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UOS appoints ombud, saying it has ‘nothing to hide’

NICOLA MILTZ

The Union of Orthodox Synagogues (UOS) has appointed an ombudsman to tackle complaints and issues raised following the recent public outcry over kosher food prices and kashrut fees.

Kenny Rabson, the chief executive of Discovery Invest & Employee Benefits, who is also a member of the UOS board, has been appointed ombudsman to handle what appears to be festering discontent among a number of its clients and members of the public.

Rabson’s task will be to address and resolve issues and complaints specific to the manufacturing food space and kosher certification, with added attention given to smaller manufacturers to ensure that they are treated fairly.

At the time of going to print, the full terms of reference were still being drafted, but Rabson said he would be fulfilling the role of an ombudsman to ensure that issues raised were dealt with speedily, reasonably, respectfully, and with the utmost fairness.

The UOS board called an urgent virtual meeting last Sunday morning following a string of attacks and complaints online and in the media from aggrieved and dissatisfied consumers, manufacturers, and other industry players.

The complaints focused mainly on the kashrut department, the high cost of kosher food, as well as the increased kashrut fees levied to manufacturers. Disgruntled callers to ChaiFM accused the kashrut department and the UOS under which it falls of alleged underhandedness, greed, and a lack of transparency. They went as far as far as accusing it of not acting in the best interests of the community.

The furore was sparked following

the Beth Din’s recent removal of a company’s kashrut licence, accusing it of a contractual breach following ongoing non-compliance. The owner of Honeyfields, George Georghiou, accused the kashrut department of “holding him to ransom” for refusing to pay increased fees for kosher certification.

In a bid to stem the tide of complaints, the UOS has appointed Rabson to act as the link between the kashrut department and its clients.

In an interview with the *SA Jewish Report* shortly before going to print, Rabson said, “The ombudsman will address the impasse between the kashrut department and the client looking for a *hechsher*.”

“The reality is there are people out there who are unhappy as providers of products, and we need to make sure they are happy and that we resolve the issues. We have to look at strengthening governance and doing a better job for our clients because it’s in our interests to have as many kosher products available.”

He said his role was to make sure that anyone with an issue with the kosher department is dealt with fairly and efficiently to achieve an outcome that’s good for everybody.

He added: “We will consider bringing in other experts on a case by case basis. The terms of reference will allow us to call on independent people for advice where required.”

“The UOS takes these complaints seriously. It’s an organisation that is there to serve South African Jewry, and it has a crucial role to play. There were a multitude of issues raised, and we will be working through them,” Rabson said.

Rabson stressed that the UOS was a non-profit organisation that didn’t turn to the community to raise funds. “Some years we made losses, some years we made small profits. This next year we will almost

definitely make a loss because of COVID-19,” he said.

He insisted that contrary to popular belief and numerous allegations, the kosher department wasn’t run as a profit-making concern, and any potential profit from the department wasn’t used to fund projects of the office of the chief rabbi such as the Shabbos Project or Sinai Indaba.

“We aren’t there to lose money, but also not there to make a profit. We’re there to render a service to the Jewish community and provide a necessary Jewish infrastructure in South Africa.”

“The Sinai Indaba has a separate trust account, and the chief rabbi raises his own money to run his projects,” he said, “No money goes from kashrut to pay for any of that.”

Rabson insisted that the pricing model wasn’t “haphazard”, saying it was an objectively worked out

algorithm, but he agreed there were areas that could be refined, especially for smaller businesses.

He said all questions and concerns raised would be answered and published within the next two weeks. “People will get to see how this organisation is run. The UOS has nothing to hide. We’re not going to walk away from any challenges.”

However, he said the UOS board wouldn’t openly discuss individual clients, and wouldn’t put salaries out in the public domain. “We won’t disclose who earns what, it’s not appropriate or dignified.”

“Contrary to the allegations, there is a huge amount of governance at the UOS, starting with a board whose members are all experienced in corporate governance. The ombudsman will add an extra level of governance to make sure that clients and consumers are dealt with fairly and

are satisfied at the end of the day.

“I’m very proud to be part of this organisation and to take this on. I believe we will come out of this stronger, and everyone will benefit. Each member of the board believes strongly in doing their best in the interests of the community. We need to strive continually to make sure we are highly regarded by our clients and the community.”

The board includes: Harold Novick (chairperson) chief executive of Golden Catering Supplies; Benjy Porter, chief executive Legal&Tax Services; Steven Isaacson, chief executive Kevro; Kenny Rabson; Brad Sifris, chief executive Altrack; Tony Ellis, attorney at AM Ellis Attorneys; Saul Sackstein, director National Flag; Lawrence Brick, director NetFlorist; Adrian Chiger, owner Vusani Property Investments; and Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein.

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Donning masks and keeping a social distance, South African matric pupils began writing their final exams this week after a matric that was like no other. The *SA Jewish Report* wishes every one of them the best of luck!

