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# Jewish Report

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 ■ Volume 20 - Number 15

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A man for all seasons – Bertie Lubner, philanthropist, community leader, international businessman but, above all, family man and friend, leaves a huge void in South African society by his passing on Monday. His generosity of spirit and love of people, especially children, is encapsulated in this picture where young Thapelo Robert Kekana from the Early Childhood Development Programme in Alexandra township spontaneously kisses Lubner in an immediate bond of affection. Many dignitaries, including rabbis and community leaders, attended his enormous funeral at West Park Jewish Cemetery on Wednesday. See pages 4 and 5.

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# Court case puts spotlight on halacha versus constitutional rights

ANT KATZ

The Cape Council of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies this week rejected a compromise offer made by the three claimants who are taking the Council to the Equality Court of the Western Cape High Court, arguing that it is unconstitutional to not allow women to sing at Jewish secular events.

This case is being deemed urgent as the claimants want it settled before the Board-hosted Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) event on May 5. Papers were originally lodged on April 1 in the Equality Court by Advocate Anton Katz SC on behalf of two Orthodox Cape residents, Gilad Stern and Sarah Goldstein. The Cape Board was named as respondent. Stern and Goldstein were subsequently joined in the matter



by The South African Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity (SACRED) which is chaired by Progressive Rabbi Julia Margolis. The SA Union of Progressive Jewry (SAUPJ), to which SACRED is affiliated, has distanced itself from the legal action.

At issue is the halachic principle of “Kol Isha”, which denies men the opportunity to hear a woman’s voice. This is “correct according to halacha”, a respected local rabbi who asked not to be named, told Jewish Report. While he agreed that it was accepted in the past, he pointed out that Orthodoxy had relied on “a number of dispensations”, to exclude certain events in the past.

However, the rabbi said, the current trend among Orthodox Jewry worldwide reflects a “general shift to the right”, adding that no Orthodox rabbi in this community would support the perception of applying dispensations to bypass halacha on an issue such as this.

The papers were served on the Cape Council on April 6 notifying the Council that it was being sued for “discrimination of women on the basis of gender”. The Cape Council’s chairman, Eric Marx, told Jewish Report earlier this month that a compromise had been proposed and that he was hopeful that

an accommodation could be reached. SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn issued a statement early last week advising that a conflict of interest over this case had forced the Board to suspend Rabbi Margolis from attending Board meetings - to which she had been invited as a guest of the Board - until matters were resolved.

The Board had “invited the SAUPJ to replace Rabbi Margolis during this time”, said chairman of the Gauteng Council of the SAJBD, Shaun Zagnoev, and the Progressive Union did so, in the person of their Gauteng chairman, Monica Solomons.

Last week Thursday, the SAUPJ’s national chairman, Alvin Kushner, issued a statement that Rabbi Margolis had acted on her own (MORE ON [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)) and he distanced his organisation from the Equality Court action. Kushner had to walk a fine line as

SACRED is an SAUPJ affiliate. Kushner made it clear that while the SAUPJ was not part of nor had prior knowledge of the action against the Board, he acknowledged that the SAUPJ does “share the frustration felt by women who are prohibited from singing” (at secular communal events). Kushner (who also sits on the executive of Progressive Jewry’s world body, the WUPJ) said the SAUPJ agreed with the sentiments expressed by the plaintiffs, if not their methodology.

As no common ground could be found between the parties, the complainants sought to moderate. They proposed nine points and asked the Board to either agree with them or give reasons why they do not agree.

The Cape Council of the Board responded to the claimants this week rejecting the nine-point compromise plan. The terms of the “settlement offer (were) not acceptable”, the Board replied, and stated that the Board’s reasons for rejecting it would “be dealt with in (the) replying affidavit”.

At the heart of the issue will be the question of whether religious rights trump Constitutional rights, or whether every such case will be judged on its own merits.

# An unusual invitation to experiencing liberty



Rabbi Pini Hecht  
Assistant Rabbi Green  
and Sea Point Hebrew  
Congregation.

One of the better known, but on reflection, more unusual statements that we make at the seder must be the opening paragraph of the Maggid section. In it we declare “Ha Lachma Anya - This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.” We then proceed to extend an invitation: “Let all who are hungry come and eat it.”

What an unusual invitation! Is this the type of warmth and hospitality we are asked to extend? Inviting the hungry for a piece of dry cracker, the food of slaves?

Unusual as it may seem, this just might be the key to understanding the secret to freedom and liberty in our own lives. You see the matzah at the seder takes on another identity later on in the Haggadah. Whereas here we describe it as bread of affliction, we will later tell how this is the food our ancestors ate upon fleeing Egypt, thus becoming the bread of our freedom.

What transforms this “slave bread” into the liberating substance it is later credited as? The secret I believe is in this unusual invitation: Nothing in life is more restrictive than living selfishly absorbed in one’s own pursuits and nothing is more liberating than opening oneself up to share with others. I can have little but live large by inviting others to share in what I have. This is the declaration we make at the beginning of our seder, at the beginning of our own journey to personal freedom.

A look at the Hebrew letters that spell matzah and chometz reflect this same message. Just like the basic ingredients are virtually identical in each, so are the letters that make up the words. Both have the letters “mem” and “tzadik”, they differ only in that matzah is spelled with a “hei”, and chometz, with a “ches”. Both these letters are shaped out of three lines; a horizontal line above and two vertical lines on either side. The only difference is that the “hei” has a gap between the top of the left vertical line

and the horizontal line above it and the “ches” is closed completely on all three sides. Chometz is symbolic of a life lived closed to those around us, an individual selfishly absorbed in their own pursuits. Matzah with its open “hei” represents a life of sharing, the opening through which we extend ourselves to help others and liberate our own consciousness.

Viktor Frankl said it best in his classic work “Man’s Search for Meaning”. In it he describes how sharing bread transformed individuals suffering in the worst of circumstances.

Frankl writes: “We who lived in concentration camps remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the freedom to choose one’s attitude in any circumstance.” Sharing the last of their food, these individuals expressed the inner freedom that no-one can take away. It’s this same freedom we are expressing in our unusual invitation at the beginning of our seder.

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# Jewish Report

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**April 22 / 14 Nisan**  
**April 23 / 15 Nisan**  
**April 24 / 16 Nisan**

Candle-lighting	Candle-lighting	Yomtov ends	
17:27	18:16	18:15	Johannesburg
17:57	18:48	18:46	Cape Town
17:11	18:01	18:00	Durban
17:31	18:21	18:20	Bloemfontein
17:28	18:19	18:18	Port Elizabeth
17:20	18:10	18:09	East London

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# Fugitive Rabbi Berland accuses Israel, South Africa of ‘illegal rendition’

ANT KATZ AND JEREMY GORDIN

Rabbi Eliezer Berland (pictured), who heads the Shuvu Banim International Breslov Chassidic sect headquartered at his Jerusalem yeshiva, continued with his bail application in the Randburg Magistrate’s Court on Wednesday afternoon at our going to press.

However, in another bizarre twist so reminiscent of Berland’s ability to slip through the hands of authorities (he has evaded extradition to Israel to face sex-related charges eight times, on four continents over the past four years), the “rabbi-on-the-run” launched a “pre-emptive strike” in the High Court in Pretoria on Wednesday morning to have his arrest by the Hawks two weeks ago (pending extradition to Israel) deemed unlawful.

In a surprise move, the rabbi’s attorney, Themba Langa, withdrew the application in the Pretoria Supreme Court on Wednesday afternoon. Earlier, in launching the application Langa maintained that Berland is not a criminal, but simply “at loggerheads with the [Israeli] government over ideological issues pertaining to the Palestinians”.

Rabbi Berland’s lawyers brought the urgent application before the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria Wednesday morning.

In the application, Rabbi Berland asked the court to declare that the warrant of arrest issued against him by a Pretoria magistrate on February 18 was invalid and unlawful and that therefore his arrest and detention are unlawful. He demanded to be released by the South African police and South African government and that his passport be returned to him immediately.

In his affidavit, Rabbi Berland explained in detail why he believed the arrest warrant against him was unlawful and maintained Israel has “ulterior political motives” to have him extradited.

In a covering letter, sent to local journalists, Rabbi Berland’s attorney, Themba Langa, wrote: “The Rabbi is not a fugitive from justice; he is only at loggerheads with the [Israeli] government on ideological issues pertaining to the Palestinian issue. The rabbi’s institute is situated in a Palestinian neighbourhood.”

Langa added that he and his client had reason to believe that Rabbi

Berland was the victim of “an [extraordinary] rendition” even though it was being “processed through the courts”.

Berland testified that it was clear from the documents attached to his affidavit that the warrant of arrest issued by a magistrate on February 18, 2016 was issued before the South African government had received an extradition request from Israel.

According to the papers in Rabbi Berland’s application, the Department of International Relations and Co-operation (Dirco) received an extradition request from Israel and on February 26, 2016 sent the request to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

On February 29 this year, the DOJ sent the request to the Johannesburg office of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA). The DOJ made it clear to the NPA that the request for extradition has been submitted to the Minister of Justice.

Langa said: “The relief we seek is for the warrant to be set aside because a magistrate is not competent to issue a warrant of arrest on the basis of an opinion of a foreign government, without our Minister of Justice expressing his opinion on the matter.

“On February 18, the Minister of Justice had not yet received the request for extradition but the magistrate had already issued a warrant of arrest, allegedly on the basis of information that he had received from the office of Interpol South Africa.

“When we requested Interpol South Africa to provide us with evidence that shows that they received the request from Interpol International or from the State of Israel, they failed to produce proof thereof. Therefore, it strongly appears that the magistrate was misled.”

Langa said it was clear to him that Interpol South Africa “used its own channels and not government channels”, to process the arrest warrant. The matter was especially suspicious, because Rabbi Berland, Langa claimed, “is not red-flagged by Interpol and is not on the Interpol wanted list”.

Berland said he has a

diplomatic passport from the Republic of the Ivory Coast “due to my strong black Jewish following there. I have previously travelled to numerous countries in Africa teaching the Orthodox Jewish religion to mainly black Jews. In South Africa I am engaged in teaching black South African Jews.”

Berland testified that his main place of business remained Israel, “living in the town of Nablus which was [sic] a Palestine settlement in Israel”.

Berland added that he had been informed “by my followers in Holland [when he was arrested there] that the Israeli police would attempt to kidnap me to take me to Israel and that the charges against me were made up of false allegations.

“According to them, the real reason for this was an assassination attempt on my life because of my past association with the Palestinians where I was staying in Nablus where I had Palestine (sic) followers. When the real reason became known to me why the Israeli government wanted me back, for my own safety I then fled that country and eventually arrived in the Republic of South Africa.”

Rabbi Berland in the Randburg Magistrate's Court on Wednesday morning waiting for the outcome of the Pretoria proceedings, after which he could be released, face a bail hearing or be returned to his cell.



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## Board considers action against virulently anti-Semitic Facebook rants

SUZANNE BELLING

Virulently anti-Semitic Facebook rants were posted last weekend by Derrick Z Venter, managing director of Skinny Pasta SA, the local franchise of an Israeli company which operates in several countries, on the company’s Facebook and Twitter accounts.

“The problem with you Zionist AshkeNAZIs and the Zionist Christians that support you... you tend to think that you are a majority. Fact is I don’t give a s\*\*\* that I get boycotted, sanctioned, blah blah... I will stand by my convictions and I will voice them... and after this fiasco was started by a Zionist AshkeNAZI genocide-supporting troll, passing himself off as a black South African woman who plays kiddies’ games online...” He did not identify the person.

“I will endeavour to be outspoken and will not be silenced by the likes of you and your supremacy psychopathy. MY products will be enjoyed by people that are in need and, yes, I will shut down my business to make my stand. The world is waking up. There is no place on this planet for people who slaughter children and women at (a) whim...”

Venter, who is based in Green Point, Cape Town, has posted antagonistic posts for some time. His posts in the past have included a swastika, a sticker saying “Holocaust hoax”, and the statements, “Pigs are pigs no matter where you may find them” and “Today, I stand with the BDS” (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions).

Speaking from Israel, Elad Barkan, CEO of Skinny Pasta Israel and co-founder of Skinny Pasta International, said: “This is the first time I have seen a human being act like this. We condemn strongly and denounce all his statements and posts that harm the Jewish people in particular and people in general. He has not represented our company for several months now and we informed him that he cannot continue to publish under our name or to introduce himself as our representative in South Africa.

“We are taking legal action against him.”

It is outrageous. He is anti-Jewish and anti-Israel. We have sent him a legal notification that he is no longer a holder of the Skinny Pasta franchise, but he still acts as if he is.” Barkan said the legalities should be sorted out in the next few weeks.

Jeff Katz, national chairman of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, said in a statement that: “SAJBD is of the view that such postings are unlawful and, as a result, the SAJBD is consulting with lawyers to determine the most appropriate action to take.”

Various angry comments from Facebook users resulted. Eliezer Roeh Ohr posted: “This guy is sick, sick, sick! He should peddle his lies along with his noodles to HamASS. They’d appreciate his tangled spaghetti brain. And, while he is at it, he should stay there! Our Chief Rabbinate should withdraw its certification until the company removes this anti-Semite from its franchise.”

John King posted on Facebook: “Such people have a mental illness, common also to lefties... Israel is defending itself with high morals...”

Lar Cotral wrote: “When the lights of the civilised world go out, you creapy (sic) crawlers come out from your crevices and can only take cheap shots against that little island of normalcy surrounded by manic-regressive and oppressive Arab regimes...

“If you are so religious and self-righteous in your beliefs of Jewish/Israeli wrongs, you might as well put away your computer, cell phone, stop taking many meds for your conditions and re-enter the cave age.”



# Chag Sameach

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# Bertie Lubner - the man who really made a difference

SUZANNE BELLING

Dr Bertie Lubner, who passed away this week at the age of 85 after a long illness, was truly a man for all seasons.

