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Face to face with an ‘ordinary’-looking antisemite

NICOLA MILTZ

Professor Karen Milner, the Gauteng chairperson of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), was shocked when she opened a threatening email at the end of Rosh Hashanah. It was full of hate and vitriol directed at her and Jews.

She had a strong hunch it was linked to the charges of crimen injuria that she had laid a few months earlier against Johannesburg information technology specialist Jan Lamprecht.

Lamprecht is an English-speaking “ex-Rhodesian” who has unashamedly spewed angry vitriol against Jews and all people of colour for a number of years on social media.

Instinctively, Milner clicked on one of his white supremacist, pro-Nazi websites in a bid to see where the email may have originated.

It was then she saw a photograph of herself posted on his website, HistoryReviewed, along with her personal details and disparaging comments about her. It was clear this was how one of his online supporters got her email address.

“I did get a fright. I wondered where this email was coming from. I went back onto his website and there was my photo with my personal details. I believe he was doxing [publishing private information about a particular individual online typically with malicious intent],” she told the *SA Jewish Report*.

It was a “horrible” email, she said, not from Lamprecht himself but related to the criminal case against him.

It said, “You are a hell fire example of why people hate you ... You scumbags can promote the murder of whites, help form groups like blm (Black Lives Matter), antifa (the anti-fascist action left-wing movement) etc that are terrorist outfits and then when anyone calls you out you use and pervert the law. You earn every ounce of hate and in fact only bring more wrath to come”.

“It was unsettling,” Milner said.

That wasn’t all. His post elicited “disturbing” comments from local and

international supporters of Lamprecht, she said. “Some were disgusting and abusive, they were also misogynistic and commented on my looks.”

One comment said, “Jan, watch your back for these evil scum of the earth. Who is this evil Milner bitch. Another filthy milner in our history is one too much.”

The SAJBD decided it couldn’t accept this, and contacted its lawyers to take further action. This resulted in Milner applying for a protection order against Lamprecht.

Lamprecht, who refers to President Cyril Ramaphosa as “the black Jew”, is prolific on social media, managing multiple websites. His homemade videos help to spread inflammatory, racist, and antisemitic material. He lauds lone-wolf white supremacists, including Pittsburgh Tree of Life Synagogue mass shooter Robert Bowers, and Charleston Church mass killer Dylann Roof.

Last Friday, Milner came face to

face with Lamprecht at the Randburg Magistrates Court when he was issued with an interim protection order. The grey-haired, bespectacled Lamprecht was neatly dressed, wearing a long-sleeved, buttoned shirt and trousers for the closed court proceedings.

When she saw him for the first time, Milner said he looked so “ordinary”.

“There was this old white man with grey hair sitting outside a court room. He was quite underwhelming until I remembered the things he’d posted, the hate he was trying to spread, and the way in which he was inciting violence against the Jewish community.”

She said the time leading up to the hearing had been “extremely stressful”.

“Seeing Lamprecht outside the court was disturbing. His ordinariness is disconcerting. You expect people who spread racism, antisemitism, and hate to have a certain look, but I was reminded of Hannah Arendt’s term – ‘the banality of evil’.”

She said she was “hugely relieved” that the interim protection order had been granted and that however stressful it had been, she didn’t regret taking the action she did.

“People who spread race hate and incite violence must be called to account. Lamprecht has attempted to spread his white supremacist views on as many platforms as possible. His Facebook account was taken down, but he uses many other social media sites. He also posts on white genocide

sites, where he seeks support for his antisemitism and race baiting,” she said.

In a statement following the proceedings, the SAJBD said that over many years, Lamprecht had used his website to promote Nazi propaganda and disseminate extreme antisemitic and racist content.

His published comments include, “Given what a race of two-faced, backstabbing fiends they are, I ... have

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The SA connection to the White House

NICOLA MILTZ

The Cohen family in Johannesburg has been inundated with media calls from around the world intrigued by United States (US) President-elect Joe Biden’s South African-born and raised daughter-in-law Melissa Cohen, and her baby boy, Beau Biden.

There were gasps of adoration from the jubilant crowd in Wilmington, Delaware, as the US president elect thanked the nation in his victory speech and held onto his Jewish grandson, Beau, while mom Melissa, 34, stood close by.

Baby Beau, who was born and had a *brit milah* in March, stole American hearts on Sunday night with his wide-eyed innocence and wispy blond hair, just like his mother’s.

Unused to the limelight and media hype, the Cohen family has declined to comment under strict instructions from the Biden campaign not to speak to the media, which has been clamouring to get any tiny snippet of information.

Insiders said Melissa Cohen, who married Joe Biden’s 50-year-old son, Hunter Biden, within a week of meeting him, had been in regular contact with her close-knit family throughout the intense elections.

The couple named their son Beau after Hunter Biden’s brother who passed away from brain cancer in 2015.

Melissa’s parents, Zoe and Lee Cohen, have yet to hold their adorable grandson because of COVID-19 travel restrictions. The Cohens however travelled to Los Angeles last December to meet their son-in-law and their famous *machetunim* (in-laws).

Melissa’s brother, Garyn, told the *SA Jewish Report*, “I’ve had calls from so many tabloids, and we are telling them the same thing. Sorry!”

After speaking to his sister last week, he told the *SA Jewish Report*, “She said it’s a very sensitive and

fragile period. She asked to respect her silence at the moment.”

Melissa is Hunter’s second wife, and baby Beau is his fifth child.

In October, Hunter told ABC News the couple met through a friend of Melissa’s, who jotted Melissa’s phone number onto his hand and insisted he call her.

Hunter got a “shalom” tattoo in Hebrew on his bicep to match Melissa’s within days of meeting her, and they were married at her Los Angeles apartment less than a

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DA comparison of EFF to Nazi brownshirts causes storm

TALI FEINBERG

As the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) clashed with the public outside Brackenfell High School in the Western Cape on 9 November, Western Cape Democratic Alliance (DA) leader Bonginkosi Madikizela issued a statement condemning “the ongoing threatening attempts by the EFF to bend society to its will”. He then added, “The Nazis had the brownshirts that went around terrorising minorities. South Africa has

Shabbat times this week		
Starts	Ends	
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19:09	20:04	Cape Town
18:10	19:04	Durban
18:15	19:22	Bloemfontein
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the red shirts.”

The EFF was protesting against white students and parents having hosted a private matric dance after the school’s event was cancelled due to COVID-19, to which it said black learners or parents weren’t invited.

The matter escalated, with the school applying for an interdict to stop the EFF protesting outside its gates, and the South African Human Rights Commission condemning the violence and the holding of a “whites only” event. President Cyril Ramaphosa described the confrontation as “deeply regrettable”, and called on all parties involved to act responsibly.

However, South Africans took the DA to task for comparing the EFF to the Nazis, especially on the anniversary of Kristallnacht. “This is a horrific analogy to make on the anniversary of Kristallnacht and a blatant misrepresentation of what happened in Brackenfell today,” University of Pretoria political science lecturer Dr Sithembile Mbete wrote.

Southern Africa correspondent at the *Financial Times*, Joseph Cotterill, responded to the DA’s tweets, “On the anniversary of Kristallnacht no less. For South Africa’s main opposition party to cheapen the memory of Nazi persecution like this does show how far into the political wilderness it has gone.”

Some users responded with an image of an Instagram post where Brackenfell High School supposedly expressed admiration for Hitler. However, the chairperson of the school’s governing body, Guillaume Smit, confirmed to the *SA Jewish Report* that this was posted by a fake account in 2016 that was subsequently shut down when the person responsible was disciplined. “We find it abhorrent. It’s not what we stand for,” he said.

Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Cape Town and antisemitism expert, Milton Shain, says, “Comparing party-political actions to those of the Nazis is common in political contestation. We know that the EFF has long been associated with fascist thuggery – rightly or wrongly. The DA was presumably relating to this long-held analysis. The EFF aren’t Nazis, but they show signs of fascist-like behaviour.”

Shain explored this in an article in 2018, where he wrote amongst other points that Julius Malema and the EFF share much with the fascists of the previous

century. “A muscular and integral nationalism, a sense of racial exclusivity, a commitment to destroy political enemies, a wish to reorganise the economy, an authoritarian leadership, and at least a hint of militarism. Even the EFF’s penchant for uniforms harks back to the brownshirts of Hitler’s Germany and the blackshirts of Mussolini’s Italy, as does Malema’s redemptive and at times racist rhetoric.

But he also noted that “Malema operates in a very different context. Unlike the original fascists, those



he appeals to aren’t anxious about modernity or fearful of the left. His concern is historical injustice. More than that, he is comfortable with existing state institutions, appreciates nonviolent parliamentary methods, and welcomes judicial independence, a free press, and free elections. There is, then, much about Malema that isn’t fascist. He slots far better into the category of racial nationalist with populist leanings.”

Mary Kluk, the national president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and the director of the Durban Holocaust & Genocide Centre, said, “It has become increasingly commonplace for Nazi comparisons to be made in just about any situation. This is problematic. The Nazi regime was an exceptionally evil tyranny that went on to perpetrate some of the worst atrocities in human history.

“To make casual, knee-jerk comparisons with Nazism is therefore flippant and insensitive. It both grossly exaggerates regarding the target of the criticism, while at the same time diminishes the gravity of Nazi crimes. It’s all too easy to forget that there are many people alive today, including Holocaust survivors, who experienced Nazi savagery

at first hand. Leaders in particular should be careful to avoid emotive rhetoric and misleading overstatements that serve only to enflame and polarise. The SAJBD will be seeking a meeting with the DA to discuss this matter.”

But Madikizela told the *SA Jewish Report* he wasn’t using the term “brownshirts” flippantly – he has thought about it, and believes it fits the EFF’s behaviour. “In fact the exact same thing was said by Gwede Mantashe in 2014.” At the time, the African National Congress’ secretary-general said: “[Adolf] Hitler used brownshirts to mobilise people. The danger of it is that once it catches fire, anarchy and destruction becomes a trend in the country. Its signs are worrying because similar trends have developed in history,” among other points.

Eleven months ago, political economist Ismail Lagardien wrote in *Daily Maverick*, “At the outset, Nazi expansion [according to Hitler] was to be achieved ‘through the unification of all Germanic peoples’. This has distinct echoes of Julius Malema’s stated objective to unify all Africans in something akin to an African *Reich*, and wage a war against scapegoats. Hitler started with the Jews as scapegoats. In the EFF’s case whites, Indians, and ‘non-Africans’ in general are Malema’s scapegoats.

“Throwing the term fascism around as easily as we do has the dangerous effect of reducing it to an almost meaningless term. The danger of this is that when actual fascism rises, or there are groups that display actual fascist tendencies, the term may already have become meaningless, and the villains are ignored or dismissed as buffoons, when they are, actually, a danger to society. Malema’s vision has the hallmark of an element of last century’s fascism that would be foolish to ignore,” he wrote in an in-depth analysis.

Said Madikizela, “I stand by my statement. Malema is behaving like Hitler, a comparison that has been made many times before. He’s been making statements that stoke violence against minorities in South Africa, and he even spoke about killing whites. He blames Jews, among other people, for the violence in Senekal. It’s not just in Brackenfell, it’s their behaviour in general when they protest, as we have seen in many instances. You can’t use the words ‘peaceful’ and ‘EFF’ in the same sentence.”

The EFF didn’t respond to the *SA Jewish Report’s* request for comment.

Torah Thought

Just be more than yourself

Don’t people love saying, “Be true to yourself”, “Don’t forget who you are”, or “You don’t want to see the real me?”

Some people erroneously believe that their jobs define them, but what we do doesn’t define us. It’s really about who we are.

Rabbi David Aaron relates how his daughter was learning to play the guitar, and challenged her father, “Abba, why don’t you try play guitar, you are so musical?” He responded, “I can’t, my fingers are too small.” She then put her hand next to his, and said, “No, your fingers are longer than mine,” and he then remembered that he had this false perception of himself based on something some person told him 40 years previously!