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NYC mayor regrets outburst over Hasidic funeral

With tension high between Orthodox Jews and New York officials, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio expressed regret on Tuesday for how he had handled a large Hasidic funeral in the pandemic’s early days.

Back in April, after a large funeral for a local rabbi in Brooklyn drew thousands of Orthodox Jews into the streets of Williamsburg, De Blasio visited the scene himself and called out “the Jewish community”. His tweet was widely criticised, and damaged what had been a relatively close relationship between the mayor and the city’s Orthodox community.

Now, with Orthodox neighbourhoods again among the city’s virus hotspots and residents chafing at restrictions imposed to curb the disease’s spread, De Blasio says he regrets what he said – and how he said it.

“I look back now and understand there was just more dialogue that was needed,” De Blasio said at a press conference on Tuesday. “I certainly got very frustrated at times when I saw large groups of people still out without masks. I certainly want to express my regret that I didn’t figure out how to do that better.”

The comments came in response to a question about a call he held with Orthodox leaders from Brooklyn and Queens on Monday night, which he said was meant to “reset” the relationship between city government and Orthodox communities.

Union leader apologises for ‘count your gold’ comment

A prominent trade-union leader and ally of former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has apologised for telling a Jewish former Labour parliamentarian to go “count his gold”.

Len McCluskey, the general secretary of Unite the Union, made the remark about Peter Mandelson in an interview aired on BBC on Monday.

“I stopped listening to anything Peter Mandelson said years ago,” said McCluskey,

whose union has more than a million members. “I would suggest Peter goes into a room and counts his gold and not worry about the Labour Party. Leave that to those of us who are interested in ordinary working people.”

McCluskey was responding to criticism Mandelson had levelled at Keir Starmer, a centrist who replaced Corbyn as Labour leader and reversed several of his policies.

Mandelson is a former cabinet secretary who later worked as a senior investor for an investment banking firm. Following protests on social media and by British-Jewish groups, McCluskey said he was referencing Mandelson’s stint in banking rather than his ethnicity.

“Let me say that language is important, and I apologise to Peter Mandelson and anyone else if mine has caused hurt,” he said.

Huge Hasidic wedding ‘fake news’



Reports of a large wedding planned for Monday in the Satmar Hasidic community in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, were met with fury over the weekend. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo even issued a special order blocking the event at which 10 000 guests were expected, which was later curtailed to include family only.

So when a Twitter account with the handle @SatmarStrong posted a video of a large wedding with thousands of people not wearing masks, it quickly racked up

thousands of views and dozens of retweets. Except, it wasn’t real.

The video was taken at the wedding of Satmar Grand Rabbi Zalman Teitelbaum’s grandson in 2006, according to Abby Stein, a transgender activist, and Meyer Labin, a writer and translator. Both were at the wedding, they said, and criticised the tweet for spreading disinformation.

The @SatmarStrong Twitter account was created this month, and had only 19 followers as of Tuesday. Multiple users said they would report the tweet for containing lies, and it was later deleted. The account has no other tweets.

Two cemeteries and a monument vandalised

Two Jewish cemeteries and a Holocaust memorial were vandalised in Greece.

The most serious incident, which involved the smashing of several headstones, occurred at the Jewish cemetery on the island of Rhodes on 11 October, the Politismika news site reported on Monday.

In a separate incident in the northern city of Thessaloniki on 16 October, “With Jews you lose” was painted on a monument for 50 000 of the city’s Jews killed during the Holocaust, according to a report on Monday on the Parallaxi news site.

The third incident occurred at the Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki on 10 October. The perpetrators of that incident wrote “death to Israel” on the entrance gate to the cemetery.

“It’s clear that in spite of the steps that have been taken in recent years, there is still much to be done to combat racism and intolerance,” the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki said.

Earlier this month, antisemitic slogans and a Nazi symbol were scrawled on the stone fence of the Jewish cemetery in Nikaia, a southwestern suburb of Athens. The graffiti included the phrase “Juden raus”, German for “Jews get out”, and the symbol of the elite SS Nazi force.

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Torah Thought

The ark’s timeless message

The world had become corrupt during Noah’s time. It had reached the point where G-d had to hit the reset button – destroy the world in its entirety, and begin anew with Noah and his family. The floodwaters functioned like the purifying waters of a *mikveh* (ritual bath), cleansing and purifying the world of its impurity. Noah was secluded in the ark, which protected him from the contamination of the earth and ensured that no vestige of the impurities of the old world would enter and influence the new world Noah was to build.

Judaism isn’t a religion of seclusion. The Jewish people are charged with being a “light unto the nations”, which by definition can be achieved only when we are part of society and able to influence it positively. To be proponents of *tikkun olam* (repairing and uplifting the world), we have to

be very much engaged with the world around us and prepared to get a little bit sullied at times in the process.

