

Winter Wunderkammer Auction  
22<sup>nd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> July  
Registration and pre-bidding  
NOW OPEN

For more information 011 789 7422 • rka@global.co.za • www.rkauctioneers.co.za  
Bram Fischer Centre, Lower Ground, 95 Bram Fischer Drive Cnr George Street, Ferndale, 2194

Get vaccinated  
now!  
See page 7

# Humanity's best rises after violent unrest

MIRAH LANGER

The KwaZulu-Natal Jewish community has begun emerging from the shock of last week's chaos, remaining vigilant and expressing gratitude for assistance provided by the wider community. Moreover, they are paying it forward wherever they can to others in need.

Those working in relief operations in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng describe a spirit of *ubuntu* (humanity towards others) among ordinary South Africans that has sparked practical, powerful change.

"We not only helped ourselves, we helped others, and they in turn helped us. Regardless of religion or ethnicity, there was aid," said Hayley Lieberthal, the media spokesperson for the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) KwaZulu-Natal Council.

The Jewish community in the coastal city was hardest hit by last week's violence and looting, in which businesses were destroyed, food and fuel supplies were disrupted, and communities felt under threat. Now, they say they are humbled by the chain of support that has encircled them.

Lieberthal said the community continued to "adopt an attitude of constant vigilance", noting that threatening "fake news" still circulated and patrols in residential areas continued throughout the night.

Government security

efforts simply haven't been sufficient, she said. "In spite of the announcements from the government, the SANDF [South African National Defence Force] isn't here to protect residential areas or citizens, it's here to protect national key points. The national and metro police are under-resourced and outnumbered." As such, while "the community certainly appreciates the efforts of the SAPS [South African Police Service] and Metro Police, the community has taken care of itself".

Lieberthal said the community was still trying to come to terms with the reality of what had hit it. "It's very difficult for those who weren't directly impacted by this crisis to understand what it was like to be in the thick of it. Children and adults alike were terrified. We hope that this nightmare is over. It's now time to pick up the pieces and try and start again."

The national leadership of the SAJBD, as well as a number of other communal organisations, corporations, non-profits, small businesses, and private individuals has been fundamental to ensuring

the delivery of essential items to the community through protected convoys.

"To date, we have received medication, non-perishable items such as flour, tinned foods, oil,

a local doctor and a pharmacist, who opening up his pharmacy "mid riot", worked together to help provide chronic medication. Volunteers brought bakkies and

Friedman. "Last week, people didn't know if they were going to have food for Shabbat, and one of the rabbinical families at the shul got flour from all the people that they could find, and made *challot* for all the families."

Last Thursday, the centre established a helpline with the tagline, "Do you need help, or do you want to help?"

"Since the message went out until today, I've had to charge my phone four times a day," said Friedman. "There is just an endless stream [of calls], and credit goes to the people on the ground making a difference."

Rabbi Shlomo Wainer of Chabad in Umhlanga echoes Friedman's appreciation of support. Along with other Jewish community organisations, he is now helping to co-ordinate assistance to impoverished areas in Inanda and Phoenix, having been in long-term contact with a bishop and pastor in those vicinities.

"We have launched what we called 'Operation Beyond Relief' because I don't believe that relationships are only for now because of the difficulties. This is for the continued relationship of goodness and kindness at all times."

Wendy Kahn, the national director of the SAJBD, said it was involved in this project as well as numerous other operations to provide food aid across affected areas. "The past weeks have been devastating for our country, and

Continued on page 14>>>



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

pasta, toiletries and personal hygiene items including adult nappies, sanitary towels, formula, meal replacements, medication, and kosher meat – all of which has been delivered or handed out," said Lieberthal.

Reverend Gilad Friedman of the Umhlanga Jewish Centre described the individual heroism that underpinned collective efforts. There were those who organised private flights to deliver goods; and

vans to take goods to distribution centres at shuls, and some acted as personal shoppers, moving from store to store to try and get the products needed by the elderly. Some are manning the phones, trying to make contact with every community member on record to check up on their welfare.

More than just providing for basic needs, there is also a sense of spiritual unity, according to



## GIVING TZEDAKA HAS NEVER BEEN SO EASY (AND FUN)

SIMPLY DRAG AND DROP A COIN WITH THE CHEV'S SMARTCAN APP







Chev Smartcan  
virtual charity can



Shabbat times this week		
Starts	Ends	
17:19	18:11	Johannesburg
17:43	18:37	Cape Town
17:01	17:54	Durban
17:21	18:14	Bloemfontein
17:14	18:09	Port Elizabeth
17:07	18:01	East London

David Friedman

*“Your Choice of property agents in the Garden Route”*

David@choicenet.co.za C : +27 (0)83 451 1456

Choice

Properties Garden Route

RESIDENTIAL • COMMERCIAL • FARMS



Appliance Repairs on Site

Fridges, Dishwashers, Washing Machines, Stoves Tumble Dryers & more

Call Jason 082 401 8239 / 076 210 6532

FREE QUOTATIONS

FRANK SOLOMON HEARING CENTRE

Have a love at first sound experience.

Phonak Audéo™ Marvel

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

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



AFFORDABLE RANGE FOR PENSIONERS

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

Fairmount 6 George Ave, Sandringham

Additional branches in Benoni and Germiston

We are COVID-19 compliant

VEHICLES WANTED



Any make, any model, any condition

Accident damaged vehicles and non-runners also wanted

Arnold Orkin 082 823 7826

AUTO AFRICA

# Commonwealth Jewish Council calls for release of ‘Nigeria three’

TALI FEINBERG

All Rudy Rochman wanted to do was to shine a light on unknown, disconnected, and re-emerging Jewish communities around the world, but something went horribly wrong.

The charismatic 27-year-old Israeli activist, who has more than 97 000 followers on Instagram, was working on a new documentary series titled, *We Were Never Lost*, which focused on these “lost tribes”. At the beginning of July, he and his team travelled to Nigeria to film their first episode.

However, Rochman, filmmaker Andrew Noam Leibman, and French-Israeli journalist Edouard David Benaym were arrested by Nigerian security services when the three presented a Torah scroll to a local community. They remain in custody, haven’t been charged, and haven’t been given legal representation. Organisations and individuals around the world are working desperately to get them released.

“Our first season is set in Africa, and we are filming our first episode on the Jews of Nigeria,” Rochman’s team wrote on Facebook on 8 July. “There are many Jews in Nigeria, Igbo included, and we are here only to help local practising and observing Jewish communities, to provide them with resources, and to document their lives, experiences, and aspirations. We don’t take any position on political movements as we aren’t here as politicians nor as a part of any government delegation.”

But the next day, they were arrested, supposedly for supporting “separatist activists”. Commonwealth Jewish Council (CJC) Chief Executive Clive Lawton is one of the many people working behind the scenes. Speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* from his home in the United

Kingdom, he says he is alarmed that the men have been held in detention for more than a week without being charged. “That would indicate it’s only an investigation, but they still have no legal representation, and how can such an investigation take more than a week?”

He says the CJC has written to the Nigerian high commissioner to the Commonwealth, His Excellency Sarafa Tunji Isola, urging him to pressure his government to release them soon. “They are being detained on the flimsiest of pretexts.

I’m sure the Nigerian government wouldn’t want to cultivate an image that foreign visitors can be snatched up on spurious accusations,” says Lawton.

He has also written to the secretary general of the Commonwealth of Nations, Baroness Patricia Scotland. “In this family of nations, the quality of relationships and expectations of decency carry a lot of weight. It’s shocking that Nigeria might continue to hobnob with other heads of governments while treating foreigners like this. It should be seen as shameful. Yes, they might need to investigate something, but that doesn’t take 10 days. This isn’t just an investigation. It’s intimidation. Acting without due process is against Commonwealth principles,” he says.

He hopes that the less formal relationships between Commonwealth countries will make an impact. “At the very least, they should be released to go home. But more desirable would be that they be allowed to return to their cultural activity of making a documentary.”

Lawton says his organisation seeks to build relationships between Jews from around the world. More

than 40 countries, including South Africa, are members.

Although the media reported that “three Israelis” were arrested, it’s unclear if all three have Israeli citizenship.

Lawton says Rochman and Leibman entered Nigeria on their American passports, and Benaym on his French passport. “We knew that they planned to make this documentary and were in the first stages of filming. They went to south-east Nigeria to visit a community. Like

anyone making such a visit, they wanted to bring artefacts or objects to present to them. In this instance, they very generously brought a Sefer Torah.”

Two weeks ago, Rochman wrote on Instagram about how his team had “just acquired a beautiful Torah that survived the Holocaust and is believed to have come from an old community in Ukraine about 200 years ago”.

“The scribal experts our team spoke to stated that the *ktav* [writing] had since gone extinct, and they couldn’t believe their eyes when we sent them pictures of the scroll.

“We will be bringing the Torah and gifting it to the youth movement of Igbo Jewish

communities of Nigeria for them to have access to our nation’s holy text.”

“It would seem that some separatist activists wrote Facebook messages along the lines of ‘welcoming this act of solidarity’”, Lawton says. “But in fact the filmmakers categorically stated that they had no interest in political issues and were there for a cultural reason – to make a film.

“They arrived on a Thursday, and visited a synagogue,” he says. “That was when Nigerian security services entered the synagogue and arrested them, taking them to the capital, Abuja. On the Friday, the men’s embassies were alerted, and sought to get involved. Chabad in Abuja

Continued on page 14>>



Rudy Rochman's arrival in Nigeria, with a Torah that he presented to the community shortly before he was arrested

## Torah Thought

### The never-ending voice

And Charlton Heston came down from Mount Sinai and gave us the ten commandments. Oops! Sorry, make that Moses. And he was carrying the tablets with the Big 10, repeated this week in Deuteronomy as part of Moses’ review of the past 40 years. He describes how G-d spoke those words in a mighty voice that didn’t end.

Rashi writes that Moses is contrasting G-d’s voice with human voices. The finite voice of a human being, even a Pavarotti, will fade and falter. It cannot go on forever. But the voice of the Almighty didn’t end, didn’t weaken. It remained strong throughout.

Is this all the great prophet had to teach us about the voice of G-d? That it was a powerful baritone? Is the greatness of the Infinite One, that he didn’t suffer from shortness of breath, that He didn’t need a few puffs of Ventolin? Is this a meaningful motivation for the Jews to accept the Torah?

Moses was the greatest of all prophets. He foresaw what no other prophet could see. Perhaps he saw his people becoming caught

up in the civilization of ancient Greece, in the beauty, culture, philosophy, and art of the day. And they might question, “Is Torah still relevant?”

Perhaps he foresaw Jews empowered by the industrial revolution, where they might have thought Torah to be somewhat backward. Or maybe it was during the Russian Revolution, where faith and religion were deemed to be absolutely primitive.

Maybe Moses saw our own generation, with space shuttles and satellites, teleprompters and technology. And he saw young people questioning whether the good book still spoke to them.

And so, Moses tells us that the voice that thundered from Sinai was no ordinary voice. This was a voice that wasn’t only powerful at the time, it didn’t end. And it still rings out, still resonates, and speaks to each of us in every generation and every part of the world.

Revolutions come and go, but revelation is eternal. The voice of Sinai continues to proclaim eternal truths that never become passé or irrelevant. Honour your parents,

revere them, look after them in their old age. Live moral lives, don’t tamper with the sacred fibre of family life.

Dedicate one day every week, and keep that day holy. Stop the madness. Turn your back on the rat race, and rediscover your humanity and your children. Don’t be guilty of greed, envy, dishonesty, or corruption.

Are these ideas and values dated? Are these commandments tired or irrelevant? On the contrary. They speak to us now as perhaps never before.

Does anyone know this today better than us South Africans?

The G-dly voice has lost none of its strength, none of its majesty. The mortal voice of man declines and fades into oblivion. Politicians and spin-doctors come and go, but the heavenly sound reverberates down the ages.

Moses knew what he was saying. Torah is truth, and truth is forever. The voice of G-d shall never be stilled.

Rabbi Yossy Goldman, life rabbi emeritus, Sydenham Shul



South African Jewish Report

Proofreader Kim Hatchuel Advertising Britt Landsman: 082 292 9520 – britt@sajewishreport.co.za • New business development manager Laura Kaufman laura@sajewishreport.co.za • Design and layout Bryan Maron/Design Bandits – bryan@designbandits.co.za • Distribution Sandy Furman Subscriptions Avusa Publishing (Pty) Ltd. Tel: 0860 525 200 • Board of Directors Howard Sackstein (Chairperson), Dina Diamond, Herschel Jawitz, Shaun Matisonn, Benji Porter. • Advertisements and editorial copy do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff and board of directors. Tel: 011 430 1980.

Editor Peta Krost Maunder – editor@sajewishreport.co.za • Sub-editor Julie Leibowitz Journalists Nicola Miltz • Tali Feinberg • Mirah Langer • Photographer Ilan Ossendryver Editorial co-ordinator Martine Bass – editorial@sajewishreport.co.za



US IMMIGRATION OPPORTUNITY

L1A - Green Card • Lighting Corporation for sale

South African founder/owner

Newport Beach CA • 16 years trading

cindi@lightraze.com • www.lightraze.com





# Expats watch SA unrest with heartache and horror

TALI FEINBERG

“Last week’s events ripped the plaster off of a big wound. They forced me to re-examine my life in South Africa – things I miss and don’t miss, my reasons for leaving, and my experiences there,” says Dan Brotman, who lived in South Africa for 10 years before leaving for Canada late last year. He is one of many expatriates who have been heartbroken watching the recent civil unrest from afar.

Many Jewish South Africans living abroad say that while we might imagine they feel glad to be far away, in reality, it’s often the opposite – their connection to the country feels even stronger at these times.

“The last week drew me closer to other South African expats,” says Brotman. “I found myself getting together with a lot of South Africans, discussing events and how painful it was to watch this happen. I don’t know of expats saying, ‘Thank G-d I got out.’ Our hearts are breaking from afar. Even if we don’t live there right now, we still feel connected to the country.”