Among the most loved community leaders, his caring nature, chesed, generosity, business acumen and boundless energy, caused him to shine in many spheres.

His philosophy on life was: “What can I do to make a real difference?” but the second part of that thinking was: “Nobody can make a success of life without the help of others. You measure true success in two ways - in your own life, yourself and your family and when you add value to the lives of others.”

Lubner was an emotional person, which belied his business acumen and his high office in many organisations, including honorary life president of the Gauteng Jewish Board of Deputies, joint founder, with the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris of Afrika Tikkun, one of the largest outreach organisations in South Africa, former chairman of the PG Group, only stepping down after 40 years to concentrate on community and country, and a founder

with his brother, Ronnie, of the Field Band Foundation, which gives previously underprivileged children a chance to develop their musical talents and life skills.

The oldest serving member of the Board of Business Leadership (formerly the SA Foundation), a founding member of the Manufacturing Circle and a member of the World Economic Forum Task Force, Lubner was the recipient of a host of awards, including the President’s Order of Meritorious Service.

A vice-chairman of the Board of Governors of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, he received the first-ever Lifetime Achievers Award from the university and was founder and president of the SA Associates of the university. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from the university.

Lubner was, till the time of his death, a vice-president of the Institute of Directors.

He served on the board of the SA Jewish Report since its inception. He was also a director of its forerunner, the SA Jewish Times.

One of his most recent awards was the prestigious Eric Samson/Mendel Kaplan

Communal Service Award, which he received at the most recent biennial national conference of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies.

After his tough decision to resign from his executive positions at the PG Group, although retaining board membership and chairmanship of the holding company, he devoted more time to community work. “It was time to have quality in my life without having to keep apologising to everyone.”

Then came a defining moment in his life. At the age of 70, he had still not learned how to relax and found himself in ICU after a five-artery heart bypass operation and kidney failure. He had to be given electro-cardiac resuscitation.

He was forbidden visitors, except for the immediate family. But he did not count on his friend President Nelson Mandela, chief patron of Afrika Tikkun, who, straight from an overseas trip, came to inspire the founder. “Nobody could keep Madiba away,” Lubner said afterwards.

Lubner underwent regular dialysis, making business calls and dictating to his secretary while on the machine.



Bertie Lubner and his wife Hilary.

He resumed his walking regimen, played golf, went skiing and carried on with all his previous activities until quite recently.

He said, at the time of surviving his surgery: “I have the highest gratitude to G-d for giving me a second chance.”

Lubner made use of the extra 15 years, travelling, going about his civic and charitable duties, with his additional portfolios - president of the SA/Israel Chamber of Commerce, a trustee of the Worcester School for the Deaf and Blind and vice-chairman of the Olympic Foundation. He simply could not give up his active life, his legacy as a member of an entrepreneurial family.

Having studied for a B Com degree at the University of the Witwatersrand, he

joined the Plate Glass Group as a trainee and in 1953, he moved to Zimbabwe to develop the company’s interests in the then Central African Federation.

Back in South Africa, in the early 1990s the group was operating in 19 countries and employed 23 000 people. Lubner and his brother, Ronnie were joint chief executives. The family sold control to SA Breweries in 1992, except for the international glass operation, but later bought back all its glass interests.

Bertie Lubner’s life was one of deep fulfilment for himself and caring for others. He never forgot to pay tribute to his wife, Hilary, for always being at his side. He is survived by her, their children Richard, Tony, Marc

and Sue, six grandchildren, and brother Ronnie and sister Pam.

Tributes have poured in to the Jewish Report from all over, including from the Smile Foundation and SA Jewish Board of Deputies, which recalled in a statement: “On one of the occasions when he was being presented with an award, he stated: ‘One should never expect to be rewarded for doing the right things. The reward in one’s own soul is far greater’. Throughout his life he was true to this stirring maxim, making him a source of inspiration to all he had known.”

Lubner, who was a founding member of the Great Park Shul, was buried in West Park Jewish Cemetery on Wednesday.



Dr Bertie Lubner was a kind and generous man who did so much for so many and will be sorely missed. He truly was a legend in his life time.

African communities will be consoled in some way.

We take this opportunity to wish the special Lubner family strength, love and blessings.

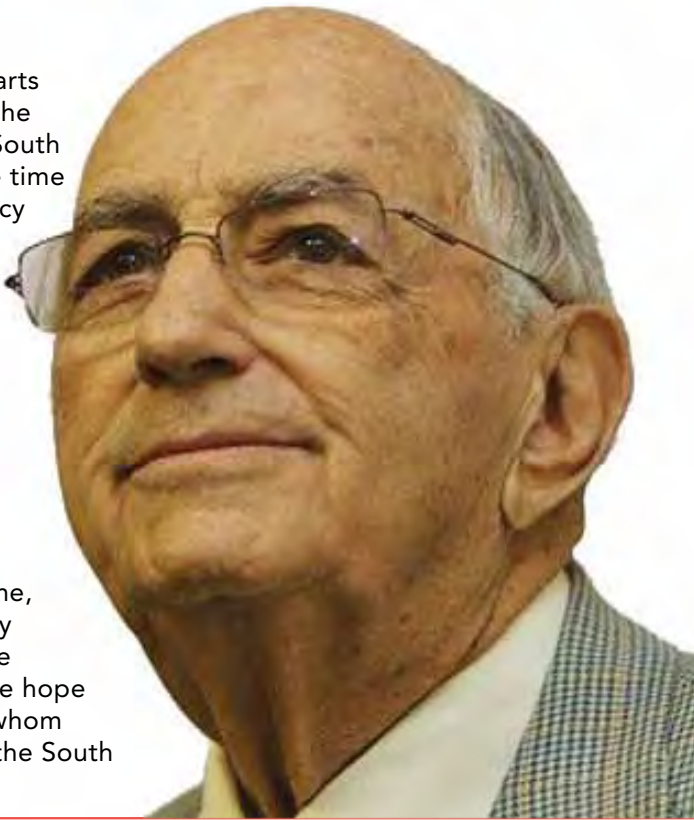
Our heartfelt condolences to the Lubner family, every organisation that Bertie helped create and to all the people of South Africa that Bertie helped in one way or another.

**From Smile Foundation board members, team and children**

We know in our hearts that the smiles on the children’s faces in South Africa will last a life time so too will the legacy of our beloved patron.

Bertie lived an exemplary life and made his mark indelibly as a compassionate and invaluable philanthropist.

During this hard time, we turn to the many happy memories we have of Bertie in the hope that every person whom he touched within the South



## The mensch who cared about all humankind

**RABBI DOVID HAZDAN**  
**RABBI OF GREAT PARK SYNAGOGUE AND MEMBER OF AFRIKA TIKKUN BOARD**

If Bertie Lubner had only exemplified compassion, love for humanity and commitment to alleviate human suffering - dayeinu - it would be reason enough to grieve his loss and to celebrate his success.

But in fact, Bertie blazed many trails. He walked paths too numerous and too far-reaching to do them justice in a brief tribute to my dear beloved friend, congregant, supporter, confidant and mentor.

Bertie’s warm persistent smile belied his profound understanding and grasp of the enormity and urgency of the challenge and task at hand. His tears, which welled up easily, most often expressed his deepest joy and pride.

Bertie exuded vision, leadership, determination, positivity, gratitude and grit. He passionately relished each moment with a commitment to suck the marrow out of every day. He personified the art of celebrating life. Even through seasons of illness and debilitation, he spoke little of his own maladies and difficulties, but much more about addressing the needs of others.

He carried his international renown and the many honours that he received on the world stage with an understated image of the ordinary and average human being. He refused to take himself too seriously. He had time and respect for everyone. He was a listener who genuinely took interest in people.

His concern and love knew no limitations and cut across the diversity of culture, politics, social standing, colour, religion and age. At Great Park Shul he was sought after and consulted for his sage advice by the elders of the congregation, even as he savoured his self-assumed role as the children’s “Bertie, the sweet man”.

He immersed himself in the vast macro-responsibilities of the chairman of Afrika Tikkun without losing an iota of his innate care and concern for the parking attendant, a street beggar, a golf caddy or any other individual’s need.

He was a proud Jew and deeply involved in the needs of the Jewish community and Israel. He was delighted with Israel’s achievements, and particularly gratified by the accomplishments of Ben-Gurion University

Continued on page 5 >>



>> Continued from page 4

It was always a joy and a privilege to share time with Bertie. Every year he arranged the participation of the Field Band at the departure of Cycalive from Johannesburg and at the cyclists’ arrival in Durban. He was personally present.

More than his enjoyment of the soul stirring sounds of the brass band, was his nachas and joy that another budding talented South African musician had been discovered and honed. He participated when Great Park hosted the residents of Selwyn Segal and Kibbutz Lubner. He had a personal relationship and interaction with each of the residents.

There have been so many treasured memorable moments: The Friday night Shabbat dinners, the weekly Great Park Shul services, the Afrika Tikkun board meetings, the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre events, the visits to the “Cradle to Career” Afrika Tikkun Centres in Alexandra township, Orange Farm and Diepsloot, the graduation ceremonies of hundreds of college students in whom he had invested, the soul moments in Israel, in Plett, at his grandchildren’s bar- and batmitzvah celebrations and at Bertie and Hillary’s 60th anniversary celebrations last year.

The timing of Bertie’s passing will only allow for two days of Shiva mourning before Pesach. Bertie made sure that the mourning period for him would be cut short and that we would immediately move on to busy ourselves with freedom - in ourselves and for all around us.

Meantime, he has no doubt already formed a committee and convened a meeting with the angels on High, to secure the requirements of his People Israel and the needs of all mankind.

Bertie’s greatest love and joy was his family. Our hearts, thoughts and prayers are with Hilary, Marc, Toni, Sue and Richard, Ronnie, Pamela and the Lubner family. May Hashem give you and our entire community, the strength and courage to continue building the magnificent legacy that Bertie has bequeathed to us.



Photo: Ian Ossendryver

# Bertie Lubner - man of integrity and humility

Outreach organisation Afrika Tikkun, in a media release, joins with the Lubner family in mourning the passing of Bertie Lubner, “a remarkable and beloved friend of South Africa, and indeed humanity”.

Lubner was chairman and founder of Afrika Tikkun and was described once, by the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, as a man who had “an infectious commitment to the new South Africa”. Lubner used his significant influence within the private sector to play a meaningful role in the transformation and reconciliation of the South African nation. He believed that if reconciliation was really to work, this affluent sector of society would “have to change its priorities radically”. Afrika Tikkun was formed to spearhead meaningful transformation.

“Tikkun” is a Hebrew word meaning a setting to rights, transformation.

At its heart Afrika Tikkun would empower individuals who had been disempowered to become skilled, educated, and productive - to be masters of their own fate.

The accomplishments of Afrika Tikkun from early on, were of great inspiration. Nelson Mandela described it as a “miracle”.

He said: “I never expected organisations of this nature, which have brought hope to the disadvantaged.”. Today that work continues at the helm of one of Bertie’s sons,

Marc, CEO of Afrika Tikkun. Bertie Lubner epitomised genuine care. He was a pathfinder for peace and reconciliation for this nation. With his characteristic integrity he wanted to ensure that peace meant something substantial. In his words, “Afrika Tikkun is the Jewish community’s’ contribution towards the upliftment of previously disadvantaged communities post-1994. We wanted to do this because we were always huge opponents of apartheid. “The rabbi spoke out, his wife demonstrated and I did too, for a very simple reason, any policy that discriminates one person against another is an unacceptable policy.”

Starting this organisation symbolised Lubner’s dedication to being a true humanitarian, yearning to give better opportunities to disadvantaged communities. But there was a deeper reason to help out indigent communities that hits close to home.

Lubner related: “There’s a culture in every Jewish parent, that says, we’ve got to give our children the best education possible because who knows whether they may be victims of discrimination again and have to leave a country.

“So, the first important feature in any Jewish family, that the parents will sacrifice anything for, is a good education. So we said: ‘Let’s take that theme into disadvantaged communities’.”

Afrika Tikkun now operates five Centres of Excellence for child and youth development from “Cradle to Career” nationally. Lubner explained: “These centres have got to be the same as what we want for our children... it’s got to be the very best and even then, that’s not good enough.”

Lubner was adamant from the beginning that Afrika Tikkun be run by people who are driven by passion, as a business: “When you deal with people’s lives, you have a responsibility for them and when you’re dealing with other people’s money, you’ve also got a responsibility or else our reputation would be at stake.”

In true humanitarian spirit, Lubner put the interest of the community’s needs first. Up to his final days, the thoughts of his heart and his commitment remained touchingly with the beneficiaries of Afrika Tikkun.

Today we have lost a hero - one whose accomplishments in the thousands of lives changed through Afrika Tikkun, extends beyond measure.

May his family be comforted with peace and hope at this time.



# YOM HAZIKARON


TUESDAY 10 MAY | TIME: 6:30 PM

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GUEST SPEAKER: **RAPHAEL HERBST**  
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# Thank you Stephen...



## Stephen J Goldberg

Optometrist

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# The chorus doesn’t change the song

Last week, the board of the South African Jewish Report debated whether we should join the rising tidal wave of voices in leadership positions, including the ANC’s own Gauteng Executive Committee, in calling for President Jacob Zuma’s resignation.

In the end we decided against it, although some members correctly felt we could not remain silent in the face of a president who has flouted the Constitution and enriched himself and his family with no regard for his people and his country.

In this issue, in light of Freedom Day next Wednesday, we asked a number of politically engaged Jews for their views on South Africa’s progress 22 years after the first democratic elections. You can read their sentiments on pages 10 and 11.

A common thread is disappointment in South Africa’s progress towards equal opportunities for all, a non-racist society, job creation, an adequately growing economy and improved education.