However, there are times when we must enter the proverbial ark and separate ourselves completely from the impurities of the day. We need to be acutely aware which waters we can swim in and conquer, and which to steer clear of. There are certain areas that should always remain out of bounds to us.

The Torah teaches us to distance ourselves from an evil neighbour, yet we have the commandment to uplift and help others who have veered from the correct path. There is, thus, a tension or struggle between being negatively influenced by others, and being a positive influence on others. This is where we need to be honest with ourselves and about our abilities, and learn to be selective in our G-dly missions.

Rabbi Rodney Richard,
Emmarentia Shul



What is certain is that, as parents, it’s incumbent upon us to protect our children from the deluge of inappropriate stimuli constantly flooding them which we know to be spiritually damaging. While we strive to give our children an education that allows them to broaden their horizons, we should be mindful of those horizons towards which they should never be gazing.


We need constantly to ask ourselves if what we or our children are consuming is aligned with the teachings of Torah and the values it espouses. It’s interesting to note that the Hebrew word for “ark” is *teiva*, which is also Hebrew for “word”.

The words of Torah should always guide us in navigating the safest journey for ourselves and those we love.

Good Shabbos and safe travels!

South African
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Parties cause COVID-19 spike in community

TALI FEINBERG

Back in March, COVID-19 was brought into the heart of the South African Jewish community because of a party held thousands of kilometres away. At that time, many were unaware that a pandemic was even a possibility, but now, with the losses so many have endured, parties have once again contributed to a rise in COVID-19 cases.

A small gathering of university students has led to about 40 Johannesburg Jewish families going into quarantine, and parties celebrated over Sukkot and Simchat Torah have further added to the spike in cases. In its newsletter on Friday, 16 October, Hatzolah reported 31 new cases that week, and 52 active cases in the Johannesburg Jewish community.

Professor Barry Schoub confirmed to the *SA Jewish Report* that one particular function “became a super-spreading event, transmitting the infection into families of the participants”. Schoub is emeritus professor of virology at the University of the Witwatersrand and the former director of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases.

A letter was sent to the community by Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and leading health professionals saying that these new infections included “a number of hospitalisations”. The letter went on to say that “the majority of these cases may have come from private social gatherings and not from shuls or schools. We urge our community to be extra vigilant at this time so that the increases we are seeing don’t develop into a full-blown second wave in the Jewish community.”

Dr Anton Meyberg, a top Johannesburg pulmonologist

operating from the Netcare Linksfield Hospital, said, “The impact has been dramatic and massive. We are definitely seeing it in the hospital already. I wouldn’t call this a ‘second wave’ as we are still seeing more than 1 000 cases a day in the country, so we’re still in the first wave.

“I would say that parties where people were irresponsible in their behaviour precipitated an upsurge in the community. This led to a ‘mini lockdown’, and multiple people have been admitted to hospital. If people don’t wear masks and don’t follow guidelines, these are the ramifications. You can’t entirely blame 22-year-olds – they need to be responsible, but they don’t always fully understand the ramifications of their actions.

“People have become lax in their actions, and I understand it isn’t always easy, but this surge has shown

Another health professional in Johannesburg, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was thanks to Meyberg’s quick response that the surge had hopefully been contained. “He put at least 40 families into quarantine,” the professional said.

A community member, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said the upsurge created “quite a bit of mayhem, as families had to be split up, and people generally got a big shock”.

She said she knows that the university students’ gathering wasn’t a “wild” event, and that the young people involved are responsible, upstanding members of the community who may have felt their party was safe because it was a gathering of fewer than 10 people.

This can be compared to the more than 80 positive cases in Cape Town after a cheap drinks event at the club Tin Roof. At the time of writing,



The drive through testing centre at Athol Square Shopping Centre in Sandton

Photo: Ian Ossendryver

that people cannot let their guard down and that social gatherings need to follow proper protocols. This isn’t just about protecting yourself, but your whole community.”

He believes the upsurge has been “nipped in the bud”, and is hopeful that it won’t affect matrices writing exams or lead to increasing numbers in the Jewish and wider community. “My only hope is that people learn from this, and take it forward.”

the Jewish community hasn’t been affected by this “super-spreader” party, but it could have been. “This kind of upsurge is happening in many communities, not just ours,” she says.

The Community Security Organisation in Cape Town has warned people not to become complacent. It reported that its COVID-19 monitoring programme had six COVID-positive community members in the first two weeks of September,

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but this doubled to 13 COVID-positive cases in the first two weeks of October.

“All over the world, second waves involve younger people and university students more significantly than the first waves,” said Johannesburg pulmonologist Dr Carron Zinman. But, she pointed out that “We aren’t out of the first wave, and this isn’t even the beginning of a second wave.” She believes there will “definitely” be a second wave, as no other country has managed to avoid it.

