Sectional Title
- Contract Works
- Professional Indemnity
- Cyber Risk Insurance

#### SPECIALISED

- Specialised Liability
- Travel
- ProCycle Insurance
- Film Producers
- Indemnity & Weather Day



Find a branch near you by visiting [www.garrun-group.co.za](http://www.garrun-group.co.za)

# If the coronavirus came to South Africa

Without intending to spread panic, I don't think it's unreasonable to imagine that if the coronavirus (Covid-19) hit South Africa, most of us would probably die. I'm not seeking to be alarmist, but there really is very little chance of us surviving this.

This isn't to say that we don't have superb private caregivers, most of whom are already engaged in the training of doctors, hospitals, and staff. Our National Institute for Communicable Diseases is well respected and geared to identify those afflicted. But that's only half the story.

Imagine asking (nay, telling) South Africans to stay home, take their temperature twice a day, and report it to authorities. This is what they are asking 11 million residents of Wuhan to do. Who, precisely, would South Africans call to report their body heat to? City Power? "Your call is important to us, please stay on the line, assuming that you aren't already slipping into a corona-induced coma."

Jewish grandmothers wouldn't be allowed to use the hand-on-forehead fever gauge, which means that Facebook group Joburg Jewish Mommies would light up with thermometer-related questions, experiences, reviews, and horror stories of those impacted. "Sending hugs, light, and love."

WhatsApp groups would warn against using thermometers made in China, and tell of thieves posing as healthcare inspectors gaining access to your home (please tell your domestic worker).

Chinese authorities have also ruled that one person per household is authorised to go shopping every three days for food. And they police that, with real police. Given how difficult it is to report a stolen cell phone at our local police station, I can hardly imagine this being added to the burden on the force. "Excuse me

## INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



ma'am, but didn't I see you at KosherWorld yesterday?" Tell anyone in Glenhazel that shopping for food once every three days is adequate – unless it's an emergency – and I will show you what happens when there is no Cheerios for breakfast. If that's not an emergency, I don't know what is.

The spread of the virus will be rapid. With an average of 17 passengers per taxi, William Nicol and Louis Botha will no doubt become Ground Zero for the disease. Trains aren't a concern as they never run, and the Gautrain, given the amount of people who use it, should pose no risk to anyone. It might even be the safest place to be, along with Mall of Africa.

Ex South Africans will, of course, waste precious little time in posting online how grateful they are to have left South Africa, because they knew, back in 1976, 1987, and then again in 1993 that this was coming. Those living in Israel will beg for Jews to "come home" (as long as we don't fly via the East, because then we shouldn't bother).

The good news for South Africans is that nothing thrives under the African National Congress government. This means that the most effective way to fight the disease is for Covid-19 to be given to parliament, and declared a national asset. Based on what has been done to South African Airways and Eskom, it will take no time at all for the coronavirus to lose its power (for at least four hours per day) before it gives up and retreats back where it came from.

# Parliament – where words will truly harm us

Parliament can't operate if its members don't stick to etiquette. But nothing is perfect. The extreme emotions attached to politics frequently overrides protocol, as we've seen lately in this country.

The modern world has experienced parliamentary shenanigans that are nothing short of comical, from banging desks with shoes in front of stern-faced representatives, to offering to attend sessions naked. The real burning issues sometimes get lost in the quarrels or actually find true expression.

Israel's Knesset is no exception, amidst the country's over-heated politics. In 2010, Arab MK Haneen Zoabi was cursed and shoved for relating her experience as a passenger on the Mavi Marmara ship which attempted to break Israel's naval blockade of Gaza. Other MKs shouted her down. "Go back to Gaza, you traitor!" yelled one in Arabic.

Russian-born MK Anastasia Michaeli alighted the podium, blocking Zoabi from speaking by standing between her and the microphone. Arab MK Jamal Zahalka ran to defend Zoabi. Arab and Jewish MKs scuffled in the aisles, requiring ushers to intervene. The speaker expelled Michaeli and Zahalka from the hall.

A famous international-protocol-breaking incident, which has become legend, occurred during the Cold War at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, filled with sombre delegates. Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev vociferously demanded the resignation of Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, accusing him of acting for colonial powers. He then shocked delegates by loudly banging his shoe on the desk after the Philippines accused the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of imperialism in Eastern Europe.