Isn’t that just so scary? Why are we so quick to label people? Don’t we realise that labels can cause harm that a person could live with for the rest of his life? That is why the Lubavitcher Rebbe warned his *talmidim*, “Labels are for clothing, not people.”

After the Akeida at the end of last week’s parsha, Hashem appears to Avraham and

says, “Now I know that you are a G-d fearing man, seeing that you didn’t withhold your only son from me.”

“Now I know”, really? After Avraham has proven himself over the past 137 years of his life? Years packed with unbelievable acts of *chesed*? Why did Hashem only now say that He knows?

The answer is that it’s true that Avraham was the manifestation of kindness in this world. But where did the kindness come from? Was he just a nice guy, being himself, or was he in control of it?

The only way to prove it was for Hashem to tell such a nice guy to kill his favourite son. The fact that Avraham was ready to do this seemingly very cruel act is proof that his *chesed* didn’t come from being himself at all. He had to not be himself. Everything he did was for Hashem and not for himself at all.

Avraham wasn’t a slave to his personality, he was the master of it.

I think we can safely say that being ourselves is a pretty limiting thing and can stunt our growth in life. So what should we

do? How should we live.

Every Shabbos day, we say “*Nishmat kol chai*” at the end of Pesukei D’zimra.

There is a verse there that is important to our discussion: “All the limbs in my body, my spirit, and soul, and the tongue you placed in my mouth: those things will bless You, and laud You and praise Your name, our king.”

Basically, this teaches us to look at what Hashem has given us, and use those talents to bless Hashem’s name in this world and fix the world (*tikkun olam*). To use whatever we can, including our talents and gifts, to achieve this mammoth task.

Rav Tzadok Hakohen of Lublin, however, gives us another way of looking at this when he says that, “If you want to know your mission in life, look at your *yetzer hora*.” This means that you should look at what you struggle with.

You need to strike this balance. By looking at your positive and negative traits – at what you’re good at and what you struggle with – you can live a very fulfilling life.

Rabbi Ryan Goldstein,
West Street Shul



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Minister breaks away from Methodist Church over its support for BDS

TALI FEINBERG

A Christian minister has put his livelihood on the line by quitting the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) over its over its Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) policy towards Israel. Reverend Rowan Rennie says he would rather “sleep on the street” than “stand against the people of G-d”.

Rennie led a group of 150 families from across South Africa in the break away.

Reverend Rowan Rennie says he would rather “sleep on the street” than “stand against the people of G-d”.

In a video that has since gone viral, Rennie said amongst other points that the Methodist Church’s resolution was “so unbiblical and such an injustice that we cannot find ourselves under the umbrella of the Methodist Church”.

The MCSA has more than 66 000 members across southern Africa. It adopted BDS principles against Israel in September 2019. It directs its members to “boycott, disinvest, and sanction all businesses that benefit the Israeli economy; [and] all future Holy Land tours organised by Methodist clergy or persons affiliated to the MCSA [are] to boycott all Israeli operators and tours and deliberately seek out tours that offer an alternative Palestinian perspective”.

Rennie told the *SA Jewish Report* that his decision to lead the breakaway had been “terrifying”.

“The house I live in belongs to the Methodist Church and they’ve told me to leave by the end of the month,” he says. “I have three foster children in my care. I don’t know the future, but it’s okay, I won’t compromise on this issue.”

His breaking point was that he believed there was “no biblical grounding for this resolution”. In his opinion, “it’s tantamount to hate

speech and racism. You cannot place blanket blame on Israel.” He believes that the issue will eventually cause a split in the Methodist Church.

Rennie says that some senior ministers had been supportive. “They are in the same place I’m in, in that they need to break away [because of the MCSA resolution on Israel]. You cannot tell Christians they cannot visit the Holy Land. People visit Israel not because they support the Israeli government, but because they want a spiritual experience. This resolution turns the entire nation of Israel and its integrity into a political agenda.”

The MCSA hasn’t officially spoken to him since he released the video, besides asking him to vacate his home. Of the small percentage of his former congregation [the St Luke’s Methodist Church] who have chosen to stay in the MCSA, there has been a backlash. A few senior ministers have berated him, but they haven’t spoken on behalf of the MCSA. He says all this animosity is understandable, but he won’t budge, as he has “a clear conscious going forward”.

Rennie has been in the MCSA for 23 years. He was ordained as a minister in 1997, and has just completed his second five-year term as a reverend of a congregation in Welkom in the Free State. “Over the past two years, we have been talking about leaving as we realised there would be a resolution rejecting Israel. In the past two weeks we officially broke away, becoming the Bethany Fellowship.”

Looking back, he says, “The church was quite biblically conservative when I first joined. It’s only in the past five years that we’ve seen it line up with the government. I believe its rejection of Israel is influenced by its close connection with the government, as can be seen with

a number of its policies, especially regarding land.

“The Methodist Church is the biggest Protestant church in the country, and it uses its channels to push this agenda.” He says this is particularly heart breaking in South Africa, where the term “apartheid” has real meaning for many people. “Its comparison of Israeli [policies] to apartheid was done in a deceptive way, drawing conclusions without saying much, without questioning, and without showing both sides,” he says.

Describing the moment he realised the resolution was official, Rennie recalls, “I was in shock. It hit like a ton of bricks. I realised the church’s political voice was way above its spiritual voice. To get there and to still call yourself a Christian, when the Bible is so contrary to that stance ... It’s insane from a biblical perspective.”



Reverend Rowan Rennie

Rennie said that immediately after the resolution was passed, “We said, ‘no way, we can’t go this route.’” Those in agreement with him wanted to leave the church by March, but COVID-19 made it difficult. However, the lockdown meant that more people heard their message online and supported them. “We eventually

felt we had enough followers, and broke away over the past two weeks.”

Those who have followed him have “taken such ownership of what we’ve said. We are privileged to make this stance and move forward in our conviction of supporting Israel.”

In response to the video, the MCSA released a statement saying that it “notes with deep sadness and concern” Rennie’s video. It went on to say that having accepted his resignation, “we note with deep disappointment the encouragement and invitation to other Methodists to join him. This is a wilful breaking of a covenant he made. Breaking these solemn and sacred vows isn’t viewed lightly.”

The MCSA urged members to “engage in open conversations to raise the theological issues we aren’t clear about or uncomfortable with. Maligning and breaking away from the church won’t create reformation, transformation, or bring healing to us, our nations, our continent, or the world.”

The MCSA did not respond to questions from the *SA Jewish Report*.

Rowan Polovin, the chairperson of the South African Zionist Federation, commented, “The MCSA has been wilfully blinded by the doctrine of ‘replacement theology’, which attempts to deny the Jewish people’s unbreakable connection to *Eretz Yisrael*. The modern manifestation of it is to use the artillery of BDS against Israel. The MCSA’s BDS resolution is a disgraceful attempt to single out and discriminate against the Jewish state.”

“Reverend Rowan Rennie is a courageous and principled individual. We strongly support his heroic decision,” said Polovin. “Those who stand with Israel do so out of moral conviction and must be applauded. We extend our deepest gratitude to him.”

Rennie hopes that “Christians open their eyes, and question the things told to them”. He also hopes that the “Jewish community finds comfort that serious Christians empathise with everything they’ve been through. The whole world might be against you, but you have an ally in the Christian community. You aren’t alone.”

Charisse Zeifert, from the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, said, “Having spoken to Reverend Rennie in an interview on *ChaiFM*, I was struck by his courage and sincerity. At great personal and professional cost to himself and his parish, he has taken a principled stance to speak out publicly against what he sees as a blatant misinterpretation of the Bible. It’s reassuring for the Jewish community to know that we have allies fighting BDS lies, and I believe it’s important for Reverend Rennie to know that he too isn’t alone.”

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Is US Ambassador Marks heading home?

NICOLA MILTZ

Lana Marks, the United States (US) ambassador to South Africa and a close friend of US President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump, may soon be packing her designer bags to head for home in Palm Springs, Florida.

The diplomatic future of the South African-born couture handbag designer hangs in the balance as President Trump, who nominated her, continues to refuse to concede defeat in last week's US presidential elections. She arrived at her post in Pretoria barely a year before the end of Trump's first term of office. Now with Trump's hope of a second term of office seemingly dashed, it's uncertain what lies ahead for the businesswoman.

It's practice for the White House to direct all US ambassadors who are political appointees to resign their posts, and for them to do so when the administration changes in Washington. Ambassadors who are career members of the US foreign service – a large percentage of envoys – are generally not asked to offer their resignations.

Marks was unanimously confirmed by the US Senate on 26 September 2019. She was sworn into office on 4 October 2019, and arrived at her posting on 9 November 2019, presenting her diplomatic credentials to President Cyril Ramaphosa on 28 January 2020.

It has been a tumultuous year for Marks, who from the outset endeavoured to deepen trade and investment ties and strengthen the relationship between South Africa and the US.

She hit the ground running as soon as she arrived only to face the onset of a worldwide pandemic and threats to her life after revelations of an alleged Iran-backed plot to assassinate her.

In response to a request for an interview with the ambassador this week, Robert Mearkle, information officer and spokesperson at the US Embassy in Pretoria, told the *SA Jewish Report*, "We'll have to politely decline the request at this time."

Requests for comment during the elections were also declined. "We aren't having an event for elections due to our continued telework and COVID-19 gathering restrictions. Also, the ambassador isn't doing media engagements this week," Mearkle said.

According to a 2016 article in *Voice of America*, then President-elect Donald Trump's transition staff issued a blanket order, distributed as a diplomatic cable by the state department, ordering all political appointees to leave their overseas posts by his inauguration.



US Ambassador to South Africa Lana Marks

In most cases, US embassies typically have a second diplomat, known as the deputy chief of mission, who takes over as chargé d'affaires – in essence, an acting ambassador. Diplomacy can then continue and the work of the embassy carries on.

Mearkle declined to comment on the protocols.

Marks, who was born and raised in East London, was Trump's nominee to serve as the ambassador to South Africa having no experience in diplomacy. She was nominated for the position in 2016, but formally nominated only in 2018. Her confirmation in 2019 ended a gap in the position in South Africa, which had been open since Patrick Gaspard vacated his post in December 2016, with the mission being overseen by a chargé d'affaires.

Marks, who left South Africa about 40 years ago, is best known for her company, Lana Marks Collections, which produces five and six-figure exotic leather handbags worn by red-carpet celebrities like Benoni-born Charlize Theron, and for her friendship with the late Diana, Princess of Wales. It's unknown what she will be doing in the coming months.

Meanwhile, Trump has tweeted that he will ultimately win the election he has been projected to lose. None of the state-by-state results have yet been certified, several vote counts are continuing, and the outcome will be set in stone only once the US Electoral College meets on 14 December. Joe Biden is preparing to assume office.

The SA connection to the White House

>>Continued from page 1

week later. Neither had their families in attendance, and the wedding photos were taken by a friend on a cell phone.

Hunter told ABC that he levelled with her about his messy past, including the tragic deaths of his mother, sister, and brother, decades of struggling with addiction, and a turbulent divorce, adding, "I instantly fell in love with her. And then I've fallen in love with her more every day."

Joe Biden reportedly thanked Melissa for "giving my son the courage to love again".

Hunter was married for 24 years to Kathleen Biden, with whom he has three grown daughters.

After the couple split in 2015, Hunter dated Hallie Biden, the widow of his elder brother, Beau, a former Delaware attorney general. They broke up in early 2019, and he married Melissa in May 2019. In November last year, DNA results confirmed that Hunter had fathered a child with a different woman while dating Hallie. While he dismissed the claims by

the child's mother, Lunden Roberts, he now accepts the child is his.

The scandal-plagued middle child of Joe Biden recently found himself at the centre of a dubious *New York Post* article based on purported juicy emails and photos found on a laptop sent to the outlet by Rudy Giuliani, President Donald Trump's personal attorney. Hunter was mentioned by Trump in the first presidential debate for his business dealings, including his connections with Ukrainian gas company Burisma Holdings and profiting in China while his father was vice-president. In spite of being cleared of wrongdoing, Hunter's entanglement in the administration's contact with Ukraine proved to be controversial.