“We can’t assume anything at this stage. We need to take this as a learning exercise, to remind us what this virus can do,” she said. “We aren’t saying you can’t socialise, but it has to be done in a different way now.” She reminded the community that people are still getting “desperately ill, struggling with every breath, and dying from this disease”.

Doctors are clear that although community leaders and institutions have poured massive amounts of funds, time, effort, and brainpower into keeping shuls and schools safe, if people drop their guard at home or at social events, the virus will still spread in the community.

Hatzolah’s Darren Kahn said the increase in positive cases fits the ebb and flow of the virus that the organisation had witnessed since the peak, and there was a similar spike after Rosh Hashanah. “We are more concerned for the week ahead, to see the effects two week post-Sukkot,” he told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“There has been some confusion as to the duration of the quarantine period, and whether quarantine is necessary for people

who have previously been infected or have had a positive antibody test,” said Schoub. “At present, the durability and effectiveness of immunity after infection is unclear. It’s also not known whether the persistence of symptoms – the so-called “long COVID” – is a sequel to the original illness or a second infection.

“There does appear to be long-term immunity following more severe coronavirus infections such as MERS and the original SARS of 2003. However, immunity following infection with the common-cold coronaviruses is short-lasting and ineffective, as is the case with many other human respiratory infections.

“Studies of protective antibodies following COVID-19 infection haven’t been definitive, with milder cases having only short-lived and low levels. The antibody tests performed in routine clinical laboratories aren’t for neutralising antibodies, and may well not indicate protection. Indeed, some of the proven second infections have turned out to be more severe than the first illness. A further public-health concern is that second infections could further spread the virus.

“Regarding the timing of quarantine – 14 days is based on the upper limit of the incubation period of the infection,” he says. “The majority of infections do take place before 10 days, and the South African health department took a decision to reduce the quarantine period to 10 days for convenience of messaging. However, 14 days remains the period recommended by most international authorities, and should be generally adhered to wherever possible.”

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Antisemitic Clover cartoon is BDS’s sour “last gasp”

TALI FEINBERG

The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement has always insisted that it isn’t antisemitic, but the newly-formed SA BDS Coalition (South African Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Coalition) showed its true colours this week by posting what clearly looks like an antisemitic cartoon on its Facebook page.

The cartoon was posted to encourage South Africans to boycott Clover Industries after about 2 000 workers at the dairy company went on an indefinite nationwide strike. It depicts a greedy, overweight giant of a man eating a pile of money while the “man on the street” is drawn as a small, insignificant figure sitting in front of an empty plate. The image of a Clover product fills the rest of the frame.

It’s accompanied by the caption, “Greedy bosses connected to apartheid Israel. Blood curdling milk [and cheese, yoghurt, etc.]. Every reason to boycott Clover! Change your brand. Viva GIWUSA [General Industrial Workers Union of South Africa] and the struggle for a living wage! Clover was recently

permitted by the Competition Commission and the department of trade and industry to be owned by Central Bottling Company (CBC), in turn owned by Milco, an Israeli concern operating in the Occupied Territories. The unions and Palestine solidarity organisations jointly submitted objections to the Competition Tribunal. Our objections were ignored.”

The caption is misleading in that Milco SA doesn’t operate in the Occupied Territories. In the merger notice to the Competition Authority, it is stated that the consortium was created specifically for the Clover transaction, and has ties to South Africa and Mauritius. CBC operates in Bnei Brak, which isn’t an occupied territory.

In September 2019, South Africa’s Competition Tribunal approved Clover’s takeover by Milco SA, a consortium headed by Israeli beverage firm CBC, for R4.8 billion. The tribunal cleared the deal subject to a range of conditions. Clover and Milco undertook to create 550 new full-time jobs in the five years following the approval of their transaction. The approval of the deal came months after Brimstone

Investment Corporation pulled out amidst opposition from what was then BDS South Africa (now Africa4Palestine).

On 16 October 2020, the *New Frame* social justice news website reported that “GIWUSA and Palestine solidarity groups have now approached the courts for a judicial review of the Competition Commission’s approval for the takeover, and GIWUSA plans to march on the Israeli embassy.” Eyewitness News reported that they would also march to Clover’s head offices.

The SA BDS Coalition is a relatively new group that was formed after the international BDS movement cut ties with what was then BDS South Africa over a sexual-harassment scandal. The SA BDS Coalition is affiliated to the international BDS body.

Antisemitism expert and emeritus professor of history at the University of Cape Town, Milton Shain, confirmed that the cartoon



The BDS Clover cartoon

was antisemitic, tying into classic tropes of Jews being obsessed with money, being greedy, exploiting the worker, and having sinister control over the world. He said that while the SA BDS Coalition was calling for a boycott of Clover products because of the Israeli connection, in this image, the Israeli and the Jew are shown to be one and the same.

