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Jewish Report

■ July 29 2016 / 23 Tammuz 5776
 ■ Volume 20 - Number 28

www.sajr.co.za

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Election fever high ahead of next week’s poll

Ahead of municipal elections next week Wednesday (August 3), the SA Jewish Report went out into the major metropolitan areas to find out who the candidates are in the major Jewish areas and what they hope to achieve. We also tried to identify who some of the Jewish candidates are. In our searching, we came across a different kind of campaign – picking up on the election theme, Chabad in Johannesburg have adorned street poles in Johannesburg with posters enticing voters to “Vote for Kindness”. Chabad is giving out yellow plastic arks that people should fill with money and give to whom-ever they consider needy. See coverage pages 3-6.



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Zimri becomes a symbol of spiritual redemption



Parshat Pinchas
Rabbi Sam Thurgood.
Beit Midrash Morasha, Cape Town

Our parsha picks up with the bold deeds of Pinchas in reaction to the scandal committed by Zimri, a prince of Israel, before the entire Jewish people.

The Talmudic sage, Rebbe Yochanan (Sanhedrin 82b), identifies this Zimri (a man we seem not to have met before) with Shelumiel ben Tzurishaddai, the distinguished leader of the tribe of Shimon who brought inaugural offerings to the Mishkan (sanctuary) and is named as one of our great leaders.

Apart from the sobering lesson that even the greatest of us can make such a serious mistake, this Gemo-rah seems problematic in its implications of lashon hara. Without the statement of Rebbe Yochanan, the reputation of Shelumiel would have remained untar-nished - but by his telling us that Shelumiel is Zimri, that he ends his life in public disgrace (a stark lesson in the dangers of the uncontrolled sexual instinct) Shelumiel remains until today a byword for one who brings shame on himself and his family.

So why did Rebbe Yochanan reveal his secret and uncover his shame? (It is worth noting that the Talmud itself asks this question regarding the identity of the “wood gatherer”, see Shabbat 96b.)

Rebbe Tzadok HaKohein of Lublin, the great mystic Sage of the 19th century, asks this question and gives a very powerful answer.

Rebbe Yochanan’s real question, he says, was not: “Who was Zimri?” (a Biblical “guess who”, if you like) but: “Why did Zimri not defend himself, or call for his kinsmen to protect him?”

His answer was that as low as Zimri had sunk, at the last moment, when he saw Pinchas approaching with complete faith and total com-mitment to what was right, Zimri realised the error of his ways and surrendered himself to death for the honour of Hashem, to make up for the desecration of G-d’s name for which he had been responsible.

Rebbe Yochanan is teaching us not that the esteemed Shelumiel be-came the wicked Zimri, but that disgraceful Zimri returned, at the last moment, to being the righteous Shelumiel. Not simply a warning to human weakness, Zimri becomes a symbol of spiritual redemption - a person who, having surrendered his spirituality completely, reclaimed it in a final moment of glory. It is never too late, we are never too low. True greatness is always within our grasp.

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17:11	18:04	East London

Kol isha dispute settled out of court

ANT KATZ

The applicants in the Equality Court case in Cape Town, where two Orthodox Jews (later joined by an interfaith group affiliated to Progressive Jewry) took up a position against the SA Jewish Board of Deputies Cape Council over the issue of women singing at secular functions, reached an amicable out-of-court settlement on Tuesday evening.

The spat, which became known in the community as the “kol isha” dispute, was set down to be heard in late August, but ended when all parties in the hard-fought saga signed off on a negotiated settlement agreement. In practice the outcome may see a two-part ceremony, with women being allowed to sing in the first part.

According to the text of the agreement, “the Board shall re-structure future ceremonies so as not to exclude a woman singing solo, while still ensuring that the event is inclusive for the entire community, including those observing kol isha.”

This puts to rest almost six months of discussions, negotiations, proposals and even a community colloquium on the issue and effectively lifts the ban on the halachic principle of kol isha (women singing in front of men) at secular events hosted by the Board.

While the settlement is between the Cape Board and the applicants, the Board’s national executive director, Wendy Kahn, told Jewish Report on Wednesday morning that the agreement applies not only to the Cape, but is “a commitment on all regions to address the same issue”.

The applicants are not insisting that the settlement be reduced to an order of court, said the source. Stern confirmed this, saying: “We trust the Board to honour their agreement.”

The text of the agreement also says: “The forthcoming Yom Hashoah ceremony, unlike previous ceremonies, will be conducted in two parts, the one following the other, and separated by an event such as candle-lighting, the time of which will be publicised. The first part will be a musical/cultural/educational part, including a woman singing solo, while the second part will follow the traditional ceremony including at least the speakers and a choir. For so long as the Board arranges the ceremony, it will determine the programme and content thereof.”

Someone close to the negotiations who could not be named told Jewish Report on Wednesday morning that “this was not a victory for Gilad Stern and his co-applicants, but rather a victory for the principle that women should be treated with equal dignity and not be unfairly discriminated against”.

Stern, himself an observant Orthodox Jew, said on Wednesday morning that he had launched his case against the Cape Board in defence of the “egalitarian principle of Judaism” and he was satisfied that this had been achieved. “The Board should be commended for recognising the principle of gender equality,” said Stern.

“The settlement agreement recognises the Board’s defence, that they needed to make events they host as inclusive as possible,” said the source referring to the Yom Hashoah ceremony that triggered the dispute.



Gilad Stern, above, and Sarah Goldstein, left.



For example, he said, if the Board wanted to restructure an event to ensure inclusivity of both religious and secular communities, “the agreement would allow them to have a two-part ceremony”.

There will be no award as to costs in this matter, meaning that both sides pay their own legal fees.

Stern, who is thrilled with the outcome, says that he has “always maintained that it’s more appropriate for men to regulate their attendance or participation, rather than to muzzle and silence all women”.

“This is a victory for the proposition that civil courts were not asked to decide on a matter of religion,” Jewish Report’s source close to the discussions said was a principle that had driven the negotiations all the way.

Jewish Report understands that the latest proposal, which has been under discussion all week, was tabled by the Board.

The Equality Court action was originally instituted by Capetonians Gilad Stern and his sister Sarah Goldstein and later joined by the SA Centre for Religious Diversity (SACRED) whose chairman, Rabbi Julia Margolis, told Jewish Report on Wednesday that SACRED was “delighted”.

Goldstein told the SAJR that: “As a mother of girl children, I say, please G-d, may generations of women to come not need to threaten court action in order to be heard!”

• Read more on www.sajr.co.za including all parties’ statements and links to the backstory.

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Johannesburg is gearing up for a ‘keenly contested’ poll

ANT KATZ

Johannesburg is turning out to be one of the hottest political battle-grounds for municipal elections as political parties bring out the big guns to fight for every extra vote they can next Wednesday.

The polls had the Democratic Alliance (DA) extending its lead in the Johannesburg metropole by a further one-and-a-half percentage points last week (week seven).

Having kicked off in second place to the ruling African National Congress (ANC), which currently holds a majority in excess of 55 per cent in the City Council, the DA overtook the ruling party in the third week of polling. But of course politics is not an exact science and with a huge “undecided” electorate of some 14 per cent, the pendulum can swing any old way.

of those votes. The ANC and the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) - a dark horse which may be a “kingmaker” - can be seen to have some high weeks and some lower ones - but generally their support is flat-lining. At this stage all three metros have the DA in the lead, but with all three clearly showing that coalitions are likely as no party seems set to attract a simple majority of 50 per cent plus one. The support for the smaller parties is not reflected.

As always, the Jewish community plays its part in the political process. Among those up for re-election in Johannesburg are the ANC’s Solomon (Solly) Cowan, a four-term councillor in Ward 74 (and who served on the transitional council prior to the first democratic municipal election in 2000); and Joy Coplan (ANC), who has served

DA’s PR list.

Smaller parties strategically allow candidates to stand in multiple wards - which gives them more PR votes even if they win no ward seats. An example of a Jewish candidate in this position is Sidney Anolik who is standing in close to 10 wards on the Freedom Front ticket.

Another is the Congress of the People (Cope) Gauteng provincial spokesman Bradley Goodson, the party’s Midvaal mayoral candidate who is also standing in three wards.

Cope “recognises both Israel and Palestine’s rights to live in peace in safe and security borders”, party leader Mosiuoa Lekota who visited the countries last year, said. He had come back “with a totally different view”. Cope is also fielding Joshua Trapedo as a ward councillor.

Where the Jews are...

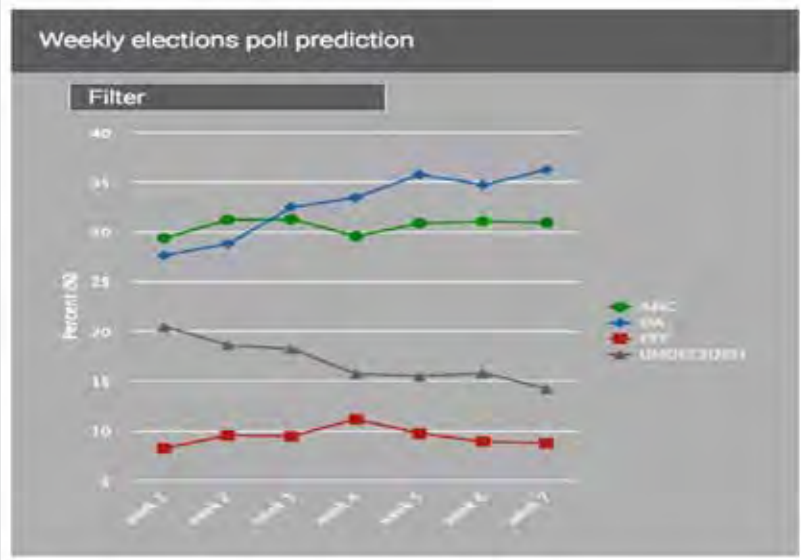
There are 10 (of a total of 150) Johannesburg wards where the Jewish vote is considered substantial (with partial description in brackets):

Ward 72 (Orange Grove to Glenhazel), 73 (Norwood, Killarney), 74 (Gresswold), 81 (Kew), 91 (Athol, Inanda),109 (Wendywood, Gallo Manor), 117 (Saxonwold), 88 (Emmarentia, Northcliff), 87(Greenside, Victory Park) and 103 (Sandown, Morningside).

While the Demarcation Board made substantial changes to ward boundaries since the last municipal elections, they have minimal effect on wards 74 and 81.

The statistics of a Johannesburg voter...

The Johannesburg metro is broken up into 150 wards, with a registered population of 4 434 827 in 2011 but has grown considerably since. The racial breakdown in 2011 was black African, 76,4 per cent; white, 12,3 per cent; Coloured, 5,6 per cent; and Indian/Asian, 4,9 per cent. The City is so cosmopolitan that, of the five most spoken home languages in 2011, “other” came in first at 39,2 per cent, followed by Zulu at 23,4 per cent; English at 20,1 per cent; Sotho at 9,6 per cent; and Tswana at 7,7 per cent.



Pollsters IPSOS and eNCA news channel have teamed up to do scientifically credible polls weekly over eight weeks in the city - as well as in two other metros which could change management after August 3, Nelson Mandela Bay (Port Elizabeth and surrounds); and Tshwane (Pretoria).

Over 1 500 registered voters are polled on Mondays and Tuesdays every week and the results compiled and released on Thursdays.

Interestingly, tracking the polls has shown that the high percentage of “undecideds” is falling as polling day gets nearer, with the DA picking up a healthy dollop

as a Proportional Representation (PR) councillor since 2006 and is now standing as a ward councillor in Ward 90 (Hyde Park area).

Cowan has served on the Mayoral Committee (inner city portfolio), in the formation of the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) and chaired two section 79 committees. Since 2011 he has chaired both the Ethics and the Public Accounts committees.

