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# Jewish Report

■ July 22 2016 / 16 Tammuz 5776  
 ■ Volume 20 - Number 27

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Photo: Emma Merdjan

## Community embraces Mandela Day

The South African Jewish community responded overwhelmingly to the annual call to dedicate 67 minutes of their time to change the world for good on Nelson Mandela Day which is commemorated annually on Monday July 18, Mandela’s birth date. Outreach and community organisations, schools - those which had already reopened after the winter break - and private companies, all did their bit to lend credence to the spirit of Nelson Mandela and the ubuntu he stood for. At United Herzlia Schools in Cape Town learners participated in various creative ways. The high school provided a tea and refreshments for the 130 residents of the Haven Old Age Home in Woodstock. Pictured is Jodie Slot serving John Petersen, a resident of the home. See pages 4 and 5.

“ It is in your hands to create a better world for all who live in it ” - Nelson Mandela



In celebration of Mandela Day, Firzt Realty Company and public volunteers came together to make gift packs for little patients in hospital and hotdogs for children at orphanages.



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# A prophecy that’s hard to swallow



Parshat Balak  
**Rabbi Dr David Nossel**  
Waverley Shul

There is something about Bilam’s prophetic status that’s hard to swallow. How does a person get so close to G-d as to reach the level of prophecy and yet be lumbered with the ignominious title of rasha - “wicked”?

I can understand a wicked person pretending to be a prophet. So it would make sense to me to say that Bilam was not really a prophet, but a charlatan. But our sages say explicitly that Bilam was definitely a real prophet. Not only that, but they teach that Bilam’s prophecy rivalled that of Moses!

They derive this from the verse that says: “No other prophet ever arose in Israel like Moses” - in Israel not, but among the nations yes! Who? Bilam the wicked.

Mind-boggling! Wasn’t a prophet a person who intended to genuinely connect to G-d

and succeed in doing so? How can one possibly stumble across prophecy while taking a stroll through the path of wickedness? And if one genuinely intended to connect to G-d and succeeded in doing so, how could one be called “wicked”?

Although the sages equated Bilam and Moses as prophets, Rashi in his comments on the first verse of the Book of Vayikra (Leviticus) points out that their prophetic practices were not quite the same.

Moses, explains Rashi, was called by G-d prior to every announcement and conversation and mission. This calling was an expression of endearment, an expression used by the ministering angels, as is written “each [angel] called to the other”. Prophets of the nations of the world, on the other hand, continues Rashi, are visited upon by G-d in a way that is termed as temporary and impure, as it says: “And G-d happened upon Bilam.”

Moses, reveals Rashi, was called by G-d before every engagement because he understood that any engagement with G-d was “a call to service”, and therefore was “preceded

by a call” - a call to respond to an announcement, a conversation and a mission, by being of service.

It was because Moses would choose to interpret the opportunity to engage with G-d as a call to duty that made the call so endearing to G-d. Similarly, the ministering angels call to each other as a call to be of service - to minister to G-d.

For Bilam (and Rashi includes the other prophets of the nations as well), the opportunity to engage with G-d, to get close to Him, was not seen as a call to respond and contribute. It was seen as the opportunity to engage with G-d as “THE happening”, as the destination in and of itself.

The Hebrew root of the name Bilam is bila - to “swallow”. A person who seeks the closeness to G-d as the destination is ultimately seeking self-gratification, to take in, to receive, to swallow. And although G-d is still prepared to engage, He nevertheless considers that engagement to be “temporary and impure”.

The difference between Moses and Bilam

was not in their attainment of closeness to G-d. It was in Moses’ rejection of swallowing (others) in order to be close to G-d, and in his embracing the service of G-d to be of benefit to others and to take care of G-d’s world, in order to be like G-d.

Moses our teacher, taught us the true meaning of getting close to G-d: to get close to G-dliness, not to let it get stuck in our throats...

Shabbat Times		
<b>Friday 22 July / 16 Tammuz</b> <b>Saturday 23 July / 17 Tammuz</b>		
<b>Starts</b>	<b>Ends</b>	
17:19	18:10	Johannesburg
17:42	18:36	Cape Town
17:00	17:53	Durban
17:21	18:13	Bloemfontein
17:13	18:08	Port Elizabeth
17:06	18:00	East London
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## Community

# The heat is being turned up on get refusers

**BRIAN JOSSELOWITZ**

A woman who has, after five years, been freed from the chains of being refused a get (Jewish divorce), will be talking about her experiences at a programme organised by the Go-Getters, the SA Get Network, and the Union of Jewish Women at the HOD in Orchards in Johannesburg on August 2.

One of the speakers is Michelle Blumenau Alge, co-founder of Go-Getters, who will talk about the importance of community participation in the get issue.

The agunah - “woman in chains” - Rachel (not her real name as her civil divorce is not final),

has been separated for five years.

She told Jewish Report: “It was practically impossible to get my get. The nature of my husband made it exceptionally challenging, as he was opposed to giving it to me. It was a difficult situation until I approached Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag directly.

“He has been wonderful. The get would have been part of the civil divorce, which is not close to being finalised at this stage. My husband only recently gave me the get due to his anxiety of public exposure following the reports in the SA Jewish Report and the campaign run by the Go-Getters in partnership with the Union of Jewish Women (Cape Town) branch.” Rachel’s topic is “My get nightmare and divorce settlement”.

Other speakers on the programme include Rabbi Kurtstag on “The get system and get refusers (women too)”. Advocate (and mediator) Liza Segal will discuss the legal situation in South Africa, followed by a question and answer session and refreshments.

The organisations who are pleased that the spotlight is now falling on the get refuser issue include Koleinu SA, the UJW and Shalom Bayit.

Wendy Hendler, co-founder and director of Koleinu SA, said: “Koleinu believes that get refusal is a form of domestic abuse which in South African law falls under the definition of ‘a serious invasion of the complainant’s privacy, liberty, integrity or security’, according to the Domestic Violence Act.

“This form of emotional or psychological abuse is one spouse’s attempt to control the other through intimidation and coercion without resorting to physical tactics. This argument was used successfully in 2015 in Melbourne, Australia to criminalise this behaviour and impose a jail sentence on the perpetrator if found guilty.

“This is a precedent that should be applied in



South Africa. Koleinu is currently gathering a group of lawyers to try and introduce this ruling into South African law. We are encouraged by the latest Beth Din policy of excommunicating violators of the spouse’s right to liberty.”

Koleinu SA is a non-profit organisation launched in 2013 in response to the rising incidence of abuse cases, including sexual abuse. It provides a confidential and anonymous helpline to support victims of abuse and also has an educational and advocacy wing to raise awareness.

Lynne Raphaely, national president of UJW SA, said the organisation is committed to the promotion of the rights and status of women. “Denying a woman a get and keeping her ‘chained’ is viewed as a human rights abuse. It is a form of emotional as well as domestic abuse and it is therefore incumbent upon us to con-

demn those who perpetrate the unacceptable behaviour of keeping women in chains.”

Irene Zuckerman of Shalom Bayit, an organisation that helps bring domestic abuse in the Jewish community into the open and make women aware that “they aren’t alone” in this, said: “It’s often not only the get that is being refused during these times but in most cases there is financial abuse as well.

“Children are caught up in the ongoing harassment during this time. There is also, of course, the issue of security for the wife, children and probably her whole family and a strong stance has to be taken against a husband who goes against both Jewish and South African law.”

• Tickets are R50 each. For more information, e-mail [info@ujw.co.za](mailto:info@ujw.co.za) or phone (011) 648-1053.

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# Rabbi Berland finally home in Israel to face the music on sex allegations



ANT KATZ

After more than three years on the run, Rabbi Eliezer Berland (pictured), leader of the Shuvu Banim sect, with headquarters in Jerusalem, was extradited to Israel on Monday night’s El Al flight departing from Oliver Tambo Airport, accompanied by Interpol agents. On landing at Israel’s Ben-Gurion Airport, he was handed over to the Israeli police who took him into custody where he was scheduled to be questioned on “suspicion of serious sex offences”.

Website Israelnationalnews.com reported that the extradited rabbi lost consciousness during the hearing at Ayalon prison and that he was evacuated to Assaf Harofeh Hospital in Tel Aviv. The site reported that his followers plan to set up a protest tent to call for his release.

Some 50 of his followers took the same flight as him on Monday night and hundreds were at Ben-Gurion Airport to meet him on Tuesday. The extradition was conducted with full co-operation between the SA authorities and their Israeli counterparts - but in complete secrecy. Reciprocal arrangements were made with the two countries’ police, justice and foreign affairs departments and even El Al did not know about it.

The Israeli Embassy told SA Jewish Report that South African authorities had placed him in the custody of Interpol agents who escorted him on the flight to Israel.

Berland fled Israel when called for police questioning on allegations of sexually abusing some female members of his sect and has wandered from country to country for three years with two stints in South Africa. The Hawks and Interpol failed with two attempts to arrest him before he fled to Holland in 2014, and again after his return to South Africa late last year. They finally got their man just prior to Pesach.

Israel’s outgoing Deputy Ambassador to South Africa,

Michael Freeman, told Jewish Report on Tuesday that, “on landing at Ben-Gurion Airport, he was handed over to the police and immediately arrested and taken into custody where he is being questioned on suspicion of serious sexual offences”.

Speaking on behalf of the embassy, Freeman said: “We are pleased that this part of the story has finally come to an end.”

Freeman, who will be taking up a new position in the UK next month, said that the “co-operation between the South African and Israeli authorities was professional and excellent on every level”.

Freeman says not even El Al was aware before the time that they were to be carrying one of Israel’s most wanted fugitives. Around 50 of Rabbi Berland’s followers bought all the remaining seats on the plane, says Freeman, “and if there were more available they would have taken those too”.

On Rabbi Berland’s English-language blog, his followers on Tuesday posted the following: “The Tzaddik is coming home! 12 Tamuz is the day that Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn was released from a capital sentence and imprisonment in Soviet Russia (1927), today is the day that the Tzaddik Rav Eliezer Berland will be returning to Eretz Yisrael.”

The embassy’s Michael Freeman asked to “publicly thank the South African authorities and all those involved in the case, both here in South Africa as well as Israel”, for their assistance.

Israelnationalnews.com on Monday afternoon published an interesting angle to the story saying that Berland’s own son, Nahman, who had been in South Africa to celebrate his father’s 79th birthday with him, now condemns his “criminal father” and, further, that “Breslov rabbis warn public to ‘keep away’ from fugitive’ Rabbi Berland”. Berland’s son has since called the remarks “a fake”. Read more on [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za).

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## Curator calls for claims from overcharged Bobroff clients

ANT KATZ

The curator of personal injury lawyer Ronald Bobroff & Partners Incorporated (RBP) is working towards winding up the practice after the firm’s two key directors, father and son Ronald and Darren Bobroff, fled to Australia in March.

Johan van Staden, head of member affairs at the Law Society of the Northern Provinces (LSNP), was appointed curator of RBP soon after the pair skipped the country, facing arrest by the SA Police Service’s Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (Hawks) on charges of overcharging victims for claims against the Road Accident Fund (RAF).