It’s a sentiment many other expats share, describing how they couldn’t sleep for days as they watched the rioting and looting on their screens. “Even though I live in Israel, I’m still deeply invested in South Africa,” says Guy Lieberman. “My work and projects are there. I own a home in Joburg. I’m committed to, pray for, and rely on the success of the South African economy. Beyond that, South Africa is my first home country – it’s where I grew up. It’s who I am. My family and friends are there – the brilliant, talented individuals that make up our community.

“I felt ill seeing the looting unfolding. Last Shabbat, not knowing what was happening and being so far away, was gut-wrenching,” he says. “I had friends who were affected, a relative who was stuck on the N3 who witnessed the fires, and a friend whose Durban warehouse was ransacked and their fleet set alight.”

For those who grew up in Durban and now live overseas, it has been especially hard to watch. “I felt heartbroken. I’m still very connected to Durban,” says Tanya Hirsch, who lives in the United States. “I was 18 when I left Durban, and it’s still very much part of my soul. I was scared and couldn’t sleep for days, afraid for what the community must be feeling, and with lots of memories. Other expats who are here who still have

close family in Durban are fearful for the future and feel helpless at being so far away.”

Jenna Lewinsky, who lives in Israel, says, “I felt really saddened as I lived in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) for 28 years and understand that many innocent and law-abiding citizens are now left not only to defend their own homes, but have no food security.”

She even emailed Prince Thulani Zulu from the royal Zulu household. “He emailed me back that he was in urgent need of food parcels for people in rural areas. I jumped into action to get quotations for truck haulage from Johannesburg to Ulundi, and got a price for a four-ton truck with two-ton trailer. I looked online at what groceries cost, and estimated about \$5 000 [R72 900] needed to be raised to send a truck with food parcels down. An American friend and I made many calls, but so far have got no donations for the cause. COVID-19 has reduced small and medium businesses to ashes globally, and it’s hard to mobilise support.”

Her mother still lives in KZN, “and she couldn’t even

fill her tank with petrol or buy enough groceries. I have, of course, helped her. And I got a group of people to daven for the safety, well-being, and rebuilding of the Jewish community and also for favour for those that need to move to Israel. But I’m not happy until prayers are matched with action, and even though I’m just one person, I’m trying my best to drum up whatever support I can.”

Michael Foreman, who now lives in London, says, “I’ve always



Photos: Leah van Zyl Photography

remained connected – my parents stayed in Durban. My mom passed away last year and my dad now lives in [the Jewish aged home] Beth Shalom. It was terrifying for the residents to receive videos of unrest so close to where they were living, and the staff that care for them not being able to come to work. The shopping centre where my mom used to do her shopping was less than a kilometre away, and it was badly looted.

“A group of us who were at school together would get together often [before COVID-19] and are very close. At

**I WANT TO BUY YOUR BOBBA!**

**OLD OR NEW, WE'LL PAY YOU A WOW PRICE FOR YOUR CAR.**

**Call Alan: 082 850 0004**  
**www.alfinauto.co.za**

one of those meetings, my good friend Jeremy Droyman [who still lives in Durban] appealed to us to remember the ageing community there. I got the idea of building a global virtual community, and set up a website and Facebook page titled, *It's Durban Calling.*”

The Facebook page is a dynamic and growing group with Jewish Durban expats from all over the world. So when events transpired last week, it was perfectly positioned to lead relief efforts for the Durban Jewish community. “Not being able to do much from overseas was scary. So we decided to do an emergency appeal. Jeremy said he was planning to airlift supplies, and we organised a fundraiser for it. We already had



an international PayPal account and a charitable trust set up, so we were able to launch the appeal very quickly.” They managed to raise R70 000 in 24 hours, and that amount is growing [R105 000 raised as of Tuesday morning 20 July]. “Every bit helps, and it allows the community abroad to do something.”

Meanwhile, expats who hail from other cities in South Africa have also been deeply affected. Elan Burman, now in the United States, says, “I still feel a very close connection, both because so many family and friends are still there, and because of how inalienable South Africa is from my personal identity. I wish I could have been part of the crowd cleaning up and helping.”

He called on his American friends to make donations to organisations like Afrika Tikkun, and to purchase South African food and wine to support the South African economy. “Now, more than ever, my soul is in South Africa, hoping for a brighter tomorrow,” he says.

Sianne Menashe, who lives in the United Kingdom, says, “My dad and sister [and her family] plus in-laws and friends are all still in South Africa. The videos and images

were devastating! I had a lot of hope seeing [former president Jacob] Zuma going to jail. [After the riots], my main emotion was sadness. I have a lot of friends that live in townships, and it’s been heart breaking to hear what’s going on. They’ve all been really scared – gunshots through the night. And now they’re the ones suffering the most.”

She’s upset about the notion of “smug expats.” “A lot of us were offended [by this] because we’ve been doing everything we can [financially] to help people there especially during COVID-19,” she says. “I love South Africa and I want her to flourish. South Africans living out of South Africa still strongly identify as South Africans.”

Liora Benater in Australia says, “South Africa will always have a piece of my heart. Last week’s events made me incredibly sad and overwhelmed, seeing so much destruction, businesses being lost, and the vaccine rollout being halted. Most of the events weren’t publicised on Australian news, which was alarming, and I had to source videos and information myself.

“I checked in with my brother almost every day to make sure he and his family were safe, and my husband did the same with his family. Family members reported hearing gunshots from their home in Johannesburg. A number of Facebook friends posted things like South Africans living abroad shouldn’t comment or judge, which made me angry. We decided to leave South Africa, but this doesn’t mean we don’t care anymore.”

• To support the Durban Jewish community, visit [https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=GTKQ48MPZVCR4](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=GTKQ48MPZVCR4)

JAWITZ

PROPERTIES

INVEST IN PROPERTY IN ISRAEL FROM R5 MILLION

Contact Herschel Jawitz in strict confidence 082 571 1829 | [herschel@jawitz.co.za](mailto:herschel@jawitz.co.za)

FOR SALE

**GLENHAZEL | R 2 350 000**  
Asking More. 4 Bedroom house set in gated secure road. A north facing home offering 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms (mes), spacious lounge, dining room and huge separate playroom and built-in bar. The patio leads onto pretty garden and beautiful pool setting. Staff accommodation. Triple car port. Fantastic off street parking. Secure. Genuine seller wants offers.

4

2

Joel Harris 082 926 0287  
Lauren Shalpid 083 789 0229

Web Ref: RL77968

FOR SALE

**GLENHAZEL | R 999 000**  
Asking More. Situated in the sort after complex of Hazelwood!! 24/7 security access-controlled entrance. Sunny open plan lounge, dining room and kitchen leading onto an ample open balcony. Two bedrooms with built in cupboards. 2 Bathrooms main en suite. 1 Carport parking. Fantastic facilities in the complex. Tennis court, squash court, pool, gym and club house. Walking distance to shops and shuls in the area. Genuine seller- bring an offer.

2

1

Joel Harris 082 926 0287  
Lauren Shalpid 083 789 0229

Web Ref: RL76126

NEW RELEASE

**WAVERLY | R 4 499 000**  
This is no ordinary cluster – spacious doesn’t cover it. Offering 3 fabulous receptions with French doors to a covered patio that can be opened to create one massive entertainment space. Modern wood & granite kitchen, guest cloak, pyjama lounge, 3 bedrooms ensuite, pool, staff, double garage & numerous stand-out features that elevate this home to a ‘class of its own’.

3

3

Chrissie Hammer: 082 568 0440

Web Ref: RL78797

NEW RELEASE

**MORNINGSIDE | R 1 650 000**  
A Rare Find! 2 Bedroom, 2 Bathroom apartment in upmarket Morningside. 2 bedrooms with BIC and laminated flooring. 2 Renovated bathrooms main en suite. Modern kitchen with space for 3 appliances and fridge/freezer. Granite tops and glamorous modern splash back. Open plan living/dining area with great space and flow to Entertainers patio. 2 parking bays. 24/7 Security. Complex Pool. Prime Position with shops, gyms, highways and all amenities on your doorstep. Awesome Lock Up and Go! With the lowest interest rates in almost 50 years, this is a ‘No Brainer’!

2

2

Sandra Luntz: 083 679 1247

Web Ref: RL78719

REAL LIFE

Real Estate.





# Diaspora minister expresses concern and support after riots

NICOLA MILTZ

The newly elected Israeli minister of diaspora affairs this week sent a heartfelt message of support to the South African Jewish community following last week’s devastating protests and riots.

Dr Nachman Shai this week expressed his “warmest regards and personal blessing” in a letter to the community.

“All of us in Israel have watched the recent events in the KwaZulu-Natal region and around South Africa with deep concern. We stand with you in solidarity, and are particularly thinking about the Durban and Johannesburg Jewish communities during this challenging time.”

He said it was also a difficult moment for Jewish communities around the world. “In South Africa, we witnessed the rise of antisemitism following Operation Guardian of the Walls, which challenged your safety and sense of security.”

His ministry is a partner in ensuring the resilience of the community, and engaging actors within Israel to understand how its military actions had a direct impact on the Jewish world, Shai said.

“Our ability as a Jewish people to take on our shared challenges depends on our

ability to engage effectively with one another.”

Shai said he was sure that his upcoming meeting with the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) and leadership would be the first of many “as we develop an ongoing conversation between us”.

“The secret of Jewish resilience rests in our sense of shared responsibility towards each other. With this frame, I look forward to working hand in hand with all of you to live up to our potential as both a diverse and unified Jewish people.”

He said the South African Jewish community had long been “a thriving epicentre of Jewish life and a true friend



Dr Nachman Shai

of Israel”, and as Israel’s new diaspora affairs minister, he looked forward to finding opportunities to further strengthen the relationship between South African Jewry and the state and people of Israel in the coming months.

Rowan Polovin, the national chairperson of the SAZF, said he appreciated Shai’s heartfelt message.

“The past few months have been an extremely challenging and difficult time for South African Jewry. Our connection as Jews living in the diaspora remains vitally important as a continued source of comfort and strength at all times, but particularly in times of hardship.”

He said the SAZF looked forward to further engagement with the minister on “developing and building upon the crucial relationship and bond between the state of Israel and the South African Jewish community”.

Shai was in South Africa in August 2017, when he led a delegation of five members of the Israeli Knesset to “promote dialogue, understanding, and co-operation”.

The delegation met leaders across the South African political spectrum, including Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, former President Kgalema Motlanthe, former Johannesburg Executive Mayor Herman Mashaba, and former Democratic Alliance (DA) leader Mmusi Maimane. It held meetings in parliament, and met members of the DA, Congress of the People, African Christian Democratic Party, Inkatha Freedom Party, and Freedom Front Plus. The delegation, a product of co-operation between the Israeli Knesset, the Israeli foreign affairs ministry, and the Jewish Agency, also met leaders of the Jewish community and engaged with the key figures in the Christian and business communities, where it reiterated Israel’s commitment to sharing expertise and experience in agriculture, water, and hi-tech.

## WhatsApp messages use Jewish community to sow divisions

TALI FEINBERG

As social media in South Africa last week became a minefield of fake news and incitement amidst civil unrest, one WhatsApp user attempted to draw the South African Jewish community into the fray.

Messages written by someone who called himself “Ari Goldberg – Israeli peacekeeper” were full of profanities and hate speech against the Indian community, including the line, “The Jews in Israel will kill you.”

They were posted with images of Israeli flags on a group called “Durban Support”. According to a member of the group, most of the people on it were members of the Indian community.

The person also changed the topic of the group from “Durban Support” to “Mossad is watching you!” and “SA must burn and die”. Members of the group told its admin to remove the user, which it did. However, the damage he caused may have the long-term effect of sowing divisions between the Jewish and Indian communities where none existed before.

The messages were shared with *SA Jewish Report* chairperson and tech guru Howard Sackstein, who immediately tried to put out the fire by emphasising that they were created to sow division and hatred at a time when communities are feeling vulnerable.

“This is clearly fake nonsense specifically sent to try ferment racial hatred,” he responded to the person who queried it. “It’s quite obvious from the following – the guy claims to be an ‘Israeli peace keeper’, but Israel doesn’t deploy peace keepers anywhere. The number used [to send the messages on WhatsApp] is American, not Israeli. India and Israel have a very close relationship.

“The telephone number is unlisted on True Caller, which means it has

been used specifically to send this message – a clear sign of someone trying to incite hatred. People who use fake numbers would never put their names to a message.

“The number is registered in Sioux Falls South Dakota, United States,” Sackstein said. “I have searched, and there appears to be no Jewish community in Sioux Falls South Dakota. I have googled, and there is no Ari Goldberg in Sioux Falls South Dakota. All this means is that someone thinks this is a good time to try create racial hatred between Jews and Indians where none exists. One has to ask, what sort of sick person would do this?”

He requested that his message be sent to the WhatsApp group where the ugly messages were posted. “People must know that political looters and criminals must be exposed and dealt with. I have been to India four times, and many of my close friends are Indian – no fake instigator will ever drive a wedge between us.”

So, why would someone create a message like this, hoping to stir up hatred and divisions between Jews and Indians? “In vulnerable times like last week, we see the best and worst in people,” said local social-media expert Sarah Hoffman. “We have witnessed people trying to rebuild, but we’ve also witnessed existing prejudices and burning hatred. When people are under pressure, it’s an opportune time to make such kind of comments.” She encouraged people to disassociate themselves actively from such comments if they are shared on a WhatsApp group, and to encourage the group admin to block the user.

In the wider context, “We have seen massive polarisation of society globally, as witnessed during elections in the United States and Israel, and in political divisions in South Africa,” said local tech expert



Arthur Goldstuck. “As a result, individuals feel emboldened to stir the pot with a mixture of their own bigotry and their desire to see the worst happen to the ‘other’. Refusal to acknowledge the rights of those with different views is a ‘pandemic’ in itself. Our own community witnesses this daily, as do others, and religious and political leaders don’t have the emotional intelligence to understand their own roles in either condoning or failing to condemn such attitudes.