How far can vigorous debate stretch without damaging the institution of parliament itself? In South Africa in 1998, Manie Schoeman, the leader of the New National Party from the Eastern Cape punched the African National Congress's Johnny de Lange, who retaliated. Speaker Frene Ginwala described the incident as a "brawl". Schoeman, who started the fracas,

## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin



was suspended from parliament for five days, and De Lange for one.

In 2016, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) were thrown out of the chamber for causing pandemonium during the State of the Nation Address (SONA) of then-President Jacob Zuma. And in President Cyril Ramaphosa's SONA this year, the EFF made it impossible to hear him by constantly interrupting before the speaker suspended parliament. It was worse in the SONA debate a week later.

How you dress is a measure of your respect for your colleagues. But what counts as respect? In 2015, EFF leader Julius Malema, reacting to a parliamentary committee's deliberations on a dress code, was rumoured to warn that his EFF MPs would discard their trademark red overalls and go naked in the chamber if parliament forbade the wearing of such apparel.

He also rejected anything requiring the EFF to don the more formal-looking garb which characterises many parliaments, saying that they wouldn't dress like "colonial masters".

Sadly, South African politics has become so unseemly that senior politicians – Malema and ANC figures – last week accused each other of domestic abuse in front of parliament, the nation, and the world, while gender-based violence is at a high.

Rightly, it caused a huge outcry from all sides of society. Why did the speaker not show leadership and censor the guilty parties by ejecting them from the chamber when this happened? The speaker is as guilty as anyone for allowing it.

It goes further than the individuals concerned. One can argue over whether making such accusations is technically a breach of etiquette, but it's certainly a breach of the spirit of parliament. Tragically, it makes South Africa look like a playground for bullying by adults who should know better. What do younger South Africans learn from this?

AUDIT • ADVISORY • TAX

## CLARITY. ORDER. DIRECTION.

Our team of over 1 400 professionals, operating from 7 offices in South Africa, offers a unique combination of local market knowledge coupled with an international network, personal service and a professional approach. We shine a unique lens on clients' businesses to see the people beyond the numbers and establish where they are going.

www.bdo.co.za

**BDO**

© 2019 BDO South Africa Services (Pty) Ltd.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

## COP relationship top of board's agenda



### ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev



The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations (COP) is the umbrella organisation of the 50 most important Jewish organisations in the United States. Since its establishment in 1955, it has been one of the most effective advocates of strengthening American support for the state of Israel including working towards furthering peace and stability in the Middle East.

Over the past decade in particular, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) has been able to establish a close and mutually beneficial working relationship with the COP. Every year, a high-powered COP delegation visits a particular part of the world, meeting with senior political leadership and the local Jewish community. What gave the relationship special impetus was the visit of a 65-person COP delegation to southern Africa in February 2010. The board put together a packed week-long programme for the Gauteng and Cape Town legs of the visit, which included meetings with Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe, Democratic Alliance leader Helen Zille, and the African National Congress, and visits to the Constitutional Court, MaAfrika-Tikkun projects, and Soccer City (this occurring just before the FIFA World Cup).

Last year, SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn accompanied the COP

delegation on a visit to Kenya and Uganda, which included meetings with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda. Wendy also gave a presentation on the South African situation to COP.

Last week, COP sent a delegation to Saudi Arabia, a ground breaking visit representing a major step forward in that country's warming ties with Israel. Afterwards, the delegation visited Israel for a marathon of tours, discussions, and meetings with top Israeli leaders. Kahn was again invited to participate, and was one of the panellists discussing the response to the rise in global anti-Semitism.

In addition to the close relationship that the board has established with the COP, it also has a strong presence on the World Jewish Congress, and is involved in a host of other significant global Jewish-leadership initiatives. It's an encouraging demonstration of how our relatively small community continues to punch well above its weight on the international Jewish stage, and at the same time forge valuable alliances that assist us in carrying out our primary mandate on behalf of South African Jewry.