Van Staden told the SA Jewish report that clients of the practice who have won RAF awards and remain unpaid, will be paid their settlements - and that they may have their legal fees reduced if they had been overcharged by the firm. This is due to the maximum fee which attorneys may charge for contingency fees (so-called no-win-no-pay) being 25 per cent of the settlement awarded. This was confirmed by the highest courts in the land, against the protestations of the Bobroffs.

The father and son pair absconded to Australia after being informed by the Hawks that they should present themselves for arrest on charges of fraud and money laundering, and possible theft of money that should have been held in trust. They agreed to do so in three days but absconded during that time - but not before allegedly depositing millions of rand into the cheque account of Elaine Bobroff, wife of Ronald. Elaine maintains she did not know about the transfers.

Elaine is being presented with a prestigious award from the Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society (JWBS) for 40 years’ service this month. The JWBS is a 110-year-old organisation that works closely with the Chevrah Kadisha.

The state is now poised to institute extradition proceedings against the two Bobroffs for fraud and money laundering. Having inspected RBP’s books, Van Staden’s team have added contraventions of the Income Tax Act, the VAT Act, the Companies Act, the Attorneys Act and the Rules of the Law Society to the litany of other charges.

A highly placed source, who cannot be named, told Jewish Report two weeks ago that the amount of money overcharged, missing, misappropriated or due in unpaid taxes by RBP had passed the R1 billion mark last month.

The Hawks referred the question of whether this figure was correct (the last reliable figure Jewish Report had was R550 million) to the NPA. “At this stage the NPA is not in a position to confirm the amount of funds till all investigations are finalised,” the NPA’s regional spokesman for Gauteng, Phindi Louw, had said in response at the time.

The NPA opened their own investigation in early May, adding to those already being conducted by the Hawks; the Law Society of the Northern Provinces; the curator of the now-defunct legal practice; the Justice and Correctional Services Department; and the SA Revenue Services (SARS).

The Road Accident Fund also started combing through all their prior cases which involved the Bobroffs in March and, in just the first week, laid almost 20 charges with the NPA, claiming that the errant lawyers had billed them, the RAF, for appointments supposedly held with clients - who subsequently denied that those meetings in fact took place.

- Johan van Staden can be contacted at (012) 316-0600.

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# Jewish community got into



Members of the Jewish community flocked to Jozi Blue in Johannesburg to make and package muffins for Mandela Day.

SUZANNE BELLING

Organisations and individuals within the South African Jewish community responded overwhelmingly to the annual call to dedicate 67 minutes of their time to improving the world on Nelson Mandela Day. Outreach organisation Afrika Tikkun is holding an entire Mandela Month, as opposed to one day. Its programmes are many and included Monday's activities at the Afrika Tikkun Uthando Centre in Braamfontein where CEO Marc Lubner and other senior members of the organisation were joined by Public Protector Thuli Madonsela and celebrity fashion designer Gert-Johan Coetzee in insulating one side of the dining room of the centre with paper cups, to be covered in Africa Kanga material.

This installation demonstrates an innovative low to zero cost solution to heat and cold insulation in shacks and low-income housing. The idea came about when the public protector visited Namibia in May this year. A community radio station there had created a way to soundproof its studio using coffee cups and material which demonstrated that an insulation structure can be made which can change the environment for shack dwellers that are fighting a very cold winter.

Part of the morning was spent planting spinach in the vegetable garden and serving the children lunch. Other activities undertaken by Afrika Tikkun were food parcel collections, a sanitary pad drive, the repainting of a principal's office in Phutaditjaba, Alexandra, as well as the painting of outdoor play equipment. In Diepsloot, cleaning, clearing, gardening and grass planting took place, while reading and comprehension classes were given at Orange Farm, as well a mural and other painting and creative endeavours. At Mfuleni in Cape Town, there was the distribution

of friendship cards and a food drive and media coverage of the Early Childhood Development Centre. Mandela Day was celebrated by Yad Aharon and Michael by inviting members of the Johannesburg community to select one or more of 67 ways to partner with them. "Whether giving of your time - in a volunteer capacity - or donating money, clothing or items towards a specific project of your choice, there is something apt to feed every soul," said Jody Eberlin, of Yad Aharon. Examples she gave were volunteering on a weekly basis, delivering food boxes, adopting a family and sponsoring its food for a year, donating towards the organisation's own outreach programme, and redeeming Smart Shopper points and donating them to the organisation.

The Union of Jewish Women branches nationally began handing out their specially packaged toothbrush and toothpaste sets, donated by a major manufacturer, to disadvantaged children to promote dental care. Oral hygienists were visiting schools to give advice as some of the children have never had the opportunity of owning their own toothbrush and are not aware of the importance of dental care. The United Sisterhood volunteers in Johannesburg celebrated Mandela Day with children from the Sizwe Hospital School. Most of the patients at this hospital are ill with HIV/Aids-related illnesses, says Maria



Sivea Stein, UJW chairman in Pretoria; oral hygienist Hester Botha; and Petunia Moetlo, principal of Sunnyside Primary School handing out toothbrushes and toothpaste to the excited children in grade 0.



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# action on Mandela Day

Gonsalves, office manager for the Sisterhood. The hospital is a project of the US.

“They were given a party and each child was presented with a gift.”

Pam Green, of Second Chances, had 320 people at Discovery Soccer Park in a mammoth sandwich-making project called “Spread the Bread”.

“It is in association with Feed a Child and Free Food South Africa. We were given 1 600 loaves of bread and 200 kilos of jam,” she said.

Shmuel Montrose, of Jozi Blue, exhorted the Jewish community to join him in the fight against poverty.

Volunteers made and packaged muffins “for people who have no idea what it’s like to walk into a cozy coffee shop and order a coffee and muffin...”

At Herzlia Schools in Cape Town which opened on Monday ahead of the Johannesburg Jewish day schools, learners participated in 67 minutes of community service. The high school chose to provide a tea for the 130 residents of the Haven Old Age Home in Woodstock.

At Herzlia Weizmann Primary the grade 1s and 2s created their own books about numbers, colours and shapes which were donated to underprivileged children, while the grade 3s collected biscuits, chocolates and other delicious treats for the Sea Point firemen.

The entire school participated in the Weizmann 67 Minute Dance-a-thon and all funds were donated to the Nelson Mandela Foundation. Weizmann principal Anton Krupenia said learners “danced their hearts out. We had many conga lines going and lots of fun was had by all.”

VAT IT in Johannesburg together with Reel Gardening and Little Green Men supported the Westbury Youth Centre (WYC) which looks after underprivileged youth.

VAT IT’s initiative was to support an agricultural project which encourages the youth to plant and grow their own produce. The company put “vegetable care packages” together to teach the learners about structure, responsibility as well as how to earn a sustainable income. Each bucket comprised of seeds strips, manure, sawdust and information cards on each vegetable being planted.



Andi Shapiro; Glenda Skudicky; and Romy Greenberg (organisers of the VAT-IT’s bucket event).



Herzlia Weizmann learners participating in the Dance-a-thon.



United Sisterhood volunteers visit children from the Sizwe Hospital School.



Celebrity fashion designer Gert-Johan Coetzee and Public Protector Thuli Madonsela at the Afrika Tikfun Uthando Centre in Braamfontein.



Aiden Kalk with his father Ryan, making sandwiches at Discovery Soccer Park.



Herzlia Weizmann grade 3s at the Sea Point fire station.

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# Paying tribute to South African heroes

professionally. After the 2014 sale of Kerzner International Holdings, the company he began after moving to London in 1987, to Dubai’s Investment Corporation, he was rumoured to have looked at some new opportunities, including the failed Baha Mar resort in the Bahamas. But, he says, that was mere speculation.

Kerzner is a man who changed the face of the hotel industry globally. A more in-depth profile will appear alongside those of other glittering South African Jewish personalities in our upcoming 2016 Achiever Awards Magazine in honour of the Achiever Awards gala dinner on August 28. The dinner helps fund our publication, so please buy your tickets and help support us!

An even more famous and global South African we honoured in South Africa this week is former President Nelson Mandela. Remembering him on what would have been his 98th birthday on July 18, members of the South African Jewish community participated through volunteer organisations, their schools and individu-

ally, in numerous acts of goodness and kindness to pay tribute to an individual who altered the course of South African history and provided a blueprint for reconciliation and transformation globally.

Interestingly, Mandela asked to meet with Kerzner upon his release from Robben Island and picking up on Kerzner’s unrivalled ability to organise a bash of epic proportions (from his legendary New Year’s Eve parties at his Hout Bay home, to the highly successful concerts of the first international stars like Frank Sinatra to break the apartheid embargo and play at Sun City), Mandela asked him to help organise his inauguration.

The theme of this year’s Jewish Achiever Awards is “Igniting the Soul of Africa” which celebrates how South African Jewry have contributed to that mission. Whether it’s as a community on Mandela Day distributing toothbrushes to disadvantaged children, or through remarkable individuals like Kerzner, we have indeed done much to ignite our beloved continent’s soul.



## South African Jewish Report

Part of the goal of the Awards is to seek out the South Africans who will be our future global heroes and change makers.

Despite the Jewish community’s brain drain and losses to emigration, we happily continue to produce heroes - both the everyday ones as well as the iconic, history-transforming ones.

In a world of economic gloom, security threats and perceived lack of leadership in many quarters, that is indeed something to celebrate.

– Vanessa Valkin, editor



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During the July school holidays, I visited Ibiza for the first time - the exotic Spanish island where the rich and beautiful flock to enjoy its beaches and famous nightlife.

For Sol Kerzner, it has become an annual August holiday destination. Over the past few summers he has rented as many as three villas at one time for his children and grandchildren there. But then Kerzner always had an eye for location and being in the right place at the right time.

He had the vision to transform an unattractive tract of land near

Rustenburg but in the former Bophuthatswana into Sun City, the most astounding gambling and hotel resort South Africa has ever seen.

I met with him in London this month at another chic location, the elegant Mayfair office building on Conduit Street that he uses for meetings. It is a conveniently short distance from his Holland Park home where his neighbours are other business titans, film stars, Arab oil sheiks and the like.

But these days, occasional meetings are all Sol Kerzner, 80, is busy with

# As London prices climb, Manchester beckons Jews

CNAAN LIPSHIZ  
PRESTWICH, England

When Yitzchak Horwitz’s family opened one of the first Jewish businesses in this leafy suburb of Manchester - a bookstore that also sold Judaica items - it served a small Jewish community that had only recently moved there from the downtown area.

“The centre was run-down after the war, living conditions deteriorated, we had to get out,” said Horwitz, a man in his 80s who runs and owns the Judaica World store that his family opened here in 1960. “A few Jewish families, a small synagogue and that was pretty much it.”

Nevertheless, Horwitz stuck it out. And half a century later, his business is among dozens of Jewish shops servicing thousands of people from the Jewish community of the Manchester area, some 320 kilometres north of London. Now this community is among the fastest growing in Western Europe, providing Horwitz income from selling Jewish and Hebrew holy books, textbooks and stationery.