Yes, there is no doubt that South Africans had hoped for better lives for all by now and Zuma, the captain steering our boat, is clearly the

wrong man for the job. But it is an entirely different debate whether we as a newspaper, representing the South African Jewish community, or our Chief Rabbi, who has spoken on our behalf to the media, should be loudly and vocally calling

**Instead of taking the baton publically for fear of not being counted, is it not more powerful for the Jewish community’s representatives to enter the dialogue in a constructive way?**

for President Zuma’s resignation.

After the National Religious Leaders Council (NRLC) and the South African Council of Churches met with ANC leadership last week to pressure them into forcing Zuma to stand down, Rabbi Goldstein was widely quoted by the press.

He said that his community, as well as the others represented by the NRLC, which accounted for some 80 per cent of South Africans, were pleading for Zuma to

stand down. Rabbi Goldstein criticised Zuma, telling journalists that the party should “put the good of the country before anything else”, and then penning his own piece, calling the actions of the ANC “deeply disturbing”.

And why should we not be vocal among the many calling for Zuma’s departure - you may ask. The reason, in my opinion, is not because we should be fearful of speaking out where necessary, but because what do we really have to gain by joining the chorus?

President Zuma has treated the Jewish minority in this country with the utmost respect, never refusing to attend our important events, address our community or send security to our celebrations when we have had concerns. We have not been victims of discrimination and have been free to prosper, build our lives and practise our religion.

Instead of taking the baton publically for fear of not being counted, is it not more powerful for the Jewish community’s representatives to enter the dialogue in a constructive way?

We could instead communicate to the ANC that whenever the decision is taken for Zuma to step down, we hope to be supportive and helpful in the transition of leadership. We all know what Zuma’s sins are but rather than attacking, we could tell him we have some good memories of his past with us and we look forward to building new bridges with whomever comes next. What is the purpose of alienating ourselves with any factions when our voice is such a small one in the grander scheme anyway?

And finally, there might be some small advantage to Zuma staying in power until the municipal elections if the ANC ignores the public swell of opinion. The drop in popularity at the voting booths may provide the much needed wake-up call that both the ruling party and this country needs.

And there is another consideration. We all want brilliant leadership but will we get it? We may still regret that we called for a new man in power. Last week Economic Freedom Front leader Julius Malema, who some think might run this country one day, was talking in Soweto to drum up support for his



## South African Jewish Report

election manifesto launch.

He actually told his supporters to have more babies, accusing whites of discouraging black procreation so that whites could take over politically. This is such a depressing and divisive message when compared with the conciliatory and unifying voices of other South African leaders and icons who have emphasised a rainbow nation. Let’s be careful and considered in what we wish for... we may be in for some tough surprises.

Chag Sameach to all of our readers. Let’s remember to celebrate our freedom in the coming days, both the freedom of the Jewish People and the hard-won freedoms of all South African citizens,

We will print a newspaper again on May 6.

– Vanessa Valkin, editor

# Talk of giving back the Golan is a thing of the past

**BEN SALES  
JERUSALEM**

During the five-plus years of Syria’s civil war, Israel has striven to stay neutral - supporting neither the government of President Bashar al-Assad nor the rebels, and certainly not the Islamic State. But on one issue, senior Israeli politicians have gladly taken sides: Israel keeping the Golan Heights.

Facing reports of an international call for Israel to leave the territory as part of a settlement of the Syrian crisis, the Israeli Cabinet met last Sunday on the Golan. The unprecedented meeting aimed to demonstrate that Israel’s 21 000 citizens in the heights - in addition to some 20 000 Druze residents - weren’t going anywhere.

“The Golan Heights will forever remain in Israel’s hands,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said at the meeting in Katzrin, the Golan city 190 kilometres from Jerusalem. “Israel will never come down from the Golan Heights.”

It wasn’t so long ago that the Heights, which Israel conquered from Syria in the 1967 Six Day War, were up for negotiation. Israel annexed the mountainous strip of land on its northeast corner in 1981, a move the international community has never recognised. But until the Syrian civil war began in 2011, rumours had frequently abounded that it would be returned as part of an Israel-Syria peace deal.

Israel had already signed treaties with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. As Israel and the Palestinians flirted with a final accord in the 1990s, Israelis wondered if peace with Syria, their last major Arab adversary, was also in the offing.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin declared at a 1994 Cabinet meeting that he would be willing to agree to a phased withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for full peace and normalisation. But those talks - as well



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at an unprecedented weekly Cabinet meeting held on the Golan Heights last Sunday.

as subsequent rounds through 2000 and again in 2008 - went nowhere due to enduring gaps in the two sides’ positions.

As with the Palestinian negotiations, Israelis who opposed withdrawal from the Heights mounted a vigorous public protest campaign. They argued the Golan was an essential strategic asset that Israel couldn’t cede.

For years, bumper stickers displaying the slogan “The nation with the Golan” freckled cars, lampposts and public spaces. In 2008, a poll showed that 59 per cent of Israelis opposed giving back the Golan, with only 25

per cent supporting withdrawal.

As Syria’s war has become only more complex, opponents of Golan withdrawal are claiming vindication. Some on the right have drawn a link between returning the Golan and withdrawing from the West Bank, calling them equally foolish.

Speaking last June at the Herzliya Conference, Israel’s premier defence gathering, pro-settler Jewish Home Chairman Naftali Bennett called for Israel to quintuple the Golan’s Jewish population to 100 000 within five years.

“Whom should we give the Golan to, to al-

Nusra? To al-Qaida?” he asked at the conference, referring to terror groups in Syria.

“Why do they still not recognise the Golan? What’s the reasoning? If we had listened to the world, we would have given away the Golan, and ISIS would have been on the Sea of Galilee.”

While a population surge is unlikely, Israel’s Cabinet voted last Sunday to devote additional funds to the Golan as a show of permanence there. Through 2018, Israel will spend an additional \$2,3 million on culture, energy efficiency and preservation of historical sites in the area. (JTA)



# Look at me - I’m not what you think!



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

One of the most interesting slices of South Africa’s population demanding to throw out President Jacob Zuma is the middle class black “born-frees” who grew up after apartheid and for whom the pass laws, Verwoerd, Mandela and Umkhonto weSizwe are folk history.

For many, Zuma’s heroism - and that of the ANC - during the Struggle, is far less important than his anti-democratic behaviour today, which they see threatening their futures.

**For many, Zuma’s heroism – and that of the ANC – during the Struggle, is far less important than his anti-democratic behaviour today, which they see threatening their futures.**

The arts is essential in expressing this, and it is inspiring that a new generation of theatre people is creating sophisticated works offsetting the politicians’ posturing, genuinely exploring what it means to be South African in post-apartheid society, with its many demons.

Two superb recent plays - one written by Steven and Kate Sidley, the other by playwright Mongiwekhaya and directed by Swaziland-born actress Noma Dumezweni who grew up in the UK - illustrate the born-frees’ efforts to establish their own identities relative to the Struggle generation, in the milieu of middle class whites among whom they live and work - who themselves face questions about their South Africanness and accusations of racism.

The first play, “Shape”, ran at Daphne Kuhn’s Theatre on the Square last month. It is set in an upmarket gym with three protagonists: a black gym instructor with a privileged education; a white fitness fanatic who battles nagging questions about his sexuality; and a white do-gooder woman who works for the Human Rights Commission, recently got divorced and has

joined the gym - she is clearly out of shape - in an attempt to regain her sense of self.

When the black man approaches the woman to take him on as a gym instructor, she declines. He immediately retorts: “Is it because I’m black?” She, of course, instantly denies it so vehemently that it exposes her complicated feelings towards the topic.

What follows is a fascinating exploration, told through the medium of gym equipment, change-rooms and tanning rooms, of each of their attempts to relate to the other as people, and ultimately, fellow citizens of the same country, while the familiar political correctness and gym jargon plays itself out.

The second play is currently on at the Market Theatre, called “I See You”. The main protagonist is a young black Wits student studying law who cannot speak Xhosa - the language of his parents - because he was taken overseas at age three when his family went into exile and he grew up there.

After a white Afrikaans woman befriends him in a Johannesburg club, they are driving in a car when they are stopped by a black cop, a former ANC paramilitary fighter turned policeman, who is fuming at the fact that his role in South Africa’s armed struggle, which came at great personal cost, is being ignored by young black South Africans who are better educated, speak English rather than their mother tongue and mix with white people.

The Market Theatre was established by theatre legend Barney Simon in 1976 with the explicit dream of facilitating such penetrating, relevant drama. This is Noma Dumezweni’s directorial debut, as part of the interrogation of these issues - which are as important for the born-frees as the anti-apartheid Struggle was for Barney Simon.

The play’s name, “I See You”, is a common Zulu greeting implying bearing witness to the other. In this confused society, how people - Jews no less than anyone else - acknowledge their fellow citizens, is riddled with tension.

Crass slogans being hurled around that “all whites are racists”, blacks are “corrupt and inept” - and some are “monkeys” - and so on, must ultimately give way to “I see you”, if this society is to overcome its history, and release itself from the grip of dishonest leaders.

• Read Geoff Sifrin’s regular columns on his blog [sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com](http://sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com)

# An era ends with closure of Yiddish Folk Nursery School

GABY COHEN

The South African Board of Jewish Education (SABJE), after much deliberation, decided to close Yiddish Folk Nursery School in its current form at the end of the 2016 academic year.

No such decision is easy or taken lightly. Teachers and children will be incorporated into existing SA Board of Jewish Education schools and structures.

The SABJE considered many factors when taking this decision. Current learner numbers and demographics, together with other variables, were a clear indication that there should be a consolidation of resources at a pre-school level.

As such, open days have already been held for current Yiddish Folk families at the other SABJE pre-schools and plans are underway to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Yiddish Folk has a long and wonderful history and has played an important role in Jewish education for decades. The school was acquired by the SABJE in 1995 (although the original school was established in Doornfontein in 1937) and has educated thousands of Jewish children in Johannesburg over the years.

Rabbi Craig Kacev, director of the SABJE, commented: “Yiddish Folk has created a nurturing environment, an excellent academic grounding and wonderful memories for so many King David students over the years.

“We are extremely grateful to the current and past staff and parents for their consistent dedication and commitment to the school. Going forward, each and every teacher and child will have a place to go to within King David Schools.”

# Bertie’s ties with BGU stretched over 40 years



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

Bertie Lubner had a long and distinguished relationship with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, of which he was president.

In a tribute to this South African stalwart, the South African Associates of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (SAABGU) said:

“Bertie’s love for Israel and a deep concern and passion for nurturing young minds drew him to Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU).

“Bertie said what first impressed him was the quality of people. ‘They represented to me true Zionists who were prepared to devote their lives to education at a desert institute, whereas they could have secured wonderful posts elsewhere.’

“This bond led to the establishment of SAABGU, marking the beginning of a 40-year relationship which blossomed into a mutual and enchanting love between Bertie,

his family and the university.

“It was his unwavering belief that partnerships between Israel and South Africa would address the developmental and economic problems we face, as well as enhancing relationships between our two countries.

“Bertie’s optimism underpinning this belief led to Ben-Gurion University awarding an honorary doctorate to President Nelson Mandela in 1997 - a momentous occasion for South Africa and Israel.”

Lubner’s philanthropy is evident throughout the BGU Campus, with his name gracing the Founders Wall, as a member of the Ben-Gurion Society and his service on the Board of Governors for four decades. BGU awarded him with an honorary doctorate in 1987 in recognition of his enduring kindness and philanthropy. In 2013 he received BGU’s Lifetime Achievement Award.

In 2015 Lubner and his wife Hilary, opened the Lubner Children’s Rehabilitation Centre at Soroka University Hospital in Beer Sheva.

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## BDS suffers from a bad bout of foot-in-mouth disease



Ben Swartz,  
National  
Chairman,  
SAZF

It certainly has been an “annus horribilis” for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. The anti-Israel propaganda movement has spent most of the year apologising for embarrassing gaffe after gaffe.

During the BDS’ annual Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) hate campaign, the organisation spent most of the week expressing regret to South Africans for their insensitivity.

In a statement issued by the Wits Palestine Solidarity Committee, it stated: “In no way did we intend to appropriate the struggles of black people in promoting the Palestinian cause...” - a very strange statement given that BDS’ entire IAW campaign is predicated on the appropriation of “the struggles of black people in promoting the Palestinian cause”.

During the same week, BDS was once again in the spotlight after a very public spat with the pro-Palestinian Daily Vox news website. Anti-Israel activist Prof Farid Esack of the University of Johannesburg, instructed BDS’ head, Muhammad Desai, to apologise to the Daily Vox, even if Desai didn’t mean it, an astounding instruction to come

from a Muslim scholar and the head of religious studies at UJ.

A few years ago, BDS had alienated its tiny circle of Jewish followers by singing “Shoot the Jew” at Wits and later by the placement by pro-BDS supporters of a pig’s head in what they thought was the kosher section of a Cape Town Woolworths branch, but which transpired to be the halaal section! BDS was forced to issue an apology for this as well.

But last week BDS once again found itself in the firing line for reposting, on Facebook, an article first published in Israel by Ha’aretz, about fugitive Rabbi Eliezer Berland, and whose extradition from South Africa, to face trial in Israel, has been championed by the Israeli Embassy in Pretoria.

Immediately a comment posted after the article by Kevin Abraham stated: “What has this got to do with fighting Israeli policies? This is simply a less than subtle attempt at demonising Jews in general.

“BDS cannot pretend to abhor anti-Semitism on one hand, yet fail to manage the anti-Semitic nature of posts like these. I oppose Israel’s policies, but I no longer respect or trust BDS.”

The posting of the Berland article resulted in anti-Israel Jewish activist, Doron Isaacs accusing BDS SA of “shameful anti-Semitism”. Said Isaacs in a tweet: “Shameless antisemitism @BDSsouthafrica.

All faiths have their predatory religious leaders. Watch @Spotlight-Movie FFS!”