“You don’t have to be an extremist to be a bigot, and that’s part of the problem,” he said. “Ordinary people who see themselves as decent and even reasonable develop blind spots when it comes to other races, nationalities, and political views. Blind support of populist leaders has created a massive us-and-

them crisis in which everyone loses. The resultant chaos allows *agents provocateur* to behave with impunity, confident they won’t have to face consequences, and relish in their apparent power to sow further division.

“Multicultural society is detested by bigots, and the antipathy towards multiculturalism in our own community provides fuel for the expression of hatred towards others. Only if we move from an ‘us-and-them’ mentality to a ‘we’ mentality can we reduced bigotry.”

Said Karen Allen, senior research advisor on emerging threats in Africa at the Institute for Security Studies, “We see this [kind of message] at times of heightened tension and unrest. People stir the pot by tossing divisions into the mix, especially when they are feeling vulnerable. For example, we saw it during the xenophobic attacks or at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Often there are more users on these platforms during difficult times, so it’s an opportunity to amplify messages. They aim to drive divisions at certain points in time.

“Also, social media allows for a much wider reach. Imagine that this person took to the streets of Durban with a loudhailer, he would reach only a certain number of people,” she said. “But on social media, the way the algorithm is designed, it amplifies such messages. So even if you share this message online to say it’s awful, the fact that you shared it propels it further.”

Therefore, she advises that users don’t re-share something abusive or hateful, even if it’s to criticise it. “South Africa is a divided country,” she said. “Touchstone issues include race and sometimes the divisions between certain communities. The fact that social media and messaging platforms can be anonymous means

that often there’s little consequence for it.”

However, South Africa’s new Cybercrimes Act, which has just been signed into law, may start to have an impact. “Malicious communications on social-media platforms are offences under the Act. Part two of the Act makes it an offence to incite damage to property or threaten to damage property or persons,” Allen said.

Furthermore, “if tweets, messages, or conversations include fake or deliberately manipulated images, the offences may amount to cyber forgery. Simply re-sharing deliberately manipulated content that is malicious could make any one of us unwittingly assistants in committing a crime.”

Sackstein said that these messages aren’t necessarily created to support one side or the other, but to “create as much chaos as possible, because if you destabilise your opponent, it weakens them”. That’s why someone writing a message like this may be a person who would “benefit from additional racial strife”, and the Jewish community is just a tool for them to achieve that. Tomorrow, they could post a similar message trying to create discord amongst other communities.

“It’s important that we understand the context and the dangers. It’s a deliberate attempt to sabotage. Be very careful what you share or forward as you are possibly being manipulated,” he said.

Meanwhile, Police Minister Bheki Cele said in a speech on 13 July, “We issue a stern warning to those circulating inflammatory messages on social-media platforms which are aimed at inciting violence and disregard of the law. Those who engage in such acts will be liable for criminal offence and can receive a fine or be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years.”



# COVID-19 crashes the party for kosher caterers

NICOLA MILTZ

The sudden closure of Gary Friedman Caterers, one of Johannesburg's largest and much-loved kosher caterers, has left the community in shock and shone a spotlight on a troubled industry dramatically affected by the pandemic.

During the best of times, kosher catering is tough, the overheads and costs are high, the margins are small, and the community is dwindling, say insiders. During bad times, it's seemingly impossible, and many are hanging by a thread.

According to many insiders who wish to remain anonymous, the world of kosher is fraught with a toxic blend of favouritism, nepotism, and fierce competitiveness which has led to market cannibalism and an unsustainable future for many.

Kosher industry players are doing what they can to stay afloat. Innovative ideas by one caterer advertised on Facebook are sometimes copied the next day by another, sometimes for less. Several establishments are selling the same products or dishes, often at lower prices than their neighbouring kosher competitors. The exorbitant and rising cost of meat and chicken continues to rear its head and plague consumers.

Even before COVID-19, but certainly during the pandemic, there has been a proliferation of home industries that profess to be kosher but aren't certified by the Beth Din. These are run by people who are also trying to make an honest living. However, they are having a negative impact on the bigger players who have Beth Din kosher licencing fees, *mashgichim* fees, high rentals, large staff complements, and other business overheads to account for.

Kosher caterers and restaurateurs have been hit doubly hard by the see-saw, stop-start nature of business during wave after wave of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. An industry heavily reliant on *simchas*, celebrations, and festive good times, it has taken an irreparable knock. In spite of impressive pivoting, unprecedented resilience,

grit, and hard work, many say it has become too difficult.

"It's a very difficult time," said Leonard Meyerowitz of Kosher Pie Works and Jozi Coffee Pizza Pasta. COVID-19 restrictions with no seating at eateries or very limited numbers at functions; the drastic drop to zero *simchas* from shul *brochas*, *brit milah*, weddings, Barmitzva's and Batmitzva's have taken a toll.

"Add to this the number of days we are closed because of Shabbos, fast days, and Jewish holidays, rising emigration, not to forget Eskom power cuts, it's really hard on all of us," he said.

South Africa has enjoyed being a flagship of kosher food around the world, but it's slowly losing its big anchor establishments, said one concerned supplier.



Just after noon on Tuesday, 6 July, Gary and his wife, Tamara, dropped the bombshell in a letter to all their clients and suppliers explaining that their company was no longer able to weather the storm of COVID-19.

It brought to an end an era of *simcha* and revelry at the HOD, where he largely operated from. Friedman declined to comment further.

Several caterers and kosher suppliers this week

expressed genuine sadness, perhaps seeing themselves reflected in the mirror of his company's demise. "I was devastated when I heard the news," said trained chef and caterer Hayley Hack. "Gary is such a good, kind man."

Hack and her former partner, Sharon Sheer, parted ways amicably when COVID-19 decimated their once thriving, small catering and function co-ordinating business.



"It simply wasn't financially viable to work as a team anymore, especially with 90% of our functions being cancelled. We walked away with a heavy heart, but at least we didn't incur debt. It's very sad because we were established in the industry," she said.

In the beginning, they tried to make money by selling delicious salad dressings and delivering meals, but found that it wasn't viable, so parted ways to work on their own after terminating their contract with function venue The Middleton in Morningside. Hack continues to cater on a small scale and Sheer remains hopeful that functions will resume and things will get better once lockdown is lifted.

Long-time caterer Estelle Sacharowitz of Love is in the Kitchen said she was "heartbroken" when she heard about Friedman. "He has an incredible legacy. This is a sad loss for the industry," she said.

Ian Isenberg, of Spice Premium Biltong & Butchery said, "Gary is the ultimate *mensch* in the industry. He gave me a chance as a newcomer, and even when the chips were down for him, he still helped to cater a wedding [last month] for a couple who couldn't afford it. He did a lot for

the community and his staff. This is a huge loss."

Some caterers who wish to remain anonymous for fear of repercussion say the Gary Friedman closure goes far beyond caterers.

In spite of a humbled Beth Din following the Stan & Pete *treif* chicken scandal and the continuing saga of the high cost of kosher food, the organisation is seemingly unsympathetic at this time, they say.

"The Beth Din has improved its accessibility and receptivity, but it's still not customer-centric and now more than ever, it needs to be," said one kosher caterer who wished to remain anonymous.

"Where is the Beth Din now when we need all the support we can get?" asked another.

"Kosher food and catering is prohibitive. The Beth Din has to do something about the exorbitant cost of kosher meat and chicken, end of story," said another commentator, who also wished to remain anonymous.

"Kosher chicken breasts cost between R244 and R268 per kilogram. Something isn't right. It has become utterly unaffordable, and it's affecting caterers and restaurants."

"Young couples are battling to keep kosher. Many are deciding it's easier not to. My biggest concern is that kashrut is going to be diluted as more and more people resort to 'kosher style' food which is not under the Beth Din, like you see happening more and more in places like Australia."

Rabbi Dovi Goldstein, the managing director of kashrut at the Beth Din, said the closure of Gary Friedman Caterers had come as a "huge blow to all of us."

"We are in discussion with Gary as to various possibilities of how to assist him," he said.

Kosher SA remained dedicated to ensuring the highest kosher standard, Goldstein said. "At the same time, we will continue to look at ways to assist all our establishments. We have, to date, provided payment holidays across the board during hard lockdowns, and extended help on a case-by-case basis."

"We are deeply concerned about the difficulties that all our certified food services are going through."

## Independent living for senior citizens



### Garden Place

**From R11 999,00 per Month**  
Fully furnished suites in magnificent surroundings  
24-hour security | serviced 5 days a week  
Affordable rates – **no monthly levy**

Situated in Orchards, Garden Place offers the ultimate in **choice and value for money** when it comes to independent living for senior citizens.

WE'LL CREATE A PACKAGE THAT SUITS YOUR STYLE OF LIVING

Three different types of accommodation to choose from:  
**Standard units:** Double bedroom en-suite  
**Studio units:** Overlooking the garden, double bedroom en-suite with fully equipped kitchenette  
**Cottages:** Lounge/dining room, double bedroom, bathroom en-suite, bath and walk-in shower, TV in bedroom and lounge, queen size wall-bed in living room (ideal for grandchildren or overseas visitors), fully equipped kitchen

- All units are fully furnished with DSTV, Wi-Fi, air-conditioning/heating, fridge, microwave, safe, bed linen, towels, crockery and cutlery
- Take your unit fully furnished or bring your own special pieces – either way, we will help create your home away from home
- Let us provide your meals and teas in our dining room or in the privacy of your unit, or choose to make your own meals
- Use our shuttle service or take your own car

The **CHOICE** is yours!

THE COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE YOU DESERVE FOR A GREAT PRICE

RATE INCLUDES

- Electricity, Wi-Fi, DSTV, 24-hour security and parking
- Idyllic gardens with two swimming pools
- Dining room and braai area
- Conference facilities at your disposal – have a game of cards or listen to a guest speaker
- Easy access to doctors, dentists, nurses, physio and Hatzolah
- Full-time management living on the property
- Daily shuttle to Norwood Mall, Melrose Arch and Balfour Park
- Laundry service available
- Situated close to clinics, fitness centres and golf courses
- Within walking distance to 4 shuls

**CALL US TO VIEW**  
(under strict COVID-19 regulations)  
**011 485 3800**  
**53 Garden Road**  
**Orchards Johannesburg**  
**www.gardenplace.co.za**  
**info@gardenplace.co.za**

## HOLD REAL ESTATE

SECURING YOUR FUTURE IN ISRAEL

### INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ISRAELI RESIDENTIAL MARKET

With more than 20 years of experience and the backing of Israel's biggest and most prestigious property development companies, you can trust Hold to provide you with the very best advice and options suited to your needs.

Whether you're considering investing for potential resale, creating a rental-based income stream, or making Aliyah, we have an exclusive portfolio of sought after new developments in cities across Israel.

**NEW RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS**  
Ra'anana | Jerusalem | Haifa | Harish | Netanya  
Ir Yamim | Ramat Beit Shemesh | Tel-Aviv  
Modi'in | Jaffa

**HOLD SERVICES**  
Legal representation, banking services -  
including opening bank accounts and organising  
mortgages and project management.

**PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**  
We will find tenants and manage your apartment  
so you capitalise on your investment immediately.

**CUSTOMER-FOCUSED BROKERAGE**  
We help buyers to find properties that are  
relevant and meet their requirements.

**Contact Julian Nathan**  
✉ julian@hold.co.il  
☎ +27 87 551 0734  
📠 +972 58 631 9754

**Contact Herschel Jawitz**  
✉ herschel@jawitz.co.za  
☎ +27 82 571 1829

In association with  
**JAWITZ**  
PROPERTIES



Netanya, Ra'anana, Tel Aviv, Bat Yam, Jaffa, Haifa, Caesarea, Or Akiva, Harish, Kfar Yona, Ramat Gan, Modi'in, Ben Gurion Airport, Jerusalem, Ramat Beit Shemesh, Florentino, Tel Aviv, Tiberias, Jerusalem

Visit our website: [www.hold.co.il](http://www.hold.co.il)



## Just get vaccinated

As the dust settles on the violence and looting that took place last week, the community has bonded in raising funds and gathering essential goods for those sorely affected by the chaos. These include our community in KwaZulu-Natal.

I was astonished to see people, many of whom were fasting on Tisha B'Av, making their way into townships to help clean up over the weekend. The kindness and generosity of our community has, again, come to the fore.

Literally millions of rand has been raised in days to help people, mostly in KwaZulu-Natal. People who have barely left their homes in months made their way to help pack boxes and sort through essentials that were destined for Durban.

It was amazing how the horror of the pandemic took a back seat to the crazed looting, burning, and madness that was believed to have been caused by Zuma's cronies, now known as the "dirty dozen".

For a week, our focus shifted to another devastating situation in our country.

But as the damage is being weighed up and the true toll on the economic and political playing field is tallied, the rest of us return to the reality of the pandemic and that level 4 lockdown is still with us. The number of people with COVID-19 is still extremely high, but it's dropping. This is a huge relief.

There is undoubtedly hope in the air, and that hope comes in the form of an injection, a jab, a shot, or a vaccination – call it what you will.

Never before have I witnessed people crying with joy when they receive a vaccination. And many are willing to wait quietly, in their masks and keeping a social distance, for hours on end just to get that small vial of *muti* vaccinated into their arm.

I know I was quite emotional when I had my first jab. It felt like one step towards freedom. One step towards being able to live a life without so many restrictions. As I was vaccinated, I pictured myself surrounded by my loved ones at a dinner table.

Isn't it amazing how regular events that we took for granted have become something we long for?

While most people I know just want to be vaccinated for all the same reasons I do, I don't understand why there are others who seem to look for excuses not to. Now, normally (if there is such a thing), I believe in letting people follow their own path. If they don't agree with my views, so be it. They don't have to.