At a time when many Jewish communities outside London are dwindling, the one in the Manchester area is growing almost beyond its own capacity due to the high birth rate of its charedi Orthodox nucleus and an influx of Jewish newcomers, drawn here by the excellent infrastructure for observant Jews and a cost of living that is roughly half that of London.

“People in London seem to think they earn loads more money,” said Selena Myers, a Liverpool-born observant Jew in her 20s who works in the office of a local Jewish newspaper.

Four years ago she moved from London to Manchester, where she lives with her husband. “In fact, the cost of living is maybe three times higher than in Manchester,” whereas the sala-



ries are not. London, she said, “doesn’t make financial sense.”

London is the world’s most expensive city in which to live and work, according to a study published in March by the Savills international real-estate agency. Accommodation for the average Londoner - calculated as a total of housing and office rental costs - comes to \$105 000 a year, putting London ahead of New York (\$103 000) and Hong Kong (\$96 800).

Not only is renting in Manchester half of what it is in London, but the average price of a home in the greater Manchester area is \$144 000 - a full fifth of the average price in London.

When the sun does shine, however, Prestwich is bustling with activity by Jews of all denominations. It has five kosher supermarkets near its centre. One features a sushi bar where customers line up for freshly prepared glatt kosher rolls.

There are clothing shops catering to the modest standards of observant women, several kosher butchers, a vegetable shop with exotic produce like gooseberries and mangos from

Israel and a French-style kosher patisserie.

According to a 2011 census by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, Greater Manchester in the previous decade saw a 15 per cent growth in its Jewish population, to 25 013. Conversely, the city of Manchester itself lost 463 Jews. It is home to Britain’s second largest Jewish population after London, where most of the country’s 250 000 Jews live.

In Manchester, as elsewhere in Western Europe, Jewish families that once lived in middle- and working-class areas of the city, have moved into the suburbs, partly to improve their quality of life.

“I chose Manchester because I’m from South Africa,” said Dianna Schwartz, an observant mother of four. She immigrated five years ago to Prestwich from Cape Town because of what she described as “a deteriorating security situation after 1994”, the year apartheid ended.

“I can’t live in a London apartment, I need space and green. That’s how I grew up,” she said. “But getting that in a part of London that is near a proper Jewish school is just impossible for us.”

Manchester’s Jewish influx has left its 12 or so Jewish schools and kindergartens in need of more space and staff, which has helped generate work, particularly for women.

While Manchester remains significantly cheaper than London, the influx is nonetheless driving up prices and creating a housing shortage in the city’s heavily Jewish areas.

Manchester is not the only affordable city in northern Britain with an active Jewish community; Liverpool, Leeds and Bristol all have them. Yet Manchester emerged as the largest because it retained an observant and charedi nucleus, which over time produced community institutions that cemented it as the epicentre of Jewish life outside London, according to Rabbi Hillel Royde of the Manchester Beth Din.

Thus Manchester is the only city in northern England with a large charedi school. Myers and her siblings attended school in Manchester for that reason even when they were living in Liverpool, she said.

This inbound traffic is “creating some problems that are nice to have, but they are nonetheless problems,” Royde said.

His rabbinical court is one of the community’s main tools for solving those problems. Established in 1902, when heavy industry attracted thousands of Jewish immigrants from Europe to the area, the court served 30 butcher shops, supervising ritual slaughter across the region.

Over time it has taken over kashrut supervision for the large food producers in the Manchester area.

In 2014, the Manchester suburbs became the site of Britain’s largest eruv, a 21 kilometre perimeter that includes Prestwich, Crumpsall and Higher Broughton. Without an eruv, charedi families with children would effectively go into weekend curfews. (JTA)



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# Getting rude and dirty with politicians should be fine



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Attempts by SABC boss Hlaudi Motsoeneng to censor the public broadcaster show one face of the question of how far freedom of expression should stretch. Another is revealed by contentious incidents in South Africa and Israel of sexual political paintings which have raised hackles.

Can political art be compared to journalism? In Israel, a society of boisterous debate, the head of the art department of Tel Aviv’s Shenkar College, Larry Abramson, resigned this week to protest censorship of a student’s painting of a naked woman bearing a representation of right-wing Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked’s face against a confusing background of colourful drapery.

The student said the work, intended for exhibition with final projects by graduating seniors, was meant to induce “discomfort” conveying nihilism and an “absence of a coherent position”. The college president instructed that it should be excluded or the face blacked out.

Abramson told Haaretz that without freedom of expression “we don’t have an art school”. If, out of self-censorship, images are silenced or hidden, then “[how] can we advance critical, open and provocative debate, all the things for which art exists?”

Should it make a difference if the work portrays a man or woman? The college president - a woman who was previously minister of culture and also education - said censoring the painting was motivated not by Shaked’s politics but the judgement that the work was hurtful toward women: “As a woman who has [repeatedly] suffered

from sexist attacks... I will not let it happen.”

Which takes us to some controversial paintings showing President Jacob Zuma in sexual poses. “The Spear”, by Brett Murray, on exhibition in 2012 showed Zuma with genitals exposed, part of a solo show entitled “Hail to the Thief II”.

The ANC threatened to sue for defamation and force Johannesburg’s Goodman Gallery to remove the piece, which was later vandalised by visitors.

This month, paintings by Ayanda Mabulu were shown in an exhibition at Constitution Hill, one showing Zuma licking the naked posterior of billionaire businessman Atul Gupta, who has been accused of state capture. An ANC flag appears in the scene, which is a plane’s cockpit - a clear metaphor for capital flight.

Mabulu defended his work saying he was “lashing the hands of the oppressor until they let loose”. He opposed “the hierarchical system where if you climb up, you can be looked at as a demigod, and we, the people on the ground, are looked at as nothing”.

In racially charged South Africa, the fact that Mabulu is black averted racism accusations. If he were white the outcome would probably have been more serious. Despite howls of protest on social media and elsewhere, the works

**It comes with the territory of being a high-profile public figure that political adversaries can portray you in almost any manner.**



remain untouched.

It recalls a piece by cartoonist Zapiro in 2008 showing Zuma undoing his belt lasciviously while “Lady Justice” is being held down by his political cronies, apparently about to be raped. Zuma started proceedings to sue Zapiro for infringing his dignity, but later withdrew.

What is the role of such lewd political artworks? Should they be banned out of respect for the person’s dignity? Or are they legitimate commentary which, if expressed in another medium - say words or film - would not raise such hackles?

It comes with the territory of being a high-profile public figure that political adversaries can portray you in almost any manner.

In art as in journalism, the right to offend is inherent to freedom of expression. Censorship’s dangerous slippery slope is epitomised by Motsoeneng forbidding SABC staff at a June workshop to question Zuma in coverage for next month’s municipal elections, instructing them to “respect” him, because he is the president. Does this mean he should be “untouchable?” The answer must be an unequivocal “No”.

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

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# Israel dedicates week in December to Diaspora youth

The Israeli Ministry of Israeli Affairs has announced the Israeli government’s approval of a week of connection to Diaspora Jewry, to take place in December. It is officially called the “Week of Connection to Diaspora Jewry”.

The Ministry of Diaspora Affairs said in a media release that, “Meetings are scheduled between hundreds of students from around the world to discuss Jewish tradition and identity, as well as their connection to Israel.” The emphasis strongly falls on Jewish youth.

Minister of Diaspora Affairs Naftali Bennett said: “Creating and deepening the dialogue between Jews living in Israel and their brothers and sisters (in the Diaspora) is vital.”

The Knesset and the Israeli education system are scheduled to dedicate their activity to topics related to the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

“During this unique week a central meeting is planned between hundreds of Jewish teenagers from Israel and overseas, as well as additional activities in the education system and youth movements. Additionally, there will be joint activities for students from Israel and around the world to discuss Jewish identity and their ties and relationship to Israel,” the release from the Ministry of Diaspora Affairs.

“The Knesset will dedicate a day to special sessions and professional discussions, as well as an event for world Jewry, under the directive of the Speaker.”

Minister Bennett reiterated: “The State of Israel belongs to all the Jews. World Jewry can claim many credits in the creation and prosperity of Israel and connecting the Jewish people to their Jewish identity and to the State of Israel is strategically important.

“Our ability to influence the future of the Jewish people is through creating and deepening the dialogue between Jews living in Israel and their brothers and sisters living around the world.”

Besides these goals, the Week of Connection to Diaspora Jewry aims to strengthen Israeli knowledge regarding Jewish life in the Diaspora and increase the understanding that Diaspora Jewry is a strategic asset for the continuation of the Jewish people and propelling Israelis to action “around this important topic”.



# South Africa is in the cross-hairs of Jihadi movements

HOWARD SACKSTEIN

It has long been presumed that it was unofficial but de facto government policy to turn a blind eye to the fact that South Africa has been host to Islamic fundamentalist terrorist training camps as well as being a transit point - in return for immunity from attack. But all of that came crashing down last week with the revelations that two brothers Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee Thulsie were arrested by the Hawks in the advanced stages of planning an attack on US and Jewish targets in South Africa. The Hawks who had been watching the twins, swooped down on them to avert an imminent ISIS-inspired attack on South Africa.

In 2015 Peter Fabricius, foreign policy expert of the Independent Media Group, wrote: “The revelations in the secret State Security Agency (SSA) reports leaked to Al Jazeera should finally dispel any illusions that might still remain that South Africa is safe from attack by groups such as al-Qaida because our government has the correct international stance.” Apparently Fabricius was right. South Africa is no longer immune to Islamic terror.

According to Fabricius, “Documents written in 2012 reveal that the SSA, working with secret services of other countries, foiled at least two al-Qaida/al-Shabaab suicide bomb attacks in South Africa between 2007 and 2010. One target was a Jewish centre in Cape Town. Another of the attacks was also aimed at a conference it seems, though whether that was also a Jewish event is not clear.”

Iraqi Ambassador to South Africa Hashim al-Alawi told Fox News in 2015 that between 60 and 300 South Africans were believed to be fighting for ISIS in Syria and Iraq. In April of this year, according to the Times Media Group, Bilal Cajee from Vereeniging was the fourth South African killed in Syria while fighting for ISIS.

The charge sheet presented by prosecutors against the Thulsie twins revealed that “the accused unlawfully and intentionally conspired to commit the crime of terrorism by planning to cause explosions at a mission of the United States of America and Jewish institutions (all such structures located in the Republic of South Africa) in order to endanger life, cause death and/or serious bodily harm and the destruction... to such structures...”

The charges of terrorism being brought against the “Terror Twins” should come as no surprise. South Africa has long been in the cross-hairs of the Islamic Jihadist movement. Only careful intelligence and behind the scenes inter-governmental co-operation has prevented previous attacks.

The website almanac.afpc.org reports that “since the

late 1990s, al-Qaida has used South Africa as both a physical safe haven and a conduit of support”. It states further that, in 2004, a leaked US Central Intelligence Agency report stated that “[a] new tier of al-Qaida leaders is using South Africa as one of its bases”, with as many as 30 of the organisation’s leaders “thought to be in and around Cape Town, Durban and the Eastern Cape”.