Aids activist and anti-Israel advocate, Zackie Achmat, tweeted out to the world that the BDS movement “has no principles”.

BDS was forced once again to apologise, stating: “BDS South Africa apologises for reposting an article from the Israeli Newspaper Ha’aretz relating to a fugitive Israeli rabbi, Eliezer Berland, arrested in South Africa for alleged sex crimes. The article is entirely irrelevant to our work, and while not intended as such, opens us to accusations of anti-Semitism.

“We undertake to exercise closer supervision over those who have responsibility for official posts on our social media pages, including Facebook. We re-commit ourselves to be far more judicious on social media and reiterate our opposition to all forms of racism, including anti-Semitism.”

Despite the apology, BDS failed to remove the post from its Facebook wall, once again calling into question the veracity of their apology and opening itself up to the stated tactics championed by Prof Esack: “Why don’t you just write to these folks and apologise for whatever - even if you don’t mean it - and get them off our backs. Our work is far too damn important to have them constantly yapping at our heels...”

*This column is paid for by the SA Zionist Federation*

### Community

## Not commonly known, but ‘shatnez’ is a biblical commandment

SUZANNE BELLING

A lot of people might never have heard of shatnez, but it is a significant biblical commandment which is gaining attention in South Africa.

Shatnez Lab South Africa was founded in 2014 and is networked with more than 350 shatnez labs globally. The lab performs tests to establish whether clothing contains a prohibited mixture of wool and linen.

It appears only twice in the Bible, on both occasions prohibiting wearing it. The first reference: “You shall not put on shatnez” (Leviticus 19:19) does not explain the term, but the second makes it clearer: “You shall not wear shatnez, wool and linen together.”

The word can be translated as mingled stuff or things mixed together. It is used in the context of prohibitions on mixing two species together, such as sowing a vineyard with two kinds of seed, cross-breeding cattle or ploughing with an ox and an ass together.

The rabbis of the Talmud brought the prohibition down to wearing linen and wool in the same garment. They defined it as mixing linen made from the flax plant with wool from sheep or lambs.

Velvy Bokow, tester and managing director of Shatnez Lab South Africa, told SA Jewish Report that it was similar to keeping kosher in terms of not mixing meat and milk in food.

He added that shatnez existed in this country and discussions with the Beth Din are ongoing.

“Just as there are kosher alerts from time to time, there are shatnez alerts.”

In June last year Shatnez Lab SA brought shatnez expert Rabbi Yosef Sayagh, director of Shatnez Lab International Headquarters in Lakewood New Jersey, to South Africa.

“The aim of bringing Rabbi Sayagh to South Africa

was to inform and educate as many Jews as possible about the biblical prohibition of shatnez and how to observe this everyday commonplace commandment,” said Rabbi Avigdor Bokow, co-founder and rabbinical head of Shatnez Lab SA and father of Velvy.

During Rabbi Sayagh’s visit, more than 100 garments were brought in for testing, including suits, coats, scarves, shawls, baby blankets, skirts and dresses.

“The reality is that people actually don’t know enough about this mitzvah,” Velvy Bokow said. “People think kosher is limited to food, such as not mixing meat and milk or only eating fish that have fins and scales or checking and removing bugs from vegetables.

“Shatnez observance is neglected due to ignorance. To the kosher aware consumer shatnez does not even begin to feature “ Many people unqualified in the specialised area of shatnez - including some rabbis - have said that linen is not used in South Africa and therefore shatnez is not prevalent in this country.

But in less than a year, Shatnez Lab SA had found shatnez in caps, blazers, linen shirts, skirts, suits and blankets. Clothing from a variety of stores have been found to contain shatnez garments.

According to Shatnez Lab SA, “people think that because the label doesn’t mention wool and linen, the garment doesn’t require shatnez testing. Halachically, however, if garments are made from either wool or linen, they require testing.”

Labels are not always reliable. Much of the clothing is made in Asia, making it impossible to supervise manufacturing.

To ensure that a garment is not shatnez, check the label - any mention of wool or linen needs testing and even if they are not mentioned, it should still be tested as internal elements could contain shatnez.

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# Community Voices

*Freedom Day will be commemorated next Wednesday, April 27. Twenty-two years on, after the country’s first democratic elections, we asked a number of involved Jewish South Africans how far they feel South Africa has come – what have been the disappointments, the successes and what more needs to be done.*

## My assessment of South Africa’s progress 22 years on

LISA SEFTEL

On April 27, South Africans will celebrate Freedom Day and 22 years of democracy. Today, South Africa is a very different place from 22 years ago. Every South African is formally equal and there has been significant investment in many different parts of our society to create greater economic and social equality.

However, high levels of inequality and poverty persist. In addition, racist attitudes and behaviour continue and many black South Africans, especially young people, do not feel welcome in certain spaces such as traditionally white dominated universities or work places. For many the persistence of inequality, poverty and racism is a result of our “negotiated settlement” and even some of the initial policies of the government aimed at promoting reconciliation. Whether this is the case or not, 22 years on, more needs to be done at an economic and social level if we want to live in a stable, inclusive, prosperous and healthy democracy. Responsibility for this rests not only with government but with all citizens - including business people, educators and professionals - each one of us.

I believe that all of us need to adopt a zero tolerance approach to racist behaviour, unfair discrimination and unfair practices. And

we need to develop increasing respect for and understanding of our different origins and histories in our country.

There are so many small (and big) ways in which we can do this, including how we treat shop assistants, frontline officials at licence centres, and post offices; stopping and addressing our fellow citizens when we see them acting in a racist way; and paying our workers in the home and work places a living wage, etc.

This is the best guarantee for white South Africans to continue to be accepted in South Africa and for the non-racial future that our Constitution and the ruling party, the African National Congress, is committed to.

Anti-racism should have a lot of resonance for Jewish people who have been subject to discrimination, victimisation and violence on the basis of their religion in the last century and beyond. As Jewish people celebrating Pesach - a festival of freedom - one week before Freedom

Day, let us recommit to doing what we can to ensure genuine and lasting freedom for all South Africans.

*\* Seftel is the Executive Director: Transport in the City of Johannesburg. She has worked in various jobs in national, provincial and local government over the last 21 years. In the past she has been an anti-apartheid activist.*



Lisa Seftel

## Johannesburg as the Republic’s proving ground

JAK KOSEFF

Freedom Day, by design, provokes a contrast between present realities and the aspirations we declared before an astounded, inspired world two decades ago. A livewire contest of 2016 is between the 1994 promise of broad-based prosperity and near full employment within a generation and the realities of living in one of the most unequal societies on the planet.

The privilege of serving as special adviser to the Executive Mayor of the nation’s first city means I can reflect on this most responsibly through the lens of Johannesburg - both because it is recognised by just about everyone as a dashboard for the state of our present social and economic order and, for those paying attention, as the Republic’s best laboratory for understanding how to give full cry to prosperity and opportunity as a street-level, lived possibility for the many.

The challenges we face as Johannesburg, the Republic writ large will face in time, and - by the same logic - the best of our efforts as City government can become national guidelines.

This path is not an easy one. Ten thousand people, on average, arrive at the fringes of the city every month. Too many of them join the 1,2 million (800 000 of them youth) trapped on the wrong side of the barriers to opportunity in a patchwork of race and class-based ghettos, transport and housing costs enforcing divisions once jackbooted in law.

The Corridors of Freedom programme lights a different way: targeted government spending tracking with incentives to the private sector to build out new mixed income, mixed use realities along our new public transit routes, and in nodes across the wider city - many of which will now start harnessing the local spending power hidden in our townships and informal settle-

ments. (Soweto alone spends R4,8 billion a year on goods and services.)

Johannesburg’s economy has literally doubled since 1994. But though the poker table is double the size, most of the chips are held by the kind of people that held them two decades back (one part the long shadow of apartheid education systems, one part the failure of institutional imagination in the democratic era).

And there is certainly a vacuum where thousands of smaller enterprises should be creating equity for their owners and first-rung jobs for our massive unused labour pool.

But the city is already demonstrating that sectoral business covenants can build specific skills pools and pipelines of new enterprises reaching into the most deprived communities.



Jak Koseff

Our Massive Open Online Varsity (MOOV) network of video-enabled training sites is already creating a new foundational and voca-

tional skills pipeline.

Using flipped classroom maths training through Khan Academy, for example (using smart analytics to figure out where gaps in comprehension are), rapidly increases basic maths ability. Using task-based video training to build specific curricula - defined by employers and sector bodies - opens up potentially thousands of new livelihood pathways that don’t run through universities.

Seeing the Jozi@work programme come to life throughout the City (turning new micro-enterprises under developmental supervision into producers of city services) has confirmed for me there is no lack of commercial instinct or enterprising spirit among the economically inactive.

The same is clear through the micro-franchising and youth enterprise channels the City is running through partnerships under VulindleleJozi.

This is all incredibly tough to get right, but the present efforts at local level are starting to show what’s possible when government and those who hold the most chips at the democratic-era poker table stop indulging in a culture of lamentation and take some educated risks on approaches that can fix some of the market failures, build business value and create broad based paths to prosperity.

I celebrate this Freedom Day having seen for myself that real steps can be taken towards a state of affairs that much more closely matches what we promised ourselves in 1994. It’s up to us, collectively, to prove we can see it through. • Jak Koseff joined the City of Johannesburg in 2007, following five years of work and study in London and New York City, specialising in urban social and economic development.

*He currently serves in the Executive Mayors Office as Special Adviser: Priority Projects.*



Jeff Katz is the national chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and Discovery Health Legal Counsel.

## Present ANC of self-interest has lost Madiba’s vision

RABBI BEN ISAACSON

As a young rabbi, and assistant to the late Chief Rabbi Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, of blessed memory, in the 1950s, I was present when, on numerous occasions, he unleashed attacks on the apartheid system, led by Dr D F Malan.

He was adamant that Judaism was totally opposed to the vicious race policies supported by most South African whites, including the majority of his own congregants and synagogue officers. He especially stressed the ethical teachings of the Hebrew prophets on justice, equality and love of the poor. Thus, he concluded that no Jew had a right to be a racist.

He told me to continue his path, no matter what the consequences. I was only too happy to do so and, in 1958, at the age of 22, I became associated with the white affiliate of the ANC, known as the Congress of Democrats and enjoyed the friendship of Struggle veterans Ben Turok, Ronnie Kasrils and many others.

During the Sharpeville uprising and the massacre of 69 black people I was questioned by the security police. They did not harm me physically, but my young wife was terrified for months to come.

My congregants of the Krugersdorp Hebrew Congregation were not impressed and I was ordered to cease my activities or leave. I took the latter path.

From then on, my life was a continuous tale of appointments and dismissals. I regularly received anonymous phone calls and even death threats.

I took my family to Israel for a few years where I taught at a school. But I missed South Africa. While we were secure in Israel, I was missing my friends in the Struggle.

I was offered a post in Johannesburg in 1975: Nothing had changed, quite the contrary. South Africa in the ’70s was a fascist state in the hands of tyrants. The Struggle had to go on and as the armed struggle intensified, so did my attacks on the regime.

Groups of congregants joined together to get me dismissed. They succeeded. A small group of supporters tried to form a congregation but it did not last long.

On the other hand, I received warmth and support from where it counted. Great leaders of the Struggle such as “Oom Bey”, Dr Beyers Naude; the then Archbishop Desmond Tutu (with whom I prayed and fasted); Helen Joseph and others, stood at my side. “Oom Bey” even provided me with some financial help. He was one of the great Christians of our time.

Out of work and with family obligations, I had no choice but to go into self-imposed exile in Zimbabwe, where the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, of blessed memory, had arranged for me to receive a congregational appointment.

It was there that I mixed with various exiles, including Thabo Mbeki, whom I entertained in my home. I also became a card-carrying member of the ANC.

The greatest honour I received in Zimbabwe was from the Catholic Church in recognition of my role in the Struggle. It was a special audience with Pope John Paul II, who was on a visit. This truly great man was so warm that I could feel it long afterwards.

When Madiba was released, I was able to return home. It was a great day for me, especially since I had been active in the “Release Mandela” campaign.



Rabbi Ben Isaacson

But I am no longer a member of the ANC and will not be voting for them. Today, they have no regard for the welfare of those who supported the Struggle at great cost - be they Jew, Christian or Muslim - or whatever.

Do I regret my actions and suffering in the Struggle? I am not alone, but among those who fought - not for the reward - but because it was the right thing to do.

Nelson Mandela’s vision was beautiful - injustice and racism had to be removed, if necessary by force.

A then hero of the Struggle, now President Jacob Zuma, and his brainwashed mass following, are tragically leading the country downwards, towards a black fascism and racism, which replaces the white one. It worships the leadership even to the extent of trampling on the country’s most precious document - the Constitution.

The Zuma government has led the country to the brink of economic collapse, being adjudged in many parts of the world as a junk state.

The cost of living is rising from day to day. It has become the done thing to blame white business interests for everything, but many white businessmen play a major role in investment in the country, whereas the number of black millionaires and billionaires increase by the year.

In the meantime, there is a surplus of millions of township dwellers who live in dire poverty, without water, healthcare and sanitation. Education is almost a lost cause, with black children being taught by inexperienced and unqualified teachers. Lower matric results are the inevitable outcome. Unemployment has become an everyday situation in most South African families.

I will celebrate Freedom Day as if Nelson Mandela and his colleagues were with us. It would help if the present ANC would go back into exile! Rabbi Ben Isaacson was a brave activist in the struggle.

## Provide a moral example to others, SA Jews urged

JEFF KATZ

Since the watershed elections of April 27, 1994, South Africa has by and large been very successful in upholding the fundamental tenets of a liberal, modern, constitutional democracy.

Under the auspices of the Independent Electoral Commission, national, provincial and local elections have been free and fair, even in areas once plagued by political violence. In creating legislation, a constitutionally mandated process of public consultation provides civil society and the general public with the opportunity to comment and give input.