The SA BDS Coalition insisted that “the image used isn’t antisemitic, and in fact, we are very concerned at the *SA Jewish Report’s* assumption that the portrayal of a greedy capitalist is a portrayal of a Jew. Insinuating that any fat capitalist is Jewish is, without question, an antisemitic assumption!”

The coalition went on to say, “The fact that Clover is majority owned by an Israeli company doesn’t exonerate the company from attacks by the workers’ union. Clover has been accused by GIWUSA of placing the financial burden of COVID-19 on its workers. The SA BDS Coalition and the BDS National Committee [BNC] have a strong stance against any forms of racism and prejudice, and we don’t tolerate any form of antisemitism.”

Shain, however, says, “One needs to see this cartoon in context. While it isn’t an obvious representation of a Jewish capitalist, it has enough resonance with age-old antisemitic images and tropes. In short, it represents a Jewish obsession with money at the expense of exploited workers. The capitalist is stuffing his mouth with profit, while the worker at home looks at an empty plate. BDS desperately tried to stop an Israeli group from buying out Clover, and this is its bitter last gasp. Israel, it must be remembered, is ‘the Jew’ writ large.”

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies’ David Saks says, “The cartoon itself doesn’t have stereotypical antisemitic features, but the juxtaposing of classic hard leftist, anti-capitalist rhetoric with swipes at ‘apartheid Israel’ is unlikely to have been accidental. It helps confirm suspicions that stereotypes of greedy, exploitative Jews are being used to fuel the radical anti-Israel positions held by the various trade unions.”

The SA BDS Coalition’s continued opposition to the Clover deal flies in the face of the government’s approval of the deal. In February 2019, then-International Relations and Cooperation Minister Lindiwe Sisulu said, “There is no economic ban in this country on Israel whatsoever, and we will allow the normal bidding processes to follow through.”

ANC calls for release of Palestinian prisoner on hunger strike

NICOLA MILTZ

The African National Congress (ANC) has called on the Israeli government to release a suspected Palestinian terrorist who has been on prolonged hunger strike in protest over his detention without trial.

Maher al-Akhras, 49, who is allegedly a member of a terrorist organisation, hasn’t eaten for 87 days. He is in a critical condition in a bed in Kaplan Medical Center in Rehovot, south of Tel Aviv.

Israeli authorities identified him as a prominent activist in the Palestinian extremist group Islamic Jihad, a terrorist organisation outlawed by the European Union, United States, United Kingdom, Israel, and others. He has denied membership of this group.

He was arrested in late July, and has been held in administrative detention, which allows terror suspects to be held indefinitely without trial.

The ANC in the Eastern Cape has compared his detention to that of political prisoners detained without trial during apartheid. The party’s international relations committee in the Eastern Cape issued a statement on 19 October urging the Israeli government to release Al-Akhras immediately “on humanitarian grounds”.

“Administrative detention is what the apartheid government referred to as ‘detention without trial’ and like the apartheid practise, it means to intimidate and victimise activists,” the committee said.

The statement, signed by Lindiwe Zulu, the chairperson of the international relations sub-committee and minister of social development, contained several grammatical and spelling errors and even spelt Al-Akhras’ name wrong.

Al-Akhras, a West Bank Palestinian, is being held subject to Israeli military law under administrative detention, which is often used against Palestinian terror suspects.

Israel has indicated that he will probably be freed by the end of November when his

administrative detention ends.

According to reports, Al-Akhras drinks water and has refused all medical treatment.

It’s understood his health is deteriorating rapidly. Al-Akhras’ possible death could ignite further tension between Israel and Palestinian factions in Gaza and the West Bank.



Maher al-Akhras

Naji Abbas, from Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, told the *SA Jewish Report* his condition was severe.

“Maher is at great risk of death. He refuses any treatment or medical tests, and monitoring from the medical team in Kaplan hospital in Israel. He is generally lucid, he is also periodically confused, very dizzy, cannot move his legs, stand, or change position in bed. His vision and hearing are rapidly deteriorating, and he complains of severe chest pains and may die any day. We call for his immediate release,” said Abbas who specialises in prisoners’ health rights.

Abbas said Israel was holding more than 300 Palestinians in administrative detention.

According to the Shin Bet domestic security service, which is responsible for counter-terrorism in the West Bank, Al-Akhras is involved in Islamic Jihad which “seeks to destroy Israel”.

“Intelligence was received that Al-Akhras was a prominent activist in Islamic Jihad, involved in activities that endangered public safety,” the Shin Bet said in a statement.

Israeli military prosecutors have decided

not to renew his administrative detention, which is due to expire on 26 November. The High Court of Justice declined to release Al-Akhras before the release deadline. Instead, it offered a compromise: Al-Akhras could end his hunger strike now, serve out the rest of his sentence, and his administrative detention wouldn’t be renewed afterwards unless new information came to light.