Among the DA Jewish candidates are Ward 72’s incumbent Steven Kruger and Tyrell Meyers in Ward 126 (Southern Suburbs). Meyers, together with Josh Apfel and John Mendelsohn, are placed high on the

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Elections in Pretoria: can the parties deliver?

DIANE WOLFSON
PRETORIA

In the eastern suburbs of Pretoria occupied by the majority of the city’s Jewish community, the political parties most visible in the run-up to the municipal elections of August 3 are the ANC, the DA and ACDP. Efforts to get comments from the ANC have been fruitless. During an interview with Siobhan Muller, DA councillor and spokesman for spatial planning, she was clear with regard to their plans for the future of Tshwane.

“As Ward 82 is under the highest densification in the city, I am committed to ensuring good and reasonable densification, with the upgrading of infrastructure going hand-in-hand with development.

Due to the proposed BRT (Bus Rapid Transport) bus service, there are continual applications for more development, often

without the needed upgrades in infrastructure, says Muller. She will focus on protecting the rights of existing land owners while working to a modern, functional residential area.

“It is imperative that development is an added value to the community and that the proposed public transport system be a positive contribution to the bettering of the ward,” said Muller. She added that the maintenance and upgrading of the existing roads, street lights, power supply and water pipes must be part of the developing suburbs, along with the protection of social and sporting facilities.

“The dynamics of the old established neighbourhoods need protecting. The value of properties need to be protected and increased in one of the most sought-after wards in the city.”

Continued on page 4>>



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>> Continued from page 3

DA Mayoral Candidate Solly Msimanga showed an open door policy and did not hesitate to endorse Muller’s comments and aims, appealing to the citizens of Tshwane to give the DA an opportunity to turn the city around. “If every DA supporter goes out and votes on August 3, we will take over the running of the City of Tshwane.

“Once we are in power, we will be able to make the difference, stopping the corruption which is bleeding our city dry, turning around the lack of service delivery and making sure all residents have a safe environment to live in”.

Brendon Govender, regional chairman for the African Christian Democratic Party in Tshwane, said: “The vision for the ACDP in the City of Tshwane is to deal with the following issues:

1. Corruption on a metro level. The city has a lot of cash flow that comes in, but because of

mismanagement of funds, our residents are suffering, thus affecting our rates and taxes.

“2. Ward councillors: We will be accountable to the community that voted us in; our focus will be to increase our working relationships between the ward councillors and the ward committees.

“3. Safety: Our ward councillors will serve on the community policing forum, thus creating a safer community for all.

“4. Accessibility: The community will know who their ward councillor is and have a contact number for them, and in the event of not getting hold of him/her, there will be an alternative number (regional executive committee member).

“5. Partnership: We appeal to all readers to lock arms with us and give us an opportunity to serve you for the next five years under the umbrella of the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP).”



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In the ‘cool’ Cape, election fever is a burning hot issue



Councillor Shayne Ramsay and Councillor Ian Iversen.

TALI FEINBERG

Democratic Alliance and African National Congress candidates standing for election in Cape Town wards with Jewish communities spoke to the SA Jewish Report about what they would offer their constituents.

Shayne Ramsay is standing for the DA in Ward 54, which includes Sea Point, Fresnaye, Camps Bay and Bakoven.

“I have to acknowledge the elephant in the room - the size of Jacques’ shoes!” referring to the popular outgoing Ward 54 councillor Jacques Weber.

Ramsay is making herself accessible to her constituents through a Facebook page. “As the ward councillor, I will be responsive to my community, representing their interests to local government, and I will be accountable for my actions.

“I intend to be the liaison representing the collective views of my community to the government in a fair and transparent manner. And once the City of Cape Town has taken a decision on an issue, I will clearly communicate that position back to the ward.”

Thandi Njuti is standing for the ANC in Ward 115, which includes Mouille Point, Green Point and De Waterkant, the Bo-Kaap, the CBD, Woodstock and Paarden Eiland.

“I am running for councillor because change and transformation will not take place on their own. Positive action is required towards pursuing the vision stated on the Freedom Charter, and I feel that I’m capable in leading towards the achievement of this vision,” she says.

“Our city is beautiful but there are beggars and homeless people on every street corner. Our plan is to channel them into rehabilitation programmes and development programmes. Municipal government should be able to equally address and cater for the rich and the poor. Having people scratching in bins looking food and used goods is indecent.”

Njuti also wants to create equal working opportunities. “Most of the industries in Cape Town are seasonal, so we will be looking at maximising revenues during the season and exploring ways of sustaining those revenue streams for job creations.”

Ian Iversen is contesting Ward 59 for the DA.

It includes Newlands, Rondebosch, Kenilworth and Claremont. He has been a Cape Town City Councillor since 1984 and this will be his last term of office.

He says: “I have a great concern about the levels of unemployment in our society and believe that it can be reduced at a municipal level by making economic investments easier from a planning/zoning entry point. Secondly, it is important that youngsters receive the best possible education, and the province and city can assist by rolling out free broadband/Internet connections to schools and education facilities.”

Iversen is proud that there’s a large Jewish community in his ward. “I keep in touch with about 220 families on my data base.”

Iversen says “the number of homeless people in the ward is really concerning. A colleague and I have earmarked a piece of land at the Claremont Interchange to construct a much larger homeless shelter, as the present one is falling apart.”

Traffic is a real problem, “as a people still want to drive, one person in a car, to work. We need to support the expansion of the MyCiti bus links.”

Although Jewish Report could not reach Nonceba Mhlauli of the ANC directly, the News24 website reported the following:

She began her campaign to be a councillor of Ward 59 in Cape Town months ago, and even changed her Twitter handle to “Councillor Nonceba”.

Living in the city’s southern suburbs, where there were many young people studying or working, she found there was “a serious lack of social integration and cohesion. “The Southern Suburbs are segregated,” she said.

“A high rate of race-related incidents that have taken place in this area have caught the public’s attention.”

Mhlauli, a part-time master’s student in social policy and African languages, cited housing as a major challenge for young working people in the area. “The rental rates here are ridiculously high. They exclude young people in particular,” she explained.

Other problems in the area included crime, she said, but her main focus would be on starting conversations about racism, inequality and segregation before tackling these scourges head-on.

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'Vote for Kindness' epitomises what politicians should be doing

SUZANNE BELLING

With the municipal elections around the corner - Wednesday, August 3 - each candidate has declared his or her manifesto, filled with promises of jobs, flushing toilets, service delivery and what the DA, ANC, EFF, IFP, ACDP, the Freedom Front Plus and other minor parties will do if South Africans vote them in.

But will this change South Africa?

American politicians are also promising the world in their upcoming national elections but will Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's promises really change the lives of the vast majority of US citizens? Maybe; maybe not.

The late Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, OBM, when speaking to a CNN reporter, who asked him for his message to the world to change it for the better, replied: "Increased acts of goodness and kindness."

In line with the late Rebbe's message and coinciding with the country's political campaign, Chabad is going all out to promote its own campaign throughout Johannesburg. It is giving out yellow plastic arks which people should fill with money and give to whomever they consider is needy.

Over one million arks are already in circulation. "It is not a fundraising campaign," emphasises Rabbi David Masinter, director of Chabad House and of the annual Miracle Drive. "The money donated goes to anyone the giver thinks is less fortunate. We will not take any money back."

Just like the politicians have their messages on posters all around the country, Rabbi Masinter has arranged his own on street poles, which state, "Vote for Kindness".

"We live in a world which is so dark right now. There are beheadings, terrorism, stabbings and we live in fear. We must not forget the power of the individual to change the world. Our manifesto is the Rebbe's message.

"Just a little bit of light dispels the darkness. An act of goodness and kindness dispels negativity," Rabbi Masinter said.

He has enlisted the support of top sports people and celebrities "across the board" to endorse the "Change Our World for Good" campaign. Many companies have supported the campaign and the arks are available at supermarkets and numerous other outlets. Fashion houses have been given the appropriate slogan, "It's time for kindness to come back into fashion", while dentists and doctors have been asked to give out the message: "Say Arrrrrrrk."

"But," says Rabbi Masinter, "It is a very serious campaign to change our world for good. Bad actions create bad energy; bad speech brings about bad karma." Conversely, good actions and good speech bring about positive energy."

So, whatever candidate you vote for in the South African elections, you cannot make a wrong choice by voting for the qualities of goodness and kindness.



ANT KATZ

The South African Jewish community has famously played a disproportionately prominent role in the struggle against apartheid - and has continued to do so in every aspect of building the country's new democracy.

"Old-timers" who were imprisoned or exiled and played an active role after 1994, are now retiring from local government seats, to be replaced by a new wave of Jews as candidates and party workers.

The current crop of Jewish politicians can be found in every facet of politics, spread over most political parties.

One Jewish political stalwart is veteran ANC Johannesburg city councillor Sol Cowan (pictured). He recalls the heady days between 1994's first national democratic election and 2000's first municipal election.

Things were moving so fast that South Africa was still penning a Constitution, drawing provincial borders and allocating powers; and municipalities were, for a time, run by transitional councils (TRCs) and substructures.

A large portion of what is today the many constituencies of northern Johannesburg were run as a single entity. The TRC was run out of a shul hall on Louis Botha Avenue next to the Doll House roadhouse.

One of the "new wave" Jewish politicians is Darren Bergman, previously a senior Johannesburg city councillor and now an MP. He says the relatively small Jewish population in Johannesburg "could be the swing vote" in the 2016 election, which he says is "going to go to the wire".

At the Durban offices of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, Alana Baranov has been running a highly successful election awareness and mobilisation campaign dubbed: "Make Us Count".

It started as a Jewish-only affair in the 2009 election and was so successful that Baranov, the co-ordinator, expanded the project for the 2014 general election. The 2016 local government election is their biggest "Make Us Count" campaign ever - and their first for a municipal election.

They create awareness and encourage Jews to register. They offer a non-partisan educational campaign, which this year consisted of well-attended debates in Cape Town and Johannesburg with an array of senior party representatives taking part in Q&A sessions.

Then they mobilise - putting together an election observer team - fully accredited with the Independent Election Commission (IEC).

In 2009 the Board only had Jewish members on their team. "In 2014 we included non-Jews," says Baranov and they fielded over 100 observers. Next week, she says, they will be fielding 120 observers, including Muslims, Hindus, Christians and even refugees who cannot vote.

The observer team includes some of the crème de la crème of the Board's executive and professional staff. They will mainly be active in the big centres but will include scatterings of the team in places such as Kimberley and Paarl.

On the day, Baranov co-ordinates by SMS. She can send out a message from the IEC to all 120 team members simultaneously. Observers can take pictures, SMS them to Baranov who will send them to the IEC.

In Cape Town, Jewish councillors such as Stuart Diamond keep the wheels turning. He is a CA and fulltime councillor who chairs the city's finance portfolio.

Another Jewish Cape Town PR councillor is Errol Anstey of the DA who believes that his party will grow their 62 per cent majority to between 65 and 69 per cent due to the huge growth in black membership.

Initial polls showed huge numbers of "undecided" voters, but the past few weeks have seen that number going down, as the DA's numbers climb. But too many politicians and pundits have burnt their fingers in the past and many expressed a word of caution about polls.

"Just look at Brexit, for example," said one, "or Donald Trump who was given a five per cent chance (to be the Republican presidential candidate in the US) just six months ago." His message was clear: "Don't be complacent if you think your ward seat is safe. Even if it is, your PR vote is valuable."

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Democrats seek unity on Israel, but cracks begin to show

BEN SALES
PHILADELPHIA

The Democratic Party has spent the first couple of days of its convention projecting unity on issues from fighting racism to fair trade. But fissures are showing on one issue that Democrats have long been united on: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Their party, which has long commanded the vast majority of Jewish votes, like the Republican side has defined itself as pro-Israel – ensuring military aid to Israel and defending it on the world stage. But some Democratic delegates believe that should change.