However, the only way we are going to get to population or mass immunity is if more than 65% of the population is vaccinated. So, it isn't as simple as looking the other way.

To get to the point where we can't carry coronavirus and make someone else sick, many more of us need to have one of the vaccines on offer in South Africa. At this stage, we are vaccinating about 200 000 people a day. So far, we have given 5.5 million individual doses. The government's aim is to vaccinate 300 000 a day.

According to the most recent research done by experts at the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch, nearly one in four are still hesitant to be vaccinated. And one in 15 are strongly opposed to it. Their reasons vary from not trusting that the vaccines have been tested for long enough to vaccinations being a global plot. I have heard and read the most ridiculous reasons for not getting vaccinated. The point is, those people who are dying and very ill in hospital are generally not vaccinated. Isn't that enough of a reason to get the vaccine?

The reality is that as a nation, we can avoid a fourth wave. The sooner we're all vaccinated, the sooner we can resume a semblance of normality.

Can you picture it: going to the cinema, dinner in a cosy restaurant, parties where we dance with each other.

Imagine going to a concert in the park with people all around us, dancing, smiling, and laughing. It seems almost like a dream.

The idea of going to shul and sitting next to a friend and enjoying a *brocha* afterwards seems like a fond memory.

Just being able to walk down the street and smile at people and see them smiling back at you would be so pleasurable. And South Africa is one of the few countries in which strangers smiling and greeting each other happens all the time.

The truth is, this isn't that far off if we all just get vaccinated. Everyone from the age of 35 and older can get their jabs now.

In the next few weeks, the *SA Jewish Report* is going to focus on trying to dispel myths and answer any questions, worries, or concerns about vaccines so that we are all armed with all the facts.

This Sunday, if you are registered on the Electronic Vaccination Data System, you can go along to The Base Shul in Glenhazel where they are vaccinating. Anyone is welcome as long as he or she has their identity document and is registered. You can be on a medical aid, but you don't have to be. You certainly don't have to be Jewish.

Our responsibility isn't just to get ourselves and those in our family above 35 vaccinated, it extends to those in our circle or those we know. What if the security guard at your office block has had difficulty registering and/or getting somewhere that he could be vaccinated? Don't let him wait, help him to get there.

The same goes for your domestic workers, gardeners, other staff, or even that woman you know down the road. Do a *mitzvah*, help someone or a number of people to get vaccinated.

Make it your commitment to get yourself vaccinated, and everyone you know who wants to be protected against this killer coronavirus.

As a community, let's do the right thing. We have seen too much death and illness, it's time to bring it to an end.

And it's not about which drug will work better and will there be a hospital bed if you get very ill with COVID-19. It's all about doing everything you can to prevent you, me, and everyone else from getting this virus.

Let's do it!

**Shabbat Shalom!**

**Peta Krost Maunder**  
**Editor**



## A crisis not to waste

OPINION

DANIEL SILKE



South Africa has survived an insurrection, if President Cyril Ramaphosa is to be believed. This is no laughing matter. The extent and context of the violence unleashed within KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng last week should leave many unsettled and insecure about the state's ability to provide security in the short term and stability in the medium term.

There should be little real surprise at the turn of events. It was, indeed, a perfect storm across a number of indicators. Primarily, the looting and pillaging was a function of the confluence of both political instability and economic stress. They came together in a toxic cocktail that has left well in excess of 200 people dead, thousands without jobs, and an economic bill likely to run in excess of R100 billion with a possible 0.5% drop in gross domestic product just as a result of the violence of a fateful 72-hour period.

The protests began just hours after former President Jacob Zuma reported to prison on contempt of court charges. The effects of the Zuma presidency on the country are now well-documented. But, the ascent to power of Ramaphosa upset the existing patronage networks established under Zuma, some of which form part of the state capture enquiry while others represent a crony capitalism and clientelism which favoured connected elites and individuals with lucrative contracts and access to state tenders.

The switch to Ramaphosa was a signal that these murky relationships were likely to be investigated and upended. Ramaphosa, for all his detractors, has been a reformer within the African National Congress (ANC). And, reformers who disrupt cosy established networks run major personal risks themselves.

With the Zondo Commission breathing down the necks of Zuma as well as ANC Secretary-General Ace Magashule, amongst others, it was always going to be a risky period for the governing party.



Political factionalism and in-fighting occur in a variety of state quarters, with the mistrust and malfeasance involved stretching across a swathe of state-owned enterprises. This level of political decline has been evident for many years. And the ANC's own debilitating moral decline has served to undermine authority and credibility. With the conflation of party and state in the country, the ANC's problems have spilled over into South Africa's problems – as witnessed last week.

The problem for Ramaphosa is that he himself is a fragile leader elected with a super-slender majority within his own party. Although he allowed the legal consequences of the Zondo Commission (ironically established by Zuma himself) to weaken his political enemies, his own insecurities resulted in a broader state apparatus bloated with former Zuma acolytes.

Similarly, Ramaphosa's desire to balance the various ANC constituent forces resulted in the appointment of an executive (cabinet) that prioritised ANC unity over that of efficiency, expertise, and political reliability. From a leadership perspective, Ramaphosa's choices in the security cluster have been particularly problematic and given the events of this last week, a failure.

While issues will still be clarified in ensuing months, the president has been sorely embarrassed by the lack of adequate intelligence as well as a police ministry clearly incapable of a semblance of public-order policing.

Of course, the catalyst for the unrest was Zuma. He was the fuse that lit the spark. And it was a spark that became a fire on the back of an economically deprived and stressed populace who, when faced with the prospects of looting without any consequences, resorted to a mass criminal event.

South Africa has a long history of political protest linked to the destabilisation of the country. And this was yet another chapter. Instigators used criminal elements to assist, and the sabotaging of schools, theft from blood banks and ammunition supplies, water plants, and cell phone masts showed an intent well beyond the criminal hysteria visible.

Ultimately, insurrection often occurs in a weak state – and for sure, this was the ticket that allowed the devastation to ensue.

Those participating in the free-for-all looting spree themselves have been victim of the broad failure of economic policy over the past decade to pursue growth-oriented policies.

The ANC has largely concentrated on redistributive policies seemingly unable to overcome ideological constraints to deregulate our economy and embrace the private sector in partnership with the state. Add COVID-19 to this mix, and the instigators keen to weaken the Ramaphosa presidency found a ready-made army even if many of those unwittingly just took advantage of the complete state of anarchy.

With unemployment at more than 40% for all adults and more than 65% for those under 25 years, economic policy hasn't worked. Rising poverty levels and inequality have been a feature of the country for the past five years. There is, frankly, nothing new about the inadequacy of state policy. Analysts have warned about the consequences of failed strategies and non-existent implementation for years.

In the end, South Africa faces some major hurdles should we begin to move away from the highly

dangerous atmosphere prevailing. The violence at hand is a direct consequence of ANC politics and policies. While we can – and should – rebuild the physical and social damage caused, it's the ANC that needs an internal flush-out.

The only way to pressurise the ANC is via enhancing a competitive democracy that begins to threaten the governing party at the polls. In mature democracies, it's only the fear of being booted out of office that gets governments to act. It's a pity

in South Africa's case that the opposition continues to be fragmented and perhaps requires an "alliance for change" umbrella to reduce intra-party sniping.

Secondly, South Africans have appeased this decline for too long. Pressure has to be brought to bear from our powerful business community who have often sought to cosy-up to government in exchange for contracts rather than speak their mind. There is little room for mealy-mouthed expressions of concern in the current environment, which threatens physical infrastructure as well as lives and livelihoods.

Thirdly, South Africa needs an economic re-boot. It's clear that the damning statistical decline of our indicators requires new thinking. And for that to happen, political pressure has to be brought to bear to end the ideological myopia that has held us back. We need a modern, market friendly, and socially responsible environment without the dictates of an interfering state.

While we can join hands around an "ubuntu" renewal and a basic income grant, it's a deeper structural problem in our political make-up that requires a shift. If this shocking week of violence assists with that in any way, maybe then it will be a crisis we won't waste.

• *Daniel Silke is a political-economy analyst and keynote speaker based in Cape Town. Follow him on Twitter @DanielSilke and view his website at [www.danielsilkeglobal.com](http://www.danielsilkeglobal.com)*



# What if this IS us?

OPINION HOWARD SACKSTEIN



I'm cursed with optimism. But as the smouldering cinders of last week burned themselves to charcoal and our president flanked by his podgy unkempt generals wailed war talk of an insurrection, and social media was overrun with stirring renditions of the national anthem and images of people sweeping the broken shards of debris from a week of shame, I felt short changed.

I cannot allow my optimism to blind me like cataracts to reality.

In a slight elevation from his usual monotone, the president informed us that an unnamed Zuma and a dirty dozen of saboteurs wrought havoc on our nation. In an attack on our democracy, they targeted road arteries, ports, oil refineries, and strategic key-points, but their attempted resurrection had come to naught.

The woke coterie of TV commentators berated us with stories of how what we are witnessing is the poor, destitute, and unvaccinated taking food to which they were entitled given long COVID-19 shutdowns, gross income inequality, and insufficient government support.



Looting in Gauteng

My fellow squad of optimists tell us how the country has come together, how people of all races have manned the barricades, protected the malls, how taxi associations have sought out the fugitives, and how, with brooms in hand, by sweeping the destruction of supermarket aisles, we will rebuild South Africa.

Channelling a national therapist, our president assured us that this past week wasn't us, "This isn't who we are as a people," he said. But what happens if he's wrong? Isn't it time to take a really good look at ourselves in the mirror and realise that this is exactly "us", this is exactly who we have become as a nation.

What concerns me isn't that a kleptocratic former president and his criminal cohort attempted to overthrow a democratically elected government. What doesn't worry me is that sadly, Pick n Pay and Shoprite Checkers were robbed of bread, milk, and eggs. What concerns me most is the image of long lines of orderly, disciplined luxury and semi luxury vehicles waiting peacefully in line for their chance to loot the Makro distribution centre in KwaZulu-Natal.

These cars and their jubilant occupants weren't the poor, the hungry, the destitute. These were middle class and upper-middle-class fat cats, willing to steal because order and society had simply broken down.

After the 1994 first democratic elections, while executive director of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), I employed the services of a private detective to track down

the assets of the IEC which had been stolen, looted, and plundered during our first democratic vote.

The detective taught me a valuable lesson. Twenty percent of the population will always steal, he explained, 20% of the population will never steal, but the remaining 60% of people will steal, rob, and loot if they are presented with an opportunity where they are likely to get away with it, when law and order has broken down, and where criminality has become an acceptable norm.

And very sadly, that's the environment we have created in South Africa. We have watched the Zumas, the Guptas, the Magashules, and most of our last few governments loot the state. Pravin Gordhan, our minister of public enterprise, estimates that R500 billion was stolen from the people of South Africa during the Zuma era.

Analysts believe that corruption has lost the country R1.5 trillion since the advent of democracy. That's about R50 000 per adult South African stolen by a government which swept to power in order to liberate and transform South Africa.

That's been the price for each individual South African, stolen from pensions never paid, houses never built, jobs never created, and grants never paid.

When you live in a society with no consequence, when theft is all around you, when those in power are never brought to justice, then the fertile ground is ploughed for anarchy.

Permission is granted to everyone to say, "If he can, why can't I?"

If the police stand back and watch the looting, swearing helplessly at the criminals, but allowing the chaos to engulf the nation, then you are guaranteed crime with no consequence.

In Rwanda, ordinary citizens turned on their neighbours and became murderers for a month. They weren't murderers before, and they weren't murderers afterwards.

Similarly, in Nazi Germany, in places like Lithuania, where most of us herald from, Jews were killed by their neighbours who didn't kill before and didn't kill again. But the climate was created in which there was no consequence for the crime, where criminality was the norm, where everyone was given permission to be part of the mob rather than the one to stand against the tide.

In these circumstances, ordinary, law-abiding, tummy-filled South Africans took to the streets to steal R67 000 couches that don't fit into their homes, to loot 75-inch TVs that can't fit into their cars, and to line up orderly and peacefully waiting to loot and plunder their local mall and store.

So, Mr President, this wasn't an aberration, this was "us". This was the real South Africa that we have created, a country with no consequence, a country that the apartheid apologists warned us about.

It's time we looked in the mirror and realised that the real South Africa just punched us all directly in the face.

• Howard Sackstein is chairperson of the SA Jewish Report.

**We specialise in small and medium-sized loads moved with care**

**CALL US TODAY**

*Speedy response, speedy delivery, speedy satisfaction!*

Get that personalized supervision that comes with a small owner-managed business.  
Deliveries Sunday to Friday – No Saturday Deliveries

**Speedy spike**  
Moving Services  
WE move when YOU want to

What's App / Call / Email us for a speedy response

082 456 0105 Spike • 011 882 6986 Landline  
E: speedyspikesa@gmail.com • Web: www.speedyspike.co.za  
f /speedyspikesouthafrica

**Branded Digital multifocal lenses**

\*until 31 July 2021

**R1499**  
a pair of lenses

**THE OPTICAL STUDIO**  
"THE ART OF EYEWEAR"

T: 011 440 9001 • 063 915 0722  
eyecare@theopticalstudio.co.za  
Midways Mall • 280 Corlett Drive

**medicare**

SAVOY PHARMACY	PERCELIA PHARMACY
<b>MONDAY – FRIDAY</b> 8:30am – 5:30pm <b>SATURDAY:</b> 9:00am – 2:00pm <b>SUNDAY</b> <b>AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:</b> 9:00am – 1:00pm	<b>MONDAY – THURSDAY:</b> 8:30am – 5:30pm <b>FRIDAY:</b> 8:00am – 4:30pm <b>SATURDAY: CLOSED</b> <b>SUNDAY</b> <b>AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:</b> 9:00am – 1:00pm
☎ (011) 885-1200/1 savoy@medicarehealth.co.za	☎ (011) 640-4321/31 percelia@medicarehealth.co.za

**YESHIVA COLLEGE**  
The Torah School of Excellence

Playground | Preparatory | Primary | Girls High | Boys High

**FOUNDATION PHASE REMEDIAL TEACHER – REMEDIAL QUALIFICATION**

Yeshiva College is a mainstream Jewish Day school based in Glenhazel. It operates through a dual curriculum, offering excellence in both secular and Jewish studies.