Al-Qaida operations in South Africa were meticulously documented by De Wet Potgieter in his book, “Black Widow White Widow”, a must read for anyone interested in the topic.

Reports almanac.afpc.org: “Al-Qaida operatives have been apprehended in South Africa several times in recent years. Ahead of South Africa’s 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections, the country’s police commissioner announced that authorities had arrested and deported several individuals linked to the bin Laden network. The actions led to subsequent raids and arrests in Jordan, Syria, and Great Britain.”

The terror warnings issued by the American and British governments during the Muslim festival of Ramadan this year were not the first for South Africa.

In September 2009, the US government closed its facilities across South Africa after it received credible threats and nearly two years ago the South African Jewish community went on lock-down after receiving threats against its safety.

Information about the threats of Islamic groups to South Africa periodically leak to the media. Saajid Muhammad Badat who was sentenced to 13 years for an airline bomb plot in 2005, gave evidence to a US Federal Court in Brooklyn, New York. He revealed that that he had planned attacks against Jewish targets in South Africa on behalf of al-Qaida and travelled to Belgium to meet with a potential suicide “martyr”.

He said that he met Osama bin Laden on more than one occasion and also met with Abu Hafs al Masri, bin Laden’s number two. Al Masri had instructed him to carry out an operation which involved naming potential Jewish targets al-Qaida could attack in South Africa. Luckily he had difficulty recruiting a “martyr” and his plans failed.

When the US Navy Seals raided al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden’s Abbottabad compound in Pakistan, they seized a large volume of documents, some of which have subsequently been released by the Combat-ing Terrorism Centre of the US Military Academy.

Frighteningly, from a South African perspective, was the revelation that bin Laden thought of South Africa as an open territory - an area where al-Qaida operatives could target Americans.

“You may find it suitable to target Americans in South Africa, because it is located outside the Islamic Maghreb. Also, South Africa is not covered by the brothers who are located outside that region. The same can be said about other African countries.”

The issue of South Africa as an operational base and a transit conduit for international jihadist groups also emerged in the court case of a Tunisian al-Qaida suspect Ihsan Garnaoui in 2004.

Garnaoui was an explosives expert. He held several South African passports in different names and travelled via South Africa to Europe where he was accused of plotting bombings on American and Jewish targets. According to Dutch counterterrorism expert Ronald Sandee, most of Garnaoui’s preparation for these attacks took place in South Africa.

In 2012, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also revealed never-before published information of a foiled terror attack on an Israeli target in South Africa. He said that an attack against Israelis was prevented in South Africa, but did not disclose any further details.

Whether France or Nigeria, Britain or Belgium, Israel or Kenya, America or Libya, the world has had to come to grips with the new reality of Islamic jihadist terror - and now South Africa stares that new reality directly in its cold and murderous eyes.



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# Israel’s Deputy Ambassador Michael Freeman says adieu



Ayellet Black, incoming deputy ambassador at Israel’s South African embassy; Sigalit and Michael Freeman, outgoing deputy ambassador; and Ambassador Arthur Lenk with the framed cover of the SA Jewish Report dated July 1.

DIANE WOLFSON  
PRETORIA

Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk on Tuesday evening hosted a farewell function for outgoing Deputy Ambassador Michael Freeman and his wife Sigalit. Some 60 guests from all sectors of the community including businessmen, journalists, the cultural arena and friends attended. Freeman took up his South African post in July 2013.

Freeman paid tribute to all those who contributed to the success of his tour in South Africa, from the Embassy team and partners in- and outside of the Jewish community to the diplomatic and cultural arenas, and expressed how much he values and appreciates these partnerships.

“We have enjoyed our time in South Africa very much and Sigalit and I are leaving with very mixed emotions,” said Freeman who explained that while part of a diplomat’s life is to move around, making and leaving friends, South Africa was a very special place and the partnerships and friendships forged have made them feel extremely welcome and happy. Freeman will be taking up his new post in London in a few weeks’ time, where he will concentrate on civil society affairs with unions, students, non-profits and other groups to promote Israel and to deal with anti-Semitism and anti-Israel groups.

At the same time, Ambassador Lenk took the opportunity to introduce Ayellet Black who will be replacing Freeman as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy. Black has arrived in South Africa with her husband Elliott and two children.

As the daughter of a career diplomat, Black has grown up in the diplomatic world and is no stranger to settling down to different lifestyles with speed and getting on with the job at hand.

Before joining the Foreign Service, Black worked as an informal educator at an Israeli girls’ high school. She studied political science, communication and Judaism and has an MA in international relations.

She previously served in Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a variety of departments including public affairs and EuroAsia and her “official” assignment in South Africa is that of Deputy Head of Mission of Israel to South Africa, Lesotho, Mauritius and Swaziland.

“I look forward to joining the Embassy team under Ambassador Lenk which has already set up an infrastructure to increase the Israeli-South African relations. I am sure that Israel-South Africa relations will continue to grow and flourish and I am excited to contribute in any way that I can.

“I have heard so much about the Jewish community in Pretoria and South Africa and judging by the incredibly warm welcome that I have received, I know that every word is true.”

Ambassador Lenk presented the Freeman’s with a framed poster of the front cover of the SA Jewish Report from July 1, 2016.

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# The how and what of municipal elections

ANT KATZ

Many South Africans are confused about how local government elections work - and the importance of each and every vote cast. For the final two weeks prior to the 2016 municipal elections on August 3, Jewish Report will clarify some of the issues.

First and foremost, ensure that you are on the voters roll and where your polling station is. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) runs an efficient service. Simply SMS your ID number to 32810 (R1 per SMS) and within seconds you will get a reply telling you what ward and voting station you are registered at.

Secondly, keep in mind that we in fact hold two separate elections: The Local Government - or municipal elections - to be held on August 3 and the National and Provincial elections which were last held in 2014.

At each of these elections, voters get two ballot papers. In the case of the National and Provincial vote, which is not relevant now, it is simple: we choose a party, not a candidate; on one ballot voters choose the party they would like to run their province and on the other who they would like to run the country.

## Municipal elections

In the upcoming municipal elections, every voter also receives two ballot papers - one for the ward councillor, and one for the proportional representative (PR) vote.

For the ward councillor, of all the candidates who are standing in a particular ward, the person who receives the most votes becomes the ward councillor.

For the PR vote, we are selecting the party and half of the seats on the City Council are allocated on the basis of PR votes. What most voters do not realise is the importance and power of their own vote on the final composition of their Council.

Voters often make the mistake of thinking they are in a “safe” ward for the party they would have chosen and so they do not vote. Wrong! One’s vote has far more value than that.

The paragraph below is taken directly from the IEC website: “In metropolitan and local councils, half of the council seats are allocated to directly elected ward councillors (ward ballot paper) and the other half are allocated to political parties on the basis of the results of the PR ballot paper.

“The ward councillors are elected first and then the remaining seats are allocated to political parties based on proportional representation. The PR allocation takes into account how many ward seats a party has already won to make sure that the final number of seats a party has does not exceed the percentage of the vote which they won.”

However, the actual calculation of the proportional vote may seem quite complicated. In calculating this vote, all the votes for ward councillors representing a political party in the whole city plus all the proportional votes for the

political parties in the whole city are added together.

Any votes for independent ward councillors are not included in this. So, for example, if there were 1 005 000 ward votes cast in the whole city and 1 005 000 PR votes cast in the whole city, but of the ward votes 10 000 were for independent candidates, then the total number of votes making up the total proportional vote would be 995 000 ward votes plus 1 005 000 PR votes which equals 2 000 000 votes. So, every vote counts - and for more than we realise.

• Read more about the calculation of PR votes on [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za).

## SAUPJ elects its first-ever female national chairman

The South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ) has elected Monica Solomon (pictured) as its new national chairman, the first woman to hold this position.

Solomon is “no stranger to the world of Progressive Judaism”, said SAUPJ in a press release. She has been active in the SAUPJ since 1997 and is also a member of the board of Women of Reform Judaism, headquartered in New York.

Solomon said she was humbled by the faith the community showed in her, and pledged her commitment to working with all structures in Jewish life on a national level - Progressive and Orthodox alike.

“I am proud to head up this wonderful organisation with its rich history of commitment and dedication to the Progressive communities in the country,” Solomon said. “In addition to the cohesive role the SAUPJ fulfils within our community, we have a long tradition of working for the less privileged in our society.

“I am hoping that our ethos of tikkun olam will continue to be reflected in the leadership and working of our organisation.”

Solomon says she intends to work closely with the chairmen of South African Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity (SACRED), Netzer, Arzenu and the Women of Progressive Judaism, South Africa (WPJ-SA).

“As a vibrant and dynamic community who actively tackles the issues confronting Progressive Judaism, we will work hand-in-hand with all

these organisations to offer assistance to secure their growth.

“I hope to forge a respectful working relationship between the SAUPJ and the Chief Orthodox Rabbi, as well as the Chevrah Kadisha.

“We need to strengthen ties between our organisations, deal with potentially divisive issues, and present a united front in dealing with the challenges we face.”

She also pledged greater structural autonomy to the regions.

“The SAUPJ constitution will also be completely revised to reflect our changing society,” she said.



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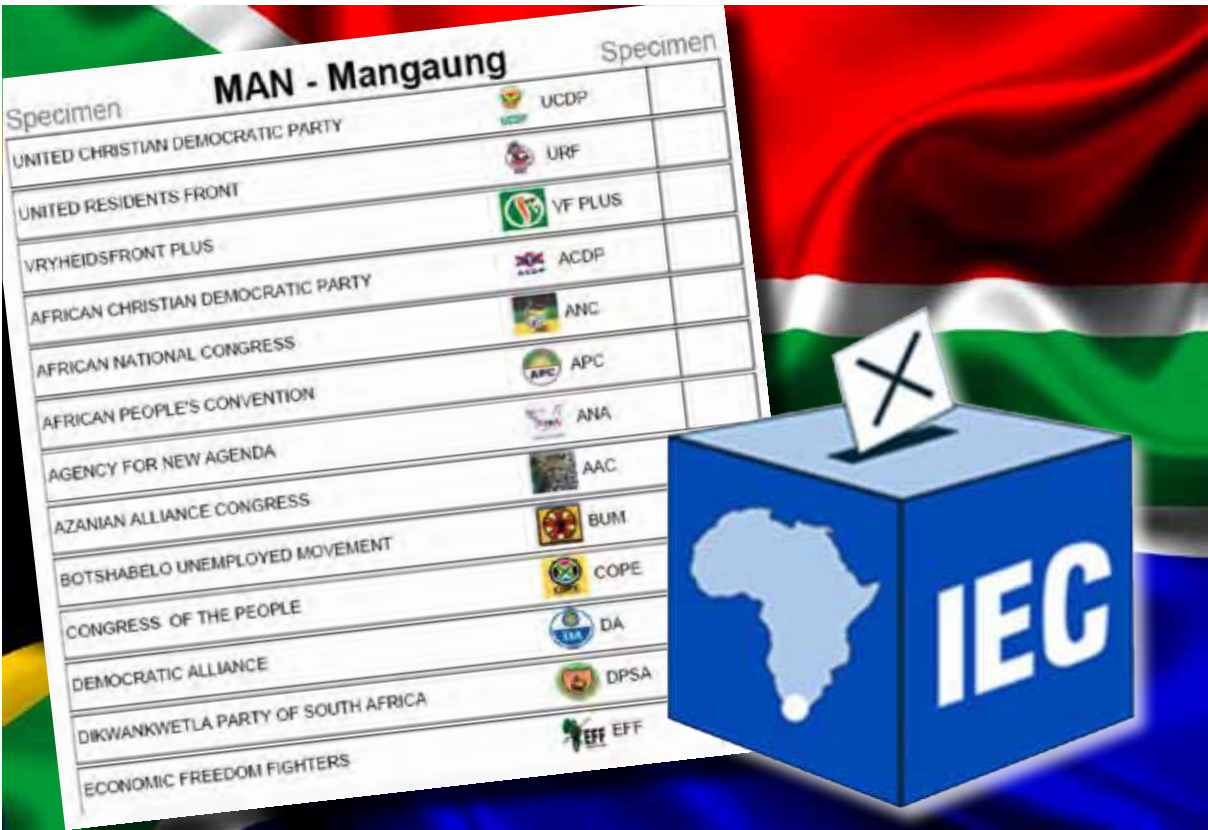
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# Massacre in Nice has taken the lives of three Jews