Al-Akhras refused, vowing to continue striking unless he was granted immediate and unconditional release.

According to the *Times of Israel*, Al-Akhras lives in Silat al-Daher outside Jenin. He has been arrested five times for alleged involvement in Islamic Jihad, according to the Shin Bet. He is the father of six children, and owns one of the largest dairies in the West Bank.

It was reported in *Haaretz* that in 2005 and 2019, he pled guilty to membership of a banned organisation. The newspaper said that court filings stated that he had attended Islamic Jihad marches and posted extremist material on Facebook.

His wife received a permit from Israeli authorities to visit him during the day, before returning to the West Bank each night.

On 6 September, the courts ruled that Al-Akhras was too weak to remain in Ofer Prison, where he had been detained. He was subsequently transferred to the Kaplan Medical Center, where he has remained ever since, according to his lawyer, Ahlam Haddad.

Islamic Jihad’s Quds Brigades, which have committed numerous attacks against Israeli civilians, threatened Israel in the event that Al-Akhras died from his hunger strike.

Islamic Jihad has carried out numerous terror attacks against Israelis, including suicide bombings, and seeks Israel’s destruction by military force. Having close ties to both Hezbollah and Iran, Islamic Jihad lauds martyrdom and rejects any truce or compromise with the “enemy”.

At the time of going to press, the department of international relations and cooperation had not responded to questions about whether it supported the ANC’s call.

Israelis make their anger known

OPINION

PAULA SLIER



For weeks, Israelis have been taking to the streets in increasing numbers demanding Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s resignation. They’re angry with the government’s handling of COVID-19 infections and the economic impact of the pandemic. But what’s really at the heart of these protests is political dissatisfaction.

Netanyahu, Israel’s longest serving prime minister, is currently on trial for fraud, bribery, and breach of trust – charges he denies. His opponents, both within his coalition government and in the opposition, believe that every decision he makes is marred by personal interest.

Without fail, come any Saturday evening, his critics are waving flags and posters at many of the country’s intersections, smiling down from bridges, and shouting outside the prime minister’s residence in Balfour Street, Jerusalem. Most estimates suggest that not more than 100 000 people are participating in these displays of anger – a number too small to make a real difference other than garner media attention.

Still, Netanyahu is doing all he can to stop them. With his backing, at the end of last month, the Knesset (parliament) banned the number of people allowed to protest in one location. It also barred demonstrators from travelling more than a kilometre from their homes to attend a protest.

Netanyahu and his Likud party argued that this was necessary as part of emergency regulations to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Protestors, however, believe Netanyahu supported the law more for his own benefit than for the fight against the pandemic.

The government’s current handling of the COVID-19 virus has left as many as 800 000 people unemployed and among them are many right-wingers. But the protests have failed to attract them. It’s not that they’re not critical of the way Netanyahu has handled the pandemic, but with topless women demonstrating (one sat atop a menorah monument outside the parliament building in Jerusalem) and the prime minister’s wife, Sara Netanyahu’s, name emblazoned on a giant penis-shaped balloon, they prefer to stay away.

The problem is that the protests have come to mean different things to different people. While some placards have decried unemployment as a virus, others have called for an end to Israel’s occupation of the West Bank. Ironically, it’s this “free for all” nature that has driven the success of the demonstrations so far, but it could also become their downfall.

For many Israelis – especially those on the political right – waving Palestinian flags and calling for justice and democracy from the Jordan

River to the Mediterranean Sea is going too far. They say that instead of being about the prime minister’s mishandling of the coronavirus and the corruption charges he faces, the protests are an attempt by left-wing elites to overthrow Netanyahu’s Likud party. If, for example, the protests



Anti Netanyahu protests in Israel

focused on economic issues, that would more readily appeal to a broad mass of frustrated right-wing voters and unify a disgruntled public.

As for ultra-Orthodox Israelis, they want Netanyahu to keep their *yeshivot* open, in spite of the high coronavirus numbers, (at the time of writing more than 2 200 Israelis have died from the virus). As it is, they usually participate only in protests that have to do with religious issues.

Another problem is that while the rallying call is for Netanyahu to step down, there’s no consensus amongst his dissidents who is better positioned to lead the country. A few

months ago, many Israelis might have suggested Benny Gantz, the leader of the Blue and White Party and a former army chief. But after a power-sharing agreement between him and Netanyahu was signed in April this year, Gantz’s popularity suffered a major blow. Once considered a potential threat to Netanyahu, his move to enter a coalition with him disgruntled many of his supporters.

Netanyahu is supposed to hand over power to Gantz in a year’s time, but most don’t expect that he will hold up his side of the bargain. Behind the scenes, members of Gantz’s party believe Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi is planning to resign from the government (and the Blue and White party) and take a third of Gantz’s supporters with him to become the new face of the opposition.