Our Yavneh Remedial stream is growing and looking for a Grade 3 teacher from January 2022.

<b>Minimum requirements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A 4 year qualification or 3 year degree in early child hood/ foundation phase.</li><li>• A postgraduate qualification in education/inclusive education/ special needs/remedial education.</li></ul>	educator within a remedial setting
<b>Experience:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 years + experience within a remedial school setting as an educator.</li><li>• Evidence of continued professional development.</li></ul>	<b>Competencies/Skills/ Requirements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Solid knowledge of remedial school outcomes and curriculum</li><li>• Familiar with IEP</li><li>• Team player</li><li>• Knowledge and benefits of multi-disciplinary interventions</li><li>• Excellent communication skills as well as problems solving abilities</li><li>• Technical competencies to be able to integrate technology into teaching and learning.</li><li>• SACE registration /or international equivalent</li></ul>
<b>Duties Required:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be responsible for all duties as required of an academic</li></ul>	

Only successful candidates will be contacted. Please email a short CV to v.bank@yeshivacollege.co.za by 28 July 2021.

**Get your COVID-19 vaccine at The Base**

**This Sunday, 25 July**

**Everyone over 35 is welcome.**

**No medical aid necessary.**

**First and second dose Pfizer vaccine if your due date has arrived.**

**Book now:**  
**www.thebase.org.za/vaccine**

designbandits.co.za/20721



# Making matches in heaven work on earth

In celebration of Tu B’Av, the Jewish holiday of love, **Mirah Langer** asked communal spiritual leaders to share their personal stories and insights about relationships.

## Rabbi Yossy and Rebbetzin Rochel Goldman Life rabbi emeritus, Sydenham Shul: Johannesburg

After 48 years together, the Goldmans’ advice is that “the first 25 years are the hardest”, jokes Rabbi Goldman. In actuality, in their decades together and as the parents of 11 children and numerous grandchildren, the couple are a wealth of wisdom when it comes to relationships. “Understand that you won’t change people. Learn to respect each other. ‘Love’ is a four-letter word. So is ‘work’. It’s a work-in-progress. Be patient. People who rush to the lawyer often regret it.”

The Goldmans have forged a life of Jewish practice and service, and it’s this, ultimately, which they see as having centred their marriage together. “Living an observant, traditional Jewish life and feeling the presence of Hashem in your lives adds to your quality of life. Practices like Shabbos and *mikvah* go a long way to enhance marriage and family life,” reflect the couple, whose union was bestowed with the blessing of the Lubavitcher Rebbe right from the start.

“Though we came from somewhat different backgrounds in terms of our families, we had similar values and goals in life. We also received the guidance and blessings of the Rebbe to



go ahead with it, and that gave us confidence,” the couple says.

They first met on the suggestion of Goldman’s sister, who had come to know Rochel at seminary. “I was studying in Montreal and she was working in New York. I flew in for a quick first date, and when we saw there was potential, we dated on my next trip to New York for a few weeks.”

Married in June 1973, their unity is forged by a belief in the importance and sanctity of marriage. “Once we had children, keeping the family strong, stable, happy, and together was a priority in our lives. We believe in *bashert*, that we are soulmates, so we just have to work things out.”

The couple study Torah and Chassidic philosophy together “which gives life greater depth”. Since lockdown, they have also enjoyed the simple pleasure of taking walks together.

## Rabbi Levi and Rebbetzin Chaya Avtzon Linksfield Senderwood Hebrew Congregation: Johannesburg

“He’s going to marry that girl!” This was the confident declaration of Rabbi Avtzon’s sister after he came home “grinning ear to ear” from his first date with Chaya.

“Less than three weeks later, we were officially engaged. You might say, ‘Three weeks – so long?’” they quip, “The truth is, we were ready after two weeks, but waited for Chaya’s parents to come from South Africa to celebrate the engagement.”

Although Chaya is from South Africa, they met when she had finished at seminary and was teaching in New Jersey. At the time, Avtzon was living with his family in New York City.

After their marriage, which took place in the Johannesburg City Hall, the couple settled in New York City. However, it was Avtzon, who about a year after being married, initiated moving to South Africa. Chaya didn’t need much convincing.



“Within two days, it was finalised. We moved here not long after. We had zero job prospects, just a strong intuition that this place would be good for us. How right we were!”

This week, on the 14th of Av, they celebrate their 12th Hebrew wedding anniversary. The couple, who are blessed with six children, say that the core of every marriage needs to be about “lots of talking and sharing”.

“Two adults working on becoming better people is the simple recipe” for positive relationships, suggest the Avtzons.

“Marriage is made out to be much more complicated and

sophisticated than it actually is. Most issues in marriage aren’t marriage issues per se. They are his or her individual character flaws that need work and maturing [from]. If two people work on themselves each day, the marriage will flourish.”

The couple continue to build a life of shared values together, and in their downtime, also enjoy the art of constructing something beautiful: completing puzzles and even sometimes Lego together.

## Rabbi Greg and Rebbetzin Andrea Alexander Temple Israel Cape Town Progressive Jewish Congregation

“We have been together for 20 years, and you don’t get there without being willing to apologise, forgive, be patient, understanding, agree to disagree, and make time for your relationship. All of this is important and holy work.” So reflects Rabbi Greg and Rebbetzin Andrea Alexander on the path they have followed in their relationship.

The couple first met when he was at rabbinical school in London and she was running the cheder of the progressive synagogue in Budapest.

“The backstory is that [Andrea’s] rabbi was trying to *shidduch* [match-make] her with Greg’s *chavrutah* [study partner]. Before she met the *chavrutah* however, she met Greg, and then sat in on a text study session he was leading. They started to discuss Torah, and the rest is history.”

A week later, they begun to discuss marriage. Two decades and three children later, they have forged a connection on a number of levels. Together, they do Tai Chi and climb Table Mountain, and when it comes to principles and practices, they share “dreams, ideals, the way we imagine and dream about community, love of creativity, culture, ritual, love of theatre, love of being citizens of the world, love of music and singing together. Love. Work and more work. When things are difficult, you have to dig deep and work through it.”



## Rabbi Sam and Rebbetzin Aviva Thurgood Beit Midrash Morasha at Arthur’s Road: Cape Town

It was as Bnei Akiva madrichim at the age of 18 that Rabbi Sam and Rebbetzin Aviva Thurgood first met. “We started off being friends, and I think that really is a beautiful way to start,” reflects the rebbetzin.

While Thurgood jokes that getting married was a “leap of faith”, his wife reminds him how a lighter moment during camp duties become a deeper sign of the kind of union they realised they might share in the future. “Sam was fun-loving, as he is now. He had this cap, a special one that he had got from America. We were doing something with the kids [at Bnei] and it was lots of fun. We ended up with excess flour, and we started throwing flour and water at each other.”

Although it “ruined his cap, for which he’s never forgiven me”, laughs the rebbetzin, “he did once say to me that in that moment, he knew that we would have fun together. I think that’s a great quality to have in a relationship”.

From this starting point, their relationship has “continued to develop over time” and they are united in knowing that “we can learn together and from each other”. The parents of four children also believe in the importance of having common goals. “We have always been heading in the same direction, and even when we are at different places, we’re still converging rather than diverging,” says Thurgood.

The advice he gives the couples he marries is that “a happy marriage isn’t a given and isn’t even the average; a good, happy, and strong marriage is an above-average result, and will require an above-average effort. You can’t rely on an average amount of forgiveness, compassion, kindness, and conflict resolution. You have to bring an above-average amount of commitment to all of those things for true results.”

“I would just add, never stop enjoying being together,” says the rebbetzin. After all, throughout their relationship they have kept their bond with the same shared sense of joy and adventure that brought them together as teenagers. “Even when things are tough,” they always know that “we can laugh and have fun”, she says. Indeed, for a recent wedding anniversary – they have been married for 13 years – they went paragliding together. Next up, they hope, is a sky diving escapade!





# From the cockpit – secrets of a Jewish pilot

Veteran South African pilot Robert Schapiro wrote *Secrets from the Cockpit* before he died. His wife, journalist Arlene Getz, talks to **Mirah Langer** about it.

## How did the book come into being?

It evolved from Robert's decision to write about his life for our son, Morgan. As Robert wrote in his introduction, Morgan loved his stories, and always said he should write them down.

Robert finished the manuscript after he was diagnosed with mesothelioma, a rare asbestos-related cancer that affects the lining of the lung, and I promised him I'd edit it and get it published.

## The two of you attended Herzlia. What are some of your earliest memories of him and his determination to break the mould of expected careers for "nice Jewish boys" at the time?

Robert and I met when we were in a school play in primary school. Even back then, flying was all he talked about. I remember clearly how so many people either made fun of him for it or just felt sorry for him because flying school was so competitive.

For me, Robert's memoir is relevant on many levels. Yes, it's about a young man who fought the odds to live his dream. But it's more than just the story of one person's life. It's also a snapshot of an era in the evolution of aviation and in the history of South Africa.

## In order to fulfil Robert's dream of becoming a pilot, he had to enter the apartheid-era South African Air Force and was even involved in the border war. Yet, he was clearly ideologically against the state. How did he navigate this?

Remember this was the 1970s, when all the young men of my generation were conscripted for national service, and

many of them did get deployed to the border. What was different was that his passion for flying made him agree to join the Permanent Force because it was the only way he could get the pilot training he needed to get into South African Airways (SAA).

## He was subject to rampant antisemitism. How did he cope?

Robert sums up the antisemitism right at the start of the book, when he wrote, "Not a day – sometimes not an hour – of my years in the South African military went by without one of my Afrikaner

name-calling. Then he either fought back hard or ran away and hid.

## How did the two of you get married?

We started dating after we bumped into each other at a restaurant in Cape Town. He was already in SAA, and I'd recently graduated from Rhodes with my journalism degree. When we got married a few years later, one of his aunts told me how happy she was that we'd finally got together because as a child, he'd never stopped talking about me.

## Robert offers a behind-the-scenes look at some of the behaviour and culture of SAA. What did he find the most startling?

Air crews could have as long

who reigned over their cockpits, expected blind obedience, and thought the rules didn't apply to them.

## What did Robert's Jewish identity mean to him?

He didn't just see himself as a pilot, he saw himself as a Jewish pilot.

Tradition was important to him. He grew up in an Orthodox home, loved family Shabbat dinners, and had us all in stitches when he used to describe the weird sounds of meat being put into the mincer when his granny made *pirogen*.

He was an active member of our New York shul community, and impressively dedicated to teaching Morgan his Barmitzvah portion.

## Which is your favourite anecdote in the book and why?

One story that is just so Robert is when he decided he needed a pet to keep him company during one of his training courses in Japan. Hotel rooms aren't exactly

conducive environments for that, but Robert decided that one of the small red crayfish he'd seen at the local fishmonger would be the answer.

He ended up having to buy three of the creatures because the fishmonger wouldn't sell him less than 200g worth, brought them back to his room, agonised over what to feed them, wondered why they barely moved, and then hid under the sheets when they became energised

enough to wake him up with the clacking of their claws in the middle of the night. He ended up keeping just one of the three, and of course, he named him Claw.

## Tell us more about what he was like beyond the pages of the book.

Robert was, to use one of his favourite words, a *mensch*. He was kind and generous.

He was enormously talented. He made gorgeous wooden furniture, restored old houses, and was an excellent cook. He baked incredible bread. At the same time, he was genuinely modest.

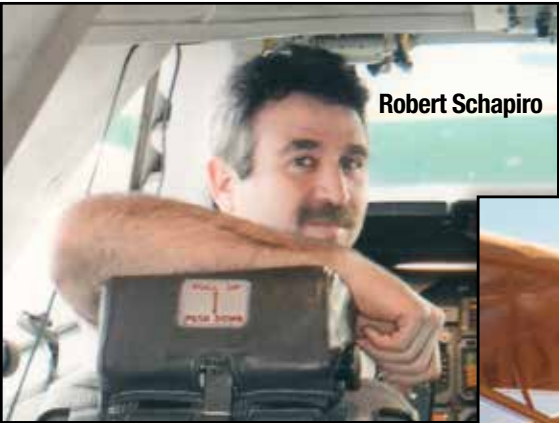
He was very much his own person. When he wasn't in his pilot's uniform, he lived in torn T-shirts and baggy shorts covered in paint stains. He hated formal clothes, and thought he was very clever when he found sweatpants that were the same colour as the flying pants issued by Nippon Cargo Airlines (NCA). He used to change into those after take-off, and tell himself that no-one could tell the difference. NCA managers didn't see it quite the same way.

He was a wonderful father. And I couldn't have asked for better, or funnier, husband.

## How does Morgan feel to see the book in print?

Robert always regretted that his flying meant he had to spend so much time away from us. Years ago, he wrote, illustrated, and self-published a series of children's stories for Morgan. The first one was called, *Where Does Daddy Go?* and it showed Morgan what Robert did when he was on a flight. It ends with Robert telling Morgan how he misses him every day that he's away.

Morgan loved those books and is thrilled about the memoir making it into print.



Robert Schapiro



Robert Schapiro and Arlene Getz

barrack mates calling me *Jood* [Jew]. They weren't saying it to be nice."

He said that it wasn't unusual for the Jewish recruits to be pulled out of the ranks to do unpleasant menial jobs. In Robert's case, it must have been worse because he would have been the lone Jew.

Sometimes he'd have to talk his way out of things, like the time when his barracks mates asked him to speak "Jewish". He started telling them in Hebrew how little he thought of them, and realised when he saw their shocked faces that he'd actually switched his insults into Afrikaans by mistake.