Melissa Cohen, who matriculated from King David Victory Park, has stood by her husband throughout the controversies and media scrutiny.

The couple are said to be smitten with their baby and who knows, it might not be long before baby Beau finds himself playing on the rolling lawns of the White House.

MOST SA JEWS (BOTH OF ASHKENAZI AND SEPHARDI HERITAGE) ARE ELIGIBLE TO REINSTATE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND, ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT.

A common misconception is that European citizenship and EU passports can only be obtained if one has documents providing his/her lineage. The fact is that not having any documents proving lineage, doesn't lead to disqualification of eligibility. Jews of Ashkenazi heritage can rely on documents obtained in Lithuania or Poland.

Jews of Sephardi heritage need no proof at all!

In his experience, the majority of South African Jews are descendants of Jews whose European citizenship was illegally deprived, and therefore they are entitled to reinstate it, and accordingly obtain an EU passport.



Adv. Horesh has been operating in SA market with the Jewish community since March 2018. He arrives regularly to South Africa, and can meet in person with Jews who are interested to do so.

Ashkenazi: This ad refers to Jews of Polish & Lithuanian heritage only. The most important things is the understanding that prior to the end of WW-I, the European map was very different than the one we know today. Countries like Poland and Lithuania did not exist as independent countries, and until 1918 these territories were only known as Lithuanian or Polish regions/counties of the Great Russian Empire who ruled all of north eastern Europe. Accordingly, until 1918, residents of these territories were Russian citizens, as Polish and Lithuanian citizenships didn't exist. Therefore, since applications for reinstatement of these citizenships can only be based on whether one's ancestor was a Polish or Lithuanian citizen, whoever is a descendant of an ancestor who left Europe prior to 1918 will not be eligible.

In addition, it is highly important to remember that since borders in Europe were shifted once again during and after WW-II, one's eligibility for Polish or Lithuanian citizenship depends on the city from which his/her ancestor hailed. Horesh explains: Shifted borders resulted in cities changing nationalities, and that the resultant effect for descendants of Jews left Vilnius is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined whereas a similar



Adv. Avi Horesh is an Israeli attorney, who lived in Poland for seven years. Horesh is recognised in Israel as one of the leading lawyers in the field of reinstatement of European citizenship.

application for reinstatement of Polish citizenship may very well be approved! Horesh has an in-depth knowledge and a full understanding of European immigration laws.

Sephardi: This ad refers to all Jews of Sephardi heritage – Jews who arrived from North Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, as well as many descendants of Jews who arrived from Holland and the UK. Most descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are eligible to reinstate Portuguese citizenship and, accordingly, an EU passport. If applicable, Adv. Horesh will apply for (on behalf of the applicant) an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which, an application for Portuguese citizenship is most likely to be approved.

Horesh resides in Israel – a four-hour flight from Warsaw and Vilnius – enabling him to travel to Poland and Lithuania, as well as to Portugal, where he collaborates with local professionals who assist him in tracing documentation required for successful applications of reinstatement of European citizenship.

Adv. Horesh closely collaborates with professionals who assist him in tracing documentation in Europe required for successful applications of reinstatement EU citizenships.

Due to Corona virus, I'm not sure when will I visit SA again. However, I do plan & hope to arrive by the end of 2020
You are most welcome to contact me on adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com or whatsapp +48783953223

Saeb Erekat: leaving unfinished business

OPINION

PAULA SLIER



Veteran Palestinian negotiator and politician, Saeb Erekat, died on Tuesday at the age of 65, weeks after testing positive for COVID-19.

I first met Erekat about 20 years ago. He was approachable and affable. In the ensuing years, he would always answer his cell phone when I called, and never declined the occasional comment or interview I'd reach out for.

For journalists, he was the ultimate spokesperson – always available and among the first Palestinian officials to comment on anything related to the conflict. In this way, he became one of the most well-known Palestinian figures to Western audiences.

The author of at least eight books and a Western-educated academic, Erekat always dressed in a suit and spoke perfect English. He was one of the most experienced and high-profile advocates for the Palestinian cause, and was part of every Palestinian team to negotiate with Israel since 1991 – with the exception of the secretly hammered out 1993 Oslo Accords.

He was deputy head of the Palestinian delegation at the 1991 Madrid talks convened by then United States President George Bush – the first time Israeli government officials negotiated directly with their Palestinian counterparts, albeit in a multilateral setting.

By the time direct talks between the sides were taking place in 1993, he was chief Palestinian negotiator. Aside from a few absences, he stayed in that position throughout his life. He announced his

resignation multiple times, but never left the job.

I once shared a joke with a colleague. We agreed that to be a negotiator for three decades either meant Erekat wasn't very good at his position or it was an impossible mission. One thing was certain, though, and that was that he didn't have to worry about looking for other work as talks between the sides, until today, remain stalled.

Erekat was an ardent supporter of the two-state solution, and blamed in particular Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for scuppering peace efforts. But his public positions also reflected those of his leadership and thus "evolved over the years", reflected Alan Baker, the former legal advisor to the Israeli foreign ministry.

"I had an ongoing argument with him on Twitter that there was never anything even like 1967 borders. All these issues he negotiated with us, and together with us drafted [agreements] and recently, [he] said Israel has to withdraw from all territories to 1967. This wasn't agreed to in the Oslo Accords, so it reflects a change, an evolving position of the Palestinian leadership."

Erekat was active on Twitter in the past few months, describing this year's agreements between Israel, the United

Arab Emirates, and Bahrain as a "poisonous Arab dagger in my back".

He argued that Palestine first needed to be formally recognised before such relations could be established. This placed him on a collision course with the Arab League and many people in the Gulf states, especially after he talked about the emergence of "Zionist Arabs".



Saeb Erekat

He visited South Africa in 2014 to receive the Global Champion for the People's Freedom Award from the Mkiva Humanitarian Foundation. While here, he lobbied for support for a United Nations draft resolution calling for the immediate resumption of talks between the sides.

What does his passing mean for the future of the Palestinians? In truth, very little. He was a loyal aide and translator to the former chairperson of the Palestine



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Liberation Organisation (PLO), Yasser Arafat; general secretary of the PLO; and aide to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. But he was never a serious candidate to replace them.

The Jerusalem Post reports that in private conversations he would ask friends and journalists whether they thought he was qualified to become the next leader of the Palestinians. But Erekat's chances of succeeding Abbas suffered a major setback when he underwent a lung transplant in the US three years ago. Since then, his health forced him to limit his activities. He also never publicly put himself forward as a contender.

Last month, he was rushed to the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem from his home in Jericho in the West Bank. The hospital said that treating him was extremely complicated because of his history of medical problems. Many Israelis pointed to the irony of him being in an Israeli hospital when he was so critical of Jerusalem and its policies.

Erekat wasn't particularly popular among Israelis. They castigated him for campaigning to sue Israel for war crimes in the International Criminal Court, and for accusing the country of carrying out a massacre in the Jenin refugee camp in 2002, an allegation that turned out to be unfounded. But he had warm relations with politicians like Tzipi Livni, the former Israeli foreign minister and a negotiating partner. She said he recently messaged her saying, "I'm not finished what I was born to do."

It's unlikely that Erekat's departure from the Palestinian political arena will herald anything new. The Palestinians may have lost one of their most experienced negotiators, but young Palestinians, in particular, are disillusioned with their leadership. They feel it's out of touch and Erekat, in spite of being one of its younger members, didn't bring anything new to the table.

• Paula Slieber is the Middle East Bureau Chief of Russia Today (RT), the founder and CEO of Newshound Media and the inaugural winner of the Europcar Woman in Leadership Award of the South African Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.



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Showing us the light

“The world we build tomorrow is born in the stories we tell our children today. Politics moves the pieces. Education changes the game.”

This is one of the many brilliant quotes from of one of modern-day Jewry’s most iconic leaders, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, who passed away last Shabbos.

His death has rocked the Jewish world because he provided deep inspiration, food for thought, and a light unto all of us.

There are few leaders – spiritual or not – who offer such positivity, integrous wisdom, and inspire us genuinely to be the best we can be. Rabbi Sacks was such a person.

I could spend ages ruminating on quotes from his writing and speeches. I love the idea (above) that what we teach our children today is the bricks and mortar of their world tomorrow. And that it’s through their education that real change will happen, not through the tawdry game of politics. Truly inspiring!

I didn’t have the honour of meeting Rabbi Sacks, but from what I read, I felt I understood where he was coming from.

The themes that seem to pepper his work are unity; finding good in the world; nation building; shedding prejudices; listening to each other; healing our wounds; being inclusive of all; and finding peace in our world.

These perhaps seem like altruistic goals, but if only we could absorb them, allow them into our lives, and make them work for all of us, we would all be so much better off.

The truth is, it’s difficult always to see the good and be positive. I know that through some of this year, darkness seemed to prevail. However, there is generally a light at the end of the tunnel.

That light is invariably one we create ourselves, individually or as a group. We make things happen, and we choose whether we accept the doom and gloom or find the light.

People like Rabbi Sacks always looked towards the light at the end of the tunnel, and not at the things falling apart around us.

But, like many of us, he realised that we have reached a turning point in the world. The pandemic that has turned our lives around this year is about a virus, but it’s also about the need to change our lives. It’s about cleaning out that which doesn’t work for us, and finding new ways of doing things.

This year has been extraordinarily tough for many of us for different reasons, whether it’s about death, illness, financial distress, the breakdown of relationships, marriages, or even problems in educating our children. It has shone a bright light on problem areas in our lives, and given us choices.

Sometimes there don’t seem to be any options at all, but there always are and always were. It’s about how we choose to accept what the light has revealed for us. Do we deny it? Do we try to ignore it?

Do we fight it? Do we look for innovative ways to tackle it? Do we face it head on, and find the best possible way forward?

You can’t deny pain, illness, and financial distress as they don’t just go away. You can try and hide them, but they won’t be hidden for long. You can face them head on, and find the best way to keep going forward towards the light.

These are all choices.

Rabbi Sacks’ choice was to make the absolute best of what he had. Now, this iconic Jewish leader leaves behind one of the most beautiful legacies that we will tap into continuously for inspiration.

On the same weekend that Rabbi Sacks died, Joe Biden won the United States election to become the country’s 46th president-elect. It was a close battle between him and Donald Trump, and I do believe that many Americans who voted for Biden did so in order to unseat Trump not because they particularly love Biden.

However, his vice-president, Kamala Harris, inspires me no end. She spoke of Biden being “a healer, a uniter, a tested and steady hand”, which is what the world needs.

Biden in his victory speech pledged to unify and not divide, seeing the country as a whole and not one made up of Democrats and Republicans. He spoke about healing the nation.

Like the US, our world is in desperate need of healing. After what we have been through in 2020, we need all the help we can get to fix what has been broken and find solace and joy again after lockdown.

We all need to get together and draw on each other’s strength and vitality to heal ourselves. We can’t do it alone. We need to lean on each other, and be strong when others aren’t, so they can be there when we aren’t. That’s friendship, family, and community. That’s what we are about – not punishing each other, but being there for one another.

That’s what Biden means, and what Rabbi Sacks stood for.

As we stand on this precipice, we bring you stories of antisemitism, hatred, and people having to leave their religion because it doesn’t represent what they believe to be good.

It’s not to say that from this precipice we look only at the good ahead. No, it’s choice time. We can choose to go a number of ways.

Let’s use Rabbi Sacks as our true north on our compass, and build our integrity, strength of character, and ability to find the good in this world, and keep moving onwards and upwards. Let us, too, be a light unto the nations!

Shabbat Shalom!
Peta Krost Maunder
Editor



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, prince of G-d

TRIBUTE

CHIEF RABBI DR WARREN GOLDSTEIN



I feel the loss of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt’l in a deeply personal way. I have lost a friend and a mentor, who guided and supported me from my early days as chief rabbi of South Africa. I will never forget that he was one of the first people to call me when I took up the position 17 years ago. From that moment, he was there for me, guiding me with wisdom, kindness, and compassion. And I wasn’t the only one – there are many around the globe who benefited from his wise counsel and compassionate care and support.