The 2020 budget is also a sticking point. The government has until the end of this year to approve it. If it doesn’t, the Knesset will automatically dissolve, leading to elections on 23 March next year. President Reuven Rivlin has warned against this, criticising Israeli politicians for dragging the country behind them like a “rag doll”.

Israelis have already gone to the polls three times within one year, and most seem resigned that the only way to extricate the country from all its

problems is to hold another election.

The anti-Netanyahu protests are nothing new. They began about three years ago, but didn’t take off. They were limited to several small groups that mainly focused on the prime minister’s alleged corruption and failed to attract broad support. The coronavirus outbreak and its economic destruction changed all that.

And while largely peaceful, in some cases, the protests have resulted in clashes between civilians and the police. A headline in the *Jerusalem Post* newspaper earlier this month asked, “Why have protests begun to feel like war zones?” Demonstrators have been punched in the face by police. Several videos have gone viral showing officers shoving, tackling, and violently arresting protestors who in turn have hurled rocks and stones at them. Certainly, the country is very far from a civil war, but the scenes are disturbing. And although the protests are likely to continue for some time to come, it’s doubtful they’ll bring any real change.

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

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Philippe Sands
Why I Wrote *The Ratline*



Elli Kriel
Kosherati: a Jewish Spin
on Gulf Foods



Dov Waxman
Israel, American Jews and the
2020 US Presidential Election



Sarah Tuttle-Singer
Jerusalem, a Love Story



Gershom Gorenberg
The Forgotten Holocaust:
The Nazis in the Middle East



Dennis Davis
RBG: The Making of a
Great Judge



Saul Berman
Crisis and Hope: Lessons from
Selma in 1965 for Jews in 2020



Leigh Nudelman
Molly Picon: Somersaulting
over Splits



Paul Root Wolpe
Artificial Intelligence and
its Ethical Challenges



Ann Harris
The Rabbinate: The Family Inside Story



Michael Harris



Arthur Green
Mysticism and Hasidism:
Wisdoms for Modernity



Terry Kurgan
Everyone is Present:
A Family Story



David Bilchitz
Our Big Fat Jewish Gay Vegan Wedding



Ruvi Ziegler



Raphael Zarum
May the Lord be with you...
always: A Jewish reading of
Star Wars I-IX



Alicia Jo Rabins
A Kaddish for Bernie
Madoff: The Film (Preview)



Will Recant
Building for a Better
Tomorrow



Sara Yael Hirschhorn
Israel At 72: Golden Years
or Midlife Crisis?



Nick Stadlen
Life is Wonderful:
Mandela's Unsung Heroes
(Film) Double Session



Ilana Stein
Noach: The First Game
Ranger



Dani Hovsha



Gabi Steiner
An Argument for Anger



Sonja Woolff



Emma Gottlieb
The Rabbi and The Mermaid:
Jews, Myths & Mystical Creatures



Nathan Abrams
The Shining at 40



Aviva Dautch
Prophet or Traitor?
Yehuda Amichai (and me)



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Getting the Jewish community BACK 2 WORK

So many in our community have lost their jobs since the onset of lockdown. We have invited people in this position to send in their details so we can help them find work. Here is our first group:



Andy Behr
Experience: Experienced PA/ Secretary
Education: Matric at Saheti High School in 1983; Secretarial course at Commercial Careers in 1984; Basic Bookkeeping at Birnam Business College in 1991 (with distinction); Various other courses through the years
Looking for a job in: Secretary/PA, Administration
More information: I am a single Jewish lady (no kids), and have enjoyed working at senior level for managing directors and CEOs. I am highly computer literate, flexible to any role, and always eager to learn and do more. Skills include online research, international and local travel bookings, diary management, following up on tasks, and administrative duties. I have my own reliable laptop, and a full work-from-home office suite with internet access, Skype, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams, which enables me to assist you remotely as easily as in your offices.
Email: misstoffeles@gmail.com



Aviva Phillips
Experience: I am a Bookkeeper up to Trial Balance. I'd love to work from home if possible or alternatively a half-day/part-time bookkeeping or admin position in Glenhazel, Highlands North, or Waverley. I have more than 20 years' experience, and can do debt collecting too.
Education: Matric at King David. I have bookkeeping diplomas from Drake and the Academy of Learning
Looking for a job in: Admin or Bookkeeping up to Trial Balance
Email: avivaphil@gmail.com



Barbara Elion
Experience: Professional copywriter, editor, and proofreader looking for remote commissions
Education: BA (English and Psychology); Higher Diploma in Education; B. Ed from UCT
Looking for a job in: Editorial or writing services
More information: Nationally recognised educator; published author of various titles (Juta-Gariep, Oxford University Press, One Life Media); speechwriter for CEOs; editor, proofreader and indexer for various publishers. Have broad general knowledge; loves animals; thrives on different intellectual and creative challenges; knows hard times and difficult people; and loves to be inspired, and to inspire.
Email: info@barbaraelion.com