Most times, he said, he ignored it unless it became more than harmless

as a one-week stopover in places like Lisbon, and it wasn't unusual for some pilots to spend the time waiting for their return flight doing little else but visiting local bars. On Robert's first international trip, the captain got so drunk one night, he ended up passing out on the floor of a local train.

Robert also disliked the autocratic captains known in the airline as the Royal Family. Many were World War II veterans

# Icy response to Ben & Jerry's decision to exit settlements

JTA STAFF

Kosher supermarkets are rethinking their inventory. Politicians are emptying their freezers. And the foreign minister of Israel is vowing to get involved in local American politics.

The reactions were all part of the firestorm that quirked ice cream manufacturer Ben & Jerry's set off on Monday morning, 19 July, with its announcement that it would no longer sell ice cream in "occupied Palestinian territory".

The Vermont-based company, founded by two Jews and long known for its left-leaning politics, had gone dark on social media for two months since the recent outbreak of violence in Israel and Gaza. The announcement broke that silence, simultaneously infuriating Israel advocates who said the decision was an unfair attack on Israel, and disappointing pro-Palestinian advocates who said the company should have gone further.

Israeli politicians, supermarkets in the United States, various pundits, and even Ben & Jerry's current Israeli licensee went after the ice cream maker and its corporate parent, British multinational Unilever, for its statement. (The company's Jewish founders, Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, no longer manage the

brand, but have often used their frozen treats to push social-justice causes.)

Reactions from Israel's leaders were harsh. In spite of the distinctions Ben & Jerry's made in its statement between Israel and the "occupied Palestinian territory", Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, a long-time supporter of the settlements, called the decision a "boycott of Israel" and said Ben & Jerry's "decided to brand itself as an anti-Israel ice cream". His predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu, tweeted, "Now we Israelis know which ice cream NOT to buy."

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, the architect of the current ruling coalition, who is generally to Bennett's left regarding the Palestinians, went even further, calling the decision a "shameful surrender to antisemitism, to BDS [the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement], and to all that is wrong with the anti-Israel and anti-Jewish discourse". He called on US states to take domestic action against Ben & Jerry's based on state laws that prohibit the

government from contracting with entities that boycott Israel.

Israeli cabinet minister Orna Barbivay posted a TikTok video of her throwing a pint in the trash; the flavour she tossed couldn't be determined at press time.

Other Israeli public figures appeared to compare the ice cream company's settlement boycott to terrorism. Eran Cicurel, an editor at Israel's public broadcaster, tweeted that the colour scheme on Ben & Jerry's statement was similar to that of the flag of the terror group Hamas.

Amichai Chikli, a right-wing legislator in Israel's Knesset, tweeted, "Ben & Jerry's you picked the wrong side", and posted an infamous photo from 2000 of a Palestinian who had just killed two Israeli soldiers displaying his hands through a window, covered in the soldiers' blood.

American Jewish groups offered varied responses to the company's scoop that mapped to their political

orientation.

Jeremy Ben-Ami, the president of the left-leaning Israel advocacy group J Street, said that Ben & Jerry's was drawing "a principled and rational distinction between commercial transactions in the state of Israel and those in the territory it occupies", and said the term "antisemitism" didn't apply to the company's actions.

Daniel Sokatch, chief executive of the left-wing New Israel Fund, said that Ben & Jerry's wasn't being antisemitic in exiting "occupied Palestinian territory" because "these lands aren't sovereign Israel".

"Attacking people who try and distinguish between sovereign and non-sovereign Israel by calling them antisemitic is to evade a matter of fact, abuse the meaning of 'antisemitism', and ultimately gaslight those who would try and work towards a future of equality and justice for Israelis and Palestinians alike," Sokatch said in a statement.

The Anti-Defamation League, a centrist group, said it was "disappointed" by the move. "You can disagree with policies without feeding into dangerous campaigns that seek to undermine Israel," it said, but refrained from calling for specific action.

And the right-wing Zionist Organization of America

Photo: Win McNamee/Getty Images



Ben & Jerry's co-founders Jerry Greenfield, left, and Ben Cohen

Continued on page 10>>

Property Sales | New Projects | Rentals | Property Management | Land Sales | Commercial | International Sales

ISRAEL

PROPERTIES

BY STAMELMAN & PARTNERS

www.israel-properties.com | Tel/WhatsApp IL +972 50 446 9515 | Tel/WhatsApp SA +27 82 608 0168 | trevor@israel-properties.com



# MP calls for recognition of Pretoria shul’s heritage

TALI FEINBERG

When Madeleine Hicklin recently viewed the dilapidated state of the Old Synagogue on Paul Kruger Street in the Tshwane city centre, she was moved to tears as she realised that a “heritage icon for Jews and South Africans” now lies in ruins.

Along with being a shul and a place of *simchas* and memories, the building was converted into a court and was the site of the start of the treason trials of 1960 and 1964 as well as the inquest into the death of Steve Biko.

Now, in her role as Democratic Alliance shadow deputy minister of the department of public works and infrastructure, Hicklin is fighting for the shul to be restored, and for it to house a memorial, museum, education centre, archival collection, or aspects of all of these.

But it will be an uphill battle, as there are plans to accommodate the department of sport, arts and culture’s (DSAC’s) head office on the property. This means that the building should be restored, but Hicklin is worried that it won’t honour the history of the site. She says she will continue to push for at least a corner of the space to be dedicated to the past.

Hicklin says that in May, she wrote to Public Works and Infrastructure Minister Patricia de Lille asking what the Heritage Advisory Services was doing about the shocking state of the building.

She also asked whether the department would “restore the building to its former state either as a synagogue or a monument to be used as a heritage education centre for both the Jewish and the South African community at large in Tshwane”.

Finally, she queried “whether the department will enter into a public-private partnership with interested individuals with a view to opening an education centre, where educational tours could be offered to tourists and scholars interested in the history of the Rivonia Trial and South African Jewry”.

In her response on 6 July, De Lille said that plans for restoring the building were underway. “In this regard, a redevelopment proposal as well as a pre-feasibility study have been conducted and recommended the best use for the facility.

Notwithstanding the fact that the synagogue building envelope isn’t in a good condition, the building’s roof has been refurbished to ensure that the interior is kept stable and dry until it is restored. There is furthermore a 24-hour security presence on the site,” she wrote.

De Lille said that “the restoration will be guided by established conservation principles” and “will recognise the different historic layers embedded in the Old Jewish Synagogue. The feasibility study supported the option to redevelop the property and maximise state land. In this regard, the recommendation is to accommodate the DSAC’s head office on the property. The Old Jewish Synagogue is proposed to be used as both a monument and as a multi-use centre for conferences and exhibitions, open to the public and



The Old Jewish Synagogue

tourists. The proposal has been submitted to DSAC, and is awaiting its concurrence.”

She added that “the execution of this project via a public-private partnership is subject to the completion of the feasibility study and associated procurement plan for National Treasury’s approval.

The required feasibility study will be commissioned on receipt of concurrence from DSAC for the proposal presented.”

“Even if the government doesn’t look at the building from a Jewish perspective, it has

significance from a South African perspective,” Hicklin says. “Accommodating a head office is fantastic, but what are they going to do to preserve the history that the building signifies?”

“It was the first synagogue to be consecrated in Tshwane, which means it has tremendous significance to the Jewish population,” she says. “Then, by memorialising the South African history, we will ensure that future generations understand that our democracy ‘started’ in that building. So there needs to be a space that celebrates that, as well as the Jewish contribution to the evolution of South Africa. This contribution is immense, and should be honoured.

“My promise is that as long as I’m in this department, I will ‘hold their feet to the fire’ to make sure this happens,” she says. “We won’t let go of this as Jews or South Africans. Sometimes in South Africa there is selective memory, but history cannot be re-written, and it needs to be recorded. The treason trial and the Steve Biko inquest hold a ‘dark place’ in South African history, but we can’t just let them ‘disappear’. We need to preserve all parts of history so we don’t repeat the mistakes of the past.”



## Transforming a rubbish dump into an oasis

ILAN OSSENDRYVER

After greening the desert with fruit and vegetables, Israelis looked elsewhere to make improvements. The country’s latest environmental achievement is to turn the Hiriya rubbish dump between Tel Aviv and Ben Gurion Airport into a park.

This former dump has been transformed into the largest green area in the Middle East, with more than 8 000 dunams (8km<sup>2</sup>) of parkland.

The Hiriya dump (Hiriya in Arabic means good in the sense of goodness and blessing in the past) was an eyesore and a rather smelly one at that, accumulating the majority of garbage from the greater Tel Aviv area.

The vision to convert this dumping ground into a green space came from the late Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. He was also the general who, during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, led his soldiers and tanks behind the Egyptian Third Army and surrounded them, cutting



Photos: Ilan Ossendryver

them off from mainland Egypt in the heat of the Sinai.

Today, the luscious green park has little lakes, dams, and revitalised rivers, with a



huge variety of plants, bushes, and trees. Aptly, it has been named the Ariel Sharon Park. Venture to the edge of it, and you see a spectacular view of Tel

Aviv.

The gas released by the landfill is being collected and rerouted underground, past the Shapirim Stream and Route #1 (the main Tel Aviv – Jerusalem highway) to a textile plant in Azur, where the gas is converted into green energy.

According to Shlomit Doten Gissin from the department of environment and sustainability at the park, the number of bird species has risen from only 80 to more than 200 species, with bird hides everywhere for visitors to watch birds in silence.

Gissin says the vegetation in the park was specifically planted to encourage low-flying birds so as not to interfere with the flight path to Ben Gurion Airport. Hundreds of indigenous plants, trees, and shrubs have been planted among fresh water ponds.

Some plants have been planted diagonally on the slopes to allow easy movements of butterflies so they don’t hit a “wall” of plants. There are also tiny animals to be found, even jackals and smaller cats.

This park is one of the wonders of unusable space being converted into flourishing public spaces in Israel. Completion should take about another year, but it’s already being enjoyed by many.

## Icy response to Ben & Jerry’s decision to exit settlements

>> Continued from page 9

called for a boycott of the ice cream, proclaiming that Ben & Jerry’s is “bad for your moral and physical health”. The call was echoed by others such as Jewish conservative commentator Ben Shapiro, who said he would stop eating the brand.

Vermonters for Justice in Palestine, an activist group based in Ben & Jerry’s home state that has been leading a years-long campaign against the ice cream maker for doing business in Israel at all, said the move didn’t go far enough.

“By maintaining a presence in Israel, Ben & Jerry’s continues to be complicit in the killing, imprisonment, and dispossession of Palestinian people and the flaunting of international law,” the group’s president, Kathy Shapiro, said in a statement. A related group, Occupy Burlington, had been a driving force behind the most recent social-media

push against Ben & Jerry’s.

Meanwhile, CodePink, an international left-wing women’s group, praised the decision for showing that pressure works. But the group also said the company should do more.

“Ben & Jerry’s included in the statement that they will be remaining in Israel,” said Danaka Katovich, a Middle East campaign coordinator for CodePink. “I hope Ben & Jerry’s continues to listen to Palestinians and their demands moving forward, and will recognise that Israel’s system of apartheid exists not only in the occupied territories but from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean sea.”

The Israeli licensee of Ben & Jerry’s, which operates a factory in the town of Be’er Tuvia, took to social media hours after the announcement to denounce the American corporation and its parent company. It called on Israeli

consumers to continue purchasing the ice cream brand because hundreds of local workers needed their support.

In a recorded video, Chief Executive Avi Zinger said he had been notified earlier on Monday morning that the company wouldn’t renew his license when it expires at the end of 2022.

“They did this because we wouldn’t agree to stop selling ice cream in all parts of Israel,” Zinger said. “The reason they did that is because of BDS pressure. We aren’t surrendering, and it’s important that you support us.”

In happier times for Ben & Jerry’s Israel relations, the company made a concentrated outreach to its customer base with original, Israel-exclusive flavours, including *charoset* and *matzah crunch* – both certified kosher for Passover.





UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WITWATERSRAND,  
JOHANNESBURG



100  
1922  
2022

In 2022 we celebrate **100**  
**years** of a great institution.

As Wits approaches its **centenary**, we  
celebrate the significant achievements  
of our Jewish alumni spread across the  
world and the strong bonds Wits has with  
our local and global Jewish communities.

Your support is key to Wits  
remaining a national treasure.

For more information visit  
**wits100.wits.ac.za**

**WITS. FOR GOOD.**



# South Africa’s “Jewish Mandela” on life and rebirth

SAUL KAMIONSKY

The oldest South African Holocaust survivor, Ella Blumenthal, turns 100 this Shabbat, the day after *I Am Here*, the award-winning documentary made about her life, has its first showing at the Durban Film Festival.

Nonetheless, Blumenthal who lives in Cape Town, will begin her Friday with her usual routine of catching up on emails, Facebook, and Instagram before calling her family overseas on FaceTime. Due to COVID-19, she will be spending Shabbat with her immediate family.

“A few shuls have arranged a pre and post-Shabbat Zoom session for my birthday,” she said. “On Sunday, I will have a Zoom call with my entire family from around the world.”

Speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* on Mandela Day on 18 July, Blumenthal said about former President Nelson Mandela, who died aged 95, “I didn’t have the privilege of meeting the great man. I’m in awe of his values, love of all people, and his ability to forgive.”

However, the similarities between these two memorable humans isn’t lost on those who know her. Said Jordy Sank, the director of *I Am Here*, “I can see so many similarities between him and Ella. They are both incredible examples of people who chose love and understanding over hate, and their life’s purpose is to spread positivity to everyone around them.”

They are both born around Shabbat Nachamu (Comforting), the sabbath after Tisha B’Av.

Both were destined to live long lives. Former Western Cape Premier Helen Zille praised both of them in her autobiography. In addition, Blumenthal travelled to Paris shortly after her liberation. She met her husband, Norman Blumenthal, in France’s capital. Less than four months after his release from prison, Mandela paid a two-day visit to Paris. There, he was joined by his second wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela. Further, the name “Evelyn” is shared by Mandela’s first wife, and one of Blumenthal’s children.