• 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



# Sports Page

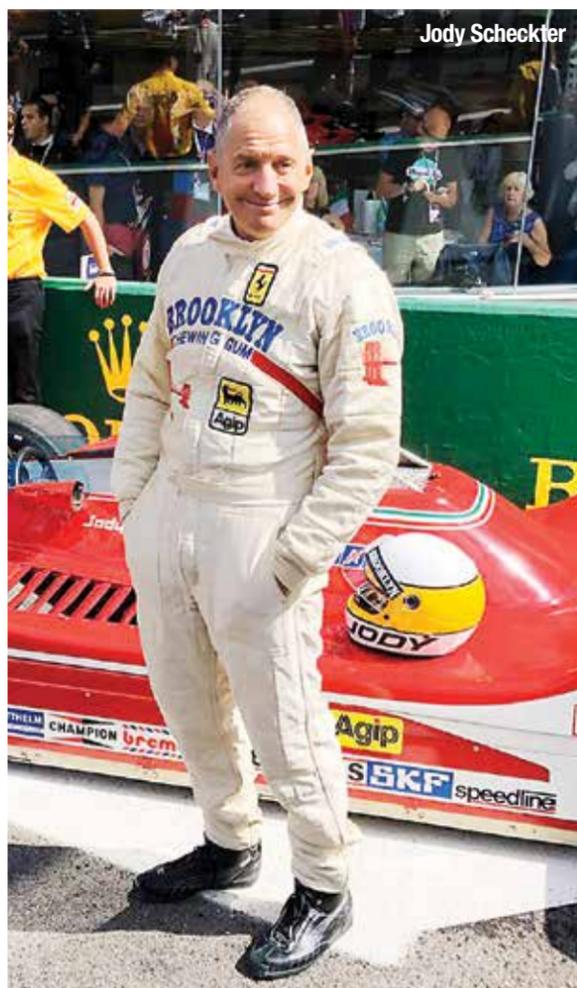
Sponsored by Maccabi SA

www.maccabi.co.za  
 f Maccabi South Africa  
 @MaccabiSA  
 maccabi\_sa

## Formula One champion Jody Scheckter back in South Africa

LUKE ALFRED

It's a tense time in the Scheckter household whenever South Africa plays against England in a Rugby World Cup final. Sitting on the one side of the couch is Jody, in his Springbok jersey, while as far away from him as possible sits his second wife, Clare, wearing the white of England.



to South African shores although he lives on a large organic farm near Overton in Hampshire, England. "And I have to say that they're very keen on bringing Formula One to South Africa in the near future.

"I can't really say any more about it at this stage, but hopefully we will be getting Grand Prix racing back in South Africa in the years to come. It's our hope, and it's the hope of the thousands of F1 fans across the country."

When asked if the Joburg Festival was likely to become an annual event, Scheckter said he wasn't entirely sure, but he did endorse the Kyalami circuit as a possible Grand Prix venue of the future, saying that he "used to love racing on it".

He hasn't, he says, driven on the new refurbished track, but says he hears "that it's become a really lovely circuit".

The Joburg Festival on Saturday afternoon will primarily showcase the talents of last season's F1 runner-up, Finnish driver Valtteri Bottas, as well as those of F1 legend David Coulthard, in a live car run through the streets of the Sandton CBD.

Scheckter will make a later appearance in his 1979 F1 title-winning Ferrari, which he also hopes to drive in Kyalami the following day.

Whatever the result at the end of the final, it's bad news for one party. Luckily for former Formula One (F1) world champion Jody, who turned 70 at the end of January, he has been on the winning side on both occasions. The bragging rights are his – for the time being anyway.

When asked who breaks the ice by speaking to the other party first, Scheckter replies jokingly, "Look, I'm not really sure, but that's no different to how it is normally. Isn't that what marriage is all about?"

Scheckter took an overnight flight from Heathrow on Monday night, arriving in Joburg on Tuesday morning to promote this weekend's F1 Joburg Festival, a street race along Katherine Street in Sandton designed not only to give local fans a taste of what F1 is all about, but to showcase South Africa's talents as a Grand Prix destination of the future.

"F1 have endorsed the street race in Sandton," says Scheckter, a regular visitor

"Fans will have an opportunity to get up close and personal with the sport on Saturday afternoon. It's a taste of what might happen in the years to come," he says.

Scheckter won the third of his ten Grands Prix at Kyalami in 1975, and was a regular visitor to the early-season South African event across the 1970s. In so doing, he became not only a national hero but a beloved icon in the local Jewish community.

The year for which Scheckter is most famous was 1979, in which he won the F1 Championship with a season of remarkable driving consistency. The season opened in South America, with races in Brazil and Argentina, Scheckter featuring on the podium in neither race.

At Kyalami in the third Grand Prix of the season, he got among the points for the first time, finishing second, and from then on was able to harvest points at regular intervals, challenging the

early-season leaders, Jacques Laffite, Patrick Depailler, and Argentine driver, Carlos Reutemann.

He had a glorious May, winning consecutive races in Belgium and Monaco. And in late July and August, he also prospered in the mid-summer heat. The former student of Selborne College in East London finished fourth in Germany, fourth in Austria, second behind Australian Alan Jones in the Netherlands, before winning the Italian Grand Prix at Monza.