Delegates for Bernie Sanders, many of them young, would like to see America’s sympathies shift from robust support of Israel to outspoken opposition to the oppression of Palestinians. These delegates see opposing Israel’s occupation of the West Bank as part of other human rights issues they champion.

“Absolutely we need to take a stand on the occupation of Palestinians,” said Jennifer Merecki, a Sanders delegate from Montana. “The US should stop funding Israel. They use that money for the oppression of Palestinian people.”

The change in US policy that Sanders delegates are demanding

egate from Northern California whose wife, Bobbie, wore a pin that said “I support Palestinian human rights”.

“We should have discussions with the Israeli government to stop the settlements. [Palestinians] are defending their right to exist,” he said.

Clinton delegates supported the views of their candidate, which are largely in lockstep with traditional Democratic support of Israel. They advocated a two-state solution but firmly defended Israel.

“I am a supporter of Israel,” said Maria Luna, vice-chairman of the New York State Democratic Party and a Clinton supporter. “We need to come to agreement between the two sides, otherwise the struggle will continue for dozens of years.”

Palestinians, she said, should gain American support “if they change their way of behaving toward Israel”.

Some Sanders delegates called for a significant change on US policy toward Israel, with a few saying America should stop providing its annual \$3 billion assistance package. Dwight Bullard, a Florida state senator who went on a May trip to the West Bank and Israel focused on Palestinian rights, said Israel should extend citizenship to Palestinians living in the territories.

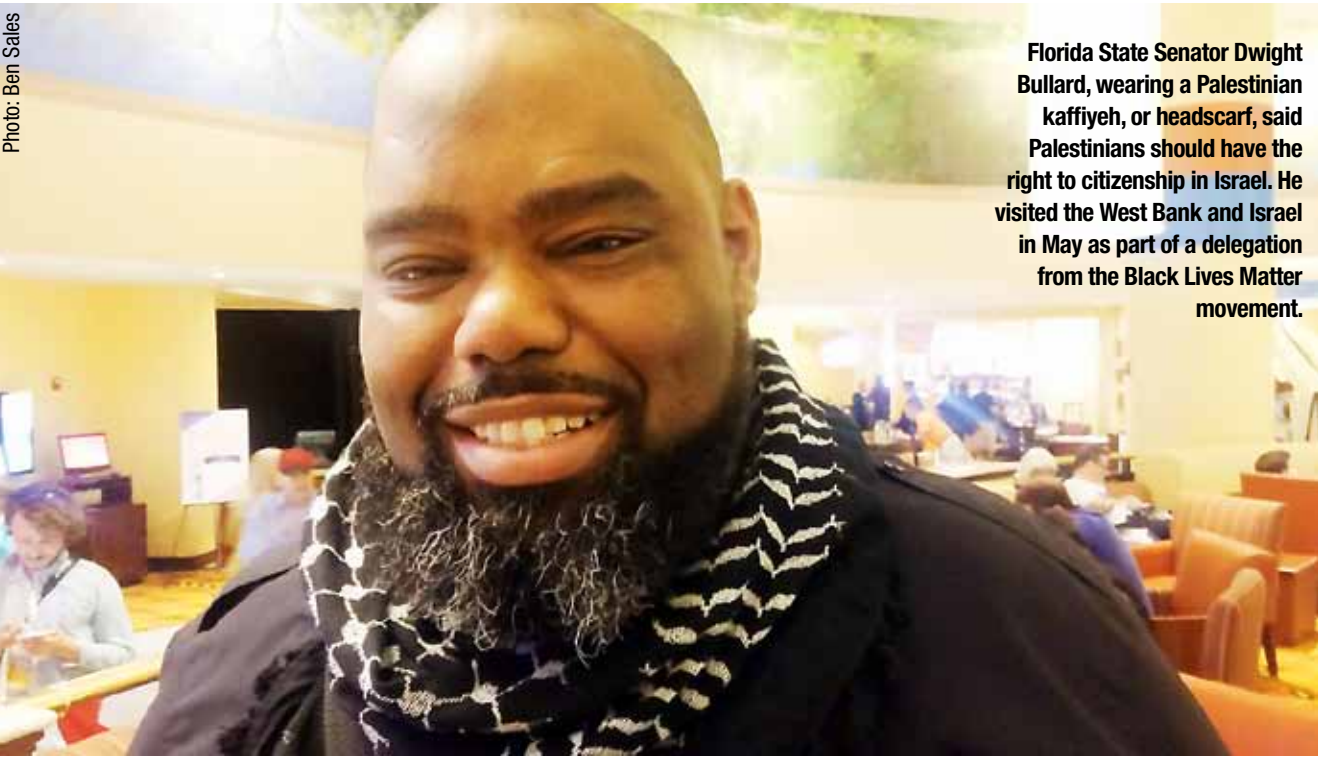


Photo: Ben Sales

Florida State Senator Dwight Bullard, wearing a Palestinian kaffiyeh, or headscarf, said Palestinians should have the right to citizenship in Israel. He visited the West Bank and Israel in May as part of a delegation from the Black Lives Matter movement.

tracks with a generational divide in the Democratic Party. While more older Democrats want the United States to favour Israel over the Palestinians, among Democrats aged 18 to 29, support is equally divided between Israel and the Palestinians, according to a late 2014 Washington Post poll.

In May, the Pew Research Centre found that more liberal Democrats, and more Sanders supporters, sided with the Palestinians over Israel, some 40 per cent to 33 per cent. Seventy-one per cent of millennials voted for Sanders, as opposed to 28 per cent for Clinton. Republicans favour Israel over the Palestinians by wide margins.

Several delegates, for both Sanders and Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton, suggested that the United States take measures it has already long taken. Some called for the US to convene negotiations between the two sides, which Democratic and Republican administrations have attempted every few years. Others said the US should oppose settlements, which it has since Israel’s victory in the 1967 Six Day War.

But all who said they want US policy to shift, emphasised that they want the government to take a more vocal stand in defence of Palestinian rights.

“We feel Palestinians deserve their own nation and that they deserve human rights,” said Elacido Salazar, 71, a Sanders del-

“You have people who lived in the region prior to the establishment of Israel,” said Bullard, 39, who wore a kaffiyeh, or Palestinian headscarf, around his neck on Tuesday to signal support for Palestinian rights. “As an African-American, it’s hard for me to buy into the notion of segregation whether in the US or abroad. Someone born in Jerusalem [should have] the rights of a citizen.”

Sanders advocated for increased recognition of Palestinian rights throughout his campaign. In a speech he gave concurrent with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee national conference in March, the Vermont senator supported Israel but called for friendship toward Palestinians.

“But to be successful, we have also got to be a friend not only to Israel but to the Palestinian people, where in Gaza unemployment today is 44 per cent and we have there a poverty rate which is almost as high,” Sanders said. “So when we talk about Israel and Palestinian areas, it is important to understand that today there is a whole lot of suffering among Palestinians and that cannot be ignored.”

When the Democratic Party platform was drafted in June, representatives of Sanders voters, including philosopher and civil rights activist Cornel West, pushed for the word “occupation” to be inserted into the section on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the Democratic Party has long condemned Israel’s control



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of the West Bank, the wording change proved too controversial.

In the end, the platform echoed traditional bipartisan positions backing Israel: support for Israel’s security, a two-state solution to the conflict, the establishment of a Palestinian state and for Jerusalem to remain the capital of Israel. Sanders’ appointees were disappointed that the platform didn’t recognise Israel’s “occupation” nor refer to “settlement activity”.

“We got defeated,” West acknowledged on Monday in an interview with The Jerusalem Post. “But we’ll bounce back, though.”

The Republican Party also saw changes to its Israel policy in this year’s platform, tacking to the right. The party abandoned the longstanding bipartisan commitment to the two-state solution and opposed “any measures intended to impose an agreement or to dictate borders or other terms”.

For some pro-Israel activists, even reliable friends like Virginia Senator Tim Kaine, Hillary Clinton’s choice for running mate, represent a softening of Democratic support for Israel.

Kaine has been a vocal supporter of US security assistance to Israel, but like most Democrats bucked the pro-Israel lobby and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in supporting the Iran nuclear deal.

During the fight over the deal, Kaine absented himself from Netanyahu’s speech to Congress opposing the deal, but subsequently worked to smooth the waters between the prime minister and Senate Democrats.

Tellingly, Kaine has worked closely with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, despite their disagreements over the Iran deal, while at the same time earning the approval of J Street, the liberal Jewish group that seeks a more assertive US policy in promoting the two-state solution.

He rarely talks about the two-state solution without reminding the Palestinians of their obligations to honour past commitments and affirm Israel’s right to exist.

Sanders delegates, too, even as they called for significant changes in how the United States relates to Israel, said they opposed any infringement on Jews’ safety and rights in Israel. Israel, some said, should remain a Jewish homeland because of the atrocities committed against Jews in the Holocaust.

“As far as what happened to Jewish people in the Holocaust, they deserve a home,” said Alex Storer, 20, a delegate from Florida. “They have more in common with our society than other countries in the region.” (JTA)



Photo: Ben Sales

Jennifer Merecki and Andy Boyd, Bernie Sanders delegates from Montana, believe the United States should cease sending foreign aid to Israel and instead work to end what they see as the oppression of Palestinians.

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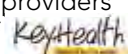
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South African rabbis on a solidarity mission to Israel



The South African Orthodox rabbis, led by Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, second from left in front.

SIMON APFEL

A group of some 50 South African rabbis have returned from the annual Rabbinical Conference which was this year held in Israel.

The three-day conference, bringing together the country’s Orthodox rabbis to discuss some of the pressing issues facing the community - and usually held in South Africa - this year doubled as an Israel “solidarity mission”.

“This trip was an opportunity to reinforce the deep connection between the South African Jewish community and Israel, especially during these times of great challenge,” says Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, who led the delegation.

“Of course, it was also a chance for our rabbonim to reconnect with each other - to listen to anecdotes, share ideas, and strengthen our wonderful network of leaders and teachers.”

Rabbi Ron Hendler, who managed the logistics of the conference, gathered a line-up of speakers representing many different facets of Israeli society.

“We were privileged to meet with leaders in a variety of fields and to be exposed to some of the world’s top rabbinical scholars and educators,” says Rabbi Hendler.

The speakers tackled a range of issues relevant to the South African community - from how to prevent, and effectively deal with, cases of agunot, and how to strengthen families through improved family counselling, to the laws of brain death and organ donation, and even the implications of artificial insemination and surrogacy on conversion.

Army generals, government ministers and civil society leaders were also on the speakers’ bill.

Ambassador Dr Dore Gold, director general of Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke about the burgeoning diplomatic ties between Israel and Africa, and South Africa in particular, and Brigadier-General Yossi Kuperwasser, director of the Project on Regional Middle East Developments at the Jerusalem Centre, gave the group the inside track on the recent dramatic upheaval in the Middle East, and its military implications for Israel.

The rabbis also met with Yaakov Litzman, Israel’s popular Minister of Health - known for his surprise personal visits to hospital patients and for his work in ensuring vital medical services and advanced medical treatment are made more accessible and affordable to people on the margins of Israeli society.

After hearing from Shurat HaDin founder and president, Nitsana Darshan-Leitner, about how her organisation was fighting terror through the courts, the group met with a number of bereaved families who had lost children and relatives to terror attacks.

Among them were Nachum Lemkus, a former South African, whose daughter Dalia was murdered in 2014

as she stood waiting at a hitchhiking stop; Rina Ariel, whose 13-year-old daughter was stabbed to death in her bedroom by a Palestinian teenager this past June; and Rebbetzen Chana Henkin, whose son and daughter-in-law were murdered by Palestinian terrorists in front of their four children in a drive-by shooting in October last year.

During Henkin’s talk, many of the rabbis were fighting back tears, as the well-known founder of Israel’s Nishmat Centre related how she and her husband had stepped in as surrogate parents for their grandchildren.