Blumenthal and Mandela are also linked by the number three. The former spent time at the Majdanek, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps, and Mandela’s 27 years in prison were split between Robben Island, Pollsmoor Prison, and Victor Verster Prison.

Like Mandela, who was a keen swimmer in his youth, Blumenthal enjoyed swimming as a girl growing up in Warsaw.

Today, Blumenthal said, “I used to swim at the Virgin Active every morning, except Shabbat, doing 18 lengths. I also used to walk along the promenade outside my flat every afternoon. But since COVID-19, I’ve been staying with my daughter in Camps Bay, and have to be content with short walks every day.” Mandela, too, was an avid walker.

In *I Am Here*, the witty, bubbly, and a larger-than-life Blumenthal is represented as having an aura similar to the “Madiba magic”.

Her zest for life comes through in the life-affirming documentary, which won the Audience Award for Best Documentary at the Atlanta Jewish Film Festival and is backed by the Claims Conference, which has supported many award-winning films, such as Hungarian Holocaust film *Son of Saul*.

At her 98th birthday celebration, Blumenthal opened up to close friends and family about her story of survival during the Holocaust in a way she had never done before. Her recollections, including tales of narrowly escaping death in a gas chamber and other harrowing incidents, put South Africa’s current challenges of COVID-19 and looting into perspective.

Along with uplifting stories, like dissuading her niece from ending her life and being saved by a nurse – her childhood friend – the immensely rewatchable film includes animation juxtaposed with present-day footage of Blumenthal performing her weekly spiritual rituals.

With antisemitism and Holocaust denial rife around the world, *I Am Here* and the new animated *Where is Anne Frank* couldn’t have come at a better time.

Asked about the symbolism of the blue butterfly, an animated visual that appears throughout *I Am Here*, Sank

said, “The blue butterfly symbolises the Jewish people, hope, faith, and so much more. I often like to let people gather their own interpretation of what it means, but as a filmmaker, it was a visual way of us communicating Ella’s spirit and faith.”

Said Gabriella Blumberg, the producer of *I Am Here*, “Ella, leading by example, shows us how to truly take time to appreciate each day, and notice the good that exists in the present. Her remarkable resilience in spite of all she has been through makes her a role model to us all.”

Said Sank, “I’m sure that for Ella, seeing the sheer devastation and upheaval that took place during the lootings was reminiscent of her time during the war. But I just know that she would pray for peace and for a speedy resolution.

“Ella is always able to see the silver lining in any situation, even COVID-19. I heard once that someone was complaining to Ella about how they were feeling during lockdown, and Ella was concentrating on the sunset and told them that we have so much to be grateful for.”

Blumenthal’s advice to those who are struggling is to “never give up and be positive. Know that the dark days will be over soon, and that the sun will shine again for all of us. We are here!”

• *Book to watch the virtual screening of ‘I Am Here’ at the Durban International Film Festival from 23 July to 1 August. Tickets are free. <https://www.durbanfilmfest.com/film/i-am-here/>*



Ella Blumenthal

# Cyber addicts slip under COVID-19 radar



OPINION

ANTONY RADOMSKY

Psycho-social media and literature have long highlighted the negative effects that the cyber age is having on our youth.

The computer screen, cell phone, internet, game console or tablet, when abused and/or used to replace human teaching and live interaction rather than as an educational tool, aren’t helpful. More often than not, they lead to the sacrifice of basic skills of analysis, synthesis, and application of knowledge. Add to this the decay in gross motor development and even interpersonal skills, and you have the real issues at play.

But what about the other dangers of unmonitored use of these devices by our youth?

The use of media devices and platforms increased with the advent of home or lockdown learning in the COVID-19 environment. But, due to the focus of our collective psyche shifting to safety from COVID-19 and fear of contraction of the virus, pre-COVID-19 awareness of the danger of unmonitored teenage (and even younger) access and behaviour in cyberspace has ironically slipped off the radar.

“I’m on my Google Classroom/WhatsApp group researching assignments,” is the prevalent reply to parents when asking their children or young adults what they are doing on the devices.

While this may be true to varying degrees, a device in the hands of a child or young adult with the knowledge that mum or dad doesn’t really ever check his/her phone, is a potentially precarious situation.

Here are some tips for parents, children, and young adults to better

- maximise cyber-safety in general:
- Be extremely selective when posting or re-posting images, conversations, videos, articles, and so on. Check with adults. Adults need to do their best to be constantly aware of what their children/young adults are posting out there;
  - If you become aware of any online cyberbullying on groups, posting of inappropriate messages or images, leave the group after reporting the event/s to a responsible adult in your home or school. Even though you may not have been the person who originally posted the negative post or image, once you forward it, you are held accountable for perpetuating the chain of publication of that post/image;
  - Be aware of games that can have a negative impact and dull sensitivities towards others when played too frequently;

- Certain things should always remain in the private domain. Don’t overshare, but be mindful of what’s posted. Ask yourself prior to posting, “Am I happy for this post to appear on the front page of the news tomorrow morning?”;
- Digital profiles should have privacy settings in place;
- Create specific times that you cut out screen time such as meal times, family gatherings, bed time, or homework and study time; and
- In most cases, parents are paying for the phone and contract. Audit your child/young adult’s phone at random intervals and ban inappropriate sites, games, activities, or platforms. Stay alert – stay safe!

• *Antony Radomsky is the principal of Eden College in Lyndhurst, Johannesburg.*



## Herzlia Kerem breaks new ground

The tree-filled haven of Herzlia Kerem Pre-Primary School’s new campus in Constantia offers the same warm, stimulating preschool experience as before, with an added sense of wonder at nature in all its glory, say the school’s teachers.

“Just being at the campus evokes feelings of wonder and calm, with beautiful trees, wide open space, and bunnies happily playing side-by-side in the lush grass with our children,” says Cara Jacobs, Herzlia Kerem’s head teacher.

This safe and beautiful new haven caters for children from 18 months to Grade R. “Kerem educates pupils using old-fashioned values and methods while incorporating the latest in technology like smart boards for a rich, balanced learning foundation. We always say that people make a space, and then imbue it with their energy. The dedication, time, and effort that has been put into creating our school is tangible and visible. Everything has been thought through from the tiniest detail,” Jacobs



Amanda and Chloe Nerwich on her first day at Toddler Group at Herzlia Kerem Pre-Primary

says. “The quality of the teaching and the facilities [at Kerem] are something we are proud of,” says Andries van Renssen, the executive director of United Herzlia Schools (UHS). “Most pupils who finish Grade R at Kerem will come to Herzlia Highlands Primary in the City Bowl when they go to Grade 1. It’s clear that the quality of teaching and care at Herzlia Kerem is the single biggest contributing factor to the success of those who come from there. We celebrate the opening of their new building.”

“Herzlia focuses on developing self-esteem and nurturing each child’s potential. Herzlia Kerem has a magnificent and dedicated team of teachers who stay up-to-date on the latest in childhood trends and issues,” says Geoff Cohen, UHS director of education.

Kerem offers morning and aftercare throughout the year from playgroup through to Grade R. Enrolments are open. Email Cara Jacobs at [kerem@herzlia.com](mailto:kerem@herzlia.com) to arrange a visit.

## UJW ices the cake for carers



Bev Cohen, executive member of the UJW in Johannesburg and Vanessa Weltman, project manager of UJW Johannesburg, deliver 67 cupcakes and cakes to Netcare Rosebank Hospital in honour of Mandela Day on 18 July

The Union of Jewish Women in Johannesburg showed it cared on Mandela Day by delivering a number of cakes, scones, and cookies to the Norwood Police Station, Netcare Rosebank Clinic, various Ampath and Lancet COVID-19 testing stations, a department of Helen Joseph Hospital, and the Thelle Mogoerane Regional Hospital in Vosloorus.

## KDVP pupil’s Gulag project wows international judges

Adam Bertoldi (King David High School Victory Park) beat thousands of contestants around the country for first place in the 2021 South African National Geography Olympiad. Round one of the Olympiad took place on 18 May 2021 and round two, a written task, was held on 23 June 2021.

The second round, in which 2 231 pupils participated, required the submission of a research project. Adam submitted a geography project on the Gulags of the Soviet Union. It was assessed internationally, and they were extremely impressed with the standard. Adam has won an ESRI GIS (geographic information system mapping) course worth R10 000.



Adam Bertoldi





*The*  
South African  
Gold Coin  
Exchange  
THE MARKET LEADERS

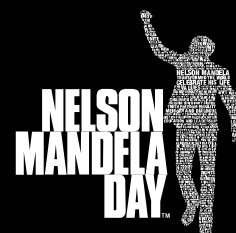
KINDNESS IS THE  
GOLDEN THREAD



## PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE 67 BLANKETS INITIATIVE

VISIT US AT: THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD COIN EXCHANGE HEAD OFFICE -  
4TH FLOOR, ATRIUM ON 5TH, SANDTON, JHB • BROOKLYN MALL • SANDTON CITY  
WALMER PARK • EASTGATE • SOMERSET WEST • GATEWAY • MALL OF THE NORTH  
LIBERTY MIDLANDS MALL • PAVILION MALL • CANAL WALK • V&A WATERFRONT

CALL US ON 011 784 8551 • VISIT [SCOINSHOP.COM](http://SCOINSHOP.COM)





# RIP Fred, terrier of my life

Fred died this morning. Not to speak ill of the dead or anything, it needs to be said that he was a bit of a narcissist. We were never close, and if I’m honest, I could hardly stand him. I’m also confident that he felt the same way towards me. And whereas my family is bereft at his passing, I probably won’t miss him.

Fred Feldman was a Yorkshire Terrier with plenty of attitude and no personality. He was self-absorbed and relentless, and would do anything for a piece of chicken breast. But nothing for schnitzel, because he hated to chew anything for himself.

Fred joined our family in a prisoner-swap deal that went down in Centurion outside Pretoria. The terms remain vague in my mind, but I know that it involved a road without a name, a house without a fence, and a handler with a heavy accent and legs with more varicose veins than I thought was possible. I do recall that we were required to leave my daughter’s “Nuk” dummies in her dustbin in exchange for a six-week-old puppy that would torment me for the next 13 years. Had I known then what I know now, I would gladly have offered my three-year-old a lifetime supply of whatever colour she preferred and an orthodontal treatment plan.

Parenting is seldom easy, but the morning of Fred’s passing was particularly difficult. I had carried him downstairs at about 04:00 as I normally do (he hated to walk so early in the day), and I had taken him outside, where he did nothing but wait to come inside (preferring to use my study for his ablutions). I had cut him some chicken breast (schnitzel not being his thing) and then went to do some work (me, not Fred). Although he normally nagged me to pick him up and put him on the couch (he didn’t like to jump up), he didn’t do that this morning. It was toward the end of my radio show when

## INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



I got the message from my daughter that he had shuffled off the mortal coil. In truth, I was surprised, more than anything because he had done something for himself. I left the studio as soon after my show ended, but noticed that the day was distinctly warmer, and the sun was shining that little bit brighter than the day before. I’m certain that I wasn’t imagining it.

I didn’t need to be a body language expert to interpret the look on my wife’s face when I walked into the house. It contained a written warning that suggested exactly what was expected from me. I needed to be supportive and contrite. And sad. No humour. No jokes. And definitely no celebration. I didn’t seek clarity on the duration that the edict would be in place. Which in retrospect might have been a mistake.

I’m not going to win any parenting awards this week.

After 18 months of excess death, sickness, of watching friends and family suffer through isolation and anxiety, this morning was a welcome reminder. It was a day reminiscent of a time when we would focus on the loss of a pet, the sadness of a girl who lost a companion. It was a reminder of a time when we would drive to Centurion to find a road without a name, a house without a fence, and a heavily accented woman with varicose veins. I also know that as much as he annoyed me, tomorrow morning at 04:00, I will miss picking up that selfish Yorkshire Terrier, carrying him downstairs, and cutting him chicken breasts because he never liked schnitzel.

## A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

### Compelled to clean up and contribute

In the early days of his presidency, when the United States was all but crippled by the effects of the Great Depression and a pall of despair and despondency hung heavy over the nation, Franklin D Roosevelt famously said, “It’s common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly, and try another. But above all, try something.” As history shows, these weren’t mere words, but a statement of intent that underpinned what came to be known as the New Deal, a comprehensive array of laws and state-headed social upliftment initiatives that, while not solving the country’s problems overnight, kick-started the essential process of rebuilding.

What’s true for governments is equally true for ordinary citizens. In times of difficulty, each individual should look for ways to be part of the solution and contribute, even in a small way. As our own tradition puts it, “You aren’t obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.” (Pirkei Avot, 2:21).

Last week, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, as the representative body of the Jewish community, had the opportunity to make a difference on the ground when we joined with our fellow South Africans from across the spectrum to clean up the Mayfield Mall in Daveyton in the wake of the devastating looting and destruction that had taken place there.

Following an approach from the office of the MEC for sport, arts, culture, and recreation, Mbali Hlophe, we put out a call to the community and early on Thursday, 15 July, a seven-car convoy set out from the KosherWorld parking lot. When it arrived at its destination, the volunteers were greeted

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



## ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev

by scenes of utter devastation, but together with local community members, they painstakingly set about sweeping, cleaning, and removing debris such as rocks, broken glass, and discarded packaging until the task was done.

Commenting on the experience, National Director Wendy Kahn wrote afterwards, “We left knowing that we had played some role in restoring some order to this area. And we had also showed a community in the East Rand that the Jewish community was concerned about them.”

At both national and local level, the Board is involved in many outreach projects with The Angel Network and other partners to assist communities affected by the unrest. Since Durban and other places in KwaZulu-Natal were especially hard hit by the violence, much of this critical work is being undertaken by our KwaZulu-Natal branch, the Council for KwaZulu-Natal Jewry.