A week or two later, he won the Drivers' Championship for the first time, with Ferrari also winning the Constructors' Championship in an extremely reliable car, the very car that he will be driving on the weekend.

Cynics might look at all of this and say

that the possibility of a South African Grand Prix is pie in the sky. It's one of those hardy journalistic perennials, flowering every so often amidst a welter of enthusiasm and promises, only to die a death because of lack of sponsorship revenue months down the line.

This might be true, but you can't accuse Scheckter of not putting his money where his mouth is. He spends as much time as he possibly can in South Africa, and has a home above Clifton beach. He also owns a farm in Somerset West, although he says that he's probably going to put that up for sale shortly.

All in all, though, he remains more than an honorary South African, as passionate about the country and bringing a Grand Prix here as he always was.



CRICKET, NETBALL AND SOCCER FOR LEAGUES, PARTIES, SOCIALS AND CORPORATE EVENTS. SO MUCH FUN FOR ALL AGES!

FOR MORE INFO EMAIL : INFO@ACTIONSPORTS.CO.ZA  
 WWW.ACTIONSPORTS.CO.ZA

### PROUD PARTNERS OF MACCABI SA



# KosherWorld Centre

TRULY KOSHER

STOCK UP NOW FOR PURIM

## Mishloach Manot Sweet Deals

**JELLY BELLY ASSORTED 10G EACH** **649**

**MIKE & IKE ASSTD FLAVS 22G** **749**

**BUY ANY 2 FOR R2099**

**Ring POP 1399** RING POP 1'S

**BENDICKS BUTTERMINTS 8999** BENDICKS MINTS 138G

**WILLARDS CRINKLE CUT ASSTD FLAVS 125G EACH** **3299**

**STAFFORDS CHOC & RAINBOW VERMICELLI 250G EACH** **3199**

**LAFFY TAFFY 119G** **3199**

**TONELLI RED & WHITE WINE VINEGAR 500ML EACH** **5999**

**THE OLD STONE MILL HARISSA SPICE 125G** **3899**

**SNOW SOFT LUXURY TOILET TISSUE 2 PLY 18'S** **8399**

**FRY'S SPICY SAUSAGES 380G** **3499**

**PARAGIANO REGGIANO 200G** **12699**

**POLAGRIC DISHWASHER 750ML** **1399**

**ALUMINIUM FOIL 5M** **1499**

**DUBBLE BUBBLE MINI GUMBALL MACHINE 2999**

**DUBBLE BUBBLE GUMBALL KEYRING 32G EACH 2799**

## KosherWorld

Kosher at Everyday Prices

Actual offers may differ from visuals shown. We reserve the right to limit quantities. While stocks last. E&OE

Offers valid till 4 March '20 or while stocks last

1 Long Avenue, Glenhazel | 011 440 9517 | info@kosherworld.co.za | www.kosherworld.co.za  
Hours: Mon - Thurs 7am - 10pm | Fri: 7am - 4pm Sat: 1/2 Hour After Shabbos - 10pm | Sun: 8am - 10pm



**Start your day with a Jozi Blue coffee**

Jozi Blue  
the coffee experience

011 440 5224

**chabad bookshop**

011 440 5224

**Sushi is happiness in every bite**

7 Pieces - Salmon Fashion Sandwich & Sashimi Combo - R120  
8 Pieces - Gourmet Sushi Options ranging from R90 - R120

**KOSUSHI**  
GOURMET FUSION SUSHI

011 440 3239

**Feigels**  
Est. 1968

*Yummy!!*

### 1/2 BAKED HAMENTASHEN

- Mon **R6399** x 4
- Choc **R6399** x 4
- Apple **R6399** x 4
- Cheese **R7499** x 4

www.feigels.com

081 775 7365

**la-mich**  
Unisex Hair & Beauty Salon

**SPECIALS FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY**

- Pedicure, tint and blow wave - R649
  - Facial, brow and lip wax including a blow wave - R549
  - Back massage (30 minutes) including blow wave - R299
- 10% off all Sulphate Free Shampoo & Conditioner**  
Gift Vouchers available.

To Book an Appointment:  
011 440 85 91 • 082 442 0014  
KosherWorld Centre, 1 Long Avenue, Glenhazel

**Montagu**  
DRIED FRUIT & NUTS  
011 440 3239

**Our Party Specials...**

**C J S PARTY Shoppe**

082 0847794