Sean Copeland, far left, and son Brodie, centre, were killed in the Nice massacre,

## ANT KATZ

A US Jewish father and son and an elderly French Jewish women were killed at the Bastille Day event in Nice in France where an armed driver ploughed his 19-ton truck into the crowds, killing over 80 people. More French Jews were injured and a group of Chabad camp counsellors missed being mowed down by a few seconds. Sean Copeland, 51, and his son Brodie, 11, were killed while holidaying in Europe with their family. The Copeland family released a statement through Jess Davis, a close friend: “We are heartbroken and

in shock over the loss of Brodie, an amazing son and brother who lit up our lives, and Sean, a wonderful husband and father,” said the statement. The French Jewish women, Raymonde Mamane, 77, died Sunday at a local hospital, the French Jewish newspaper Actualite Juive reported Monday. Her sister, Clara Bensimon, 80, remains unconscious in the same hospital, where both of her legs reportedly were amputated. Bensimon was only identified late Friday after being reported missing following the attack. At least five more of the wounded in the attack are Jews, according

to Rabbi Yossef Yitschok Pinson of Nice’s Chabad House. A defiant Pinson said: “We will not let this affect us, we will not let fear affect or damage the life of our community.” Shul services and community events went on as planned. Nice is the “capital” of the French Riviera, on France’s Mediterranean coast. The tourist destination draws hundreds of thousands of local French and other tourists in summer, as well as many Jews from Europe and further afield because it has a permanent Jewish population of 25 000 and provides kosher shops and many shuls. Luckily, the full summer crowd

had not yet arrived, Pinson said. “They usually come in August, then there are far more Jews in town.” The Copeland family holiday began with the running of the bulls in Pamplona, on to flamenco dancing in Barcelona and finally celebrating Bastille Day in Nice, where Sean and Brodie were killed. Heather Copeland, Brodie’s cousin, took to Twitter to express grief and post pictures of the father-son duo. “I just please ask for prayers for my family and all of the others [who] were killed in France,” she wrote. “I don’t even know how to put this in words. Today was a very [tragic] day for my family.” The truck had “left a trail of blood as it tore through the crowd,” said Rabbi Pinson, citing eyewitness testimonies. One witness to the attack was “deeply traumatised” by what she saw, he said. “Body parts, people screaming, blood everywhere and

very, very difficult sights.” JNS.org reports that the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, a humanitarian organisation which helps Jews make aliyah, is receiving thousands of inquiries from French Jews. The Fellowship has had over 5 000 phone calls and hundreds of e-mails from French Jews asking about aliyah in recent months. The organisation took 82 French Jews to Israel in June and will take more than 150 more this month. French Jews were attending a Fellowship-organised aliyah meeting in Nice just one block away from the site as the attack took place. Forward.com reported that a group of Chabad madrichim from the Gan Israel day camp narrowly escaped the attack, crossing the street moments before the carnage. “They had to run from the truck. It was just a few feet away from them,” said Rabbi Pinson.

# Israel and Africa reach out as neighbours and partners - Lenk

## ANT KATZ

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s four-nation Africa visit where he met with seven African heads of state this month, was the first to sub-Saharan Africa by a sitting Israeli prime minister in nearly three decades. Speaking to the media on his return, after his weekly Sunday Cabinet meeting, an upbeat Netanyahu called his trip “an important visit” and said: “The trip began with a historic summit, not just with the four leaders of [the countries I visited], but with another three leaders; all-in-all seven leaders from seven African countries.” The other leaders Netanyahu was referring to were from South Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia. Netanyahu said all seven leaders, representing 260 million people, had “agreed to act to strengthen our links”. The trip had been a huge success - both diplomatically and commercially. On the political front, Netanyahu was assured by all seven leaders that they would work to restore Israel to observer status to the African Union, which is composed of 54 countries. While this will take time, said Netanyahu, “We have begun the process of a long journey toward gaining seats for Israel in international forums.” Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk, told Jewish Report: “It was a wonderful week, seeing Israel and Africa reach out to each other as neighbours and partners.” Lenk said that he was particularly “inspired to see leaders of countries like Kenya and Rwanda emphasising that it was in their national interest to deepen their relationships with Israel”. Lenk had also been amazed at “how many other leaders spoke with some disappointment that the Israeli delegation didn’t visit their countries”. He said that it is becoming increasingly clear that “Israel’s experience in areas such as water, agriculture, innovation, cyber technology and homeland security are relevant to so many African countries”. And, he says: “All of those topics have resonance with many here in South Africa, too.” Netanyahu also noted in his statements after the trip that each of the seven African countries, without exception, “are interested in enhancing relations with Israel because they see Israel and its technological capabilities as a major force”. This included assisting them in the war against radical Islam that is inundating all of Africa and also that they “see Israel’s technological and entrepreneurial ability as a very major tool in developing their countries in all areas”. The prime minister added that Israel “is receiving calls from other countries, some of which we do not have relations with, that they want to enhance relations”.

- See much more on the trip as well as Netanyahu’s further observations and his speech to the Ethiopian parliament on our website: [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

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NAZIS CLEVERLY HID DEATH CAMP ATROCITIES FROM WORLD

There is a belief that the world stood by and allowed the Holocaust to unfold. That is not the entire picture. While the Jewish extermination was the worst in history, there were other genocides during the 20th century, including the Herero, Armenian and Ukrainian holocausts which are less well known, as well as the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides.

Regarding the Jewish Holocaust, the Nazis kept it secret so as not to horrify the world and even segments of the German population and also so as not to panic the Jewish people into resisting.

The impression was rather created that the Jews were being resettled in the east and put to work there. Code words were employed to hide these atrocities.

The extermination camps were placed in remote areas where they could be partially hidden. Above the entrances to these places the slogan: “Work Makes You Free” was placed. These horrors were so unexpected that many found them hard to believe when they began to surface towards the end of the war.

In spite of the massive and overwhelming anti-Semitic propaganda and hysteria of the time, many gentiles risked their lives and the lives of their families, to hide Jews. Since these saviours had to avoid the Gestapo and its spies, they acted in secret and many will never be known.

The Italians who were allied to the Germans during the first part of the war, saw the Jews as equal citizens. They could not relate to Nazi anti-Semitism. The Finns who were also German allies refused to hand over their Jews.

When the occupying Nazis insisted that the Dutch Jews wear yellow stars, the Dutch Queen also put one on and the Swedish King totally condemned the deportations. Swedes, Danes and Dutch also stood out by saving people.

The Russians opened their frontier, enabling many Jewish people to escape. The Bulgarians strongly opposed the deportations, while the Greeks refused to help with the slaughter.

It has also come to light that the ambassadors of Turkey, Japan and Portugal sheltered Jews, as did the Vatican. Winston Churchill was also appalled by the situation.

Finally, when the Allies liberated the concentration camps, most of the soldiers were shocked by what they found - so was much of the world, leading to a new type of international law, namely war crimes.

It is often asked why the Allies never bombed the death camps when they eventually came to light. This is indeed difficult to understand, even though they argued that it was more productive to divert limited resources towards ending the war sooner and saving lives that way.

It has also been argued, that since the camps held many slave labourers and that because the Allied bombers lacked the technology for precision bombing, they feared that they might destroy prisoners rather than the gas chambers. In spite of all this there were many who participated in the Holocaust.

**Martin Zagnoev**  
**Sunningdale Ridge, Johannesburg**

IF IT’S FRIDAY, IT MUST BE JEW-BASHING DAY

If it’s Friday it must be “Hate Israel day” for the Independent Newspaper Group. More often than not one or more of their newspapers will publish a derogatory piece about Israel (read Jews) - on a Friday. Why Friday? Well that leaves the weekend plus Monday before their letters editor will review letters and by that time the subject is completely out of the public’s mind and the letters that do appear in print seem out of context. Or am I imagining this?

The likes of Janet Smith, Shannon Ebrahim and the members of the Media Review Network are afforded an inordinate amount of space and frequency in the Independent publications, yet one struggles to remember when last the pro-Israel lobby was given one column-centimetre on those same pages.

Reading the offerings from these journalists and other bigots, the uninformed would believe that Jews descended on Palestine, dispossessed those hapless people of their land, possessions and dignity and colonised that country where the Palestinians have evolved into the world’s greatest victims.

Israel’s occupation has become a far bigger concern for these humanitarians than the killing of half a million Syrians who have now become a statistic rather than a tragedy.

But we also have the Jewish Voices for a Just Peace voicing a similar narrative. They know nothing of 70 years of Palestinian brutality and terrorism; they know nothing of inciting little children on Palestinian TV to hate and become murderers; and they know nothing of little girls having their throats slit in bed.

None of these atrocities seems to worry our sisters of conscience. Would it surprise anyone if they now come out in support of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas’ claim that the Jews have no historical connection to the Temple Mount - or even the land itself?

**Allan Wolman**  
**Rosebank, Johannesburg**

Letter was by Sydney Kanichowsky and not Horwitz

A letter that was published under the name of Errol Horwitz in last week’s paper was in fact written by Sydney Kanichowsky. We apologise to both Mr Horwitz and Mr Kanichowsky for the error.

INSTEAD OF 3 DAYS OF MOURNING, FRANCE NEEDS ACTION AGAINST TERROR

In response to the horrific terror attack in Nice, President Francois Hollande has called for three days of mourning. What a sensitive gesture! But I would like to address an open letter to him.

defence, then very soon you are going to have a lot more to mourn about!

Every minute you spend mourning is another victory for Islam. Because there is nothing that Islam treasures more than watching the West mourn.

Today, Israel is the world leader in counterterrorism - there is not a single country in the world that comes close. Instead of boycotting her, why don’t you rather partner with her.