The Constitution itself is highly regarded among those of even the most advanced Western countries when it comes to guaranteeing basic human rights and freedoms. A two thirds parliamentary majority is required to change it, and it is significant that even when the ANC enjoyed the necessary

parliamentary seats, it refrained from doing so.

In addition to universal suffrage, regular and free elections, and laws upholding essential rights and freedoms, a democracy’s resilience is anchored on such critical institutions as an independent judiciary, media freedom and an unconstrained civil society.

South Africa continues to do well in all three areas, as demonstrated by how effectively the courts, media and NGO sectors have combined in calling to account the Zuma administration.

South Africa is a society where diversity is not merely protected, but encouraged and in this environment, the Jewish community is flourishing. We have a vibrant network of communal organisations, through whose activities we are seeing increasing levels of involvement in Jewish life, in particular in the educational, religious, Zionist, welfare, culture and social outreach fields.

Politically, the South Africa-Israel relationship has come under pressure in recent years, but in the last few weeks we have seen encouraging developments, among them, the official visit by Israel’s Director-General of Foreign Affairs Dore Gold, the visit by Israel’s former President Shimon Peres and the ongoing work and engagement of the presidential envoys in the Middle East.

South Africa, however, still faces many serious and critical challenges, including corruption, social inequality and severe shortcomings in the educational system (at both school and tertiary level).

As South African citizens, we must involve ourselves in addressing these issues. We must at the same time also strive to provide a moral example for our fellow citizens by acting honestly and ethically in all our dealings. At the end of the day, our good name and reputation is all that we really have and it is up to us all to see that they are never compromised.

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SAJR ONLINE MISLEADS WITH HEADLINE TO MARGOLIS MATTER

It is regrettable that the SA Jewish Report has chosen to sensationalise a very sensitive matter to South African Jewry in its online coverage of the matter between Rabbi Julia Margolis and the Gauteng Council of the SAJBD.

SAJBD leadership explained in detail why Rabbi Margolis’ invitation to attend SAJBD meetings was temporarily suspended while she was involved in litigation against the organisation, which is in line with all legal disputes of this nature.

The SAUPJ was invited to replace Rabbi Margolis during this time and they have chosen to do so. The Gauteng chairman of the SAUPJ, Monica Solomons, will attend the Gauteng Council of the SAJBD meetings.

In its online reporting an unnecessarily provocative headline was used to further inflame this complex and sensitive issue: “In a shocking development - Rabbi Julia Margolis booted off the Jewish Board of Deputies Committee”.

This headline is misleading, inaccurate and in no way reflects the information contained in the article.

While we do note that the headline has since been amended, unfortunately this mischievous initial reporting has already caused damage by further polarising our community.

Shaun Zagnoev  
Chairman, Gauteng Council SAJBD

We respectfully maintain that the headline is not inaccurate or misleading. It merely makes use of colloquial language that is in accordance with most modern trends of news reporting on social media. Editor

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12 SA JEWISH REPORT

Letters

22 April – 6 May 2016

Disclaimer

The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report.

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TRUMP CAN BRING A REFRESHING HONESTY TO THE TABLE

After reading Uriel Heilman’s article on Jared Kushner (“Who is Donald Trump’s Jewish son-in-law, Jared Kushner?”) in last week’s Jewish Report, I was tempted to discover the “real” Donald Trump and his policies as a Republican presidential frontrunner.

While Bernie Sanders has accused Israel of a disproportionate response to rockets fired by Hamas, Trump sturdily defended Israel’s actions by saying: “If your enemy is firing rockets at your capital, I don’t know what a disproportionate response is.”

Prior to attending a monetary meeting last week (and meeting the Pope) in the Vatican City, Sanders also inaccurately referred to a figure of 10 000 killed in the Gaza/Israel war. His knowledge of Middle East matters is decidedly lacking.

Both Trump and Sanders differ significantly on various aspects of American policy, such as trade, military and immigration. On individual’s rights they are poles apart.

On abortion, Trump disagrees that it is a woman’s unrestricted right to abort. He disagrees on same sex marriage and he strongly argues that G-d should be kept in the public sphere.

Sanders conversely disagrees with Trump on all those views, curiously, because America is largely a Christian and principled country. In a JTA commentary in March, Heilman writes: “To understand American Jews who support Trump, they see the

Guidelines for letters

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LEARNING OR BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS - ‘TRY OBD APPROACH’

I read with interest Suzanne Belling’s article on dyslexia in a recent edition of Jewish Report.

My son David, who was born in England, was diagnosed dyslexic when he was 11. In his late twenties he was diagnosed bipolar and he died tragically in 2009 in South Africa. My daughters and I decided to write a book about him called “Too Difficult to Explain - a bipolar conundrum”.

Belling wrote a review of the book for Jewish Report last year; dyslexia occupies a small fraction of the book. Nevertheless, I think it is worthwhile to quote part of what my daughter Lalitte wrote: “David is diagnosed with dyslexia. Mum, in a typical refusal to accept easy labels, tracks down the most ground-breaking research on the subject.

“She discovers that David has a particular form of dyslexia - as defined by the Peter Blythe Clinic. Peter Blythe is an authority on Organic Brain Dysfunction (OBD), an off-putting term for learning difficulties, whose roots are neurological, not psychological.

candidate as refreshingly honest, unafraid to challenge political orthodoxies, which they say is what a president needs.”

He cites many Jews voting against Democratic Party frontrunner Hillary Clinton “because of her support for the Iran nuclear deal and her infamous (1999) embrace of Yasser Arafat’s wife, Suha, and the support given to the Clinton Foundation from Arab donors”.

It is said that Donald Trump and Charles Kushner (Jared’s father) resemble each other. Both grew successful and large real estate empires and both had a similar urge to see their surname on the sides of buildings.

Trump has many flaws but can bring a refreshing honesty to the table. He has commercial experience, unlike Sanders and Clinton, who, during their lives, have only run for government office. Trump’s articulation is easy to decipher, unlike that of Sanders or Clinton.

American comedian George Carlin once said: “By and large, language is a tool for concealing the truth.” There may be truth in that platitude.

Nathan Cheiman  
Northcliff, Johannesburg

EASY TO APPORTION BLAME ON ISRAEL FOR ARGENTINA'S ‘DIRTY WAR’

A recent letter in Jewish Report accuses Israel of being involved in Argentina’s “Dirty War” (1974-1983). This is slanderous and unfounded speculation.

The Internet references a book claiming Menachem Begin supplied Argentina with arms during the Falklands War (1982) against Britain. Begin’s motivation was “to avenge (Britain’s) crackdown on the Irgun during the time of the British mandate in Palestine”, for meddling to Jewish detriment on the ground and revenge for them having executed his good friend.

“Several newspaper editorials contended that Britain had no right to complain about Israeli arms sales because it (Britain) had consistently supplied weapons to Arab countries that were sworn to destroy Israel.”

One site quoted a senior Israeli official saying it was “highly unlikely that in the months of the Falklands War, when Israel was preparing the invasion of Lebanon (1982), anyone in the defence establishment, and certainly not the prime minister, would have the time or resources to organise emergency arms supplies for faraway Argentina”.

I found the article, which must have prompted the accusations (because it was quoted verbatim in parts) from Ha’aretz. This article expresses the frustration of Jewish Israeli Argentineans who filed a Freedom of Information Law request to obtain

details of the extent of Israel’s involvement (or non-involvement) with Argentina’s military regime of that time.

During Argentina’s “Dirty War” Jews were kidnapped and killed because of their political affiliations, not as a result of anti-Semitism. The state terrorism was largely in the form of abducting people who were anti- the regime, either shooting them immediately or sending them to concentration camps where they would be tortured and/or killed.

This would require guns, like hand-held pistols that are short-range weapons. “Mortars... air-to-air missiles... anti-tank weapons... gas masks... landmines... radar equipment,” etc. (that the article in Ha’aretz lists) are not the type of weapons used to abduct people off the street. These weapons are used for war against another country - like the Falklands War that Argentina was fighting against the British.

Ha’aretz, for all its flaws, has not drawn the conclusion that was drawn in the Jewish Report letter where it “...wishes to highlight Israel’s involvement in Argentina’s ‘Dirty War’... of Israel’s role in supplying military equipment to the regime... (other letter writers) claim Israel’s actions against Palestinians are in self-defence. The case of selling arms to a brutal dictatorship... show this isn’t always the case.”

Michele Engelberg  
Johannesburg

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# Crawford Preparatory celebrates 20th annual seder



SHELLEY ARENSON

Last week Friday, the Jewish pupils at Crawford Preparatory Sandton celebrated their 20th annual seder. Rabbi David Shaw spoke to the children and parent body and the grade 7 pupils led the seder with the grades 1 – 6 learners celebrating. Morah Heather and Morah Lindsay prepared the pupils for the seder and Elona Shaff produced some magnificent artworks which enhanced the atmosphere.

# Pesach preparations at Rosabelle Klein Nursery School

CARON LEVY, PRINCIPAL

Pesach preparations are on the go at Rosabelle Klein Nursery School. The children are learning about baby Moshe, the nasty King Pharoah and of course all the plagues that Hashem cast upon the people of Egypt so that the Jews, as slaves, could be free. The children, with the help of their teachers and assistants, have created wonderful Pesach art which reflects the essence of the festival of our freedom.



Pictured are the children of Rosabelle Klein's Baby Playschool together with teacher Tarryn Sacke and assistants Cynthia Tshoadi and Gogo Jan Tsibande.

More news on our website [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

# From small beginnings to an integral part of Johannesburg Jewry



SUZANNE BELLING

In June 2012 Rabbi Shaun Wingrin walked into a private retirement home in Melrose in Johannesburg to offer the residents bus transport to Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein's Sinai Indaba at the Sandton Convention Centre. Due to logistical constraints, Rabbi Wingrin ended up instead giving an inspiring Sinai Indaba feedback lecture to the residents following the event. In the week after this, a well-received Friday night Kiddush and brief talk on the portion of the week was arranged and sponsored for the residents and since then has become a weekly fixture. On getting to know the residents, their desire to be supported spiritually and emotionally was soon realised. This led to Rabbi Wingrin arranging for the appropriate annual celebration of the Jewish festivals and national Jewish events, through Shiur-On-Sally's Alley and its sponsorship and they have since become a fixture at Queen Alexandra

Retirement Home, Orange Grove. Since December 2014 Shiur-on-Sally's Alley decided to formalise its activities and expand its staff and to reach out to senior citizens in several private retirement homes and numerous apartment buildings in Melrose, Killarney and further afield. As of June last year, a very popular weekly shiur has been offered and the potentially life-saving TeleCare (emergency call for help system) was introduced and is supported and maintained by Shiur-on-Sally's Alley. Through this initiative, Torah Academy Primary School has since visited Our Parents Home, the Capri Hotel (both projects of the Chevrah Kadisha) and, currently, a pre-Pesach visit to Queen Alexandra Retirement Home in Orange Grove, where the learners sang Pesach songs and presented residents with gifts appropriate to the festival. Pictured are Leikie Rod; Mike Rod; Naomi Goldman; Elisheva Ainsworth and Batsheva Lurie.

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# KDVP gearing up for record-breaking sandwich making

NIRVANA ROGERS

King David Victory Park School will attempt to break a Guinness world record on May 12, by making the most number of sandwiches in an hour. The school aims to make between 27 000 and 35 000 sandwiches in an hour, all of which will be distributed to worthy causes around Johannesburg by student leaders with the help of Feed SA, an official support partner of this initiative. In a build up to the event, 47 volunteers made up of staff, parents and learners, came together on April 10 for a trial run and made 370 sandwiches in eight minutes. "May 12 also happens to be Yom Ha'atzmaut and a carnival will be held in celebration after the sandwich making." Feed SA, a non-profit organisation whose main aim is to establish feeding programmes and education within the townships for those who receive no other forms of funding and for the children who go to school on an empty stomach. The organisation does monthly food handouts ensuring that each child/person has at least two nutritious meals per day. Director of Feed SA Genevieve Nathan said: "We are currently feeding 6 000 people a day in and around the country and the sandwiches collected from King David Victory Park can go a long way." Headmaster of King David Victory Park Primary School, Rabbi Ricky Seeff, thanked a major supermarket group and its suppliers "and (are) excited to engage more people in the fight against childhood hunger. The event is a terrific opportunity for our community to come together with the express aim of making a small difference in the lives of thousands of South African children."

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# Yom Hashoah: Remember those who refused to be mere victims

DAVID SAKS

For Yom Hashoah 2016, the international theme chosen by Yad Vashem is remembering those victims of the Holocaust who resisted being brutalised by the horrific circumstances in which they were placed, but instead strove to maintain and preserve their essential humanity.

The SAJBD, which organises the ceremonies in the seven main Jewish centres countrywide, is this year putting a particular emphasis on educating the next generation and providing it with the tools to carry remembrance of the Holocaust forward into the future.

An information pack specially geared towards young adults has been prepared for the many high school learners from both the Jewish and government schools, who are expected to attend the ceremonies.

Over the past decade and more, the keynote speakers for Johannesburg and Durban have been prominent Holocaust survivors from abroad, brought out for the occasion by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies. These have included Auschwitz prisoner Eva Schloss, whose mother later married Anne Frank's father, Otto, Wallenberg survivor John Dobai and Ben Helfgott, who went on to become an



Olympic weight-lifter.

This year's speaker, Veronica Phillips, is from Johannesburg. Born in Budapest, Hungary, she survived years of internment in the international ghetto in her home city, the Ravensbruck, Penig and Johanneor-genstadt concentration camps and the Death Marches.

The Johannesburg and Durban

programme will also include a presentation by SAJBD National President and Director of the Durban Holocaust Centre Mary Kluk, who will focus on the specific lessons that the Holocaust has for South Africa today.