“Meeting with these bereaved families was itself a painful and traumatic experience,” says Rabbi Goldstein, “and at the same time it was so incredibly inspiring to witness first-hand their heroic strength and faith and indomitable spirit, even in the face of such unimaginable personal tragedy.

“We are only too aware that the threat of terror persists, and everywhere we went our message was that we stand shoulder to shoulder with our brothers and sisters in Israel during these difficult times.”

For many, the highlight of the conference was the opportunity to engage with and learn from some of the world’s top halachic authorities, including Rabbi Zalman Nechemia Goldberg (chief justice of the Rabbinical High Court in Jerusalem), Dayan Asher Weiss (head rabbi at Shaarei Zedek Hospital), Rabbi Hershel Schachter (rosh yeshiva at Yeshiva University in New York), and Rabbi Dr Mordechai Halperin (Chief Officer of Medical Ethics at Israel’s Ministry of Health).

Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi David Lau was among those who addressed the delegation, expressing his admiration for the South African Jewish community - whose warmth and unity he experienced first-hand on a visit to the country in 2015.

The group themselves embodied this unity, representing the broad spectrum of the country’s rabbinical leadership.

“So many of the people we encountered expressed how wonderful it was to see unity among the rabbonim,” says Rabbi Dani Brett, who was attending his 12th Rabbinic Conference and second in Israel.

“In Israel this kind of common accord unfortunately isn’t so common. Many of the great leaders and educators we were exposed to remarked that this was a lesson they themselves could take away.”

Also included in the itinerary were visits to the Zomet Institute - an organisation working at the interface between cutting-edge technology and halacha - and the military cemetery at Har Herzl, where the rabbis paid their respects to Israel’s fallen soldiers.

“As the delegation returns to South Africa,” says Rabbi Goldstein, “we look forward to sharing the eye-opening and inspiring experiences of this trip with the entire community.”

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The woman who would not accept 'no' for an answer



Photo: Suzanne Belling

SUZANNE BELLING

When Ilana and Martin Gerschlowitz's son David was 20 months old, he stopped making eye contact and stopped vocal communication.

“We took him to a neurologist, who diagnosed him with autism and basically told us there was nothing that could be done. ‘Goodbye and good luck’, she said,” Ilana told Jewish Report.

"I didn't believe there was nothing to be done. When somebody tells me 'no', I hear 'maybe'," she said.

Setting aside her successful law career, Ilana embarked on intensive research into autism and discovered the Centre for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) in the US. “My husband and I took it in turns to fly to America, where we consulted with top experts and seven years ago brought Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) to South Africa.”

With the help of CARD, seven years ago Ilana founded the Star Academy (Martin, an accountant, works there nights) with three branches in Highlands North, one in Pretoria and works with the sub-Saharan countries of Ghana, Zimbabwe and Mauritius.

As director of the Star Academy, she was chosen as the winner for South Africa's Most Influential Woman in Business and Government at the annual CEO Global Awards ceremony held in Johannesburg.

The Star Academy's arm has extended to Tembisa on the East Rand, where Ilana trains students in ABA and has fundraised extensively to keep the outreach programme going.

“Twenty years ago maybe one child in 1 000 was diagnosed as autistic. Today one in 148 has the condition. There is genetic susceptibility, affected by certain environmental toxins such as water, food, air, antibiotics and vaccines and other factors.

“We call autistic children the yellow canaries of the planet - a warning to the population that autism is on the increase. It is vital to have the diagnosis early in life

and consult a biomedical doctor who has been trained in this protocol.

“There is a road to recovery - some children will not fully recover, but with the right medical educational intervention in the form of ABA, children will become functional and independent members of society.

“The important message of ABA is that it has evidence of over 30 years of published research.”

Instead of emigrating, as others might have done, Ilana decided to deal with autism on her doorstep. Her academies have one-on-one facilitators and some of the children recover sufficiently to be placed in regular schools.

“According to the Constitution, children with disabilities have the right to be included in mainstream education. Every one of our facilitators is a board certified autism technician, who holds a behavioural interaction certification council qualification.”

When the children are ready to enter the mainstream school system, they are accompanied to classes by their facilitators.

Ilana stresses the necessity of empowering parents and professionals and says successful outcomes regarding their children can even lead to autistic children going to university and getting married.

Previously autism-related illnesses were divided into categories including progressive development disorder and Asperger's, but now all are classified under DSM V in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual.

There are three areas - language and communication, social relatedness and stereotypical behaviour.

ABA is an intervention which assists in learning skills such as looking, listening, imitating, as well as complex skills such as reading, conversing and understanding another person's perspective.

On receiving her award, Ilana dedicated it to autistic children around the world for their bravery, labelling them as the true winners of society.



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

The shift to the right in the world is epitomised by Donald Trump who may become the next United States president and have his finger on the nuclear button. A scary thought. As nationalism and intolerance of the “other” rises, the fundamentalist trend grows too in Jewish communities and other religions including Christianity and Islam.

Last week Thursday, at the annual memorial lecture in tribute to the late educationist and liberal humanist Franz Auerbach, the keynote Jewish speaker was Mr Justice Dennis Davis, a sitting judge of the High Court who describes himself as “an adherent to modern Orthodoxy”. The event was in a Progressive synagogue.

Davis' key point was that while many Jews were activists against apartheid, most did it without reference to Judaism, whereas Auerbach premised his activism against all social systems which reject the "other", explicitly on Jewish tradition.

Auerbach, who came to South Africa as a young refugee in 1936 to escape Nazi Germany, knew from personal experience what can happen when one group of people demonise another. In his vocal opposition to apartheid, when many other Jews were silent, he fought for his belief in tolerance towards people with different identities.

It was inevitable that at last week Thursday's lecture controversial topics would be raised, including the "kol isha" issue which has shaken SA Jewry recently due to the interpretation in conservative parts of the religious community that men should not listen to women singing alone.

Davis described to the delight of those present how in various other countries that he visits, devoutly Orthodox Jews are regularly seen - bearing their kippot and tzitzit - at great opera performances where female sopranos and others are dominant.

Why is it that in this community the most narrow and restrictive interpretation

Around the Jewish World

Sharing Shabbat by the seashore

PHILADELPHIA - Philadelphia-area synagogues are teaming up with their counterparts at the shore to hold services along the beach. The soothing sound of waves crashing onto the shore. Delicate sand castles rising from the surface. Seagulls squawking "Mine!" as they search the sand for scraps. This might sound like the backdrop of a family day at the beach, but it's also the setting of a popular spot for Shabbat services during the summer.

Well, at least it is for synagogues already housed in popular beach towns such as Ventnor and Margate, New Jersey. A few Philadelphia-area synagogues have taken advantage of the summery location of these synagogues and formed partnerships to hold services together as congregations. These relationships have allowed synagogues to bring their shul to the shore.

Starting in July, Congregation Beth Judah (now called Shirat Hayam as a result of a merger with Margate synagogue Temple Emeth Shalom) will hold its first of three sets of Devotion by the Ocean, Kabbalat Shabbat services that are co-sponsored by Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel in Philadelphia.

"We have the beach right here. We have the ocean right here. When we have good weather, it's fabulous," said Rabbi Jonathan Kremer of Congregation Beth Judah in Ventnor.

While this will only be his third year participating in Devotion by the Ocean (his first was actually on his very first Friday as rabbi at the synagogue), he is looking forward to sharing in the Shabbat experience with others. - Jewish Exponent, Philadelphia

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Fish recipe that will have you begging for more

JENNIFER STEMPEL
NEW YORK

I come from a family of hunters and gatherers and the younger generations are no exception. My grandfather owned and operated a farm in Cuba and to this day enjoys reaping what he sows.

This love of farm-to-table delicacies doesn't end in the garden, either. Some of my fondest and earliest memories are of our family fishing trips. We'd each have our own special fishing chairs, and our rods would line the lake like sabre arches, saluting the swimming fish. In the evening, dinner always included the catch of the day.

Fortunately I married someone whose family traditions also included spending quality time with a fishing rod in hand, though he grew up clear across the country. My husband often shares stories about his experiences fishing with his grandfather.

My dad and husband have travelled to Alaska together for salmon fishing and often go to a local fishing club for a fun and lazy Sunday. Of course, when they return with their loot in tow, they turn to me to transform the scaly catch into something delicious.

I love to utilise as much fresh produce in my cooking as is seasonally possible. As a young mother, I am always looking for shortcuts and time savers at dinnertime.

A recent favourite meal in my home has become my "Sheet Pan Chimichurri Cod with Potatoes and Squash". The fresh and pungent flavours of the herbed chimichurri sauce traditionally found on grilled Argentine steaks heightens the mild flavour of the cod fillets, while the new potatoes and the zucchini slices mellow any heat that travels from the chillies in the dish.



Sheet pan chimichurri* cod with potatoes and squash.

Chimichurri* cod with potatoes and squash
*Chimichurri is an Argentine condiment used to accompany grilled steak and other meats; it is a pesto-like sauce made from onions, garlic, parsley, dried oregano, salt, cayenne pepper, oil and vinegar.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup chimichurri sauce, divided (recipe below)
- 1 pound (about half a kilogram) thick-cut cod loin, cut into 3 large pieces
- 1/2 pound (about a quarter kilogram) new potatoes (any colour), sliced into 1/4-inch (6,35 mm) rounds
- 1 small zucchini, sliced into 1/2-inch (12,7 mm) rounds

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- Add cod pieces and 1/4 cup of chimichurri sauce to a zip-top plastic bag; seal to close. Massage the bag to coat the fish with the sauce. Let sit in refrigerator to marinate while you proceed with recipe.
- Cover a sheet pan in heavy duty foil (for easy clean-up), spray with cooking spray, and add the potatoes, zucchini and yellow squash. Drizzle the olive oil and sprinkle with salt, pepper and garlic powder. Toss to coat, and bake in oven for 15 minutes.
- Remove sheet pan from oven and stir the vegetables. Add the marinated fish pieces on top of the vegetables and return to the oven for 15-20 minutes, or until fish is cooked through and flaky.
- Serve with additional chimichurri sauce.

For the chimichurri sauce:

In a medium bowl, combine the vinegar, salt, black pepper, garlic, shallot and chilli. Stir to combine and let sit for 10 minutes. Add the parsley and oregano, and whisk in the olive oil. (The Noshers via JTA)

Jennifer Stempel is a TV development executive who lives in Los Angeles with her husband and son. She enjoys teaching cooking classes and blogs about her experiments in the kitchen.

- 1 small yellow squash, sliced into 1/2-inch (12,7 mm) rounds
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Chimichurri sauce:

- 1/2 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 cloves of garlic, finely minced
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 small serrano chilli, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup minced fresh Italian parsley
- 1/4 cup minced fresh oregano
- 3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

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THEATRE ON THE SQUARE

Ground-breaking for TA Nursery School’s new classrooms



Grant Harli, structural engineer; Mandy and Pam Yachad; Sara Bronstein, principal of TA Nursery School; Andy Stein and Anita de Oliveira, quantity surveyor.

SUZANNE BELLING

Lubavitch rabbis swapped their borsalino hats for hard hats during the ground-breaking ceremony - held in freezing, rainy and misty weather on Tuesday morning - at Torah Academy Nursery School at the start of the building of additional classrooms for the school.

Dignitaries included donors, who have made the project possible, guests and senior staff of the school.

Rabbi Mendel Lipskar, head of Lubavitch SA, said Jews are at the beginning of the three weeks of mourning and sadness over the destruction of the temples, but expansion of the school meant that every place contributing to education that was built, would form part of the ‘new temple’.

Sara Bronstein, principal of the nursery school, explained the expansion project, saying “chinuch” (education) had the same meaning as commitment and dedication.

“We educate to dedicate and we are dedicated to education,” she said.

Yeshiva learners ‘get wise’ on Homo naledi

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Ashley Kruger, a PhD student working under Prof Lee Berger at Wits University, last week presented a talk on the hominid discovery of Homo naledi in the Rising Star cave system in the Cradle of Humankind to the Yeshiva College grade 12 life science learners.