That someone as brilliant and influential as Rabbi Sacks was with us one moment and then gone the next – that sense of shock is something that will take time to overcome. And it will be only in the months and years ahead that we will be able to frame his legacy adequately and his contribution to the Jewish people and society as a whole.



Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein, and Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

I would, however, like to share one thought, while the memory of his passing is still raw. It’s a phrase used in this week’s *parsha* to describe Abraham, our forefather: *Nesi Elokim*, (prince of G-d). Rabbi Sacks was a prince of G-d. A prince of dignity. A prince of kindness. A prince of eloquence. A prince of wisdom. His presence, his speeches, his articles, shone with royalty and brilliance. It’s that sense of lost majesty that we are all feeling at this time. He was a prince amongst the Jewish people and a prince among the nations, celebrated for his leadership, his intellect, his ideas. Rabbi Sacks wasn’t just a source of guidance to queens and princes and prime ministers, he, himself, was a noble soul.

And he carried with him the source of all royalty. He carried the *keter* Torah, (crown of Torah), and he carried it with such dignity and authority. The Talmud says that the crown of Torah is the greatest of all crowns. The crown of Torah is greater than the “crown of kingship”, and even the “crown of the priesthood”, because it’s the source of all majesty in this world, as the Talmud demonstrates by citing this verse, “Through Me kings shall reign.” When one wears the crown of Torah, one carries the royalty of G-d, the “King of all kings”.

Rabbi Sacks carried the crown of Torah in such a way that its light shone across the globe. Through his eloquence, his genius, his profound wisdom, he was able to unlock and unleash the divine light that lies within our Torah. Rabbi Sacks was well-versed in all of the wisdom of the world. He understood sociology and psychology, politics and philosophy, science and literature. And yet he showed us

that all wisdom is subservient to – and sourced in – the ultimate wisdom, the ultimate crown, the wisdom of Torah.

The menorah of the sanctuary had seven branches, a middle branch and three branches coming out of either side of it, their flames leaning towards the centre. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that the middle branch represents the light of Torah wisdom, while the other six branches represent the wisdom of the world. The six outer branches emerge from the central branch, and their flames turn inwards to face the central branch it came from. Rabbi Sacks was a menorah. He lit up the world with the Torah’s teachings by showing how all true wisdom in the world emanates from and turns towards the light of the divine wisdom of the Torah.

In this way, he was the ultimate *kiddush* Hashem. He sanctified G-d’s name every time he wore the crown of Torah, and everyone

who heard him or read his writings, gained renewed appreciation and reverence for the divine wisdom of the Torah. Over the course of decades, he brought its light to bear on some of the most difficult and complex issues facing the world – religious intolerance, antisemitism, secularism and materialism, faith and science, the politics of anger. He was able to access the wisdom of Torah and use it to illuminate these intractable problems with the majesty of divine wisdom. Rabbi Sacks demonstrated that the Torah contains the wisdom that is indeed

the blueprint for all of creation and every dimension of human experience. Through his speeches and his writings, he demonstrated how everything we need to know about life and society is contained within the divine wisdom of Torah, as the *mishna* in Pirkei Avot says, “Turn it over and over, for everything is in it.” And in so doing, he showed the world in the most powerful way the majesty of the crown of Torah.

Rabbi Sacks was truly a prince of G-d. He carried the name of G-d high in this world, and he uplifted all of us. The word “*nasi*” (prince), comes from the root of the word “to carry”. This is the true meaning of royalty from a Torah perspective – we don’t carry the king, the king carries us. Rabbi Sacks taught us, led us, and inspired us. He carried us on the majesty of the Torah he taught.

Right now we’re bereft; we’ve lost our prince. But our comfort is that he has left behind a royal treasure of writings and lectures; a legacy of wisdom, ideas and insights. Let’s all continue the holy work of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, prince of G-d. Let’s extend his legacy, by carrying the crown of Torah with pride and dignity, and by illuminating our lives and our world with its divine light. I can think of no more fitting tribute to his kindness, dignity, empathy, brilliance, eloquence, wisdom, and his deep love for us all.

Our hearts and prayers go out to Lady Elaine Sacks and her children and grandchildren. Your loss is one we cannot understand, but know that we share your grief and are with you in your pain.

Yehi zichro baruch. May his memory be a blessing.

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Moments with Rabbi Sacks show his impact on the world

TALI FEINBERG

As Jewish communities, prime ministers, presidents, princes, rabbis, and followers of many faiths grieve the loss of the past Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Lord Jonathan Sacks, who died last Shabbat (7 November 2020), South African Jews reflect on the impact he had on them and others, even in the most unexpected of places.

Anthony Spitz knew him for 30 years. “Wishing to contribute to Jewish life in London after emigrating from South Africa, I asked a friend for an introduction to the newly appointed chief rabbi. As a perfect illustration of the kindness and openness of Chief Rabbi Sacks, I found myself sitting at his breakfast table a few days later.

“During our discussion, he mentioned his admiration for the structures of the South African Jewish community. He was concerned about the future because of high intermarriage, and tried to create an organisation called Jewish Continuity, but it had not fulfilled his hopes.

“Talking about this, I explained how we had successfully merged the Israel United Appeal with the United Communal Fund in South Africa. His face immediately lit up – he made a mental connection between our merger and the possibility of a future merger between his Jewish Continuity and a larger Jewish entity. Some years later, such a merger took place, restructured as “Jewish Renewal” and I was invited to be part of it. From then on, I found myself spending many hours with him.

“He and Lady Elaine would have small dinner parties, and it wasn’t unusual to find oneself sitting next to the Catholic Archbishop of London, a cabinet minister across the table, and

an assortment of lecturers, chief executives, and leaders.”

Spitz recalls how “in 1999, Gordon Brown announced that Britain would be selling off its gold. This sent tremors of fear through South Africa. The late Gerald Leissner, an integral part of Anglo American, asked if I could arrange a meeting with Rabbi Sacks and Bobby Godsell, then chairman of AngloGold Ashanti. He hoped that the chief rabbi could explain South Africa’s position to Brown, with whom he had a good relationship. The chief rabbi agreed, and asked if I could attend. I don’t know if his intervention was successful, but Britain only sold half of its stock of gold.”

When the centenary of the founding of the Great Synagogue in Wolmarans Street was being planned for September 2007, Rabbi Dovid Hazdan asked Spitz if he thought Rabbi Sacks would be willing to attend. “The chief rabbi immediately agreed. However, it was discovered that the foundation stone had in fact been laid only in September 1913, and sheepishly, I had to approach him again. I expected him to decline as it fell just one week before his retirement. But without hesitation, he accepted. His sermon at the Shabbat service in the Great Park Synagogue and his speech at the celebration of the centenary will be long remembered by the Johannesburg community.”

Spitz says “like everything else he did, Rabbi Sacks was a fastidious but conservative dresser. I took great pleasure in inviting him to New &



Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft and his son Yossi with Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

hesitation, he would offer the most erudite, informative, and non-judgemental responses, drawing on philosophical insights from Nietzsche to Plato to Jewish sages alike. Few could inspire such confidence in the all-embracing character of an ancient religion as he did.”

Cape Town businessman Ivan King recalls “about twelve years ago, Rabbi Sacks was travelling around South Africa and ending his trip with his first visit to Cape Town. My sister, Syma Weinberg, was his executive director for 20 years and asked if I would spend the morning with him, so we met him and his wife at the President Hotel.

Lingwood, where he would show boyish delight in choosing clothing for Rosh Hashanah. His favourite purchase every year would include a soft yellow tie that he said would brighten up the long services of the high holy days.”

African Jewish Congress Chief Executive Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, known as “the travelling rabbi”, says, “I’ve always liked to distribute Rabbi Sacks’ books to religious leaders in sub-Saharan Africa. His 25 books aren’t only for Jews. He made the message of Torah and Judaism applicable to all. His ideas were visionary and accepted by every recipient, Jew and gentile alike.”

This can be seen in extraordinary tributes from far-flung places and religious leaders on Sacks’ passing. Dr Patrick Coleman of the Fellowship Chapel in Luanshya, Zambia, wrote, “Three years ago, Rabbi Silberhaft gave me a copy of Sacks’ book *Not in G-d’s Name*. I read it and gave copies to others. Over the years, I have shared many of his teachings with congregations in Zambia. His latest book, *Morality*, is a masterpiece, and has already been incorporated in my lesson plans.”

Pastor Kobus Jooste from Pretoria said, “Through his divine revelations and brilliant scriptural insight, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks broke down the boundaries of my own religious mindset.” While president of the Maputo Jewish community, Samuel Levy, said, “His weekly *divrei Torah*, and the family educational curriculum he authored, was the source material for so much of our Torah study and Hebrew school programming.”

Silberhaft says Sacks had a deep fondness for Africa and its Jewish communities, and in 2009, he hand wrote a message at an event they both attended. “To the Jewish communities of Africa: we salute you, we think of you, we admire you, and we ask G-d to bless you. May He be with you at all times, and may you be successful in all you do.”

South African business leader Johnny Copelyn has been travelling to London in September for many years, and attends services at the Western Marble Arch Synagogue for *yom tov*. “Rabbi Sacks always conducted the service with Rabbi Lionel Rosenfeld. For the hour or two between the Musaf and Neila services on Yom Kippur, the congregation would sit for a question-and-answer session with him.”

While some questions were unusual or controversial, “without a note or a moment of

“It was a Sunday morning, and we took him for a walk along the famous Sea Point promenade.” As a leader of interfaith work, “he was absolutely amazed at so many Jews and Muslims sharing the same space. Even though we passed many members of the Jewish community, no one recognised him! It was a privilege to walk along the promenade with the chief rabbi of the Commonwealth, and he had no security – he was just like anybody else.”

Rabbi Yossy Goldman became good friends with Sacks over the years. “We first met first in the early 1980s. I had started Torah Academy, and he was our guest one Shabbos morning. I still remember something he said, “What’s the difference between a rabbi and the Rebbe? When a rabbi speaks, everyone thinks they mean someone else. But when the Rebbe speaks, everyone thinks he is speaking directly to them.”

Goldman says Sacks had a “warm relationship with many people in South Africa and South African Jewry as a whole”.




Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Photo: Ilan Ossendryver


Sacks once joined a meeting when Goldman was chair of the South African Rabbinical Association. “I remember he asked, ‘What is the question most frequently asked of rabbis?’ Everyone shared their opinions, but couldn’t guess. He eventually said it was ‘Rabbi, do you remember me?’



“In other words, he had the common touch. He was a man of Torah, but also a man of the world, and the single most articulate ambassador of Judaism and the Jewish people. No one is indispensable, but he is one person not easily replaceable. It’s a devastating and monumental loss.”




THE YEAR OF THE VILNA GAON & JEWISH HISTORY IN LITHUANIA
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UOS introduces new kashrut measures

JORDAN MOSHE

The board of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues (UOS) put its money where its mouth is this week with new measures relating to kashrut.

They include effective kashrut-query monitoring, new *hechsher* pricing, and the establishment of a mediation panel, according to a UOS update on Wednesday, 11 November.

“From the recent webinar, we saw that quite a few things needed to be addressed,” Kenny Rabson, a non-executive member of the UOS board, told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“We were also aware of issues raised prior to the webinar, and applied our minds to all points that were mentioned. We are determined to address every one of them.

“This is the first step in our strategy. We want to keep people informed.”

Two new pricing categories are being introduced for micro-enterprises seeking a *hechsher*, with the monthly base cost reduced significantly to either R500 or R1 500 depending on the number of products and inspections required.

The micro-enterprise categories include companies that have been in operation for less than a year or have a turnover of less than R1 million a year, limited to between five and 15 products. Customers that meet the criteria will revert to the lower fee from 1 December.

New companies that apply for certification will now fall into one of four categories based on their size, complexity, and other qualifying criteria.

“We knew from questions that came in that the small manufacturers were battling with *hechsher* costs, and we hadn’t really focused on them when we changed the pricing model,” says Rabson.