The traditional Yom Hashoah programme includes alternate Hebrew-English reading of "To everyone, there is a name/Lechol ish

Yesh Shem", lighting of six memorial candles by survivors, Holocaust poetry readings and renditions of the Hazkara, Partisan Song, Ani Ma'amin, Shiviti and Hatikvah.

Israel's Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk, will deliver a message on behalf of the State of Israel and Lt Hilton Kaplan, the Soldiers' Tribute on behalf of the SA Jewish Ex-Ser-

vicemen's League.

In addition, the Johannesburg ceremony will feature violinist Waldo Alexander playing the theme from the film Schindler's List and Redhill High School pupil Gemma Davies reading an extract from her poem "Brother", the prizewinning entry in the Writing, Poetry & Art Competition held by Chapman University, US.

Ceremonies will be held in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Pretoria and Port Elizabeth on Thursday, May 5 and in Durban and Bloemfontein on the following Sunday (May 8). The date of the East London ceremony is still to be confirmed.

SAJBD Gauteng Council Chairman Shaun Zagnoev will preside over the proceedings in Johannesburg which will take place as usual at the Martyr's Monument in West Park Cemetery, at 12:30.

\* For further information on the Yom Hashoah ceremonies around the country, contact (Johannesburg) Shirley Beagle, (011) 645-2583; (Cape Town) Gwynne Robins, (021) 464-6700; (Durban) Roseanne Rosen, (031) 335-4452; (Pretoria) Diane Wolfson, (012) 346-8792; (Port Elizabeth) Michael Simmons (041) 373-7433; (Bloemfontein) Leah Chabas, (051) 436-2207, and (East London) Ellen Ettinger, (043) 748-4481.

## Cooking up a storm at an ORT fundraiser



Tracey Baron shows the audience exactly how much latke mix to use.

MARCELLE RAVID

ORT SA recently hosted a fundraising cooking demonstration in aid of its ORT JET programmes. It was aimed at aspirant chefs looking for Pesach cooking ideas. Stacey Baron of Stacey Baron Catering and Sharon Lurie, "The Kosher Butcher's Wife", gave demonstrations of salads, meat roasts and sauces which were then tasted by the guests.

The event took place in a beautiful private home in Houghton under a Johannesburg autumn sky. Décor ideas for table settings were presented by Natasha Jacobson and kosher le Pesach nougat and marshmallows were donated by Ooh la la. Bev Milun practised her spot-on numeric profiling on some guests.

Goodie bags included Sally Williams nougat and kitchenware from Busby were given to participants.

ORT JET's programmes enable and assist the continued growth of small businesses in the Jewish community.

## Bethal's last Committee member passes on

OWN CORRESPONDENT

This photograph was taken almost 60 years ago on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the second shul in Bethal, Mpumalanga. Second from the left in the back row is Alec Meskin, then secretary of the shul, who passed away in Johannesburg on March 24. He was the last living of all the committee members in the photograph. His brother-in-law, Norman Ginsberg, who was married to Alec's sister Sarah is fourth from left.

Alexander ("Alec") Meskin was born on the August 30, 1919 in Johannesburg to Rachel and Leib Meskin. When his parents finally got to the registry office they couldn't remember the exact date and he was registered with his date of birth as August 29. He was the oldest of three siblings, the others being Sarah and Rivka.

He was brought up in Doornfontein in Johannesburg and later attended Athlone Boys' High.

The Second World War broke out in 1939 and unbeknown to his family Alec enlisted in the army as a medic. After his basic training he was transferred to Kenya and finally on to North Africa where he served at El Alamein in Egypt and Palestine.

After the war he returned to South Africa where he



Sitting: L Jackelson; Rev I Schwartz; Morris Hirschowitz (chairman); and I Stein. Standing: M Cohen; Alec Meskin; I Goldberg; N Ginsberg; L Hirschowitz; and C Goldstein.

worked for Associated Press. It was at this time that the opportunity arose for him to join his brother-in-law, Norman Ginsberg and his sister Sarah in Bethal, to work at Highveld Selected Seeds.

Before moving to Bethal, Alec met Cynthia Lack and they were married at the Yeoville Shul in 1951. Bethal in those days had a thriving, prosperous Jewish community with a high proportion involved in farming.

Because he always had a pipe dangling from his mouth, he earned himself the nickname "Mapiep", which was how his staff referred to him.

After the Bethal Mills and Highveld Seeds ceased trading in 1970, Alec joined the Ellerines Group at Volks Furnishers in Bethal.

In the mid to late 70s things in Bethal began to change and it was then that Alec and Cynthia decided to look to their future. Retirement beckoned and Durban seemed the ideal place to spend

their autumn years. The Meskins injected themselves into the Beachfront Jewish community and they became more involved in the now renamed Vryheid Shul where Alec was a regular at all the services and an active member.

Alec and Cynthia were married for more than 64 years. He is survived by Cynthia and three children, Rene, Geoff and Lynette and four grandchildren.

May his memory be for a blessing.

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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



**Above Board**  
**Jeff Katz**  
National Chairman

When Philip Krawitz, himself a highly regarded businessman, philanthropist and Jewish communal leader, was asked recently to give a talk on the part played by Jews in building the South African economy, he decided to focus on those who in addition to economic success made significant contributions in the philanthropic field. Some great names came up in his address, people who truly changed the country for the better and of whom our community is justly proud. Almost without exception these business icons generously supported Jewish causes, whether relating to local Jewry or to Israel.

*This column is paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies*

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

## We need perspective when it comes to Pesach

By the time this column hits the streets there will be only 24 hours until the arrival of Pesach 2016. For the past several weeks we have seen harassed shoppers rushing around everywhere, planning, purchasing and complaining about the costs of Pesach goods and the amount of work involved in Pesach preparation.

It's a crazy time of year with the chag always top of mind, consuming us with details about guest lists, menus, products and prices. While major chain stores compete for Jewish business, the community grapevine is alive with who is selling what and where the best deals can be found.

I am offering the gift of perspective as a gesture of comfort by telling you about the massive scope of work being done in the Chev's huge kitchens which are kashered so that 3 000 Pesachdic meals can be prepared for our residents every day.

Imagine, if you can, the range and quantity of products that were ordered to fulfil that objective, and what the numbers on those accounts might look like!

And it doesn't end there. Invitations were extended to community members to join us for sederim at Sandringham Gardens, Our Parents Home and the Capri.

In the weeks leading up to Pesach, Matzah Man visited all the Jewish day schools col-



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lecting product donations from the children and there was a collection point outside Pick n Pay too.

On Sunday morning all those donations were packed into boxes for distribution to people in need. As always, the packing was an inspiring community effort. I was there with my family and was delighted to see so many other families present as well as the huge group of students who came along to assist.

Ultimately almost 700 boxes were packed containing 2 000 chickens and other staples like matzah, grape juice, oil, sugar, etc.

I don't know of any two families who observe Pesach in exactly the same way. Some eat local matzah and others only imported, hand-made matzah.

Sephardi and Ashkenazi customs differ and traditions, passed down through generations, vary from one household to another. But, there is one thing on which our community all agree: Pesach is a time of caring about our fellow Jews and ensuring that their needs are met and that they have a place at a seder table.

What makes our community so special is that although we may get lost in the detail, we never fail to see the bigger picture and to celebrate the true spirit of Pesach.

May our partnership continue to thrive. Best wishes for a chag kasher v'sameach.

*This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha*

### World News in Brief

## Unesco approves resolution ignoring Jewish ties to Temple Mount

BRUSSELS - The executive board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) adopted a resolution last week Friday that ignores Jewish ties to the Temple Mount and Western Wall in Jerusalem. With 33 votes in favour, six against, and 17 abstentions, the resolution solely refers to the Temple Mount areas by their Muslim names - Al-Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif - with the exception of two references to the Western Wall Plaza in parentheses, the Jerusalem Post reported. The resolution also referred to the Western Wall plaza by its Muslim name, Al-Buraq Plaza. The resolution criticised a number of Israeli actions on the Temple Mount, such as plans to build an egalitarian prayer space near Robinson's Arch, and called on Israel not to restrict Muslim worshippers from the Temple Mount. (In fact, the Israeli government enforces a ban on Jewish prayer at the site.) The measure also condemned ongoing violence on the Temple Mount, but solely focused on Israeli actions and not Muslim rioters. (JNS.org)

Bertie was presented with the Eric Samson Mendel/Kaplan Communal Service Award. It was only the latest in a long string of public honours he had received over the previous quarter-century and more, and in truth he could just as easily have been given it when the SAJBD first instituted the award back in 2003. What spoke volumes was the reaction of the capacity crowd when the award was announced. In the outbreak of spontaneous cheering and rhythmic clapping - a reaction far from typical of South African Jews, we saw how greatly esteemed and admired

was the name of Bertie Lubner in our community. And just as importantly, Bertie saw it too. We will miss him greatly, but can take at least some comfort from the thought that the legacy he left will benefit ourselves, our country and the people of Israel for generations to come. I will miss the drives home with Bertie from Gauteng Council meetings. • Listen to Charisse Zeifert on Jewish Board Talk, 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00 - 13:00

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# Non-dairy asparagus soup with lots of flavour

**LIZ RUEVEN**  
**NEW YORK**

Veering off the matzah path toward plenty of fresh vegetables is an easy way to stay healthy and feel satisfied during the eight days of Passover. I like to serve vegetable soups to take the edge off that inevitable and inexplicable hunger we sometimes feel when we have, uh, matzah belly.

Eating plenty of fresh greens takes the cue from one of the Hebrew names for Passover, Chag Haaviv, or spring festival. With symbols of rebirth and new beginnings front and centre on the seder plate, consider including green vegetables and herbs as often as possible.

Trying to eat seasonally? One of the earliest spring crops is asparagus, a perennial plant that yields for up to 20 years after the plants are established. Asparagus can be picked when they reach a height of 152 - 203 mm, which syncs with the soil temperature reaching 50 degrees. This is why asparagus so often

**Creamy non-dairy asparagus soup**  
**Yield 6 to 8 servings**  
**Ingredients:**

- 2 bunches asparagus, chopped (woody ends snapped and discarded)
- 1 small head cauliflower, rinsed and separated into florets
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large red onion, peeled and chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 6 cups vegetable broth
- 4 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped (reserve some for garnish)
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice (or more to taste)
- 1/4 cup chopped pistachios (optional)

find their way onto early spring menus.

This velvety, bright green asparagus soup is a perfect starter. It comes together in one pot, making it easy to assemble, puree and reheat without adding extra dishes to your load. It owes its creamy texture to cauliflower, but don’t tell anyone. The only flavour it lends is a sweet nuttiness to the distinctive, slightly grassy flavour of these early spring stalks. The soup is dairy free, gluten free and vegan, so you won’t get any pushback from the crowd gathering to celebrate the start of the new season.

**Notes:** This soup may be made in advance and refrigerated for 2 - 3 days. It may also be frozen for up to 2 - 3 weeks. You may use a food processor to puree, but an immersion blender is infinitely less messy and well worth the purchase. Place the pot in the sink to puree so any splatters are contained. Adding herbs at the very end maintains their bright and distinctive flavours.

**Directions:**

- In a large soup pot, heat olive oil until shimmering. Sauté onions until soft. Add garlic and toss for 2 - 3 minutes.
- Add asparagus and cauliflower to same pot. Stir and cook, covered, for 10 minutes.
- Add vegetable broth, bring to a boil and immediately reduce to a simmer. Cook for 20 minutes or until cauliflower is tender.
- Remove from heat and stir in fresh herbs.
- Cool soup and puree to velvety texture with an immersion blender.
- Add lemon juice and taste, adding salt and pepper to your liking.
- Serve garnished with additional fresh herbs and pistachio halves if desired. This soup is lovely sipped from small cups or spooned from traditional soup bowls. (The Noshers via JTA)



• Check out Liz Reuven’s blog, *Kosher Like Me*. The Noshers food blog offers an array of new and classic Jewish recipes and food news, from Europe to Yemen, from challah to shakshuka and beyond. Check it out at [www.TheNoshers.com](http://www.TheNoshers.com).

## Around the Jewish World

### Putting Jerusalem in the frame

JERUSALEM - Jerusalem Film and TV Fund director Yoram Honig’s attempts to turn the capital into a film powerhouse have begun to pay off.

Think of film industry hot spots around the world. Hollywood, of course, will top the list, and you could add New York, London, Paris, Rome and Mumbai. But what about Jerusalem?

Things have really started to shift in the capital in recent years. Much of the growth has been down to the sterling work of the Jerusalem Film and TV Fund which was founded in 2008 under the aegis of the Jerusalem Development Authority and does its best to support a wide range of projects, from big-budget international ventures to animation productions and post-production work carried out locally.

Honig says there is absolutely no reason why the capital should not lead the national film industry. - Jerusalem Post

### Australian rabbis address LGBTI inclusion

SYDNEY - A panel of guest speakers, including both Orthodox and Progressive rabbis, will come together on Sunday, May 1 for the first time to openly discuss issues, barriers and opportunities for greater inclusion of Jewish members of the LGBTI community.

Titled “What Place is there for Gays and Lesbians in the Jewish Community?” and moderated by New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies CEO Vic Alhadeff (originally from South Africa), the forum’s line-up includes the Great Synagogue’s chief minister Rabbi Dr

Benjamin Elton, Emanuel Synagogue’s Rabbi Jacqueline Ninio and LGBTI activists Brando Srot, Dawn Cohen and Justin Koonin.

Forum organiser Nadene Alhadeff, who co-chairs the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia New South Wales division’s social justice and status of women committee, described the event as “an exciting opportunity for the community to explore and discuss the personal, political and religious challenges facing the LGBTI members of our community in an open and supportive manner”. - Australian Jewish News

### Heathrow’s no-fly zone for Cohanim

LONDON - Cohanim have been advised not to take El Al flights to Israel from Heathrow to avoid the risk of ritual contamination from bodies being transported for burial.