This is one of the most important fossil hominid finds in history due to the sheer numbers of specimens discovered. Knowledge of this discovery is an integral part of the human evolution section of the grade 12 life science syllabus.

Pictured are Heath Hull (senior life sciences teacher); Gila Rosen; Shaina Sachs; Adi Levi; Ashley Kruger; Sarah Jacobson; and Dani Waksman.



Read the South African Jewish Report online
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The grade 5 class at Rebonwe Primary School in Ivory Park on the East Rand, enjoying their Mandela Day “Bill of Responsibilities” activity with ORT SA.

ORT’s ‘Bill of Responsibilities’ game a huge success

OWN CORRESPONDENT

The King David Ubuntu Holiday Camp, SA Board of Jewish Education members, as well as Hudaco Industries and Citadel Wealth Management who funded the day, joined in the Mandela Day “Bill of Responsibilities” activity with ORT SA.

ORT SA ran the programme on Mandela Day for primary school pupils in Ivory Park and Vosloorus on the East Rand on the “Bill of Responsibilities”.

Explains ORT: “Our Constitution grants us ‘rights’ but what responsibilities come with it?”

This was captured in a fun “game” rolled out in 55 classes over 2 700 children. ORT SA is also looking to rolling out the “Bill of Responsibilities” game to all primary schools in the Jewish community.

New equipment delights Sydenham Playschool kids

SUE BENJAMIN

On their return to school after the winter holiday break, the Sydenham Pre-Primary School kids were delighted to find their playground had been dramatically upgraded.

Outdoor play is crucial to a child’s development as they are constantly developing their motor skills and building their core strength.

New slides, a climbing frame, balance beam, ladders, stairs and an outdoor chalkboard have been installed to enhance the existing equipment.

The children are enjoying the challenges the new apparatus offers and they are eager to explore and take some risks.

Pictured are Gabriella Marcus; Mila Hovsha; Chloe Bergman; and Danni Cohen, excited to try the new equipment.



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IF YOU LIVE IN A GLASS HOUSE, DON’T THROW STONES

I would like to respond to two letters which appeared in last week’s Jewish Report.

There is hardly anything to respond to in Olga-May Musnitzky’s letter in which she attacks my previous letter in which I clearly explained why, in my opinion, Elie Wiesel was not a saint, to say the least.

I want to point to the obvious fact that she didn’t put up any argument for anything which I wrote. Indeed, what did Wiesel do in memory of non-Jewish Second World War victims, if he was “such a great” person, as she and others state? I guess the answer is obvious and can be summed up in one word…

Regarding the letter of Grant Gochin from Los Angeles about anti-Semitism in Lithuania, I am not going to go into this complicated subject but would like to comment on a very strange point in his letter, where he states that Nazi values were taught to children in Nazi Germany and “racist” values were taught to children in… apartheid South Africa.

May I ask what were those “racist” values? Maybe the fact that a large proportion of the land in South Africa, or at least in its eastern part, was paid for by the Voortrekkers, unlike the settlers in what today is the US, who just massacred the original inhabitants of the place, confiscated their land and didn’t even grant them any autonomous homeland.

And what about the fact that Los Angeles, along with many states in the US, had been forcefully confiscated from Mexico?

I really think anyone who lives in a house made of glass should not throw stones at other people’s windows.

Avner Eliyahu Romm
Jerusalem

MORE BACKGROUND ON SOUSA MENDES, ‘THE ANGEL OF BORDEAUX’

Rene Pozniak’s poignant account of how the Portuguese consul, Aristides De Sousa Mendes, in 1940 saved 30 000 “forbidden” people fleeing Hitler, by issuing visas to them, brought tears to my eyes. This was such a feel-good story that I was resolved to investigate this remarkable and unselfish man further, in order to determine what moved him to save all those people.

Much has been written about the man they called “Sousa Mendes”, who saved more lives than Oscar Schindler - and yet he is not a household name. He was a Catholic and at the time the Portuguese consul to Bordeaux.

The Portuguese dictator, Antonio Salazar, to appease Hitler, issued his “Circular 14”, decreeing that no Jews or dissidents were to be granted passage to Portugal.

“I cannot allow all you people to die,” Mendes announced to his staff. “Many of you are Jews and our constitution clearly states that neither the religion nor the political beliefs of foreigners can be used as a pretext for refusing to allow them to stay in Portugal.”

On June 17, 1940, a production line was set up where he issued 30 000 visas, passports and travel documents - 12 000 to Jews.

After defying his government, Sousa Mendes was hauled back to Lisbon where Salazar declared him mentally unfit and sacked him.

Sousa Mendes declared shortly thereafter: “Even if I am dismissed, I can only act as a Christian, as my conscience tells me.”

He was stripped of everything and declared a “non-person”. He died in abject poverty.

Hellen Kaufmann runs a charity in Bordeaux and has created a database of “human salvage” - every person that was saved by Sousa Mendes that summer.

Kaufmann believes that Sousa Mendes’ actions were pivotal to the reconstruction of Europe after the war. It wasn’t the number of people he saved, but who many of them were. The royal families of Luxembourg and Austria, along with political activists, were among them. Many families, however, did not know that he had saved them.

After receiving an e-mail from Kaufmann, Harry Oesterreicher, whose father was one of those granted a visa, attended an anniversary in June at the consul building. He had “a crying week”, says Kaufmann.

Post-war, Sousa Mendes declared: “I could not have acted otherwise.”

For many years, Aristides De Sousa Mendes remained uncelebrated, but now his memory will be perpetuated and a story will be revealed about an unexpected hero who they now call “The Angel of Bordeaux”.

Nathan Cheiman
Northcliff, Johannesburg

SOME BOUQUETS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN JEWISH REPORT

Kol hakavod to the Jewish Report. I have always been a keen supporter and reader of the Jewish Report and would like to commend all involved in the publication of this newspaper, both the printed and digital online versions. The Jewish community is truly privileged to have a newspaper that is so informative, insightful and rich in content with diverse articles and opinions of Israeli, world and local Jewish news.

The printed version is presented with an interesting and eye-catching design and layout. It is also so good to see that an increasing number of businesses, individuals and organisations are coming forward with their adverts in support of the newspaper, which are undoubtedly also of great benefit to our businesses and community.

The Jewish Report is a newspaper which is read not only by our community, but by members of the community at large and also many South Africans living abroad; it is a newspaper well worth reading! Keep up your great work and kol hakavod.

Riva Klompas
Bramley, Johannesburg

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AN ODE TO WOMEN AS RULERS OF THIS WORLD

The prominence of powerful female politicians on the world stage is a welcome development. It is time for women to rule the world because they can do it so much better than men.

It is no longer political correctness that has empowered women such as Theresa May (Britain), Angela Merkel (Germany), Hillary Clinton US) and Nicola Sturgeon (Scotland). Rather it is their womanly practicality and long-term strategic vision that engenders collaboration and inclusiveness to facilitating conflict resolution and peace making.

These women are the standard bearers of a new matriarchy where capable and ambitious females are taking matters into their own hands. They are uniquely qualified to do so because they listen and understand (the concept of) consensus in a dimensional context.

A historic political power shift is in the making. Globalisation is immutably preparing women for political leadership positions. Male-dominated patriarchy must wake up to the fact that women are imbued with intellectual capacity and emotional fortitude to make the difficult decisions that leadership demands.

The world needs new thinking and new strategies. Women get it and are up to the task. The old patriarchal order must get on board by teaming up with women as equals before it is too late for all.

Errol Horwitz
Fresnaye, Cape Town

TWO EXPERTS ON LITHUANIA MAKE FOR ESSENTIAL READING


I would like to recommend Professor Dovid Katz and Dr Efraim Zuroff’s interesting Facebook pages, as well as Professor Katz’s website www.defendinghistory.com (on the Litvak origins of so many Jews).


Professor Katz is an American-born, Vilnius-based Yiddish scholar, author and educator and cultural historian of Lithuanian Jewry.

Dr Zuroff, also American-born, is an Israeli historian and Nazi hunter who has played a key role in bringing indicted Nazi and fascist war criminals to trial. He is the head of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Jerusalem.

Both investigate and offer comprehensive information regarding the Lithuanian participation in the Holocaust, the revisionist blurring of that history, including “double Holocaust” theory, and also how that period of history is being memorialised in Lithuania.

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VIEW INTO THE FUTURE A BLEAK PICTURE OF DÉJÀ VÛ A LA ORWELL

Watching the 2025 Democratic Convention, Hillary Clinton, completing her final term as president of the US has endorsed her daughter Chelsea as the Democratic candidate for the presidency.

Not only might the US have its second woman president but a Jewish one to boot. It's also five years since Israel withdrew to the pre-1967 lines and over half a million Israelis resettled within those borders.

Despite total withdrawal from occupied areas in terms of the Oslo Agreement as well as complying with US, EU and UN demands that Israel's blockade ends, Egypt still maintains that blockade and rockets continue to rain down from Gaza.

The recent mortar and rocket attacks on Ben-Gurion Airport from Palestinian positions outside Ramallah causing the closure of the airport has had a telling effect on the economy this summer.

Has appeasing the West by withdrawing to the 1967 lines, handing over the settlements to the Palestinian government and ending the occupation five years ago, resulted in the promised peace?

Has Europe eased up on sanctions against Israel? Has the UN Human Rights Council ceased its

constant demonising Israel?

And has peace come to the Middle East as all the world was telling us - end the occupation and all will be well in our region. Oh dear what has gone wrong?

Jerusalem is again a divided city without Jewish access to its holy sites as was guaranteed under the international treaty establishing the state of Palestine and now those Jewish Voices for a Just Peace together with SA Jews for a Free Palestine demand that Haifa, Jaffa and huge swathes of the Galilee be turned over to form part of Palestine. BDS is now recognised by the UN as a legitimate NGO with a seat on the Human Rights Council. But ending the occupation has certainly brought peace to the world. ISIL is now in full control of what was Iraq and Syria and recognised by the UN. The Iranian centrifuges are spinning at high velocity and the ayatollah tells the world that Iran is about to test its first nuclear device . One wonders how Chelsea will cope with a nuclear Iran and a politically correct world.

Allan Wolman
Rosebank, Johannesburg

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SA JEWISH REPORT

Letters

29 July – 5 August 2016

RIGHTWING ISRAELIS ARE THE BIGGEST RACISTS EVER

Testimony catalogue number: 361307

Rank: Staff sergeant

Unit: Nahal 50

Area: Hebron

Period: 2012

In Hebron there's the worshippers' route and some other route, the Erez (v)alley I think. There's the road and there's this low wall and next to it there're big heaps of construction debris; it's hard to walk there. I remember they told us to tell the Arabs to walk along the edge of the construction debris and not on the road so that there wouldn't be any friction with the Jews. And I remember there were times when I told my commander that I refused to - these are elderly people, a woman with bags and stuff, I'm not going to tell her "Go cross over there now." And what did he say, the commanding officer? He didn't stay with me at the position - each one is at a position at a certain distance. When he passed through once he told me it's unacceptable not to do it and that I'm not here to make the call.

This testimony from a staff sergeant in the IDF shows how Arabs are supposed to walk in the rubble so that Jews can walk freely. Dare we say this reminds us of South Africa in the "old days" when black people weren't allowed to walk on the pavement in case they got too close to whites.

Alan Wolman takes issue with JVJP who issued a pamphlet with racist statements made by Israeli Cabinet ministers calling Palestinians beasts and snakes among other comments. These pamphlets were produced for, and handed out at the Conference against Racism hosted by the SAJBD.

Surely this should be the appropriate forum to interrogate all forms of racism, not only racism perpetrated against Jews but also

racism perpetrated by Jews.

Some of the worst racism is found among rightwing Jewish Israelis and if we as Jews around the world don't speak out against it, then we are complicit.