Face to face with an ‘ordinary’-looking antisemite

>>>Continued from page 1

made the argument that there is no such thing as a good Jew”; “They need to meet a new kind of white man, the kind they’ve not met since the time of Hitler”; “Filthy little race of rats and pathological liars ... They dominate EVERYTHING ... and turn all the powerful against us ... Hitler was too nice to them”.

Lamprecht continued to post inflammatory material even after he was served the protection notice.

In terms of the interim protection order, Lamprecht is prohibited from engaging in and attempting to engage in harassment of the complainant (Milner); posting any pictures/videos referencing the complainant on websites; and all references and pictures/photos of the applicant and complainant are to be removed and deleted from all websites and platforms within 48 hours of the order.

He posted on 8 November, “I’ve spent several hours on my websites and social media, checking and double-checking, and I’ve complied with the court order. I’ve removed the details of the “complainant” from all the posts. I’ve removed the one photo, and I removed three videos. I’ve deleted all the things I have control over.”

However Lamprecht, who insists Jews are “busy shutting up South Africans of every race”, added in bold type face, “My view in the future is that the ONLY time I will make modifications to my website posts will be by a court order like this. That is the only time I will make changes to content due to external forces.”

There are still reams of racist, antisemitic articles on his websites, and dozens of videos posted online on his channel HistoryReviewed – The Truth They’ve Been Hiding from You.

He blames Jews “across the Western world” for censorship and interfering in freedom of speech “all under the guise of combating hate speech”.

Lamprecht is expected to appear in court on 16 March 2021 for his final protection order appearance. The interim order will be in place until then.

“We’ve adjusted the formula and dropped the base fee massively for people who produce fewer products using simpler manufacturing processes. The fee is now less than a quarter of a what it was before.”

Improvement to customer service involves the establishment of a kosher care customer relationship management system. This allows the kashrut department to track all queries made at Beth Din Kosher, with all incoming queries allocated a ticket number for the tracking of turnaround time and to identify any bottlenecks in the system.

Says Rabson, “We want to move away from anecdotal comments, and get real stats we can work with to reprioritise staff or arrange any necessary interventions. Queries which might be getting stuck in the wrong area can be quickly redirected, and we’ll better address and understand the information received.”

The first stage of the system will be launched on 16 November, with another to follow in the first quarter of 2021, allowing the UOS to conduct a survey in the community on the level of service received.

Finally, the UOS board is appointing a panel of two independent community members and one board member with legal and business experience to review complaints from food manufacturers regarding either pricing or certification processing.

Rabson stresses that the option is open only to those companies who have fully exhausted proper engagement with the kosher department and remain unsatisfied.

“This is a last resort purely for product manufacturers,” he says. “It has nothing to do with complaints over prices of chicken or the like. It’s a narrow mandate, but an important one.


“The public didn’t like the fact that the Ombud wasn’t independent of the UOS or that we called it an Ombud, which sounds legal. It’s not. This is really a mediation space for manufactures and the kashrut department to resolve pricing or processing issues.

“We are still in the process of appointing people formally, and will publish the names of those involved in the coming days.”

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Challenge to get Biden to focus on Israel, not back off the country

OPINION

SIMMY ZIV-EL

By the time Nelson Mandela became president in 1994, I had been living outside of South Africa for 16 years but recall the overwhelming sense of relief that most South Africans felt as the country finally joined the enlightened world.



When Joe Biden was declared president-elect on Saturday, “relief” was the term most widely used among those that supported him and among many who didn’t as well. Relief that the focus would now be on the daunting issues facing the United States and frankly the whole world, and not on the latest incendiary Tweet from the fragile ego of one person. As Jews, we are of course most interested in the meaning of a Biden presidency for the US Jewish

community and Israel, and Biden’s record over the past 40 years gives cause for great hope. Who did Jews vote for? By most accounts, 77% of Jews voted for Biden and 21% for Trump. This resounding 56-point margin is in itself beneficial

for the community. We voted with the winner and our influence will ipso facto be greater. The South African Jewish community should broadcast this fact loud and clear. Who is a genuine person of faith? National Public Radio correspondent Barbara Sprunt observed wryly, “Church and golf – Biden and Trump return to their usual Sunday routines.” As a man of faith who reads the bible, not just brandishes it for photo opportunities, and who quoted from Ecclesiastes in

his victory speech, Biden has deep respect for all people of faith. Even Evangelical Christians admit that their votes for Trump aren’t based on their respect for him as a Christian. What’s good for Israel? As one reads the Israeli press, both before and after the election, one is struck by the Bibi narrative that Trump was better for Israel than any US president ever, and more than President-elect Biden will be. He telegraphed his dismay by being one of the last world leaders to congratulate Biden. The question is, what does “better for Israel” really mean? Most American Jews, including this one, believe that the move of the US embassy to Jerusalem was sensible and overdue. The open agreements now with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Sudan are certainly beneficial, even though none are on the frontline of the conflict. But in the end, the most fundamental question of all regarding the Palestinians and Israeli democracy was not addressed for even one day over the past four years since John Kerry’s last futile trip to the region in the waning days of the Obama presidency. And, until it is, Israel’s international stature at the macro level and within an increasingly distant younger and progressive Jewish community in the US at a more esoteric level, will

continue to wane. Biden’s credentials on support for Israel are impeccable. Concern that some of the democratically elected Muslim members of Congress will dictate his foreign policy is foolishly playing into Trump/Bibi fear-mongering tactics. Biden stayed the centrist course on Medicare-for-all (against) and defunding the police (against). He will remain centrist on supporting Israel without giving Netanyahu and the Israeli right carte blanche on everything and anything. That’s what being authentically pro-Israel is all about. The challenge Israel faces is to get attention! In the debates (one of which sort-of met that definition, the other of which was a shameful temper tantrum) the questions of foreign policy were few and essentially non-existent. The top four issues the Biden-Harris ticket has emphasised repeatedly are (1) the pandemic, (2) the economy as a result of the pandemic, (3) global climate change, and (4) racial justice. In foreign policy, getting to a more sensible place with China and making Putin pay for his interference in 2016 which continued this year according to every US intelligence agency, are at the top. While every Israeli newspaper is analysing what this means for Israel, it’s safe to surmise that Israel is very low on the “do we have the bandwidth

for this?” list of priorities. Those of us who care for Israel’s democracy are ironically tasked with getting the Biden administration to pay attention, not back off. This is the eighth election since I moved to the US. As a Democrat, I was on the winning side four times with Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, and three times on the losing side with Gore and Kerry against Bush Jr. and Hillary Clinton against Trump four years ago. Never once in the first seven, including four years ago, did I believe that it was a struggle for the soul of America, the continuation of democracy, and the existential threats to our planet. This time, all of those were on the ballot and as a global citizen, an American, a Jew, and a Zionist living in the swing state of Wisconsin that flipped blue, I kept saying *shehecheyanu* all weekend long.

• *Simmy Ziv-el grew up in Pretoria, attending Carmel School, and was the national Mazkir Klali and Rosh Machaneh of Habonim in 1976 and 1977. He lived in Israel for 13 years before he and his family relocated to Milwaukee. For the past 30 years, he has worked in global Education Assessment companies.*



The ‘Imperial Tour’ that cemented the Jewish Commonwealth

ZAKI COOPER

Exactly one century ago the chief rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire, Dr Joseph Hertz, arrived in South Africa on the first leg of a global tour which lasted almost a year. Arriving in South Africa on 27 October 1920, he spent more than three months in the country. He then went on to visit significant Jewish communities in other dominions: Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. The entire tour covered 42 communities and 40 000 miles (64 000km). Hertz, who became chief rabbi in 1913, got the idea of conducting a tour after seeing the Prince of Wales’ visit to Canada following World War I. He wanted to do something similar, and visit smaller communities, saying he was “enthused to come into personal touch with the distant communities under my ecclesiastical jurisdiction”. Earlier on in his career, he had served as rabbi to the Witwatersrand Old Hebrew Congregation in Johannesburg (from 1898 to 1911). During this time, he publicly challenged the Kruger regime, and supported the administration of Lord Alfred Milner, who recommended him to Lord Rothschild for the vacant post of chief rabbi of the British Empire. Hertz set sail from the United Kingdom (UK) on 8 October 1920, and reached South Africa almost three weeks later. The tour was branded a “pastoral tour”, but the agenda was also to raise £1 million for Jewish education as a memorial for those who had died in the Great War. Indeed, a letter in the United Synagogue archives reveals correspondence from a man in South Africa to Hertz, aggressive in tone, asking whether the trip was for the purpose of Jewish pastoral care or if it was to raise money for the Jewish War Memorial. The chief rabbi replied, “Let me assure you, dear Mr Ehrlich, that I am coming to South Africa on a purely Jewish mission. It is true that there will be an accompanying appeal for the Jewish War Memorial, but I regret the



‘war’ part of it as much as you do.” South African Jewry had a population of 66 000 at the time. Hertz travelled throughout the country, covering 5 000 miles (8 000km) by railway. His first public engagement was a sermon at the Great Synagogue in Cape Town on Shabbat 30 October 1920. He was impressed by the shul, describing it as “the largest and most impressive Jewish house of worship in the empire”. He also warmed to its minister, Rev A P Bender, whom he said was “a most popular and respected figure, not only in the Jewish, but also in the general life, of [the] Cape Colony”. Bender was a part-time professor of Hebrew at Cape Town University. In the following days, the chief rabbi was given a banquet at City Hall, delivered a sermon at New Synagogue, and attended a reception of the Cape Town University J-Soc. Hertz then travelled to Kimberley, where the community dated back to 1869. It was there that he sounded a warning about assimilation. In a sermon, he said that there

had been “too much drifting in religious life”, and the perils faced by South African Jewry were the same as those confronting Jewish communities in England, Australia, and Canada. After a trip to Bloemfontein, which brought back memories of consecrating the synagogue in 1902, Hertz moved on to Johannesburg. In this city, he received a rapturous welcome, with crowds waiting for his arrival at the railway station. The *Sunday Times* reported afterwards, “There can be no doubt of the warmth of his welcome from his old congregation. He comes here not only as the high priest of English Jewry, but as an old friend who through long years of unselfish work among us endeared himself equally to Jew and Gentile.” The next stop was Pretoria, where Prime Minister Jan Smuts gave a speech praising the contribution of the Jewish community and looking forward to it flourishing in the future. In his remarks at the reception, Smuts declared, “The Jews in South Africa are welcomed in every walk of life, and have

achieved the greatest successes. Nobody grudges them their success because they deserve it. Let them bring their resources and talents to this country.” At his next destination, Bulawayo in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), he said he found “Jewish hearts throbbing with enthusiasm for all forms of Jewish endeavour”. Hertz spent a final few weeks in South Africa visiting Pietermaritzburg, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, and Oudtshoorn. One of the things Hertz noticed about the Jews of South Africa was how charitable they were – a characteristic still identifiable today (even among those who now live in Israel, the United States, and the UK). He was struck by the care shown in the orphanages in Cape Town and Johannesburg. He was also impressed by the community’s raising of £450 000 for the War Memorial Fund, remarking that it was “a record of generosity that surpasses even that of American Jews”. Afterwards, Hertz wrote about the success of the visit. “Thank G-d it has been justified by the results, which in view of the extraordinary financial position prevailing in this country, are very gratifying indeed.” After this ground breaking world trip lasting almost 11 months, Hertz arrived back at Southampton on 30 August 1921, and had a private audience with King George V at Buckingham Palace in November. The “Imperial Tour” is one of the things Hertz remains most famous for, along with his commentary on the Chumash. It solidified the bonds between the UK and her then dominions, and gave him and his office profile on the world stage. A century on, the historic ties endure. The sun may have set on the British empire but, 100 years after Hertz’s landmark tour, the ties between Jewish communities across the Commonwealth remain strong.