Once again, for your own sake. It’s now time to follow Israel’s example when dealing with terror. Because contrary to popular belief, Israel is not always wrong. France’s feeble initiative to unilaterally enforce the creation of a fictitious “Palestinian state” will never bring peace to France, to Europe, nor to the Middle East. It should be relegated to the dustbin of history, where it belongs. And it is also time to send “political correctness” back to the dictionary. Where it too belongs.

**Neville Kahn**  
**Sandringham, Johannesburg**

JEWISH REPORT SHOULD NOT HAVE PUBLISHED LETTER ON ELIE WIESEL

It is understandable that the Jewish Report, a reputable newspaper, allows freedom of speech but frankly the inane letter from Avner Eliyahu Romm condemning Elie Wiesel, is not worthy of publication.

That Elie Wiesel was truly a remarkable saint is not in dispute.

To quote Lord Jonathan Sacks: “Elie Wiesel gave voice to the voiceless victims of the Holocaust and bore witness in the name of humanity to one of the great crimes against it. His was the voice of memory when others sought to forget, and of defiant hope in the face of despair.

“He spoke for an entire murdered generation, and did so with dignity, humanity and grace. He was a great survivor, a great Jew, and a great humanitarian. His work was a blessing; so may his memory be.”

To have someone such as Romm denigrate and attack the memory of an extraordinary humanitarian such as the late Elie Wiesel, is, with respect, outrageous sacrilege.

**Olga-May Musnitzky**  
**Glenhazel, Johannesburg**

*To the writer: Our letters page is an open, uncensored platform for all views provided they are not racist or discriminatory.*

EVEN TODAY ANTI-SEMITISM REMAINS RIFE IN LITHUANIA

A society displays its community values by the heroes it chooses to promote. It teaches its children by holding up examples of behaviours it respects, so that children might model that behaviour to grow into the citizens that their society values. So it was in Nazi Germany, where Nazi values were taught to children, and so it was in apartheid South Africa, where racist leaders were venerated and racist values instilled into white children.

But that was in the past; those societies have since reformed, apologised and moved forward. Not so in Lithuania, where Holocaust perpetrators remain continually venerated by society.

In what should have been an obvious move, a British member of the Vilnius City Council recommended that Skirpa Boulevard, one of Vilnius’ major boulevards named to honour a primary Holocaust perpetrator, Kazys Skirpa, be renamed to “Righteous Boulevard”.

Skirpa was the leader of the Lithuanian movement that promoted the ethnic cleansing and the ultimate slaughter of 95 per cent of Lithuania’s Jews. His crimes against humanity are known to all. His original memoirs are available online, in which, long before Germans ever entered Lithuania, Skirpa clearly indicated his intention to ethnically cleanse Jews from the nation.

Skirpa laid out his plans in about 20 different documents, before he proposed his plans to the Nazis. He claimed that Jews had to be ethnically cleansed, as they were “a foreign race” in Lithuania, and were betrayers to the Lithuanian nation.

Nazis used the Jewish genocide in Lithuania as a model to be implemented throughout Europe. Skirpa is one of the fathers of the Holocaust.

These actions, among others, have qualified Skirpa for hero status in Lithuania. His deeds are venerated by the youth and the country’s national leadership.

Vilnius is not the only Lithuanian city that honours the perpetrators of this genocide. Kaunas also has a street named for Skirpa. In fact, honours for murderers of Jews litter Lithuania, where the official government institution tasked with exposing these crimes, the Genocide Centre, led by Teresa Birute Burauskaite, has established a pattern of behaviour that indicates active attempts to whitewash these crimes against humanity.

On July 13, over 70 years after the end of the Holocaust, Vilnius city councillor Mark Adam Harold, proposed to the Vilnius Names Commission that it renames Skirpa Boulevard. It should have been a unanimous, immediate, and enthusiastic response of government to remove these honours.

Yet the city leaders who have maintained other honours for Holocaust perpetrators, decided to defer any action pending “further study”. Germany has removed all boulevards named for Hitler. Cambodia has removed all boulevard names for Pol Pot. And still, Lithuania maintains their honours pending “further study”. In fact, study has been ongoing for 25 years since independence and the facts are clear, so, therefore, are the Lithuanian positions.

A society identifies itself by the heroes it venerates. Words do not matter; its actions define its positions.

**Grant Gochin**  
**Los Angeles**

HOST OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS IN ‘EARLY DAYS’ OF TERROR ARRESTS

The news last week of the arrest of the Thulsie twin brothers and the Patel siblings on terror and other charges came as a shock.

The Hawks (Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation) believe the Thulsies may be part of a terror cell in South Africa.

It is now common knowledge that Brandon-Lee Thulsie worked for Discovery. There is no information in which department he worked, but nevertheless, it is disturbing to realise that he may have a contact list of names and addresses of Discovery clients.

Human rights organisation, CAGE, has criticised the South African authorities for the manner in which two of the suspects were arrested saying: “It undermines their due process rights.” As if that matters more than the rights of innocent citizens who may have been potential targets for murder.

Another pearl from CAGE: “Amid concerns from some individuals in the Muslim community that this is a false-flag operation, CAGE Africa hopes this is not a manifestation of anti-Muslim sentiment within the Directorate for Priority Crimes Investigation.”

In the current light of global terrorism, this unembellished statement is an affront to our intelligence agencies and the people participating in the investigations, who work diligently to safeguard our country.

The Patels have been released on bail of R5 000 each, after charges relating to the firearms act were preferred against them.

Intriguingly, weapons were found in their residence, which Fatima Patel allegedly claims she used for hunting. Her predatory intentions will no doubt be divulged at the trial.

Perhaps some optimism may be derived from the secretary-general of the Council of Muslim Theologians Moulana Bham’s statement last week Monday when he said: “The Muslim community in South Africa does not condone any activities that either perpetrate or abet acts of terror.”

It remains to be seen what evidence the Hawks have against the Thulsies and whether there is in fact a network of terror operating in our country.

Having allegedly been the target, we as Jews can only hope that this is not a portent of things to come.

**Nathan Cheiman**  
**Northcliff, Johannesburg**



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# Lithuania: My journey of return



Vilnius – Lithuania



The Choral Synagogue of Vilnius was built in 1903.

## GARY S EISENBERG

As a Cape Town-born Jew, my life has come full circle. Although I was born after his death, my zeida, Rabbi Shimon Ze'ev Aysenberg had an indelible influence on my life. My father, Isaac Eisenberg, born in a stable in Mogilov, Belarus in 1922, a medical doctor and writer, spent his life interpreting his childhood memories.

The smell of the black earth, winter tales, the rich Yiddish he spoke, the gerichten of the alter heim, were the jewels of the past my father polished throughout his life.

My zeida was a graduate of the Slabodka Yeshiva in Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania, but fled to Belarus in 1917. His book, Milchomo Shteib (The Dust of War), recalled the period when Germany took control of all of Congress Poland, Lithuania and Latvia and parts of Volhynia and Belorussia - bringing a large segment of the Jewish population of the Russian Empire under the rule of the Central Powers.

This was a bitter period, which ultimately brought my father and his family to South Africa.

Chopped herring, kichel, kneidel and chicken soup, chopped liver, brisket and tzimmes, the smells, the tastes, the profound reflections of my father's origins, but living in our hearts, glorify our identities as part of the Litvak world.

I am a Litvak. My friends are Litvaks, my teachers at school were Litvaks, but I never realised until recently that my Litvak community is inextricably linked to a culturally enriched and internationally scattered Litvak diaspora.

About 90 per cent of South Africa's 70 000 Jews are of Lithuanian descent. Almost a million of us around the world thrive in our communities.

Some of the greatest names on earth are part of the Litvak community: Ehud Barak (previous Israeli Prime Minister and Defence Minister); Benjamin Netanyahu (Israeli Prime Minister); Menachem Begin (previous Israeli Prime Minister); Roman Abramovich (owner of Chelsea Football Club); Ben Bernanke (previous chairman of the US Federal Reserve); Michael Bloomberg (owner of Bloomberg and former mayor of New York); Charles Bronson (US actor); Bob Dylan (US musician); Harrison Ford (US actor); Nadine Gordimer (South Africa Nobel Prize-winner for literature); Mendel Kaplan (South African industrialist and past president of the World Jewish Congress); Helen Suzman (South African politician); Sol Kerzner (South African businessman); Michael Marks (founder of Marks and Spencer in the UK); Tony Leon (South African politician); Chaim Soutine (artist); Joe Slovo (South African anti-apartheid politician); Amos Oz (Israeli writer); the Vilna Gaon. This list goes on almost forever.

Jewish life in Lithuania stretches back 600 years; before the Holocaust, Jews were the majority of the population in small towns. In Vilnius alone, 134 synagogues functioned. Napoleon named Vilnius the "Jerusalem of the North".

Lithuania today only has a meagre 3 000 Jews as the vestige of a large and flourishing Jewish community, survivors from the Soviet invasion of June 1940 and the killings, which took place at the hands of Nazi oc-

cupiers from June 1941.

Prior to the Holocaust, Lithuania's Jewish population numbered almost 250 000. Then came the mass executions in 1941, the establishment of the Jewish ghettos from 1942-1943 and the "Final Liquidation" of the Jewish community from 1943-1944.

The Jewish massacres of Kaunas, Vilnius and the Lithuanian countryside, are well documented, as is the extent to which 95-97 per cent of the Jewish genocide was assisted by Lithuanian collaborators.

After the Soviets took control of Lithuania in 1944, there existed a prohibition or tight restriction on Jewish education, language and traditions. After the Soviets departed in 1993, these restrictions lifted and Jews were free to pursue their religious and cultural practices and to reinvigorate themselves.

In my first visit to Vilnius in September 2013, I realised that there existed a new trend of collaboration between non-Jewish and Jewish Lithuanians to recognise and rebuild its Litvak Jewish heritage.

One of the most successful of these enterprises was created by Jewish cultural activist Anna Avidan and pre-eminent Lithuanian attorney and art collector Rolandas Valiunas and businessman Antanas Zabulis. These projects are seeking to discover the Jewish past of Lithuania and to recreate it.

When Lithuania became a full member of Nato and the European Union in 2004, it was brought into the Western world to rebuild and rebrand itself in modern secular terms. The Lithuanian government recognises the importance of the Litvak diaspora, not only in financial terms but also as a way to rehabilitate itself.

Its citizenship laws encourage the descendants of Lithuanian citizens (from January 1918 to June 1940) to reclaim Lithuanian citizenship. This programme is increasingly successful, not only by the granting of EU status passports to successful applicants, but also to encourage Litvaks from all parts of the world to return to Lithuania in different ways. Brian Joffe from Bidvest and Robbie Brozin of Nando's have both recently invested in businesses in Lithuania.

On my recent visit to Vilnius, I spent Shabbat with Rabbi Shalom Krinsky, the Chabad emissary to Lithuania and attended the only functional synagogue in Vilnius, the Choral Shul on Pylimo Street, built in 1903. Surrounded by members of Vilnius' Jewish community and visitors from Australia, the US, and England, I had come full circle.