The SAJBD has once before been rightly accused of this kind of complicit behaviour during the years of apartheid, when they did not speak out against the racist policies and actions of the South African government.

Once again, the SAJBD is silent about the racism being carried out in the name of all Jews. We commend the Jewish Report on the other hand for reporting about the following statistics which reveal racism in Israeli society. The recent PEW report found that 48 per cent of Israeli Jews want their Palestinian/Arab neighbours to be expelled from Israel and 80 per cent of Israelis say that Jews should get preferential treatment in Israel. This kind of racism does not come from nowhere. It is nurtured by the state and goes right up to the prime minister himself who exploited Jewish fear to win the election by declaring on the eve of the elections: "Arabs are voting in droves." This exploitation of fear calling on Jews to prevent Palestinians living in Israel from having any impact on the elections, creates and reinforces racism towards Palestinians.

Wolman says that South African Jews don't all support the Israeli government but we have yet to see the SAJBD criticise the policies of the Israeli government which discriminate against Palestinian people. The Board only seems to represent people who show uncritical support of Israel.

Jessica Sherman and Rina King

Jewish Voices for a Just Peace

Community Columns

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Above Board

Jeff Katz

National Chairman

Striving towards a free and fair election

South Africa's much anticipated local government elections are now just a few days away. As in previous years, the Board has run a multifaceted "Make Us Count" awareness and educational project to involve our Jewish community in the process.

First launched for the national elections in 2009, and revived again for the 2014 elections, the "Make Us Count" 2016 campaign has been our first for local and municipal elections.

It kicked off in April with a drive to get our community registered with their correct details on the voters roll. It was followed up by two lively pre-election debates in Johannesburg and Cape Town, where high-level representatives from the various political parties shared what they stood for and engaged with the Jewish community on issues of interest.

The campaign, as in 2014, will culminate in the participation of a multi-faith and multi-ethnic Election Observer Team, which the Board, through Alana Baranov, has put together to assist the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) on polling day.

In 2014, our team comprised nearly 100 volunteers from across the religious, ethnic and national spectrum. They monitored events at over 250 voting stations in five cities across three provinces, and further assisted by supervising the delivery of ballot boxes and opening of the polls, helping to resolve problems at polling stations and ensuring that counting began on time.

We were pleasantly surprised that our call for volunteers brought many of our 2014 observers back, as well as scores more individuals signing up to make an active contribution to democracy on the day.

Once again, we have members of the Jewish community from the various centres, as well as people of various nationalities and faiths and volunteers from the refugee and asylum seeker community. They are attending the IEC election observer briefings around the country and we are setting up channels of communication on the day so that our team can report back any issues or problems and relay them as quickly as possible to the IEC.

Those charged with monitoring the elections to ensure that they are free and fair have a major responsibility, and the indications, unfortunately, are that they may have an even more crucial role to play this time around.

Over the past few weeks, we have seen a disturbing rise in incidents of politically-related violence, in several cases involving loss of life. We hope and pray that when the time comes, the overwhelmingly peaceful manner in which previous elections have been conducted since the transition to democracy will again be the order of the day.

In closing, I urge once more that every member of our community who is able to vote ensure that they do so. We are truly fortunate as South Africans to be able to have a say in our political leadership and the ability to vote, an act for which countless South Africans devoted - and in many cases sacrificed - their lives to achieve. It is not only a privilege but a solemn responsibility that we must honour.

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

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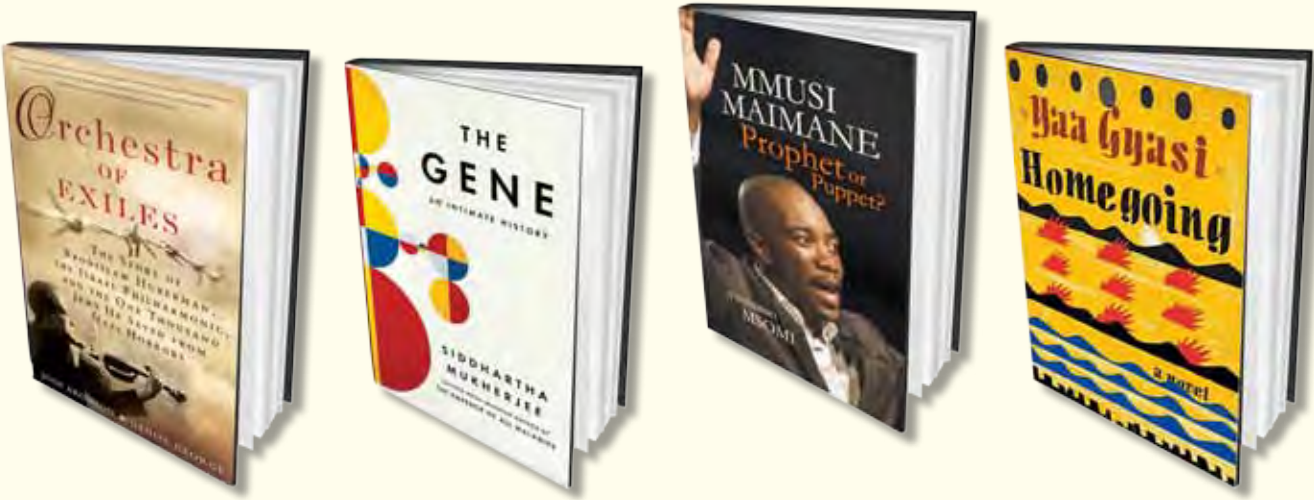
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STEVEN KRAWITZ

Jewish interest

“Orchestra of Exiles” (Berkeley) by Academy Award-nominated documentary film-maker, Josh Aronson, tells the inspiring true story of the world-famous violinist Bronislaw Huberman’s quest to save persecuted Jewish musicians and their families from Nazi Germany and Europe in the 1930s and create a world-class orchestra in Palestine, the orchestra that would become the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra when Israel achieved independence in 1948. In a thrilling work of historic, narrative non-fiction, Aronson draws together Huberman, Einstein and Arturo Toscanini, the great Italian conductor, who all campaigned against anti-Semitism and fascism. In total Huberman saved close to 1 000 Jews from the Holocaust.

Paul Goldberg’s the *“Yid”* (Macmillan) is a debut novel of daring originality. Moscow, February 1953, a week before Stalin’s death and his final pogrom against Soviet Jewry is in full swing. Three government goons arrive in the middle of the night to arrest Solomon Shimonovich Levinson, an actor from the defunct State Yiddish Theatre, but Levinson, though an old man, is a veteran of past wars and his surprising response to the intruders sets in motion a series of events both zany and violent, as he proceeds to assemble a ragtag group to help him enact a mad-brilliant plot: the assassination of a tyrant. Hilarious and moving, intellectual and violent, this is a tragi-comic master piece of historical fiction.

Seth Siegel’s *“Let There Be Water”* (Macmillan) is already a New York Times bestseller. The US government predicts that in the near future, 60 per cent of the earth’s surface will face severe water shortages in the face of growing demand for the precious resource. Without action food prices will rise, economic growth will slow and political instability is likely to follow.

Seth Siegel uses meticulous research and hundreds of interviews to show how Israel can serve as a model for the world in dealing with water shortages by showcasing methods, techniques and offbeat inventors. Siegel also records little-known stories of how co-operation in water systems can forge diplomatic ties and promote unity.

Non-fiction

“The Gene: An Intimate History” (Bodley Head) by Siddhartha Mukherjee, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, spans the globe and several centuries to tell the story of the quest to decipher the master-code that makes and define humans. From an abbey in Moravia in 1856 where Gregor Mendel discovers the idea of a “unit of heredity” through Darwin, Nazi eugenics, Francis Crick, James Watson and Rosalind Franklin, to the latest research breakthroughs and possible gene therapies, Siddhartha Mukherjee explores the epic history of a scientific idea coming to life. In parallel, he tells the story of his own family’s recurring pattern of mental illness, reminding us that genetics is vitally relevant in our everyday lives.

Steven Hatch is assistant professor of medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. His book *“Snowball in a Blizzard: The Tricky Problem of Uncertainty in Science”* (Atlantic) sets out to show that medical science is much more complicated than we like to believe.

According to a saying among radiologists, finding a tumour in a mammogram is like finding a *“Snowball in a Blizzard”*. Up to 30 per cent of breast cancer diagnoses are given to those who have no cancer at all. Medicine is subject to far more uncertainty than we commonly acknowledge. Covering topics from the efficacy of Prozac to the regular barrage of health advice by the media, *“Snowball in a Blizzard”* is a profound meditation on why it’s essential that doctors and patients know what we don’t know.

South African

S’thembiso Msomi’s political biography *“Mmusi Maimane: Prophet or Puppet”* (Jonathan Ball) would be compulsory reading at any time, but has an urgency with local elections looming. On May 10, 2015 Mmusi Maimane was announced as the new leader of the Democratic Alliance, beating his opponents by a huge margin. It was a historic event because it marked the completion of the DA’s transformation from a white political party to one whose new leader shared similar experiences to those of the majority of voters. Thus a highly intelligent and charismatic young man was thrust onto centre stage. But who is the real Mmusi Maimane?

Experienced political reporter S’thembiso Msomi goes behind the scenes to examine how and why Maimane

rose to head up the opposition. Finally, the author attempts to answer these burning questions: is Maimane his own man, and can he deliver the electorate that the DA so fervently desires?

Once an enemy of the apartheid state, Andrew Brown, advocate and author, has worked as a police reservist for almost 20 years. His new book *“Good Cop, Bad Cop”* (Zebra Press) is a personal account of the perilous and often conflicting work of an SAPS officer.

Taking the reader on patrol into the ganglands of the Cape Flats, the townships of Masiphumelele and Nyanga and the high-walled southern suburbs of Cape Town, Brown describes being shot at, arresting suspects in a drug bust, chasing down leads in a homicide investigation and keeping the peace during the UCT student protests. Gripping and thought-provoking, this is a fascinating insight into the social fabric of South Africa.

Fiction

“Homegoing” by Yaa Gyasi (Viking) follows two sisters, Effia and Essi, with very different destinies; in 1767 one is sold into slavery, the other is a slaver’s wife. The consequences of their fates will reverberate through four centuries and seven generations. From West Africa to the streets of New York, taking us from the Gold Coast of Africa to the cotton plantations of Mississippi and missionary schools in Ghana, Yaa Gyasi has written a miraculous, intimate novel.

Thriller

So many spy writers are compared to John le Carre. In Chris Morgan Jones we have a true successor. Morgan Jones worked for a decade with KROLL, the world’s largest investigations company, which gives his writing a great degree of authenticity.

In *“The Searcher”* (Mantle) Isaac Hammer, the owner of a London-based intelligence company, is under arrest, his company having broken many laws - phone tapping, police bribery. Released on custody, Hammer heads straight for a former colleague, Ben Webster, the only person who can explain the crimes and clear Hammer’s name.

But Ben is in Tbilisi, Georgia. Hammer follows Ben to the Caucasus only to find his every movement watched by the police, spies and gangsters and he is drawn deeper and deeper into a web of intrigue.

Mirvis pioneers a new way of looking at Jewish education

SUZANNE BELLING

Social entrepreneurship has become a buzzword for the attempt to draw on private sector approaches to solve public sector social, cultural, or environmental problems. In “It’s Our Challenge: A Social Entrepreneurship Approach to Jewish Education”, Dr Jonathan Mirvis (pictured) has given it meaning and practical application in an area never before covered in this context - Jewish education.



This is a pioneering work by former South African Mirvis (his father is the well-known Kabbalist Rabbi Dr Lionel Mirvis of Cape Town and his brother is Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth).

Jonathan Mirvis is a senior lecturer at the Melton Centre for Jewish Education at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Jewish education is as old as the Jews, but in recent times it has faced new and difficult challenges in the Diaspora, says Mirvis. How to ensure Jewish identity, continuity and knowledge in open, democratic societies, in a Jewish population that is often much less Jewishly observant than its forebears.