• *Zaki Cooper is on the diplomatic advisory board of the Commonwealth Jewish Council.*

Zooming to victory, like a real-life superhero

JOCELYN ROME



• *Jocelyn Rome is a research consultant on enterprise development, the co-chair of Limmud Johannesburg, and a mother of three.*

The school day was intense, sitting at the computer from 08:00 to 15:30 every day was no easy task, but she coped. Finally, the matrics were allowed to go back to school, obeying very strict

I have watched her tackle this year with true grit and determination, all the while keeping my feelings of panic and anxiety to myself. This year may have been one of the hardest years yet, but I believe that the matrices of 2020 are going to be stronger, wiser, and more resilient. They are real-life superheroes.

- *Lisa Kahn is a nursery school teacher, and the mother of two daughters.*

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Swastika helmet leaves sour taste at historic Cape pub

TALI FEINBERG

The Firemans Arms pub in Cape Town has existed for 156 years, and is filled with memorabilia from times gone by. But when Jewish customer Antony Arvan sat down for a drink last week, he was astonished to see a helmet with a swastika imprint sitting on the shelf next to him.

“On 6 November, I went to Firemans Arms and was astounded and upset to see a Nazi helmet emblazoned with the swastika displayed on its shelf,” Arvan told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“I immediately called the owner over and demanded that it be removed. He refused. I tried to reason with him and explain what the symbol represented. This made no difference. Eventually he said he would move it somewhere else in the pub, as if that was some begrudging compromise. I advised him that still wasn’t acceptable, and he shrugged and basically walked away. When I left a few minutes later, the helmet hadn’t been moved.

“I’ve subsequently been advised that it’s a fireman’s helmet. To me that makes absolutely no difference. It has the swastika on it. The fact that it’s on a helmet makes it even more menacing. I want an apology,

and for the helmet to be removed. I would hope in this day and age that they would be sensitive enough not to display it. It’s the ultimate symbol of hate.”

Arvan subsequently lodged a complaint with the South African Human Rights Commission and shared the incident with other media houses. He also asked the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) to investigate. In a letter to the pub’s owners, Cape SAJBD Executive Director Stuart Diamond wrote, among other points, “In 2017, the Cape SAJBD launched its #NoPlaceforHate campaign and this past week launched #WordsMatter, but it has become clear now that even symbols matter.”

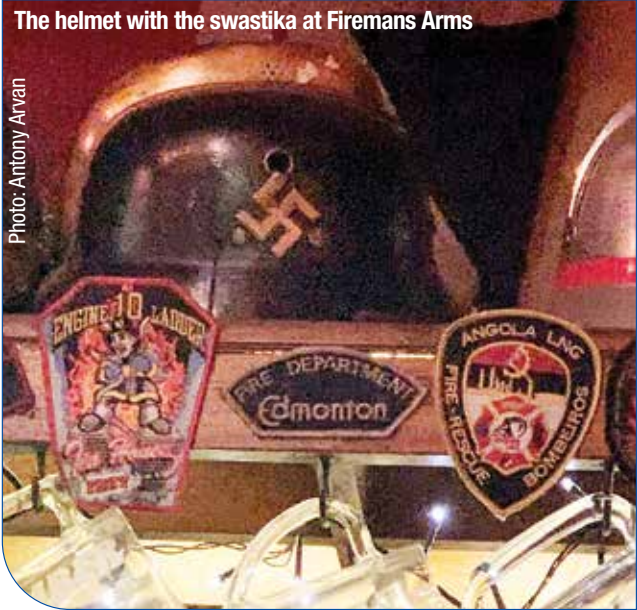
He went on to say, “Although [Arvan] accepts that the display of the swastika isn’t illegal in South Africa, it remains hurtful, upsetting, and offensive to a community that has a large Holocaust survivor community and connection to the Holocaust. We recognise that symbols must be evaluated in the context in which they appear, but we ask that you understand how this symbol is interpreted for so many. With diverse clientele, [we hope] that you would be open to engage in trying to find a solution.” The owners of the pub, Kevin Phelan and Dean Kadir,

responded to this letter with an apology.

Phelan said, “We wish to apologise to the customer and Jewish community for any distress caused. We have owned The Firemans Arms for 29 years, and it has been running since 1864. It has a hoard of memorabilia which has been donated over many years. The helmet has been at The Firemans Arms for more than 50 years, and was given by one of the customers.”

He doesn’t know the history of the helmet or where it comes from, but it is one of 150 helmets of all kinds on display. “We have many Jewish friends and customers, and did not intend to upset anyone. The helmet has been moved.” He said he and Kadir understood the sensitivity around the swastika, especially for the Jewish community.

“We clean our memorabilia on a regular basis, and the reason we have never had a problem is because the swastika was never in full view, as we knew it would offend customers. It was unintentionally put back the wrong way by our barmen while



cleaning,” he said.

There are other items of memorabilia in the pub that patrons may find offensive, Phelan said, for example, the old South African flag and the Confederate flag. However, they aren’t displayed prominently. Though Arvan had asked for the helmet with the swastika to be completely removed from the pub, he said they wouldn’t do so because it was an historical item that was part of the pub’s memorabilia collection. However, he promised that it would be displayed with the swastika facing away.

Professor Emeritus of History at the University of Cape Town and antisemitism expert, Milton Shain, said, “This isn’t the first display of a swastika in a public setting [in South Africa]. I recall several other occasions, including Nazi-regalia being worn as fancy dress at a Tuks [University of Pretoria] residence party decades ago. A float at one RAG procession had a Nazi theme. It remains offensive to Jews, and rightly so.”

However, the chairperson of the Cape

SAJBD, Tzvi Brivik, said, “When investigating cases of Nazi imagery displayed in public, it’s essential to carefully consider the context and motive behind such displays. The SAJBD will deal with every such case on its merits, and its conclusion may well be that there is a valid reason for the display of such images or items.

“Unless there is compelling evidence to suggest otherwise, the inclusion of Nazi-era artefacts in general displays of historical memorabilia doesn’t equate to public advocacy of support for or identification with Nazism. Military re-enactments would fall into the same category.

“From a legal point of view, the court’s ruling on displaying the old RSA flag would probably extend to the legality of displaying Nazi imagery as well. In terms of that ruling, it’s recognised that it’s legitimate to display the old flag when this is done in a bona fide educational or historical exhibitional context, such as school textbooks or museum displays. It’s when the flag is gratuitously displayed in a public setting that it amounts to hate speech, since it inter alia expresses support for the old apartheid regime and therefore the racially discriminatory system that underpinned it.

“In this case, the fireman’s helmet with a swastika on is part of a general collection of such items from different times and different places,” Brivik said. “It’s inclusion can therefore safely be attributed to it being of genuine historical interest and relevant in the context of a public meeting place whose very name ‘Firemans Arms’ advertises its nature.”

Arvan said he didn’t accept the owner’s explanation. “When I discussed the matter there, at no stage did he advise that the helmet had unintentionally been put back the wrong way. He stood his ground, and said that the helmet had been there for the past 50 years, and he wasn’t going to remove it. He was absolutely indifferent and insensitive to the offence it was causing.

“Why not simply put it in a private office or out of the public domain? The fact that they have a hoard of memorabilia doesn’t justify the display of the swastika. The line that he has Jewish customers runs thin when you display the swastika knowing it would or could offend those very customers.”

After further urging from Diamond, Phelan eventually agreed to store the helmet in an office.

The sharp truth of Kristallnacht

JORDAN MOSHE

“My mother and I sat in the living room and I looked for the last time at our huge grandfather clock. As it struck, we heard a sound like a bomb falling. People were beating the iron shades on our windows, breaking through them, and coming into our home. We stood in the hall against the wall as 30 people came in with axes. They demolished everything.”

This chilling testimony captures the true horror of what befell German Jewry on the night of 8 November 1938. Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, is often remembered as the day that paramilitary forces and civilians throughout Nazi Germany attacked shuls and Jewish businesses, but few know the extent to which private homes were brutally targeted and their residents attacked.

The full scale of the November pogrom of 1938 was illustrated this past Tuesday evening in an online commemoration of the events which took place 82 years ago. Hosted by the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre and the Goethe Institute, keynote speaker Professor Wolf Gruner shared details of what befell thousands of Jews on the infamous night.

“We often thought that the pogrom of November 1938 is the best investigated action of the whole Third Reich,” said Gruner, a professor of history at the University of Southern California and specialist in history of the Holocaust and comparative genocide studies.

“We now recognise that our knowledge of what happened is still quite limited. When it’s discussed, most people emphasise the attacks on shuls and Jewish shops, and some mention Jewish community centres, schools, and orphanages. The homes of Jews were also targets.”

Gruner said that the cited numbers emerging from the pogrom in many historical documents excluded Jewish homes.

“Nazi Reinhard Heydrich issued a report that 177 shuls and 7 500 stores were demolished, and 35 Jews murdered,” he said. “In another document, this was raised to 276 shuls and 91 deaths. Another document which has never seen the public eye mentions that 171 Jewish homes were demolished and even stresses that the figure was probably higher. This is in one city alone.”

Today, scholars agree that the actual numbers include 2 000 shuls destroyed and that several hundred Jews were murdered, with 30 000 men arrested and transported to concentration camps. Still, little has been said about the invasion of private homes.

Said Gruner, “According to another report from a mayor of an administrative district, 16 shuls, 63 shops, and 231 apartments were destroyed. Note that the number of apartments is four times greater than the shops.”

Figures were similar in Nuremburg, where 236 apartments were destroyed, and other documents suggest about 600 were destroyed in a rural region.

“This means that in just three places, we have



Nazi troops destroying the contents of a home

evidence that more than 1 000 apartments were vandalised,” said Gruner.

These statistics are confirmed by numerous testimonies provided by survivors, one of whom said that he recalled that “the beasts forced their way in, threw furniture out of our windows, and slit the feather beds”. Other accounts speak of furniture being hacked to pieces, the robbery of valuables, and arson across many cities.

It becomes clear that the total demolition of Jewish homes was a mass phenomenon across Germany, said Gruner.

“Different reasons could account for the lack of information,” he said. “There was serious underreporting of the events by police, many of them speaking only about shuls and shops. When they did mention homes, they usually sugar-coated things and made them seem isolated and random.

“Detecting the full scale of the destruction was also a problem. While police could see the burning of big

shuls and stores in the centre of the city, vandalised apartments were harder to see unless furniture had been thrown from windows. Much destruction was hidden from plain sight.”

However, the testimonies Gruner uncovered make real the scale of violation of personal property across Germany.

One survivor recounted, “There was a horrible noise like a bomb. We heard crashing all around and there was a banging on the gates of our block of apartments. The poor chap on the ground floor who opened the gates to let them in got a good bashing for not opening quick enough. Floor by floor, we heard the commotion, and we knew we were on the list.

“They came in and smashed the crockery.

Any glass cupboards were smashed up. Bottles of drink were smashed against the wall. There was glass everywhere.”

Similar incidents were reported elsewhere. In a town near the Dutch border, the SS smashed all windows and demolished the interiors of almost every Jewish home. On the Belgian border, troops smashed windows and china, ripping out power cables and stamping on clothing as they went.

“Survivors report that their furniture was hacked to pieces, and in Hannover, Jewish households’ goods were burned in front of cheering crowds,” said Gruner.

“In Silesia, a merchant came home to find his door broken, a fallen wardrobe blocking his way in. He had to wade through knee-deep shards of smashed pieces – glass, china, clocks, instruments, lamps, and paintings. He reportedly sat down and started sobbing.”

In addition to the destruction, evidence is coming to light of Jews suffering extensive looting, beating, murder, and even sexual abuse on the night of 8 November and the following day.

Said Gruner, “Thousands of Jews were left homeless after that night, either as a result of destruction or because they had been evicted by Nazis forces. Hundreds ended up on the street without money or other belongings, leaving the community to organise emergency shelters.

“It’s impossible to say this was random. It happened across Germany, and several hundred Jews were killed.”

Celebrating Kallenbach’s legacy

JORDAN MOSHE

The breathtaking views of Linksfield Ridge in Johannesburg might never have become accessible were it not for Dr Hermann Kallenbach, a renowned architect and close friend of Mahatma Gandhi.