Of immediate concern is alleviating the desperate poverty which so many were suffering from even before the unrest, and which the violence and looting has greatly exacerbated. You can assist us in this work by supporting our Food Relief Appeal at SA Jewish Board of Deputies, Standard Bank Killarney, Account 200305190, Swift code SBZAZAJJ, Reference Food Relief.

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

## Letters

### WHO ARE THE REAL LOOTERS?

Having witnessed probably the worst outbreak of civil unrest since the dawn of democracy, one difficult question needs to be answered. Who are the real looters?

What took place last week was pillaging in its crudest form. Such plunder has been experienced in many countries around the word, recently in the United States and right now, in both Cuba and Swaziland. Looting and plundering in its crudest form seems to be the knee-jerk reaction of the oppressed and disadvantaged. Sadly, in the case of South Africa, the damage was enormous.

It seems, according to some analysis, that looters didn’t attack and wantonly destroy much infrastructure. In the main, they looted, stole what they could get their hands on, and fled with their spoils. The jury is still out on that. The question remains who the real looters are – not those crude

thieves with that 52-inch flat screen TV or trolley full of food.

The real looters are far more sophisticated. While the crude looting took place over only a few days, the sophisticated ransacking has taken place over many, many years, and probably continues today.

Anyone listening to the evidence presented before the Zondo Commission these past two years could name tens if not hundreds of politicians, director generals, public servants, municipal leaders, executives, and managers of state-owned entities, as well as leaders in private business who plundered the country with such efficient sophistication, it would make the *Wolf of Wall Street* look like an amateur. Paul Holden, who runs the non-governmental organisation Shadow World Investigations has traced more than R50 billion plundered from the state thus far but says the

true cost could be substantially higher.

Finger pointing by some “honest” ruling party leaders is really part of the African National Congress’s (ANC’s) internal factional conflict. Does anyone really believe that only one faction is complicit in corruption?

The plunder happened under the watch of the current leadership. Only days after the COVID-19 pandemic was recognised as a national emergency, a host of “shady” PPE (personal protective equipment) tenders were awarded to the strangest of people, and who can ignore the very recent issue of a sitting health minister fingered for questionable deals?

The façade of respectability by the “connected and influential” is starting to wear thin. Even the masses are starting to question the ANC. – **Allan Wolman, Israel**

# Humanity’s best rises after violent unrest

>>Continued from page 1

the SAJBD, in addition to assisting and supporting our Jewish community in KwaZulu-Natal, has prioritised the alleviation of hunger that the past unrest has unleashed in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng.”

In collaboration with other foundations in Gauteng, “in the past week, we have supported the distribution of hundreds of food parcels to areas in distress”. These include Eldorado Park, Orange Farm, Kliptown, Vanderbijlpark, as well as Alexandra, and more help is being planned for the East Rand.

On the ground, the Board took part in clean-up operations in Daveyton. “Although it was heart wrenching to see the destruction, it was also incredibly uplifting to be part of the solution. We were so moved by the community in Daveyton, that we intend to return with other ways of supporting the community,” said Kahn.

The SAJBD is also working with The Angel Network in KwaZulu-Natal as it organises truck and air deliveries of essential goods. Glynne Wolman, the founder of The Angel Network,

said that within four days, they had managed to collect more than R500 000 in funding, and had already dispatched trucks loaded with 1 800 food parcels, 200kg of nutritionally fortified e’Pap, 14 000kg of mielie meal, and one ton of soya meal to help those left in the direst conditions after the unrest.

“We have seen the worst of people, and now we have the chance to see people at their best. More than anything [in the aftermath], it has been *ubuntu* in its truest form,” said Wolman.

Jewish humanitarian group Cadena’s director of international alliances, Miriam Kajomovitz, echoed Wolman’s observations. The organisation has been helping in Gauteng in various capacities, be it clean-up operations, organising psychological support, and now planning small-business relief for those whose livelihoods were destroyed: “We are all working together. Everyone is giving of their expertise and what they can for the good of all.

“Crisis is always an opportunity for change,” Kajomovitz observed.

# Commonwealth Jewish Council calls for release of ‘Nigeria three’

>>Continued from page 2

has managed to organise provision of kosher food for them, which the security services agreed to allow. They also agreed for Benaym to be transported to the French embassy for medical attention, as long as he was returned to detention, and that is what was done. Israel has no ‘formal locus’ to help as they didn’t enter on Israeli passports, but it has sought to engage government and services.”

He believes that they are being held in some kind of “detention circumstances”, but cannot say what these conditions are like, if they are separated, or if they are being held with others. But he says that the fact that the French embassy was willing to return Benaym suggests it was “probably not extreme”.

A member of the Igbo community, speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* on condition of anonymity, says, “Our information is that Rudy and co. came here to do a documentary on the connection of the Igbo people to Biblical Israelites. Many Igbos are reviving the practices of their ancestors and returning to Judaism. This is what Rudy and his team wanted to do – to hear our story as

told by our people. But sadly, some local people hijacked the original intention of Rudy and began to make political capital out of it. The team was bringing a Sefer Torah to be donated to our community. We were very happy that many Israelis would get to know about our Israelite heritage and know that we are brethren.

“Our people are very saddened by the arrest, but we don’t want to heighten tension by making utterances as the matter is being handled. We keep praying for their safety. We believe they will be released because their visit was for religious reasons. We don’t believe they came here to undermine the security of Nigeria. In our synagogues, we don’t entertain separatist activities. We are very sad about their plight. We see it as someone getting into unforeseen trouble while in search of a long lost brother.”

The most recent update on the *We Were Never Lost* Instagram page is that, “Rudy, Noam, and David are still in custody, but are ok. Their spirits remain high. Three embassies are working diligently towards a resolution. No other action is necessary from the community at this stage, but thank you all for the care and support.”



We're sharing our big ad space  
with small businesses  
to help create better futures ♥

This page is proudly sponsored by

Hollard.  
presents  
**Big Ads**  
for Small Business

# ORDER BEANS ONLINE



## MOCOCOFFEE.CO.ZA

15% off your order  
use coupon code: BigAd15



## READY TO TAKE POWER BACK?

MAKE THE FIRST MOVE TO  
A GREENER FUTURE

OFF-GRID SOLAR

HYBRID SOLAR

BATTERY BACKUP

GET A QUOTE WITHIN 1 MINUTE  
@ [WWW.SOLAR365.CO.ZA](http://WWW.SOLAR365.CO.ZA)



## Let us help you tell a Compelling Story

The way information is consumed has changed. If you want your message to stick you need to engage people in a way that captures their attention and their imagination.

At Five Star Media our job is to unearth your story and communicate it to your market in a compelling way.

Services:

**TV Commercials | Digital Content  
Social Media Marketing | Virtual Events**

*Five Star Media is a true champion of the work of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre. They were there supporting us to create many of our unique educational films about the Holocaust since 2018. Their team's skills, ingenuity, sound advice, know-how and wide network in the field was and still is a huge asset. What a pleasure it is to work with all of them!*

- Tali Nates, Jhb Holocaust & Genocide Museum

Call us and let's discover your own story together.

Alan | 082 512 1059 [alan@fivestarmedia.co.za](mailto:alan@fivestarmedia.co.za)  
Kirsty | 082 890 2184 [kirsty@fivestarmedia.co.za](mailto:kirsty@fivestarmedia.co.za)

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



Since 1995  
*Design Bandits*

## NEED A DESIGNER

**We are specialist designers and layout artists of:**

**Business Cards | Magazines | Brochures | Adverts**

**T-shirts | Flyers | Websites | Billboards | Logos**

**Bookmarks | Posters | Invitations | Emailers**

**+27 (0) 83 460 3633**

**[info@designbandits.co.za](mailto:info@designbandits.co.za)**

**[www.designbandits.co.za](http://www.designbandits.co.za)**





# Stand-up comic’s illustrious goalkeeping career

**LUKE ALFRED**

**S***A Jewish Report* readers of a certain generation might be vaguely familiar with the name Con Travis, a stand-up and television comedian of the late 1970s and early 1980s. What they probably don’t know, however, is that Travis – who was born in 1926 and is currently a sprightly 94 – had an equally illustrious career as a goalkeeper in Wales in the 1950s.



Con Travis, saving a goal for Newport County at their home ground, Somerton Park

He kept goal with distinction for both Cardiff City and Newport County, with City playing in the then English Second Division alongside Spurs, Wolves, Fulham, and Bolton Wanderers. “It was strictly amateur in those days, tea money and bus fare,” says Travis with a chuckle. “If I’d been professional I would have earned £12 (R238) per week with £2 (R39) for a win!”

Travis’ big day as a goalkeeper came in 1953, when he was chosen in the Great Britain Maccabi team to participate in that year’s Maccabi Games. “We had a

warm-up game under floodlights against Manchester United Reserves at the United training ground called ‘The Cliff,’” he says. “Although we lost 2-1, Sir Matt Busby, the United manager, was so impressed, he singled me out as the star of the team. He asked me if I was interested in signing professional terms but I politely refused.”

Playing sport, whether soccer or cricket, was always an amateur affair for Travis. He was married and had a young family to support by the time Busby’s offer came along, not to mention being in the latter stages of his studies to become an aeronautical engineer. “After graduating, I ended up in Downsview, Toronto, working on the prototype for the Avro Arrow.

“As an aircraft, it was years ahead of its time, a phenomenal, delta-wing plane, but the Canadian prime minister refused to support the project and in one fell swoop put 20 000 workers out of a job. I was one of them.”

With his best years as a footballer behind him and no job as an aeronautical engineer, Travis suddenly found himself facing an uncertain future. He had always been able to make people laugh, was friendly and gregarious, so with little formal training and a suitcase full of *chutzpah*, he and his young family went back to Britain where he began a fledgling career as a comedian.

In the years to follow, he appeared on stage with such luminaries as Connie Francis, Sammy Davis Jr., Eydie Gormé, and Rosemary Clooney, the mother of the more-famous George.

“I didn’t forget my Manchester United experience,” he said. “In the game under floodlights we played in 1953, I became friendly with two of their younger players, Billy Foulkes and Liam ‘Billy’ Whelan, the



**All Fridges, Washing Machines and Dishwashers on special now!**  
Shabbat Shalom from I-deal Furnishers  
For the Ideal Prices, best service and Ideal value speak to us. We stock the biggest and best brands.

**Furniture:** Lazy Boy, Linea Classica Alpine & Grafton  
**Beds:** Sealy, Simmons, Rest Assured & Contour  
**Appliances:** Bosch, Defy, Samsung & LG  
**☎ 011 887 5456 | 011 440 9571**  
**Nathan: 082 854 5706**  
**Midways Mall,**  
**280 Corlett Drive, Bramley Gardens**  
Monday to Friday 8:30 – 17:00  
Saturday 8:30 – 13:00 | Sunday 10:00 – 13:00



Irishman. Whelan, you’ll remember, died in the Munich Air Disaster with seven other members of the United side in 1958. As a ‘Television Entertainers XI’, we played in a charity game to raise money for the next of kin afterwards.”

Before long, the wanderlust bit Travis – his full first name is Conrad – once again. Off he went to a booming South Africa, seen by many in gloomy Britain as the land of milk and honey. By then, he had remarried and had two young sons by his second wife, but he’d always had a social conscience and he continued the charity work he’d started in Britain when playing for teams like the “Television Entertainers” in their fundraising matches against various “All Star XIs.”

“As well as doing comedy work in South Africa, I was actively involved in charity work,” said Travis. “I remember the Germiston Callies goalkeeper, Fred Green, suffering from terrible head injuries while playing for Callies, and we put on a charity exhibition match to raise money for his wife and children before he tragically died.”

During the South African years, Travis became a regular at Cyros night club in the centre of Johannesburg. He also appeared on Springbok

Radio. “With the arrival of television [in 1976], I was approached by director Ronnie Wilson who wanted my help with a new comedy show called *Biltong and Potroast*,” remembers Travis. “I was slightly surprised to be on the Biltong side rather than the other way round,” he says, laughing. “I did only 10 shows before opting out but that was a whole lot of fun.”

Never one to stand still for very long, Travis was also instrumental in bringing Maccabi soccer to Durban, with good friends Bobby Bloom and Dennis Port. “I’ve also held the two-year presidency of the Hebrew Order of David,” he says. “We’ve raised money for a number of Jewish charities, as well as Guide Dogs and Tape Aides for the Blind. It’s work I’m tremendously proud of.”

In a long life lived to its fullest, Travis has seen the world and rubbed shoulders with the good, the famous, and the great. Across all his experiences, though, nothing quite compares with the day in 1946 on which he played in goal for an Occupational Services XI against a Russian XI in post-World War II Tokyo. “We were both part of the occupying army in Japan,” he says. “We beat them 3-0. That was quite something, I can tell you.”

# KosherWorld



TRULY KOSHER



**ONLY AVAILABLE AT Checkers SEA POINT**

**CHALAV YISROEL DAIRY PRODUCTS:**

**YOGHURTS, HARD & SOFT CHEESES**



CAPE JEWEL GRAPE JUICE

**45<sup>99</sup>**



ORLI CANDLE 24 HOURS

**6<sup>99</sup>**



EDEN CUCUMBERS

**36<sup>49</sup>**



GARDELIA HONEY

**80<sup>99</sup>**



STEINZ LIGHT MEAT TUNA CHUNKS IN BRINE 170G

**11<sup>49</sup>**



MANAMIM WAFERS

**23<sup>99</sup>**



CAPE POINT TUNA CHUNKS IN BRINE 170G

**18<sup>99</sup>**

# BERKIES

Handmade from a traditional recipe.  
The great taste says it all!

**Available Sea Point Checkers only**



**109<sup>99</sup>** EACH ROAST CHICKEN & KITKA



**39<sup>99</sup>** 4 FISH CAKES



SCHMALTZ **59<sup>99</sup>** /500G



**79<sup>99</sup>** EACH CHIFFON CAKE

**Grilled Lamb Ribs 100g - R19.99**

**4 Potato Latkes - R29.99**