This, Mirvis says, requires both vision and being rooted in the present, and finding ways for those involved in Jewish education to be able to look forward and build organisations, institutions and programmes that are marketable and meet needs - and find the funding to make them sustainable.

Written in an accessible and interesting style for both lay and academic readers, Mirvis applies the central concepts of the book in both visionary and practical terms, which are valuable to both educators and donors.

He defines social entrepreneurship as “the harnessing of entrepreneurship for the attainment or enhancement of social value”.

Entrepreneurs take advantage of opportunities to create value, to change reality, while social entrepreneurs bring about social change.

In terms of Jewish education, these can be meeting a social need or an ideologically-driven motivation of a social vision. One example of social vision was the creation and continuation of the Jewish day schools in South Africa, now attended by the vast majority of Jewish children in the major centres.

The book in clear terms explains the concepts of social entrepreneurship in Jewish education, with examples and interviews.

It clarifies the idea of quality Jewish education - from the traditional text-based teaching to newer approaches, gives insights into how social entrepreneurs have operated in the field of education and discusses investment in social innovation and the challenge of sustainability.

Entrepreneurship might have its roots in commerce, but this book involves its social application, “dedicating ourselves to the sacred task of Jewish education”.

Three sides of Jewish education are considered, namely “participants, personnel and ‘pennies’” - those who are educated, faculty (staff) and funding.

Mirvis pioneers a new way of looking at Jewish education, not simply from the aspect of educators on one side, going cap-in-hand to donors on the other, but illustrating how to establish viable, ongoing, partnerships between them to ensure quality Jewish education, from formal schools to informal learning.

He often uses the language of business to illustrate his novel points, including his explanation of the title of the book.

Other business terms are also used, such as “disruptive innovation”, the way business is done (or how social entrepreneurs operate) to create new markets, sell new products (and education is a product) and bring in new “customers”.

The book goes beyond just theory, discussing ways to maximise the possibility of success and how to evaluate social entrepreneurial projects - including return on investment, as well as looking at ways to ensure the sustainability of projects and organisations.

It is an important, and highly readable contribution to the field of Jewish education in the 21st century; and creates visionary social value itself.

- Jonathan Mirvis. (2016). It's Our Challenge: A Social Entrepreneurship Approach to Jewish Education. Oxford and Shrewsbury, YouCaxton Publications. \$15 (available on Amazon at \$11,99).

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Absa Jewish Achiever Awards 2016

British Blues Award beckons South Africa’s Dan Patlansky



PETER FELDMAN

Dan Patlansky (pictured), arguably South Africa’s top blues rock guitarist, has been nominated for a prestigious British Blues Award in the Overseas Artist category. The 34-year-old Johannesburg musician joins an elite group of nominees that include Kirk Fletcher, Mike Zito, Buddy Guy, Dana Fuchs, Thorbjorn Risager and Buddy Whittington. The seventh presentation event will be held on September 11 at Newark Castle, Nottinghamshire, as part of the Newark Blues Festival on September 10 and 11.

“This is without doubt great recognition from my peers,” Patlansky told Jewish Report. “Any nomination or award is just pay-off for many years of hard work. But to be mentioned along with the names on that list is very exciting for me, indeed.”

His latest album “Introvertigo” came out in May and Patlansky is currently touring and promoting this work. “I’m always writing and we are thinking about releasing some back catalogue material later in the year,” he said.

Patlansky, who has carved a special niche in South African music, has been engaging with UK audiences over many years and is constantly undertaking tours there. “We have toured many times ... and the biggest highlight has been seeing our profile and ticket sales slowly but surely increase massively over the last few years.”

Patlansky has a hectic schedule at the moment for, apart from touring, he will be conducting his annual guitar weekend in the small Free State town of Clarens. Thirty musicians from all over the country and from different levels and backgrounds will join him on the weekend of August 19 to 21.

“I teach four group workshops covering all aspects of playing. There is a lot of jamming going on. It is definitely one of my highlights of the year.”

Asked what motivates him after years in the business, he replied simply: “The music motivates me and the passion I have for it. It’s easy to do a job for years that you love doing. We are slowly but surely getting there on the international side of things. But it’s a lot of fun getting there.”



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He attended a number of different schools, but ended up going to the National School of the Arts.”It was a great place in those days. My music dream only started when I was in about Standard 6. So it was my dream through high school to follow music.”

His early influences, he said, included Stevie Ray Vaughn, Jimi Hendrix, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, BB King and Freddy King, but there were many others from the world of Blues, Jazz, Rock, Funk, Soul and Country who had an impact on his formative years. Asked for his thoughts on the state of South African music, he said: “It’s small compared to the rest of the world. But I think relatively speaking it’s going to a healthier place every year. We are an emerging market still and have a lot of ground to cover. We have the artists to compete.”

Managing both a career and a family is not an easy task, but Patlansky said it’s really “all about balance”, adding that without a strong home base touring cannot happen for him and vice versa. “It’s really tough to achieve this balance sometimes, but it is so vital.”

When away from music, he tries to spend as much time with his family as possible. However, he admits that music is a huge part of his existence and he finds this relaxing as well.

To budding musicians wanting to enter a tough industry, Patlansky advises that they must fully understand what they are getting themselves into because it’s tough and demanding. “But if there is enough passion in place, then it’s really easy.”

Around the Jewish World

Arab attacked for posting Israeli flag on Facebook

JERUSALEM - Haled Abu Mokh, an Israeli Muslim Arab, was attacked by other Arabs last week for posting a profile picture with Israel’s flag on Facebook. Haled, who works in a Jerusalem hotel, was caught by a fellow Arab worker surfing his Facebook page, and the other man started threatening him.

By the end of that day’s shift, that same worker followed Haled on the street and threw a stone which hit him on his head. Haled dropped to the ground and was later taken to hospital, where he received several stitches. He’s still suffering from dizziness.

Haled was a guest on Israel’s Channel 20 TV, where he told the host, Rinat Spivak, that he is used to these reactions: “These responses, it’s normal - wherever there are such extremist Arabs. But they won’t break me.

“Why should I be afraid,” he answered the host’s next question. “We shouldn’t be afraid of them, they should fear me, not me of them. I walk the true path. This is the truth. I was born here, I opened my eyes here and saw the national flag. There was no Palestinian flag where I was born. The Star of David, that’s me, that’s how my mother raised me.”

Jerusalem Post

Record high intermarriage - but rate of increase slows

LONDON - New research into intermarriage among British Jews has shown that it is at its highest level for generations. The report, by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, claims that marrying out is having a “corrosive” effect on the Jewish population.

However, marriage between Jews and non-Jews is rising at a far slower rate than had been previously thought - and is half that of the United States.

David Graham, author of the new survey, said the “doom-laden predictions of the 1990s about accelerating intermarriage have not come to pass”.


He added that “although the intermarriage rate has been steadily rising since at least the early 1970s and is currently higher than it has been in a generation, the rate of increase since the early 1980s has been modest at most.”

Yet the effect of such marriages remains “corrosive” on the Jewish population, the report claims, because the children of intermarried couples are three times less likely to be raised as Jewish as those from all-Jewish families.

The new research shows that while marriage between Jews and non-Jews is at a record high of 26 per cent, it has climbed by only one per cent since the mid-1990s. This compares with a figure of 58 per cent for the United States.

Whereas 96 per cent of Jews who married-in raise their children as Jewish, only 31 per cent of intermarried couples do. And while 44 per cent of intermarried Jewish women raise their children as Jewish, just 10 per cent of intermarried Jewish men do. - Jewish Chronicle, London

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Progressives combine tikkun olam with successful conference



Rabbi Greg Alexander, chairman of the SAAPR, and some willing young SAUPJ helpers.

A Mandela Day tikkun olam project by the Progressive Jewish community of Cape Town was the final highlight of the three-day Biennial South African Union for Progressive Judaism (SAUPJ) conference in the city over the weekend.

The SAUPJ in a media release said its newly-elected chairman, Monica Solomon, was one of over 200 people who helped prepare sandwiches for Cape Town's underprivileged last Saturday night.

"After a Havdalah service headed by both international and local Progressive rabbis, we got down to the serious business of caring for those less fortunate than ourselves. This involved making hundreds of sandwiches and care packages for them."

A 12-person delegation from the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ), headed by Rabbi Joel Oseran, vice-president emeritus of the WUPJ and Rabbi Lenny Thal, retired senior vice-president of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) joined six South African Progressive rabbis from Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Numerous delegates and dignitaries from across the country came to Cape Town to elect the new board and to help plan the way forward for the SAUPJ.

Last week Friday morning was devoted to the biennial general meetings of all SAUPJ affiliates, while the afternoon was spent on the business of the SAUPJ, including the passing of a number of important resolutions and the election of the new board.

Solomon was elected national chairman; Linda Thorn and Gary Budlender were elected vice-chairmen; Ian West as treasurer; and Russell Cohen as the administrator.

Said Solomon: "We have been tasked with the very important function of restructuring the SAUPJ to give each region more autonomy while still maintaining a vibrant and meaningful parent body. In times of change, an organisation representing communities from across the country needs to reflect that change in the way it operates and the way it maintains itself."

Rabbi Thal concluded the day with a discussion on 'Roles, Responsibilities and Rewards - the Three Rs for future leaders of our communities.

After a Shacharit service last Sunday morning, delegates were given a sneak preview of a book on the history of Progressive Judaism in South Africa, written by Irwin Manoim.

Interactive workshops on various topics followed with a keynote address "Fortress Israel - Challenges to our Jewish Identity and Democracy", presented by Dr Leonard Suransky and Mike Berger.

Ambassador Kedar, Rabbi Silberhaft, cement warm relations with Namibia

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Last week Thursday, non-resident Israeli Ambassador to Namibia Gershon Kedar, accompanied by Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, spiritual leader and CEO of the African Jewish Congress, presented his credentials to President Hage Geingob at State House in Windhoek.

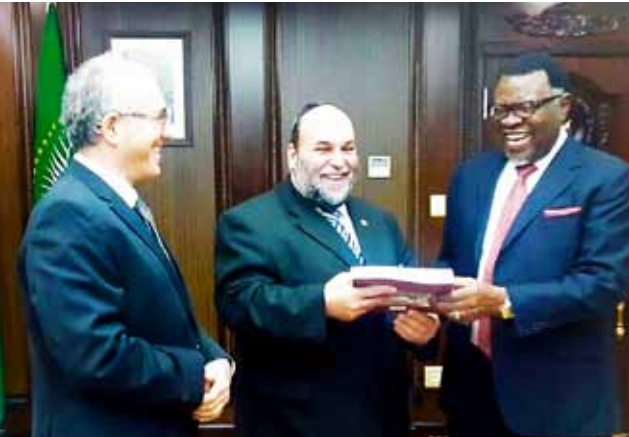
President Geingob thanked the Jewish community for what its members had done to develop Namibia in the post-independence era.

For his part, Rabbi Silberhaft thanked the President for the friendship shown by himself and his predecessors to the Jewish community and - on behalf of the Windhoek Hebrew Congregation - presented him with a copy of the book, "The Jewish Community of South West Africa Namibia: A History".

The book, which was nearly 25 years in the making, chronicles in extensive detail the story of Jewish life in Namibia, commencing even before the German colonial occupation through to the early 21st century.

In addition to recounting the many

and diverse ways in which Jews have, to a remarkably disproportionate extent, contributed to the building of the modern-day Republic of Namibia, it is a veritable treasure trove of genealogical information. Copies can be obtained through Rabbi Silberhaft (Thetravellingrabbi@gmail.com) or Laurie Pieters (lauray@iway.na). In the evening, Ambassador Kedar and Rabbi Silberhaft jointly addressed the local Jewish community. In addition to Namibia, Kedar is responsible for Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



Ambassador Gershon Kedar; Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft; and Namibian President Hage Geingob at State House in Windhoek.