Last Sunday, 8 November, representatives of the Lithuanian embassy and the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation (JHF) trekked along the ridge, visiting sites of architectural and historical importance in Kallenbach’s life.

Kallenbach spent much of his professional life in Johannesburg where he left his mark, introducing numerous elaborate terraces, stairways, retaining walls, and stone garden tables on Linksfield Ridge. In greater Johannesburg, Kallenbach is known for some well-regarded religious, commercial, and residential buildings, ranging from the Greek Orthodox Church in Joubert Park to the Lewis & Marks Building and Arop House in downtown Johannesburg.

His Linksfield legacy began in the 1930s, when Kallenbach (who arrived from Germany in 1896) and his architect partner, AM Kennedy, bought up portions of land in “the township of Linksfield” which had been formally approved in 1922.

The portions would be merged into a

single suburb, and in 1939, Kallenbach would become the owner of the ridge itself. Under his watch, the eponymously named Kallenbach Drive was laid down, and vast tracts of undeveloped land in Linksfield were given to the city council for the construction of Sylvia Pass.

Sunday’s tour was part of a Lithuanian embassy initiative to learn more about prominent Lithuanians who came to South Africa.

“Since we opened the embassy in 2015, it’s been important to us to learn more about the prominent Lithuanians who came to South Africa, Jewish Litvaks who contributed to South Africa in different ways,” Inga Stankaite, the charg   d’affaires at the embassy in Pretoria, told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“Kallenbach was actually born in the very small town of Rusne in Lithuania, and while much is known about him in relation to his connection with Ga ndhi, we wanted to do more to celebrate him in his own right.”

Last year, the Lithuanian government declared 2020 as the year of the Vilna Gaon and Lithuanian Jewish history, making the celebration of Kallenbach’s legacy especially appropriate. In August, the Lithuanian embassy reached out to JHF Chairperson Kathy Munro to devise ways to pay tribute to Kallenbach.

“The year 2021 is actually the centenary anniversary of Kallenbach’s birth, something which has been celebrated in Rusne every year since a statue of him and Gandhi was erected in 2016,” says Stankaite.

“We wanted more research into his personality, and to recognise his contribution to Johannesburg in time for the anniversary.”

The embassy also decided to commission two blue plaques (markers installed by the JHF across Johannesburg to mark the heritage of various sites) at sites in Linksfield in recognition of Kallenbach’s impact.

The JHF’s Munro undertook the project along with Israeli multidisciplinary writer and researcher, Shimon Lev. She also led the Linksfield tour on Sunday.

Kallenbach was an unusual figure, says Munro. “He was part of group of largely Jewish and white people who supported Gandhi, verging towards socialism because they wanted to create a better world for all.”

Kallenbach even established a rural, co-operative, pre-industrial community at Tolstoy Farm at Lawley to the south-west of Johannesburg, where people grew their own food, made their own sandals, and became skilled carpenters and bricklayers according to Tolstoyan ideals. Munro

maintains that this project influenced Gandhi’s later creation of ashrams in India, and could be a strand in the shaping of the kibbutz in Israel.

The tour included sites featuring Kallenbach’s work across the ridge, including New Mountain Road, the iconic Kallenbach Drive, Grove Road, and Mountain View, as well as Satyagraha House, which Kallenbach shared with Gandhi.

Says Munro, “The original house was called ‘The Kraal’ and was designed and built by Kallenbach, which he came to live in with Gandhi. Today, it’s a guest house and museum which captures the spirit of these men, and is an example of a successful conservation of heritage.

It included stops at the properties of Gerald Gordon, a major contributor to architectural innovation, who appreciated Kallenbach’s work and bought a share of the icon’s estate for the construction of his home.

“Gordon had a social conscience,” said Munro. “He worked at the point where architecture, new technology, and good design could meet to serve housing needs in South Africa.”

Along with Kallenbach’s plaque, there are discussions afoot for the installation of a plaque on New Mountain Road to celebrate Gordon’s architectural legacy.

Munro, who is also a visiting professor in the school of architecture and planning at the University of the Witwatersrand, welcomed the Lithuanian embassy’s commitment to furthering Kallenbach’s legacy.

Kallenbach’s work gives a sense of identity to the city, but sadly, many of his buildings have been demolished. We cannot save everything that is older than 60 years, but we do want to have people pause and ask what mattered in the city 100 years ago, and how we can tie it to the life of today.



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Vilna Gaon take centre stage in Lithuania’s Jewish revival

JORDAN MOSHE

Most Lithuanians know very little about the country’s Jewish life prior to the Holocaust.

While some remain uninterested or antagonistic about this Jewish heritage, there are a number of initiatives to reconnect the population with an indelible part of their country’s history.

This was the subject of an online discussion hosted last week by the Lithuanian embassy in Pretoria and the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre. The importance to our community is clear, with about 70 000 Jewish South African citizens of Lithuanian descent. It is the largest pocket of Lithuanian Jews in the world, and about 5 000 of them are Lithuanian citizens, according to Linas Linkevicius, the minister of foreign affairs in Lithuania.

The Lithuanian government chose 2020 to pay tribute to the 300th anniversary of the birth of famed Jewish scholar, the Vilna Gaon, and Jewish history.

The schedule originally included exhibitions, concerts, and other commemorative events aimed at celebrating the country’s Jewish legacy. Many were cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19. A ceremony at the Vilna Gaon’s grave in Vilnius in April and an exhibition on the scholar’s life presented at the National Library of Lithuania, however, went ahead.

“This is an important step on our long road together,” Linkevicius said. “It exemplifies Lithuanian efforts to build continuous dialogue between Litvak communities around the world.”

Dr Jurgita Verbickiene from the Vilnius University Faculty of History unpacked the legacy of the Vilna Gaon, saying that he had long remained a neglected figure in Lithuanian society in spite of his accomplishments.

The scholar was one of about 5 560 Jews of the Vilna community in 1765, and played an active role in raising the status of Jews in what was then a commonwealth of Polish and Lithuanian



Excavations at the site of the Great Synangoue of Vilna

countries.

“In his time, the Jewish quarter was repealed, and Jews could reside anywhere,” said Verbickiene. “By the end of the 18th century, Jews could participate in parliament. At the same time, the Gaon developed his genius and became noted in the community for Torah study, to which he devoted most of his time.”

In spite of his legacy, it was only in 1997 (the 200th anniversary of his death) that broader Lithuanian society began taking an interest in the scholar. Verbickiene said that many use him as a touchpoint when trying to relate to the country’s pre-Holocaust Jewish history.

“Today’s Vilnius is a place of memory for his genius. Unfortunately, there’s not much authenticity associated with the operation. The latest trend for Lithuanians discovering the history of local Jews is a guided tour called the ‘Gaon Code’ accompanied by a novel of historic fiction by the same name. It’s limited.”

According to Lara Lempertiene, a senior bibliographer at the National Library of Lithuania, the response across Lithuania to the year’s events has been mixed, although there has been an increase in those eager to learn more about their country’s lost Jewish past.

The excavation of Vilnius’ Great Synagogue is another project that serves to connect Lithuania with its Jewish legacy, said archaeologist Jon Seligman who has worked on the site for the past few years. He is also the director

of external relations and archaeological licensing of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Although tucked away in a side street, the shul was a central point in Vilnius’ Shulhof, a synagogue courtyard which has been described as a city within a city owing to the number of stores and Jewish amenities it included. Among these were a library, a *mikvah*, meat stalls, a small prison, and even 12 other smaller shuls.

According to Seligman, the building stood until World War II, when it was ransacked and burned. Although it remained standing until the end of the war and was even declared a national monument, the Soviets demolished it the 1950s. A school was constructed over the space, and it is here that Seligman has endeavoured to excavate whatever remains can be found.

“We concentrated on finding some of the foundations, and decided to work on the bathhouse first, excavating close to the surface,” he says. “We found a *mikvah*, and we now know it to be the women’s *mikvah*. We’ve since moved on to working on the back wall of the shul, its main entrance, and seeing if we can find the *bimah* and *Aron Kodesh*.”

Seligman said the shul was a central point of a major Jewish population.

“When you talk about a diaspora community, it’s usually a percent of even half of the overall population,” he said. “But the Jewish population here was so significant that when the Polish president visited Vilnius in 1930, he visited two

places only – the local cathedral and the Great Synagogue. That’s how we need to see the Jews of the city.”

Sadly, little remains to suggest the impact the local Jewish community had on its city.

“It’s important that we have a huge memorial for the Jews murdered at Ponary,” Seligman said.

“They accounted for 30% of Vilna’s population. If 30% were killed, that demands a huge monument in the middle of the city, not outside it.

“Vilnius today needs to bring its Jewish history back into the city itself, and not leave it in the side street or outside the city. That’s the real challenge.”



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Veganism is good for the planet, but is it a healthy choice?



ON NOURISHING NOSH

Hilitt Milner

It's the latest trend, the game changer athlete's choice, the planet saver's contribution, and the plant-based burgers' income. The real question is what science says about veganism, and whether we have enough conclusive evidence about it and its plant-based substitutes?

Veganism goes beyond diet. It's a philosophy defined by a way of living which seeks to exclude all forms of exploitation of animals. A vegan diet excludes any animal-based products such as meat, fish, eggs, dairy, and honey. The choice to follow a vegan diet stems from ethical and environmental concerns, or from a desire to improve your health. The health benefits have been supported by studies and research, but care needs to be taken in different circumstances.



When it comes to healthy nutrients, vegans have been shown to have the highest intake of dietary fibre, magnesium, potassium, folate, vitamin C and E, vitamin B1, polyphenols and other anti-oxidant containing compounds. Due to this and other

reasons, plant-based diets have been shown to reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

Cardiovascular health

Vegans can have better cardiovascular health. The saturated fat and dietary cholesterol intake of vegans is less than half that of meat-eaters, resulting in lower cholesterol levels. Low incidence of heart failure has also been attributed to high intake of fruit, vegetables, legumes, and wholegrain products which in turn increase the intake of antioxidants, micronutrients, and fibre and reduces inflammation.

Obesity and weight loss

Several studies have shown that plant-based diets are associated with lower levels of obesity and have been relatively effective for weight loss. This can be attributed to the fact that vegan diets include less unhealthy fats, reduced intake of hormone-containing proteins (with detoxification and weight impacts) and more dietary fibre. Skipping these items can potentially decrease inflammation, which in turn can reduce weight gain.

When looking more critically at the studies, it's evident that vegans also generally have healthier life habits, which affects health and weight, making it trickier to differentiate between the influence of a disciplined lifestyle and a vegan diet on weight. More conclusive research is needed in this regard.


It's important to remember that successful weight loss depends on the individual, and the best diet for you is that determined by your unique biology, medical history, relationship to food, and genetics.

Cancer

It feels obvious that with vegans consuming high amounts of foods and nutrients that protect against cancer, this is an area where veganism will shine.

While most studies do show a lower incidence of cancer in vegans as opposed to many other diets,

population studies have not shown more pronounced differences in the incidence of cancer. Although a high intake of fruit, vegetables, and legumes contains chemo-preventative factors, many studies fail to distinguish between vegetarians and vegans, making it hard to draw conclusions without further research.



Eat more plants, they said

Without doubt, eating more plant-based foods is good for our health. Many studies show the benefits of increasing fruit, vegetables, and legumes on weight and the reduction of chronic diseases. Does this mean that veganism is the best diet? Could we obtain health benefits by modifying the type and amount of animal-based protein that we eat without having to go vegan?

Large studies have shown the Mediterranean diet to be one of the best approaches to reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cancer while also improving brain health and well-being.

Nutritionally adequate?

The American Dietetics Academy emphasises that vegan diets can be relevant, beneficial, and nutritionally adequate to many if they are appropriately planned as there can be associated downsides and diet deficiencies.

With the complete elimination of animal products from one's diet comes the risk of certain nutritional deficiencies. Vegans have been shown to have the lowest intake of some important and essential nutritional components. Having said this, it's possible to avoid nutritional deficiencies by ensuring that you eat a variety of food as well as know which foods and supplements are needed. Individuals prone to deficiencies include those with medical conditions as well as populations with specific dietary requirements such as the elderly and young.