The Lithuanian Citizenship Programme is grist to my mill since through the process of acquiring Lithuanian citizenship by reinstatement, a journey of return can be concluded in myriad significant ways.

• Gary Eisenberg is an immigration lawyer.

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# The difference one brave man can make to the world

## RENE POZNIAK

Aristides De Sousa Mendes was the Portuguese consul in Bordeaux, France in 1940. In defiance of then Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, he issued approximately 30 000 forbidden visas to refugees fleeing Hitler and the Nazi terror.

Among those visas issued were 10 000 to Jews who had been expressly excluded from receiving them. They transited through Spain to neutral Portugal and ultimately to other places of freedom, where they survived the war.

On June 25 this year, 46 of us flew to Bordeaux to honour this special man and retrace the steps taken by the refugees. Among the group were members of the De Sousa Mendes family, original visa recipients and their descendants and a handful of Holocaust educators.

Original testimonies were read by family members along the route. We visited the original consulate in Bordeaux and the journey took us to Bayonne, Biarritz, Hendaye, Salamanca, Viseu, Caldas Da Rainha, Coimbra and finally Lisbon. We were hosted by the mayors of these towns and even welcomed at the palace in Lisbon by the current president, Marcelo Rebelo De Sousa.

The Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer, referring to De Sousa Mendes, said: "This is the largest rescue action by a single individual during the Holocaust."

For this great act of defiance, De Sousa Mendes was stripped of his diplomatic position and could not earn a living to support his wife and 15 children. The only help he received was from the Judaic Association of Lisbon, which fed the family in its soup kitchen and paid their medical bills.

The children could not go to university or get meaningful jobs and eventually scattered all over the world. The ancestral home was sold and De Sousa Mendes died a pauper in 1954. He asked his children to restore his name and the honour of the family.

In 1966, Yad Vashem posthumously recognised him as a Righteous Among the Nations. In 1986, the US Congress honoured his heroic act.

When Mario Soares became president of Portugal, he apologised to the De Sousa Mendes family and De Sousa Mendes was posthumously promoted to the rank of ambassador. His face now appears on postage stamps in many countries and there are streets named after him.

The challenge to educators of the Holocaust is to try and make this dark period in Jewish history resonate with the youth here in South Africa 75 years after the fact. At the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre, this story will be an invaluable tool that we will use to address issues of Jewish identity, human rights, xenophobia and the current refugee dilemma around the world.

What will be stressed is that one person can make an unquantifiable impact on the plight of the targeted, marginalised people of the world.

• Rene Pozniak is an educator at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre.



Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre's educators Rene Pozniak and Arlene Sher, meeting with the Portuguese president at the palace in Lisbon.



A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



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

## Beyachad community security briefing

This Thursday evening at Beyachad, representatives of the various Jewish communal organisations come together for a security briefing, taking place under the auspices of the Board and the CSO.

Both the chairman of the CSO and I will be speaking, followed by a question and answer session. As explained in our letter of invitation, the aim of the meeting is to appraise the communal leadership of the current global terror situation, and how it affects South Africa and SA Jewry.

We believe that in light of recent developments, both at the local level and internationally, have made it imperative for us to relook our existing security structures and practices and identify where and how these should be adapted to meet our needs in the environment in which we find ourselves today.

It is a global reality that Islamic State (IS) has metamorphosed from a Middle East-based operation to one that now seeks to carry out terrorist attacks everywhere in the world. South Africa is not immune from this threat, and while we have to date mercifully been spared any IS-inspired attacks in our country, recent events - including the warnings issued by the US and other countries during the last few months, the reality that at least some South Africans have left the country to join IS and last week's arrests of four people in Johannesburg on suspicion of planning terrorist attacks - underline how important it is for us to monitor our ever-changing environment and adapt our strategies accordingly.

Ultimately, each one of our organisations has to take responsibility for improving its own security, working in conjunction with all the other security organisations. The upcoming meeting will brief our affiliates on the current situation, make appropriate recommendations and provide guidelines as to how each organisation can implement them.

### Gauteng Council conference

A little over three weeks remain until the SAJBD's Gauteng Council conference, to take place in the Sandton Shul hall on August 15. While the programme has still to be finalised, the overall theme will primarily be on looking back on and celebrating 175 years of organised Jewish life in South Africa.

Highlights will be an address by Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, and a DVD presenting a whistle-stop journey through our community's colourful history.

A special presentation will be made to the Edelstein family to pay tribute to the late Dr Melville Edelstein, one of the unsung heroes of our community, who tragically lost his life during the 1976 Soweto Uprising.

We will also be presenting a new award, for services in the realm of social upliftment on behalf of the wider society. Fittingly, it is named after the late Bertie Lubner, who throughout his remarkable life rendered such outstanding service in this area.

We hope to see as large a turn-out as possible for what we are sure will be a memorable celebration of our Jewish community and what it has achieved. For more information, contact Roseanne on [sajbd@sajbd.org](mailto:sajbd@sajbd.org).

- Listen to Charisse Zeifert on Jewish Board Talk, 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday 12:00 - 13:00

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



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### World News in Brief

## Netanyahu: PA condemns French terror while encouraging it in Israel

JERUSALEM - Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last Sunday accused the Palestinian Authority (PA) of encouraging terrorism in Israel while condemning such acts abroad.

Speaking at the start of Israel's weekly Cabinet meeting, Netanyahu said that "like Israel, the Palestinian Authority extended condemnations and condolences" after last week's truck attack in the French city of Nice, which killed 84 people.

"But there was one key difference," Netanyahu said. "Here, not only do they fail to condemn car ramming attacks, they encourage them."

At the Cabinet meeting, Netanyahu said the PA "aggrandises murderers and car-ramming terrorists, pays them and, if they are killed, pays their families."

"Terrorism is terrorism, whether it is perpetrated in France or in Israel," Netanyahu said. "[The PA] needs to adopt a uniform attitude toward condemning and combating terrorism, here and anywhere else." (JNS.org)

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

### Community Columns

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

## When divorce is a mitzvah

Everyone knows that, unlike some religions that do not permit divorce, Judaism recognises its necessity under certain circumstances. The proper procedures are even built into the framework of Jewish law.

What you may not know is that correctly executed for the right reasons, divorce is counted among the 613 mitzvot in the Torah.

This doesn't mean that I am advocating divorce. It is always heart-breaking. The Talmud tells us that when a divorce occurs, the Temple altar - the symbol of Jewish unity and holiness - symbolically "weeps" as if to mourn this failed union.

But sadly, an increasing number of marriages fall into a destructive cycle of abuse and in those situations divorce is not only appropriate, it is a mitzvah.

A crucially important factor is when kids are watching and learning. Regardless of what we say to them, what we teach them, children watch our behaviour and learn from the example we set.

When a little boy sees his father abusing his mother - verbally, emotionally or physically - he is learning how to treat a wife. And when a little girl watches her mother permitting abuse, she is learning about her own value as a female.

At the Chev we held our first "Family

*This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha*



**Partners in Chesed**  
**Michael Sieff**

Abuse Awareness" week this week during which a light was shone, primarily, upon the subject of domestic abuse - a topic too often shrouded in secrecy and shame within our community.


Women, in particular, (because in 90 per cent of reported cases they are the victims), need to be made aware that help is available and that they have options.

It is possible to transform a traumatic time of life into one of growth and joy, so while divorce is a tragedy, sometimes it is absolutely the right thing to do.

Much as we would like to deny that abuse is as prevalent in the Jewish community as in other communities, it is a sad fact, and needs to be addressed. As eminent psychiatrist Rabbi Dr Abraham Twerski said in his book, The Shame Borne in Silence, "abuse occurs in a community that tolerates it". Ours should not be one of those.


May our partnership continue to thrive!  
[Feedback@jhbchjev.co.za](mailto:Feedback@jhbchjev.co.za)

PS: With the process of divorce in place, as a final act of vindictive control, a husband may sometimes refuse to give his former wife a Jewish divorce (get), without which she cannot remarry. Make no mistake, this refusal is a serious act of abuse.



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# Brisket married to baked beans – union made in heaven



**SHANNON SARNA**  
**MEW YORK**

If a sweet pulled brisket married a can of baked beans, this dish would be their delicious baby. Try it and be sure there will be many repeat performances.

I love baked beans right out of the can all summer long for cookouts and backyard parties. It reminds me of my childhood, not to mention it’s just easy and cheap.

You can follow all my steps below. You could also put a brisket in a slow cooker with some water, a bottle of store-bought barbecue sauce and maybe an onion. After 3 1/2 hours, add the rinsed, drained cans of beans, and voila: dinner! But this version is also pretty delicious, and received both husband and child’s stamp of approval.

Make it for dinner; bring it as a side dish; put it on a sandwich... “There’s too much brisket at this picnic” is something you will never ever hear.

**BARBEQUE BRISKET AND BEANS**

- Ingredients**
- 2-pound (.907 kg) brisket (preferably second cut)
  - 1 teaspoon paprika
  - 1/2 teaspoon salt
  - 1/4 teaspoon pepper
  - 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
  - 1/4 teaspoon cumin
  - 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
  - Olive oil
  - Pinch red pepper flakes (or more)
  - 1 medium onion, chopped fine
  - 1 cup tomato sauce
  - 1/3 cup cider vinegar
  - 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
  - 1/4 cup brown sugar

- 2 tablespoons black strap molasses
  - 1 1/2 cups water
  - 3 15-ounce cans pinto or white beans
- Directions**
- In a small bowl combine paprika, salt, pepper, cinnamon, cumin and garlic powder. Rub onto each side of the brisket.
  - In a large Dutch oven, heat a few tablespoons olive oil on medium high heat until its glossy and the pan is hot. Cook brisket on each side for 4-6 minutes, or until caramelised and deep brown. Remove from pan and set aside. Turn heat down to medium.
  - Combine water, tomato sauce, cider vinegar, mustard, brown sugar and molasses in a small bowl.
  - Cook onion 7-10 minutes, scraping brown bits off bottom of pan. Add heaping pinch of red pepper flakes. Add half the can of beer to deglaze. Pour in the tomato sauce-water mixture and bring to a simmer. Add remaining beer.
  - If sauce looks too thick now, or at any point, add 1/2 to 1 cup water.
  - Reduce heat to low and cook for 3-4 hours, checking periodically. Remove from heat and allow brisket to cool. Place on a cutting board and using 2 forks or a fork and a knife, shred brisket.
  - Keep sauce in pot and put back on heat on a medium-low flame. Rinse and drain the cans of beans and place in pot, stirring to cover with sauce. Put meat back in the pot and cook another 15-20 minutes.

Serve hot. (The Noshers via JTA)

• *Shannon Sarna is editor of The Noshers, a food blog which offers an array of Jewish recipes and food news.*

News

## Many parallels between Anne’s story and apartheid history

**MOIRA SCHNEIDER**  
**CAPE TOWN**

Anne Frank’s story is so powerful because it is an illustration of the insanity of the Nazi machinery, seen through the eyes of an innocent child. So said Ambassador of the Netherlands, Marisa Gerard, at the opening of the international exhibition “Anne Frank: A history for today” at the Nelson Mandela Gateway, V & A Waterfront, last week.