The Vaad Mishmeres Hakohanim, a group which protects the purity of Cohanim, has published advice on potentially problematic flights following queries from the public.

According to Jewish law, descendants of the ancient priesthood are forbidden to come near a corpse except in the case of specified close relatives.

El Al flights from Gatwick, Stansted and Luton do not transfer bodies for burial in Israel; neither does British Airways from Heathrow.

But around 10 per cent of El Al flights from Heathrow carry a body.

Since it was usually only possible to confirm whether a body would be on board a few hours before departure, the Vaad advised Cohanim to avoid any flights where there was the possibility of a body being transferred.

Vaad member Eli Katz said most transfers took place on night flights.

Priestly purity was “one of the most complex” areas of Jewish law, he said, which is why there were “different valid halachic opinions”. - London Jewish Chronicle

### Hearing for Jewish hairdresser forced not to work on Shabbat delayed

MONTREAL - A Jewish hairdresser whose complaint of discrimination by his Jewish employer was upheld by the Quebec Human Rights and Youth Commission late last year, is still waiting for the unsettled case to be brought by the commission before the Quebec Human Rights Tribunal.

Richard Zilberg worked for Spa Orazen (now Spa Liv Zen) from October 2011 to August 2012 when he was dismissed. He was forbidden from working on Shabbat by the main owner of the business, Iris Gressy, because he’s Jewish, Zilberg testified.

Gressy, an observant Jew, operated the spa on Saturdays, but did not work there herself at that time. Zilberg said he was fired after telling clients about what he felt was an unfair directive from Gressy.

The commission recommended that Zilberg be compensated \$20 000 by the spa and Gressy for material damages of loss of income and other hardship, moral damages and punitive damages for intentional violation of his civil rights.

Zilberg’s complaint was filed for him by the Centre for Research-Action on Race Relations (CRARR), a non-profit organisation combating discrimination. It took three years for the commission to release its decision, and the respondents did not pay him damages by the deadline set by the commission of October 23, 2015.

“Normally, in cases of non-compliance, the commission brings the file to the Human Rights Tribunal within a month or two,” said CRARR executive director Fo Niemi. - Canadian Jewish News

### The surgery-free operating room of tomorrow is here now

HAIFA - Exablate MRI-guided ultrasound platform from Israel can fix conditions from fibroids to tremors without anaesthesia or incisions.

In March, 200 participants in the 16th International Symposium on Therapeutic Ultrasound in Tel Aviv saw a live-streamed medical procedure to cure a woman’s essential tremor without incisions or anaesthesia.

Neurology and radiology experts at Rambam Health Care Campus in Haifa used the Exablate Neuro system developed in Israel by InSightec. Guided by magnetic resonance (MR) imaging, they focused multiple ultrasonic beams of acoustic energy to heat and destroy target cells in the patient’s thalamus.

Looking on in amazement from Tel Aviv, the conference attendees saw a 65-year-old baker - who had suffered tremors for a decade despite medication - walk out of the three-hour procedure, sit down and slice a celebratory cake to share with the neurology team.

“I wanted to cry, because I could not remember when I was able to drink a glass of water, and for the first time in over 10 years I can finally return to serving people in my bakery,” she said.

The first patient to get an Exablate Neuro treatment at the Haifa hospital is still without tremor two years later, said Rambam neurologist Ilana Schlesinger. - Israel 21c



# Garmin navigates itself back to the future

Before the explosion of smartphone mapping apps, Garmin was synonymous with navigation. Now it is fighting its way back to relevance.



**GOLDSTUCK ON GADGETS**

Does anyone remember the PND? That stands for personal navigational device, and it was a standard accessory bought by drivers of mid- to upper-end vehicles. Typically, it was mounted on the inside of the windscreen via a suction cup. Does that ring a bell?

The dominant brands providing these clunky tools were Garmin and TomTom, and they became synonymous with the idea of maps going digital. But that was before the smartphone, and in the last seven years the global PND market has plummeted.

From 40 million sales in each of 2008 and 2009, according to Berg Insight, it will have dropped to 10 million by 2019. Market researcher GfK puts the 2014 total at 22 million - down by 21 per cent from 2013. The cause is obvious: By 2013, the monthly active user base for navigation apps on smartphones had reached 180 million.

How, then, do the likes of Garmin and TomTom survive? It's obvious but hardly simple: they have to reinvent themselves, and they have to reinvent every category in which they operate.

TomTom has put the emphasis on its mapping solutions, driven by telematics and traffic data. Its fleet management solution is used by around 600 000 professional drivers. Its mapping systems are built into on-board vehicle navigation systems, and power Apple Maps as well as Uber.

Garmin, on the other hand, has set out to reinvent the categories for which it is already well-known in the consumer market. Its sports watches and activity trackers are among the most highly rated in this segment and it has relaunched its fitness product range with the vivo sub-brand.

It includes the vivofit fitness band and vivosmart HR activity tracker, which give the market leaders, the Fitbit Charge and Charge HR, a metaphorical and physical run for their money. The main difference is that, rather than focus on activity in itself, they focus on intensity of activity. It is no coincidence that the Vitality fitness rewards

programme run by Discovery Health is also making a transition from rewarding activity to rewarding intensity of activity.

“The focus has moved away from steps and to things like intensity minutes,” says Marc Bainbridge, category manager for fitness and outdoor products at Garmin Southern Africa.

“The movement to get people moving has been great, but now there’s a disconnect. Intensity minutes will drive people to get the real benefits.”

There is a strong South African connection in Garmin’s sports range. Last year it bought the world’s first cycling radar, which warns of cars approaching from behind, from Stellenbosch-based start-up iKubu. It rebranded it as the Varia Rearview Bike Radar and integrated it tightly into Garmin’s Edge range of cycling computers and the Varia head unit.

“You need so much experience to back such a device and to make it into a form factor that you can take to world markets,” says Walter Mech, CEO of Garmin for Sub-Saharan Africa. He points out that the investment is not unusual. Garmin has become world leader in niche recreational areas through similar acquisitions, like the compass manufacturer Nexus and boat communications brand Fusion, which has given it PND-like dominance in the marine market.

“Getting all these things to talk to each other is where Garmin is a specialist and continues to develop new markets,” says Mech. “You have to innovate continually, otherwise you’re stuck with three models of a single device. Our strength lies in our diversification.”

**Reinventing the navigational device**

And now it is the turn of the PND to be reinvented. Garmin has dropped the Nuvi

name and rebranded its devices as the Drive series, which it says is “specifically designed to help increase driver’s awareness”. The Drive, DriveSmart, DriveAssist and Drive-Luxe each take the concept to higher levels.

The features that differentiate these devices may be found individually in a range of apps and gadgets, but are rarely well-integrated. It starts with warnings for upcoming sharp curves, alerts for users driving the wrong-way on a one-way street, and fast-approaching traffic jam notifications, and culminates in fatigue warning alerts on long journeys, with suggestions for potential break times and available rest areas.

“The Nuvi brand was seven or eight years old,” says Mathys Thompson, automotive product manager at Garmin Southern Africa. “Because navigation has become so commercialised and everyone has got it on smartphones, we had to find something to make it relevant again.”

The basic devices, with a range comprising the Drive 40, 50 and 60, replace the



entry-level Nuvi units. The more advanced DriveSmart introduces Bluetooth, traffic smart notifications, calendar alerts, a social media feed and WhatsApp integration.

The DriveAssist includes a dashcam, which adds lane change warnings to the mix, along with Go Alert for when you stop at a traffic light and the camera picks up traffic in front is moving while you remain stationary. Finally, the DriveLuxe offers a premium metal housing and capacitive touch screen.

The functionality, says Thompson, will keep evolving in ways that smartphones can’t match.

“We are now integrating the devices with a backup camera. People are demanding an after-market backup camera, meaning one you can fit to the vehicle after you’ve bought it, allowing you to see behind the vehicle when in reverse. The BC 30 Wireless Backup camera comes with a transmitter for the back of the car and a receiver that plugs into the Drive device.”

Thompson offers one simple but massive benefit of the way Garmin is navigating itself back to the future: “The most exciting development of the new Garmin Drive series is that the driver awareness features typically seen in luxury vehicles are now accessible as an aftermarket solution for all drivers.”

*\* Arthur Goldstuck is founder of World Wide Worx and editor-in-chief of Gadget.co.za. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram on @art2gee*

World News in Brief

Israeli Jordan Valley farmers to EU: we will not label products

JERUSALEM - Israeli Jordan Valley farmers told European parliamentarians last week that they would not label their products as coming from “the occupied territories”, despite European Union guidelines that may require them to do so.

An April 13 conference in the Jordan Valley was attended by a number of European representatives, including the leader of Austria’s far-right Freedom Party, Heinz-Christian Strache.

David Elhayani, the head of the Jordan Valley Regional Council, said at the conference: “We will not label our agricultural produce. We are determined to fight this phenomenon and to struggle against this unethical and discriminatory [demand] that has remnants of a dark time.”

Strache expressed his support for the Israeli farmers, saying: “We will do everything to ensure that the boycotts get taken off the agenda.” (JNS.org)

Explosion on Jerusalem bus injures 16

JERUSALEM - An explosion injured 16 people on a bus in Jerusalem on Monday afternoon.

The bus was driving on Derech Hebron Road in the city when the explosion took place. Magen David Adom paramedics arrived on the scene and treated approximately 16 wounded individuals before transporting them to the Shaare Zedek Medical Centre, Yedioth Ahronoth reported. At least two of the wounded are reported to be in serious condition.

Jerusalem’s Fire Department also dispatched teams to put out fires that engulfed two buses and a car, which were set on fire during the explosion on one of the two buses. The source of the explosion remains unclear. (JNS.org)



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South African Jewish Report



# Ronnie Kasrils: The killing game has already started

**RICHARD POPLAK**

The former Minister of Intelligence Services Ronnie Kasrils does not have anything good to say about the current administration. He has joined the revived Phansi Zuma Phansi campaign, and has begun to speak out regarding the president’s peccadillos dating back to the sepia-tinted exile days. A bad man leads a traumatised country, and the fellow who used to run the spies thinks the killing game has already started.

Ronnie Kasrils thinks sh\*\*’s about to get real. On a recent Monday, we sat on the verandah of his new house in Greenside, overlooking a modest garden that had already submitted to winter’s cold hand. Fraying plant life aside, the killing of South African citizens, insisted Ronnie over a glass of premium tap water, had already begun. His house was a classic Johannesburg bungalow, and we were within view of a small office that bore an unfortunate resemblance to the room in Mexico City in which Leon Trotsky was wacked with an ice-axe. That act of counter-counter-revolutionary trephination would come to symbolise the factions that eventually rip all movements apart, only for the remnants to be rearranged into a simulacrum of what came before. Did Ronnie genuinely fear the coming of the ice-axe, or were his mantic revelations just the rumblings of a former spook entering his dotage? “Look, I’m 78,” he said, “I’ve lived a long and interesting life. I’ve got nothing to fear because I’m fine with my conscience. If they want to come for me, they know how to find me.”

Who is they? Ronnie was referring to the buffoonish securocrats and their minions that form President Jacob Zuma’s factional forward army. As useless on paper Police Minister Nkosinathi Nhleko, Minister of State Security David Mahlobo, and Directorate for Priority Crimes (or Hawks) head Major-General Mthandazo Berning Ntlemenza may appear, there can be no denying that Zuma has built around him a security cluster that is puppy-dog slavish, and who by convention wield the state’s monopoly on violence. Ronnie believes that they will soon get the opportunity to wield it at will. He wanted me to think of the killings of ANC members in KwaZulu-Natal, of the Glebelands hostel murders in Umlazi, of the armed raid on the Helen Suzman Foundation offices, which saw hard-drives and other data removed during what appeared to be an organised robbery perpetrated by folks who organise robberies. “I think people need to be afraid,” said Ronnie. Ronnie, people are afraid.

●

If you’re unfamiliar with Ronald “Ronnie” Kasrils, we should probably begin by acknowledging that he is “no angel” - his description. But he is a committed commie badass, and one of the very few members of my tribe that refused to collaborate during the thousands of Shabbats that constituted the apartheid regime. He was radicalised by the bloodletting at Sharpeville, joined the ANC in 1960, and helped found the party’s armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), in 1962. During the exile years he traipsed across the usual hotspots, and in the early sixties met a young

comrade from KwaZulu-Natal, about whom he has had much to say of late. The big black mark on Ronnie’s career - besides his Stalinism, depending on how you look at these things - is the Bisho Massacre, during which 28 ANC members were killed by forces loyal to the Ciskei Bantustan chieftain Oupa Gqozo. Ronnie was criticised by the subsequent Goldstone Commission for leading 80 000 marchers into an episode that was almost certainly not going to end well. But people die in revolutions, as Ronnie knows only too well. “If they come back at me with that,” he said of his former homies currently holding office in the Union Buildings, “I know how to defend myself.” After the regime fell, Ronnie marched his way into the Transitional Executive Council’s Sub-Council on Defence, and from there he became the Deputy Minister of Defence, the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, and ultimately, in 2004, the Minister of Intelligence Services. He lasted in that post until President Thabo Mbeki’s ousting in September 2008, and was privy to much of the filth that proliferated during that unhappy family war. Now, Ronnie is a pensioner who has stumbled back into the landscape of his youth - he’s not getting along with the authorities. He has lent his voice and his presence to the re-upped Unite Against Corruption collective, a loose affiliation of unionists, religious leaders, former ANC stalwarts, civil society organisations and Cape Town picnickers who are trying to form a coherent and vocal mass movement. So far, they’ve failed. I wanted to know whether he was wasting his time. At the ribbon cutting of this new collaboration, which occurred a week before last on the steps of Constitution Court, we were promised a “rolling plan of action” that included, among other things, “conversation”. In my experience, governments aren’t typically conversed out of power. Ronnie shrugged. “This emergent Left really needs to find its centre of gravity,” he said. (I’d argue that the patchouli stench suggests that the “emergent Left” is little more than the old Left in new T-shirts, as opposed to the Fallists and their ideological kinfolk who are changing stuff.) “It’s rather hesitant.” It has probably occurred to Ronnie that this New Left’s enemies know it better than it knows itself. And that its primary target is nowhere near as dumb as most people assume him to be.