It's important to be aware that if you are someone who has allergies to soy, seeds, and nuts you may find a vegan diet limiting and even nutritionally deplete.

Weight loss and veganism

Consuming a vegan diet has been shown to improve weight loss but, as mentioned above, this isn't guaranteed, and is dependent on multiple and individual factors. Many vegans, however, may find it hard to lose weight given the higher intake of starch and starch-heavy legumes. Care also needs to be taken about the many processed vegan foods and alternatives containing more preservatives, fats, and calories.

Although veganism seems to be taking the world by storm, from a scientific perspective, there still isn't enough data to determine its long-term health effects. There's no doubt that vegan diets have fundamental health benefits. However, the research to date makes it hard to distinguish between vegan and vegetarian diets as well as the healthier lifestyle choices that vegans lead.

• Hilitt Milner is a registered clinical dietitian who runs a private practice, works in a top private hospital, and has founded a wellness blog called 'Sunrise by HM'. She views health holistically, starting from a cellular level and working her way out.

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Letters

TRUMP TOO DIVISIVE TO BE US PRESIDENT

The United States presidential election has gained the attention of many across the globe and has occupied a lot of time and space on various media including social media, where some of the rant was aggressive, even resorting to foul language and accusing Jews who don't support Donald Trump of being un-Jewish. Many Jewish radio listeners also seemed to have supported a second term for Trump to the point that the host of the (ChaiFM) morning show exclaimed that he thought that he was the only one who favoured Joe Biden to be the next US president-elect.

I wrote to the station to say, "Although I'm very grateful to Trump for moving the US embassy to Jerusalem and for whatever role he played in the recent peace agreements in the Middle East, I'm looking

at the environment that has emerged in the US since Trump took office, in addition to his lying and lack of responsible leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. People who don't live in the US are [probably] looking at his international accomplishments and not the domestic issues that directly affect Americans."

This sentiment is reiterated in a recent article in the SA Jewish Report, "Toilet paper and trepidation: an unusually tense US election", (6 November 2020). As a candidate, Trump has garnered more intense emotion than any other in recent history. He is an extremely polarising and divisive figure, and there is hostility between those who support him and those who don't. Is this contentious character really fit to continue to lead the US?

– Michele Engelberg, Johannesburg

PANDOR'S RESPONSE ENTIRELY PREDICTABLE

The reaction of Naledi Pandor, the South African minister of international relations and cooperation (DIRCO), to the recent developments in the Gulf, Sudan, and Israel was wholly predictable.

Together with her whole African National Congress (ANC) government, she has chosen to bury her head in the sand rather than capitalise on these events that, in reality, must surely pave the way to a peace negotiation resulting in a two-state solution, something that DIRCO has supported.

With a host of other Middle Eastern and African States warming to and on the cusp of normalising diplomatic relations with Israel, the odd man out is the country that could benefit most by a change of attitude, but chooses rather to hold its obstinate, antiquated world view. No, the ANC believes that its foreign-relations dividend will come from greater ties with the likes of Cuba and Venezuela, two of the "most progressive" political systems that the ANC aspires to emulate.

The Palestinians are more and more isolated by their sponsors and traditional supporters due to their intransigence and not seizing the opportunity to get the Oslo Accord back on track, forging the way to their independence and an end to the dreaded occupation. But in reality, their thinking over these past years is that occupation brings them world support and the currency with which to malign Israel.

Surely even the most inflexible – or even blind – can see how these recent events in the region could act as a catalyst to achieve their goal of independence. Or is that, in truth, their real goal? An accommodation or full peace deal with Israel would mean that they could no longer lobby for the demise of the Jewish state. Worse still, independence might precipitate the need for elections, something that hasn't happened in that territory since 2006.

– Allan Wolman, Israel

Delivering soul food – and a challah

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

Kelita Hoffman is a busy corporate lawyer and the mother of a three-year-old with physical challenges. She's also the founder of Challah2Share, which bakes and delivers challahs to people in need.

Challah2Share aims to brighten up Shabbos for people with some kind of need, be they sick, alone, financially stressed, or a myriad of other reasons. The challahs go to the vulnerable, isolated, in need, and the families of special-needs children.

Started in August 2020, it has gone from 10 challahs which Hoffman made herself in her kitchen to more than 100 packages a week that are personally delivered.

"Sick? Alone? Medical kids? Unique needs? Diagnoses? A steep mountain to climb? We could all use a gesture, a happy face, and someone to show us how truly loved we are," Challah2Share states on its website.

Challahs are a universally accepted Jewish symbol, Hoffman says. They are also culturally significant, and, of course, they're food. The latter isn't to be underestimated, as there are a huge amount of people out there who need help with sustenance. The bulk of the organisation's recipients are elderly Jewish people living alone.

Though it has grown substantially in a short time, Hoffman still runs Challah2Share from her garage, relying on volunteers to bake, pack, and deliver packages to people's doors. Ingredients are sponsored by one or two anonymous donors, and two rebbeztins make a huge contribution by baking the bulk of the challahs.

Delivery in person is an essential part of the process because a lot of people are depressed and lonely at this time. "Many haven't had a conversation for some time, haven't seen family, or their family is living overseas. Using a driver would lose that personal connection. Also, the fact that four to five people have gone into the creation of each package gives it a communal connection. It's a message that the community cares for them," she says.

"It's wonderful to see people doing kind things for nothing," she says, pointing out that she has made amazing connections in her garage, and that it gives meaning to their lives. "Some of our recipients have even become deliverers."

Though she is delivering about 100 packages weekly, she has more than 400 people on her list of possible recipients, but lacks the resources to give more.

Hoffman says that ironically, she's "not a womanly wife who

spends her time cooking" – though she does manage to bake six challahs a week for her family with the help of her caregiver. A full-time lawyer with a masters degree from the University of California, Berkeley, she describes her life as "very busy".

Reaching out to strangers is also about imparting strength in crisis. This was the theme of a virtual challah bake Hoffman organised last week with more than 100 participants. It included speakers across the generations from the age of three to 96, who shared stories of resilience.

Hoffman talks about the many challenges of being a parent to a special-needs child. At Rosh Hashanah, they managed to deliver to 250 recipients even though she was in hospital dealing with seizures. But on this journey, she says she has had numerous unexpected encounters with "guardian angels", who taught her and her husband "the power of true kindness by simply being proactive doers and giving with no expectation in return".

• To get involved, contact Challah2Share at challah2share@gmail.com or call 064 110 5367.

King David Sandton counts its medals in maths challenge

Students from King David Primary School Sandton achieved remarkable results in the recent Wits Mathematics Challenge. King David Sandton came eighth in Gauteng in the Middle Primary section (Grades 4 and 5) and ninth overall. In the Senior Primary section (Grades 6 and 7), King David Sandton placed sixth in Gauteng and seventh overall.

Individual medals were awarded to Matt Fanaroff in Grade 5 (who

came seventh in Gauteng and eighth overall); Aidan Goralsky in Grade 7 (placed tenth in Gauteng); and Daniel Markman in Grade 7 (who placed third in Gauteng and tenth overall).



Aidan Goralsky, Matt Fanaroff, and Daniel Markman

Photo: Arnaldo Mandel

KDVP boys on top of their game

Matric boys at King David High School Victory Park have built innovative games and apps in their spare time that aid memory, pattern recognition, strategy, organisation – even chemical calculation.

The first involves maths and counting, requiring the user to focus on two things at the same time, namely multiples of a number and other numbers containing that number.

The next game is more about memory. Players are given a bunch of blank tiles and expected to match the images on them in pairs of two. However, they can see only two at a time, requiring them to think about what they have seen, and where the images are.

Another is also about memory, but less about pattern recognition and more about speech. Players are given a list of words, which soon disappear. They have to remember as many

words as possible, and be able to build strong spontaneous mental connections between seemingly unrelated words.

Yet another game is completely patterns based. Players are given a grid of nine squares,



Dan Rom

a few squares flash a colour, and then go back to normal. They have to remember the order.

Brent Butkow's chess game came third in South Africa in the Computer Programming Olympiad this year. It aims to teach people to think ahead and strategise.

Jonathan Utian has created a groundbreaking programme for teaching quantitative chemistry. Called Periodic Practice, the programme helps student to calculate and manipulate the substances present in a chemical reaction, a challenge for many particularly in testing situations.

Dan Rom has created a programme to assist students with time management. Called Make a Plan, the programme helps those who don't want to waste hours creating a study timetable to remain on top of their work, organised, and well prepared for their exams.

MOST SA JEWS (BOTH OF ASHKENAZI AND SEPHARDI HERITAGE) ARE ELIGIBLE TO REINSTATE EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP AND, ACCORDINGLY, AN EU PASSPORT.

A common misconception is that European citizenship and EU passports can only be obtained if one has documents providing his/her lineage. The fact is that not having any documents proving lineage, doesn't lead to disqualification of eligibility. Jews of Ashkenazi heritage can rely on documents obtained in Lithuania or Poland.

Jews of Sephardi heritage need no proof at all!

In his experience, the majority of South African Jews are descendants of Jews whose European citizenship was illegally deprived, and therefore they are entitled to reinstate it, and accordingly obtain an EU passport.



Adv. Horesh has been operating in SA market with the Jewish community since March 2018. He arrives regularly to South Africa, and can meet in person with Jews who are interested to do so.

Ashkenazi: This ad refers to Jews of Polish & Lithuanian heritage only. The most important things is the understanding that prior to the end of WW-I, the European map was very different than the one we know today. Countries like Poland and Lithuania did not exist as independent countries, and until 1918 these territories were only known as Lithuanian or Polish regions/counties of the Great Russian Empire who ruled all of north eastern Europe. Accordingly, until 1918, residents of these territories were Russian citizens, as Polish and Lithuanian citizenships didn't exist. Therefore, since applications for reinstatement of these citizenships can only be based on whether one's ancestor was a Polish or Lithuanian citizen, whoever is a descendant of an ancestor who left Europe prior to 1918 will not be eligible.

In addition, it is highly important to remember that since borders in Europe were shifted once again during and after WW-II, one's eligibility for Polish or Lithuanian citizenship depends on the city from which his/her ancestor hailed. Horesh explains: Shifted borders resulted in cities changing nationalities, and that the resultant effect for descendants of Jews left Vilnius is that their application for Lithuanian citizenship will be declined whereas a similar



Adv. Avi Horesh is an Israeli attorney, who lived in Poland for seven years. Horesh is recognised in Israel as one of the leading lawyers in the field of reinstatement of European citizenship.

application for reinstatement of Polish citizenship may very well be approved!

Sephardi: This ad refers to all Jews of Sephardi heritage – Jews who arrived from North Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, as well as many descendants of Jews who arrived from Holland and the UK. Most descendants of Sephardi Jews (who were exiled 500 years ago) are eligible to reinstate Portuguese citizenship and, accordingly, an EU passport. If applicable, Adv. Horesh will apply for (on behalf of the applicant) an official certificate confirming such eligibility, on the basis of which, an application for Portuguese citizenship is most likely to be approved.

Horesh has an in-depth knowledge and a full understanding of European immigration laws.

Horesh resides in Israel – a four-hour flight from Warsaw and Vilnius – enabling him to travel to Poland and Lithuania, as well as to Portugal, where he collaborates with local professionals who assist him in tracing documentation required for successful applications of reinstatement of European citizenship.

Adv. Horesh closely collaborates with professionals who assist him in tracing documentation in Europe required for successful applications of reinstatement EU citizenships.

Due to Corona virus, I'm not sure when will I visit SA again. However, I do plan & hope to arrive by the end of 2020
You are most welcome to contact me on adv.avi.n.horesh@gmail.com or whatsapp +48783953223

- A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



Social media has given us many gifts. The ability to connect and to keep in touch is one of them. The ability to show we care is another. But like everything, it has a flip side, which is that our missteps – even those with the best of intentions – are glaringly showcased for all to see. At least by the living.



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