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Friday (July 29)

• UZLC hosts The Star's Metro
Watch editor Anna Cox on "Major
Developments Happening Around
Johannesburg in Anticipation of the Local
Government Elections". Venue: Our
Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00.
Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011)
485-4851.

• Shalom Masorti Seniors Club welcomes
everyone who would like to make new
friends and have some light-hearted fun
on the last Friday of each month. Tea is
served and there is a selection of board
games to play and cards. Bev Goldman
will speak on "He Who Controls the
Media Controls the Mind". Contact:
Esther (011) 485-5619 Monday,
Wednesday, Thursday or Friday morning.

Sunday (July 31)

• Ditsong Museum of Military History in
Saxonwold (next to the Johannesburg
Zoo) shows two films with an instruction

by Radio Today presenter Selwyn Klass.
"The Kid 1921" (52 minutes) sees
Charlie Chaplin for the first time as
a filmmaker, stepping into feature-
length storytelling with this tale of the
down-but-never-out tramp. The second
movie is "The Red Balloon 1956"
(34 minutes). It remains one of the
most beloved family films of all time.
Time: 14:30. Cost: R100 (incl tea and
snacks). Bookings: (011) 486-3648 or
e-mail: majestic.henni@gmail.com

• JH&GC and Limmud Johannesburg
present a staged reading of the
play, "The Boys from the Ashes" by
Courtneigh Cloud. Venue: JH&C, 1
Duncombe Road, Forest Town. Time:
18:00. Seating limited, Booking:
shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za or (011)
640-3100/2148. Suggested donation
of R50.

• RCHCC presents, back by popular
demand, the film, "The Last Mensch"
Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium.
Time: 19:30. Booking: Hazel or René

(011) 728-8088/8378, a/h (011)
728-8378; e-mail: rhcc@telkomsa.net;
rene.s@telkomsa.net. Donation: R70
(incl refreshments).

• Second Innings hosts Prof David
Bilchitz on "Constitutional Democracy
Twenty Years on: How is South Africa
Doing?" Venue: The Gerald Horwitz
Lounge, Golden Acres. Time: 10:00
for 10:30. Cost: R20 members and
R40 non-members (incl tea and light
refreshments).

Tuesday (August 2)

• UJW presents "Unchain Jewish Women
- the Get Issue". Presenters will include
Rosh Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag;
a co-founder of Go Getters, the SA Get
Network; an advocate; and a woman
who recently got her get after waiting
five years. Venue: The HOD, Orchards.
Time: 19:30. Cost: R50 (incl tea).
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Sport

Former gold medallist Shireen Sapiro is Rio bound



Shireen Sapiro holds her gold medal she won at the 2013 Maccabi Games, with Samantha de Leve of the US.

ILAN HERRMANN

The irrepressible Shireen Sapiro will be
competing in her third Paralympic Games
when she travels to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in
September.

In 2004, Sapiro was seriously injured in a
waterskiing accident which resulted in her
left leg being paralysed. She fought her way
back to competitive swimming as a "para
athlete" and made the national squad.

In 2008 Sapiro competed in the Beijing
Olympics and won gold in the 100m back-
stroke. In London four years later she took
bronze in the 100 metre backstroke; 100m
freestyle; and 50m freestyle.

It all seemed over for Sapiro soon after
London when she developed a shoulder in-
jury and had to have repeat surgery, which
led to an 18-month layoff and healing pro-
cess. It was only a year and a half ago that
she finally got back in the water: "I could
barely swim a kilometre," she recalls.

But with blood, sweat and tears, Sapiro has
fought her way back to reach the competitive
lap times that she was doing four years ago.

The trials were held in April and 10 swim-
mers qualified with good enough times
for Olympic selection. There were only six
berths, however, which meant four athletes

would have to be dropped.

"It's heart breaking to see some of my
friends in the swimming fraternity having to
be sidelined due to quota," Sapiro says.

She found out she made the cut last week:
"It's surreal. I feel like pinching myself, to
make sure it's actually happening! After
the struggle of the last few years, it's just
incredible and the result has surpassed my
expectations. It's also very humbling to be
here, to be given this opportunity again."

South Africa will field a strong side in the
Paralympic swimming division. Of the six
swimmers four are Olympic medallists.

At the 2009 Maccabiah, Sapiro was flag
bearer for the South African delegation at
the opening ceremony. While she generally
competes in Paralympic events, she com-
peted in the open competition of the swim-
ming events against able-bodied swimmers
at the Maccabia.

Sapiro admits that at 25 it's her last
Olympics and she will "hang up her swim-
suit" after this tournament. As a veteran of
the Olympics she goes into this one confi-
dent, focused and ambitious. "I don't want
to come home empty handed."

The Rio Paralympic Games take place
after the main Olympics - from September
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Two Jewish-Canadian boxers who supported the ‘People’s Olympics’

JACK MILNER

It is now 80 years since the staging of the infamous 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. Looking back on it one is dumbfounded by how stupid world leaders were at the time to support an event now remembered as a grotesquery of Nazi pageantry.

What many people do not know was that with the growth of Communism, an alternative to the Berlin Olympics was arranged to be staged in Barcelona at the same time. In May 1936, the government of autonomous Catalonia in Spain announced they would play host to a Popular Olympiad, also known as the “People’s Olympics” and the “Workers’ Olympics”, for athletes who wanted no part in supporting the Nazi regime.

The Barcelona Games, organised under the auspices of Catalan President Luis Companys, whose name appeared on all official documents,

were ambitious. Planned athletic competitions included track and field, soccer, rugby, swimming, water polo, tennis, basketball, cycling, wrestling, gymnastics, shooting, and table tennis.

An athlete merely needed to make his or her way to the Games to take part. The organisers promised room and board for all competitors and a seven-storey hotel was reserved to room 1 600 participants. The hotel had been built for the International Exposition held in Barcelona in 1929, as had been the 54 000-seat Montjuic Stadium, which was to be the site for track and field events.

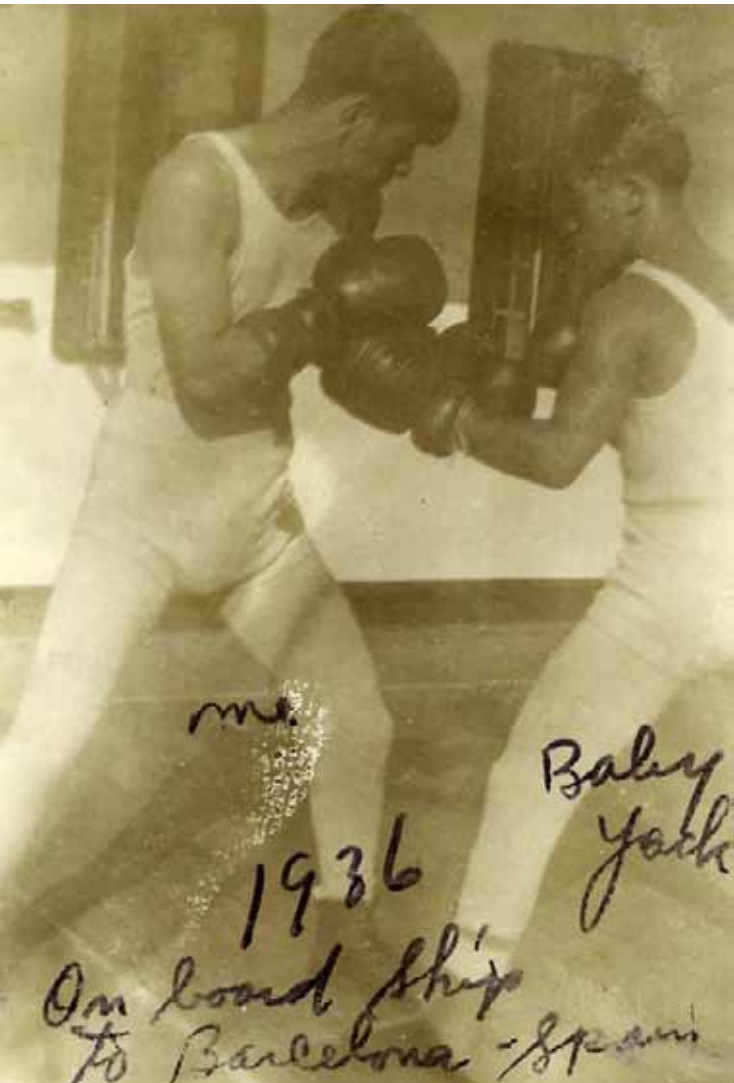
In Canada Sammy Luftspring, aged just 20, was the son of a bootlegger. Sammy had grown up in a tough Toronto immigrant neighbourhood and learned to protect himself at a boxing club at the local Young Men’s Hebrew Association. By 1933 he was an Ontario amateur champion.

That year Luftspring took part in the famous wild street brawl when members of a local pro-Nazi club put up a large banner with a swastika. It led to a confrontation with a rival Jewish baseball team and lasted for hours.

A move to boycott the Berlin Olympics found little support. In the United States Avery Brundage, president of the American Olympic Committee, complained that the boycott movement was part of a “Jewish-Communist conspiracy” to keep the country from participating.

Canadian officials followed Britain’s lead in agreeing to take part even after it became clear the Nazis intended to use the Games as a propaganda stage.

Luftspring was certain to win a spot on Canada’s Olympic boxing team and he wanted to go overseas to show the Nazis the same fighting spirit he had shown their sympathisers on the streets of Toronto.



Sammy Luftspring (left) and Baby Yack spar aboard the ship en route to the “People’s Olympics” in Barcelona in 1936.

But his parents feared for his life and as a good Jewish boy, he listened to them. So he decided to go to Barcelona instead.

Luftspring convinced fellow boxer Benjamin Norman Yakubowitz to join him. Yakubowitz was a ferocious bantamweight and fought under the name Baby Yack. They wrote a letter to The Globe explaining their decision to skip the Canadian Olympic boxing trials.

“We know that we, as Canadian boys, would be personally safe and perhaps well received in Germany,” they wrote. “But can we forget the way the German government is treating the Jewish boys in Germany? No athlete or sportsman would think of engaging in a sporting contest with a bully who would ill-treat even a dumb animal. The German government is treating our brothers and sisters worse than dogs.”

It was during the Depression and the two did not have funds to travel to Europe. Harry Sniderman, a well-known Toronto sportsman, found a group of Jewish backers. Businessmen donated funds and more money was raised from the pass-the-hat proceeds from Jewish Community Softball league games.

Sniderman also organised a stag at which bookies and bootleggers were in the unaccustomed role of giving - not taking - money. More than \$2 000 was raised and Sniderman joined them as a team manager.

Athletes from other participating countries began converging on Barcelona. Germans who had fled the Nazis and were living in exile, had a delegation, while a team of Jewish athletes represented Palestine.

Some of the early arrivals in Barcelona were delighted to hear what they thought were fireworks being exploded in their honour. Unfortunately, they were bullets as the Spanish army launched a rebellion against the Republic.

As it turned out, the Canadians were waiting for a train in Toulouse, France, when word reached them about the uprising. Alas, the “People’s Olympics” were cancelled.

Luftspring and Yack turned professional soon after returning to Toronto. Both had some success, though Luftspring’s career ended prematurely after being accidentally thumbed in the eye during a fight. He went on to become a distinguished boxing referee and co-owned a popular Toronto nightspot.

He wrote an autobiography in 1975 titled “Call Me Sammy” and he was inducted into Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame. He died in 2000, age 84.

Yack won the Canadian bantamweight title in 1937. After retiring from the ring, he struggled to find his place, serving in the armed services during the Second World War before becoming a bookie. He spent some time in prison.

When the journalist William Stephenson profiled the fighter in 1979, he was a recovering alcoholic driving a cab for a living while resident in a cheap hotel. Yack died in 1987, age 71.



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