●

Ronnie has known all the players bounding about on this Cirque du Soleil set for a very long time. Most particularly, he has known Zuma since the president was a 17-year-old comrade coming up through the ranks, a charismatic man-boy who brought more Natal into what was not quite a broad enough church at the time. Zuma’s biography has yet to be properly written, but as far as Ronnie was concerned, after the future Prez was arrested in 1963 and exiled in 1975, his personality was all but fully formed. “There were things that we saw. Certain attitudes to women or ideas about homosexuals - backward not in the sense that he was uneducated, but in how he chose to... be. And although we were not all Cromwell’s Puritans - a wife here, a girlfriend there, it was a hard life. Still.” At first Zuma appeared charming, then he appeared to be a liability. The way Ronnie saw it, this was how most exiles regarded the man. But exile had its own non-rules, and much of the ANC’s core was forged in this necessarily amoral desert. What, Ronnie

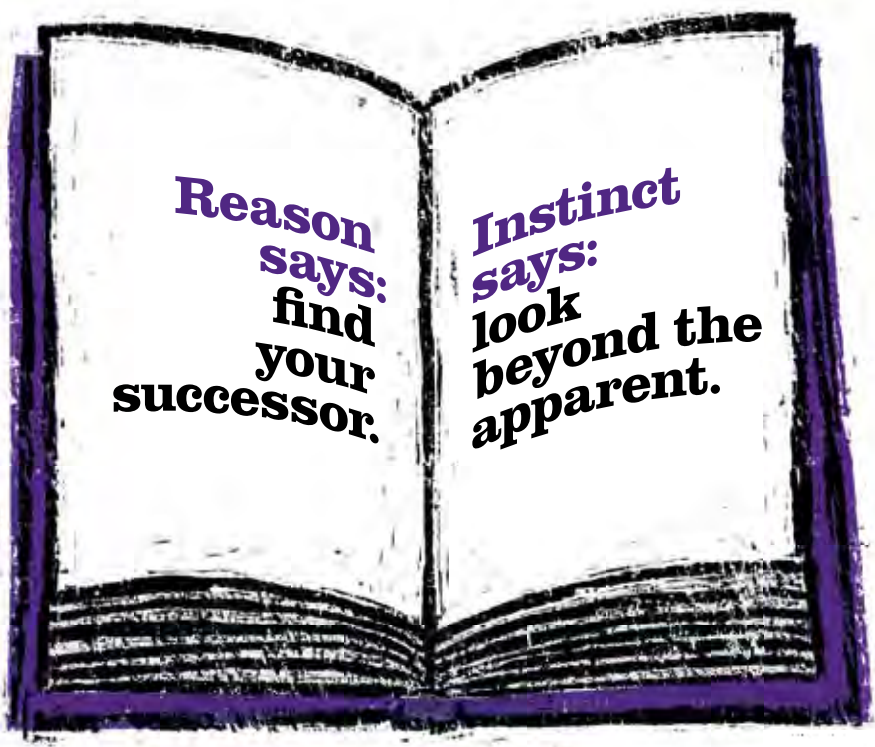
wanted to know, were he and his comrades supposed to do? “We were dealing with a ruthless enemy and you could be struck down at any time.”

Where in this universe did morality serve as useful? Ronnie and Zuma worked together in Mozambique between 1980 and 1983, as chairman and secretary of the underground committee respectively, side by side within the MK structure. It wasn’t a happy marriage. By the time Zuma returned to South Africa from exile, a man who had always enjoyed a simple lifestyle was, according to Ronnie, “taking and taking and taking. He comes back to the country, he’s avaricious. And it gets him into the well with Schabir Shaik.” As the proto-Gupta entity, Shaik probably needs no introduction in these pages. There was always going to be SAS (Someone After Shaik, if you’ll forgive the acronym), and the poor Guptas were simply next in line with the cashola.

So, how to best this guy? “Well, Zuma is kept in power by the National Executive Committee and the general congress of the ANC,” said Ronnie. “But a president can be recalled. So where is the tipping point? Given the huge patronage network, and the people who owe Zuma their livelihoods, it’s tough. “The only way is through the law, and we’ll see the so-called Stalingrad offence - and fight house to house. Time does run out on these people. We do have the Spy Tapes issue coming up.” But, as Ronnie noted, Tony Blair and Silvio Berlusconi are still scampering free. Justice for Zuma must be considered in geological time, and the dude just turned 74, so... yeah. The numbers aren’t good. Ronnie’s real play, however, and therefore the play of his happy-clappy coalition, was the upcoming municipal elections. He said that should the ANC lose a major municipality, or should the numbers indicate a slip below the 60 per cent popular vote baseline “then the real fear will hit them. August” - the elections are called for August 3 - “is going to be a really big deal. “I know the way they see things from inside,” continued Ronnie, “and the pressure from outside counts. Add that to a poor performance in the local elections, and...” Boom! Ronnie said that the ousting, or the attempt thereof, would come at a cost. The pressure would be met by aggression, as it always is. “There are guns out there - there’s ever-present danger.”

Will people get killed? “It’s very possible.” But the status quo, Ronnie wanted me to know, was too ghastly to contemplate. “We didn’t fight for this. What I can’t bear is the comrades who have come in and are milking the people. That I won’t stand.” There are lots like Ronnie, more every day. For all of them, sh\*\*’s about to get real. The Jacob Zuma Ronnie knows does not play fair. But as the author Margaret Atwood once said, with more acid than perhaps even Ronnie can stomach: “I’m an optimist. I like to show that the Third Reich, the Fourth Reich, the Fifth Reich did not last forever.” Justice, gauged in geological time, is not really justice at all. Ronnie, the ancient spook from a previous age, knows that all too well. His warnings of violence come from a previous age, too. Which doesn’t make them any less sinister.

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As the smiles on the children's faces in South Africa will last a lifetime, so too will the legacy of our beloved patron,  
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Our heartfelt condolences to the Lubner family Hilary, Anthony, Marc, Sue and Richard. The smiles of the Smile Foundation children will continue to light up the world, just like Bertie's did when he entered a room.  
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- JH&GC and partners host a screening of the documentary, "A Snake gives Birth to a Snake". Venue: Constitution Hill. Time: 17:30 for 18:00. Admission free. Booking: shirley@jhbhocaust.co.za or (011) 640-3100/2148.
- UZLC hosts communal leader Marlene Bethlehem on "50 Years of a Communal Journey". Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 – 14:00. Contact: Gloria (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421
- Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets at St John's College Auditorium in Houghton. Compiled by Ron Cowley. A DVD of Big Bands will be presented followed by an audio tribute to band leaders who have anniversaries and a DVD will be screened on "Two Girls and a Sailor". Time: 14:15. Marilyn 072-243-7436 or Jack 082-450-7622.

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World News in Brief

Arab Knesset member: Ban Jews from Temple Mount 'in any way possible'

JERUSALEM - Israeli-Arab Member of Knesset Jamal Zahalka has called on Palestinians to prevent Jews from visiting the Temple Mount holy site "in any way possible". just a day after the Joint Arab List party lawmaker returned from a two-month suspension from the Knesset.

"In light of the daily increase of [Jewish] ascent to the [AI] Aqsa Mosque, it is up to us to stop it in any way possible," Zahalka told the Palestinian website Dunya al-Watan, lamenting that Israel "continues its 100-year-old colonial Zionist project".

Although Israel gained eastern Jerusalem and its holy sites from Jordan during the 1967 Six Day War, the Temple Mount is being administered by the Islamic Waqf, a Muslim trust overseen by Jordan that limits non-Muslim visitation and bans Jewish prayer. Israel, however, provides security at the site. (JNS.org)

After earthquakes, Israeli relief group sends teams to Japan and Ecuador

JERUSALEM - The Israeli international relief organisation IsraAID has sent a delegation to southern Japan, where more than 50 people have been killed and thousands have been injured as a result of two strong earthquakes in the Kumamoto province since last week Thursday.

The Israeli relief delegation in Japan comes after another IsraAID delegation was dispatched to Ecuador, where another earthquake killed more than 70 people and injured hundreds last Saturday.

In addition to distributing food, the IsraAID volunteers are offering medical and psychological assistance to the affected communities.

"In addition to the dozens of volunteers of IsraAID who are working hard to provide support to the teams on the ground, IsraAID plans to provide ongoing support to both countries and regions in need," the organisation said in a statement, the Jerusalem Post reported. (JNS.org)

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# The Jewish side of football great Johan Cruyff

**JACK MILNER**

It turns out that Cruyff, the Dutch player with his twinkle toes, one of the greatest players the world has ever seen, who died on March 24, aged 68 after a long illness, had a close relationship with Judaism. In fact, the Holocaust played a major part in his life.

On a trip to Israel in 2013 to celebrate his son Jordi's first title-win as Maccabi Tel Aviv sport director, the 1974 World Cup runner-up visited Yad Vashem. While there he entered documents for his wife, Danny's, family members.

Regina de Groot, Rozette Behr and Judith van den Berg - all sisters of Danny's uncle - were in their forties when they died in Sobibor and Auschwitz concentration camps.

One of his good friends, Jewish sports journalist Frits Barend, has now revealed another incident which not only demonstrates Cruyff's compassion, but his humility as well.

Barend was not yet born when his brother and parents had to flee their home during the German invasion in 1940. They were hidden by a local farmer called Frits, after whom he was named. Four decades later, with Cruyff due to attend a Netherlands game 25km from the farm, Barend saw a way to repay his namesake.

"I took the man who saved our lives - an old, sick farmer who could only wear wooden shoes because his feet hurt - to see Johan. I said to Johan: 'This is the guy I told you about, who gave shelter to my family in the war.' Cruyff said: 'Oh, of course - you are the guy who saved the lives of Frits'

could tell his friends: 'I met Johan Cruyff. He's a good guy.'" Barend said the open, friendly way Cruyff spoke to the farmer, was "typical Johan."

He behaved the same in the dressing room as he did with the Queen.

"He was the only person in the

orative shirts which incorporated his famous No 14 - the number he also wore on his kippah when he used to visit Israel.

Barend explained that Cruyff had been able to have such a profound effect on so many people because he had no interest in those aspects of life that divide



**Football legend Johan Cruyff who died last month, had strong ties to his Jewish roots.**

family. I'm proud of you. How nice to meet you.'

"While others laughed at the old man for wearing wooden shoes, Johan talked to him for five minutes. The farmer died three months later but, before that he

world who didn't realise he was Johan Cruyff. That made him so special. I miss him. He was always willing to talk."

Maccabi Tel Aviv also paid tribute to Cruyff, with players wearing black armbands and commem-

people. "He thought only in terms of human beings, not of religion, politics, race or gender; for him it was just about trying to reach your goals and giving everyone the chance to play sport."

## World News in Brief

### Hamas gearing up for next war with Israel, IDF officer says

JERUSALEM - Eyeing a fresh round of violence with Israel, the Hamas terrorist organisation is sparing no effort to enhance its arsenal and train its operatives, especially from the Gaza-ruling group's elite "Nukhbah" terror unit, a senior officer with the Israel Defence Forces Southern Command told reporters last week hursday.

In a briefing with military correspondents, the officer said that Hamas' special forces currently include some 20 000 operatives.

Hamas also strives to develop its drone and naval capabilities, including terrorist divers, he said, adding that the terror group was actively pursuing improved rocket-launching capabilities. But Hamas has yet to rehabilitate its pre-2014 firing abilities, which were significantly crippled during Israel's Operation Protective Edge.

Hamas is currently focusing on developing its short-range projectile fire apparatus, which proved more effective during the summer 2014 war with Israel, as it challenged the Iron Dome missile defence system's interceptors. The officer said the Islamist group was trying to increase the amount of explosives its arsenal of short-range projectiles can carry, as well as to develop mid-range rockets that could "escape" the Iron Dome. (JNS.org)



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## Wonderful success of KDH Sports Week

**JACK MILNER**

When King David High School Linksfield gear up for a sports week, they do it in style.

This year's event, which was staged last week, saw the school transformed into a mini Olympic Village with flags, balloons, banners, gazebos and a massive security tank.

It was the project of Head of Sport Greg Hurvitz, who put countless hours into planning the project with Lisa Klotz, who has changed the face of the school sports committee and is the driving force behind its success.

They even managed to entice Johannesburg Executive Mayor Parks Tau to join them at the opening ceremony to light the torch indicating the start of the event.

Some of the sporting events were quite extraordinary and one that captured the attention was an exhibition tennis match between the Leviner cousins from grade 1 against first team tennis captain Josh Hertz and head boy Daniel Gewer, who is also vice-head of the sports committee.

In other events the first netball team went head-to-head with the first team rugby boys on the netball field.

There were netball matches against Crawford Sandton, rugby contests against teams from Fourways High School and a night six-a-side soccer tournament.

The school was also treated to a talk by Raymond Hack and videos of the week's events were shown. There was also a tribute paid to the Israeli athletes murdered at the 1972 Munich Olympics.

Before the matches, the captains read a pledge reaffirming the commitment their teams have subscribed to of "No to racism, No to anti-Semitism, No to bigotry, No to



**Johannesburg Executive Mayor Parks Tau and King David Linksfield Head of Sport Greg Hurvitz light a torch to start the Sports Week at the school last week.**

homophobia, Yes to drug-free sport and Yes to equality in sport".

The Sports Week had the full support of principal Lorraine Srage and put the spotlight on sporting talent at the school.

Erin Goodman and Erin Lazarus, student heads of the sports committee, assisted with information on this article.