“Are we alert when we see this ‘othering’ again; have we learned the lesson?” the ambassador asked. “I think the answer is ‘No,’” she replied, listing the genocide in Rwanda, the war in Yugoslavia and apartheid in this country in support of her stance.

“We need these exhibitions and her story to remind us,” she said, adding that young people were “our beacon of hope”. Here she was referring to the 14 grade 10 learners who had volunteered to be guides at the exhibition, despite the fact that the period fell over their school holidays.

“You can tell the story like no other can and relate it to your reality,” she said addressing the volunteers.

The exhibition, a joint venture of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre (CTHC) and the Robben Island Museum, tells the story of Anne Frank against the background of the Holocaust and the Second World War.



**Volunteer guides Luthando Diba of St Joseph’s Marist College (left) and Bathandwa Mki of Isilimela High School flank Denis Goldberg at the opening of the Anne Frank exhibition at the Nelson Mandela Gateway, V & A Waterfront.**

Director of the CTHC Richard Freedman spoke of the special connection between the young girl and the political prisoners of Robben Island.

The “Diary of Anne Frank” was one of the few books smuggled to them and proved to be a source of hope and inspiration, he said.

Sharing her personal memories, the ambassador recalled the effect that the young heroine’s story had had on her childhood. “Anne Frank plays a very special role in the life of every Dutch girl. All would read her diary; we could all very easily relate to it.”

After the war, Ambassador Gerard’s mother had met Miep Gies, who brought the Frank family food and news daily while they were in hiding and had found Anne’s diaries after their deportation to Auschwitz concentration camp.

“She shared her feelings of grief and guilt at not being able to rescue the family,” the ambassador remembered being told.

Rivonia Trialist Denis Goldberg, who was the keynote speaker at the event, noted that Anne had longed for the freedom to see the sun rise and hear the birds sing-

ing, feelings with which he could identify. “I lived for 22 years in prison and I desperately wanted to hear the birds sing and open the window and feel the raindrops,” he recalled.

Referring to the six million Jews who had perished, he said that 20 million others had also died during the Nazi era, “equally a tragedy, but they hardly get mentioned. One in every 100 Germans was murdered by the Nazis - let’s not forget that.”

Goldberg said that today “Jews in general have a terrible reluctance to accept ordinary German people”.

As to the relevance of those events for us today, he noted that the system of apartheid had also led to the deaths of millions through starvation and disease.

“In the rural areas of the eastern Cape, half of all kids under five died in apartheid times. We don’t talk about this, only about the brutality and the oppression.

“We whites claim we were civilised, but we allowed this to happen. People were killed judicially and extra-judicially.

“There was imprisonment of women and children for throwing stones - what sort of a people takes action against children?” he asked.

In the face of increasing ethnic hostility, the Holocaust Centre was holding the exhibition “to remind us how deep are the roots of intolerance”.

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# Gilli Apter boasts ‘an in-built ability to make people laugh’

PETER FELDMAN

Jewish culture has provided a rich source of humour to comedians around the world and Johannesburg comedienne Gilli Apter is no exception.

She admits: “I mine Judaism and the Jewish community for comedy - it’s a rich, flowing source. There is definitely something definitive about Jewish humour.”

This attractive entertainer, who is in her early 30s, has already left her mark on the comedy circuit in South Africa with her unique style. She said she always knew that she wanted to make entertainment, in one form or another, a part of her life. “It’s fair to say that I had an in-built ability to make people laugh.

“In primary school they don’t exactly explain that it’s possible to make a living from reading out of your ‘99 Jokes’ book,” she told Jewish Report.

Apter, who attended King David Sandton, Wendywood High and Crawford College, originally just wanted to direct comedy for TV and film. “I then went to AFDA (the film school) and as a director you were forced to take writing as a sub-major so that you could write your own scripts - and I’m thankful for being forced to do it because otherwise I may not have explored it. And that would have been dumb.”

Asked about her influences, she said: “Many of the great ‘80s and ‘90s comedy films like Dirty Rotten Scoundrels; The Three Amigos and pretty much anything else with Steve Martin, Chevy Chase or Eddie Murphy in them and later shows like Saturday Night Live.”

In more recent years she’s been inspired by a host of female comediennes and comedy



writers like Tina Fey, Sarah Silverman and Amy Schumer. Her list is long, and continues to grow.

Apter has been working as a professional comedy writer since 2005, using a variety of different platforms. Her work includes: Marc Lottering’s sitcom, Loitering in Jozi; satirical news show, ZAnews; a sitcom recently aired

on SABC3; Those Who Can’t, a comedy show flighted last year on SABC3 which recently won a SAFTA award, and most recently, Nik Rabinowitz’s 2016 one-man stage show, Power Struggle.

Apter started performing in her own right in 2015. Her style is mostly observational - sometimes easygoing and other times more

aggressive, depending on the subject. And the subjects, mostly autobiographical, are wide-ranging - from navigating the waters of being in her 30s to the curse of having to teach her parents about technology, to the reasons we no longer love Nicolas Cage.

She revealed that working with established comedy names such as Nik Rabinowitz and Marc Lottering gave her great insight into the more purist world of comedy such as stand-up where you learn unequivocally whether or not something is funny. “An audience will tell you immediately whether it works, as opposed to writing shows where you’re more or less writing in a vacuum.”

Her inspiration is drawn from everything she sees and hears around her. “Sometimes it’s something in the news, sometimes I’m eavesdropping and sometimes it’s something a person says at a table that I’m actually sitting at.”

She described comedy in South Africa as being “fantastic” because it’s growing and stretching in every direction. “I think the biggest developments are happening in stand-up comedy and those performing in that space also seem now to be driving comedy in other formats whether it’s TV, web series, or podcasts.”

Apter performs regularly at The Box Comedy on a Sunday night (Maboneng Precinct); Poppy’s on a Monday night (Melville); Kitchners on Tuesday night (Braamfontein); Steamworks or Parkers on a Wednesday night (Montecasino, Fourways) and Goliath Comedy Club on Thursday-Saturday (Melrose Arch).

Asked how she relaxes, she responded: “I just think of the stress of being on stage when I’m not, and it instantly relaxes me. I recommend this!”

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News

## Christian Zionist brings a strong message of unity



Willem van der Hoeven.

ANT KATZ

SA Friends of Israel and the SA Zionist Federation will be hosting Jan Willem van der Hoeven, director of the International Christian Zionist Centre (ICZC) in Jerusalem. He will be speaking next Thursday evening at Beyachad in Johannesburg.

Van der Hoeven is a passionate Christian and unashamed Zionist. He is coming to South Africa with a very challenging message to both Jews and Christians about the future and our different callings in these troubled times. Our unity, he says, is key.

But he asks the questions: Will the Christians have the courage of the Biblical Ruth to stand with Israel, no matter the cost and will the Jews have what it takes, to hold onto their inheritance - Jerusalem?

He has, over the years, had the trust of, and personal friendships with most of Israel’s prime ministers and he has made useful input into governmental decisions. (see video on [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za) of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaking about Van der Hoeven’s contribution).

Van der Hoeven has been living in Jerusalem for over 40 years and has worked tirelessly toward this cause.

Bookings can be made either online at <http://sazionfed.co.za/events/jan-willem-van-hoeven-christians-who-love-jews/> or by calling Miriam at the Zionist Federation on (011) 645-2531.



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Tuesday (July 26)

• WIZO Women Inspired hosts Ooh La La owner  
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Cost: R100 (incl tea). Bookings and venue  
details: Lorraine 083-268-8016; Joceline 082-  
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Friday (July 29)

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# A host of Jewish faces at Rio Olympics

JACK MILNER

The Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil begin on Friday, August 5 and unlike the recent European Soccer Championships hosted by France, there will be quite a bit of Jewish interest at this year's Olympics.

Never mind the athletes. Three of the top officials of the Rio 2016 Organising Committee, including its president, Carlos Arthur Nuzman, are Jewish.

One of Brazil's most prominent sports figures, Nuzman, 74, is a former president of the Brazilian Volleyball Confederation and has been president of the Brazilian Olympic Committee since 1995.

"My connection with Judaism and with Israel is through sports," said Nuzman, who was part of the first Brazilian male volleyball team in 1964 when the sport debuted at the Olympic Games.

"I started my career playing at the Brazilian Israelite Club and I have attended four Maccabi Games in Israel."

The grandson of Russian immigrants, Nuzman was born in Rio. He is an active member of the 440-family Conservative synagogue Congregacao Judaica do Brasil led by Rabbi Nilton Bonder, his nephew. Nuzman's father, Izaak, presided over the Rio Jewish Federation, the Hebraica Club and the local Keren Hayesod-United Israel Appeal.

Sidney Levy, a business executive, is the Rio 2016 committee's chief executive officer and has a \$2,2 billion budget to manage. Leonardo Gryner, a communications and marketing director who was part of the Rio 2016 bid, is deputy CEO.

The trio are behind the ceremony to honour the Munich victims. At the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich in Germany, 11 Israeli Olympic team members were taken hostage and eventually killed by a Palestinian terrorist group.

As far as sportsmen and -women are concerned, Aly Reisman, who set the gymnastic world alight with her performance in London four years ago, will be back for the US team while there are also Joshua and Nathan Katz who will become the first set of brothers to represent Australia in judo at a single Olympics.

Nate Ebner of the New England Patriots has qualified for the US Olympic men's rugby sevens team. Joining Ebner on the squad is another Jewish player, 26-year-old Zack Test from California.

Ebner's father, Jeff, was the Sunday school principal of Temple



**Golfer Laetitia Beck will represent Israel at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro next month.**

Sholom in Springfield, Ohio. Sadly in 2008, he was killed by a man who attacked him during an attempted robbery in his shop.

Rugby has not been played in the Olympics since 1924 when the US team won gold. That squad included Samuel Goodman, a Jewish player who also managed the club. Goodman also played for and managed the US team who had won the gold four years earlier.

A most interesting Jewish participant is golfer Laetitia Beck who will represent Israel. Considering Israel has just one 18-hole golf course - in Caesarea - it is rare to find a player of her calibre. The 24-year-old was born in Belgium but moved with her family to Caesarea when she was six. The golf club was within walking distance from their home and Beck would practise at the club every day.

When she was 12, a coach at the club noticed her golfing skills and suggested she compete in the Israeli Open Golf Championship. She ended up winning the competition. At the age of 14 she moved to the US and eventually studied at Duke University.

"Everywhere I go, I want people to know where I'm from, my background and where my family came from, because of the struggle they had to go through," she told the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA).

Beck was born into to a traditional family who observed Shabbat and kept kosher. "For me, it's very important for people to know first that I am Jewish and that I come from Israel, and next that I am a golfer."

She is Israel's first professional women's golfer and calls the Olympics the "biggest stage" yet for her. "

Beck will walk into the arena at the opening ceremony as part of Team Israel.

"That's a very important part for me. Just being with the team and standing with the Israeli flag when they announce it. I don't think I should carry it right now but in the future, I hope so."

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