Barbara Elion
Experience: Experienced Language and Literature Teacher – Remote Assistance
Education: BA, HDE B.Ed (UCT)
Looking for a job in: I can inspire most students (child or adult) to improve their thinking and writing skills
More information: Over 20 years in the classroom at various high schools; a previous sub-examiner of English Literature for the WCED; a previous inspector of A-level centres in the Western Cape; a published author with Oxford University Press; a previous teacher training guide for UCT education students; and an editor and proofreader of postgraduate theses for UCT and GIBS. "Once a teacher, always a teacher." Check out my website: www.barbaraelion.co.za
Email: info@barbaraelion.com



Barbara Rosenstein
Experience: Experienced office administrator looking for a half-day job in the Raedene, Glenhazel area
Education: Matric certificate from Wykeham Collegiate Private Girls School Pietermaritzburg; Secretarial Finishing School Greenoaks; Cosmetology Witwatersrand Technical College; GIA Course in Gemology
Looking for a job in: Admin Assistant
More information: I am friendly, well organised and disciplined, with excellent clerical and basic computer skills. I have more than 35 years' experience providing administrative support in different environments. My last job for 27 years was with an NGO, where I organised and administered its head office. Duties included organising national executive meetings and conferences, bursary officer and general correspondence for the national president. I have a strong work ethic and am always willing to help out where needed. I have worked effectively with managers, co-workers, and customers in my various roles. Previous employment was as the PA to the Director of Education of the Jewellery Council of SA and marketing/distribution for a number of retail pharmaceutical companies.
Email: arbalest4@gmail.com



Cheryl Epstein
Experience: Experienced educational facilitator or secretarial Cape Town
Education: HDE Commerce
Looking for a job in: Educational facilitator
More information: I am a qualified teacher, and have taught for five years. I have 20 years' secretarial experience and seven years' facilitation experience.
Email: cheryl.epstein@gmail.com



Colin Kelvin
Experience: Experienced COO and General Manager for retail and consumer
Education: Damelin Matric; Diploma in Business Management
Looking for a job in: Senior Retail Executive
More information: Managed a retail store in excess of R2.4bn – multi store executive. Experience in retail store operations, controlling just under 100 stores for various groups, plus Buying Executive of a portfolio in excess of R2bn. Have also specialised in property, HR and IT, store planning and development, store design, and store leasing. General Manager of a consumer electronics company managing local and first tier international brands.
Email: ckelvin@mweb.co.za



Colin Neil Miedzinski
Experience: Retail
Education: Matric Damelin
Looking for a job in: Sales, merchandiser, management, customer service
More information: I am helpful, hard working, and like to complete any task I am given. I have a lot of experience in retail selling. I am a hands-on learner, and always like to learn something new.
Email: colinmiedzinski2810@gmail.com



Daniel Traub
Experience: Experienced lawyer looking for work in Johannesburg
Education: Matric (KDHL); BA LLB (Wits)



Looking for a job in: Legal Advisor / Lawyer
More information: I was admitted as an attorney and thereafter as an advocate of the high court
Email: danieltraub@hotmail.com



Daniet Levin
Experience: Proofreader looking for work in publishing
Education: Matric King David High School Linksfield; BA Unisa; PGCE RAU/UJ
Looking for a job in: Proofreader
More information: I have taught before, full-time and locum teaching. I am quite creative and am currently sewing for a small company. I am 43 and would work in teaching as well. I enjoy dance and exercise.
Email: danietlevin@yahoo.com



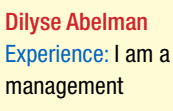
David Joffe
Experience: Business development, managing sales teams, recruitment, training, development, and mentoring. Looking for full-time employment
Education: HDip.Ed
Looking for a job in: Business Development Manager
More information: I am married with three boys. I have volunteered for Hatzolah as a responder for the last seven years. I have developed skills in business development management, including recruitment, training, management, and mentoring of sales teams. I have primarily been involved in the security industry for the past 11 years, however my skills can be utilised in any sector. I am dedicated and always open to learning new skills.
Email: davidjoffe67@gmail.com



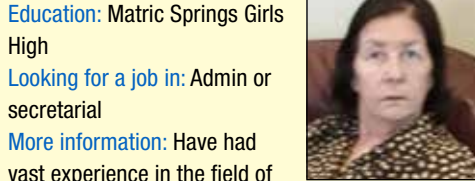
Debbie Sanders
Experience: Computer – Library teacher
Education: DEd (special needs education); matric King David Linksfield
Looking for a job in: Computer, library teaching. Also happy to do part-time admin work and online work.
More information: I have been the computer and library teacher at a private school for 18 years. I have also been online tutoring and helping with admin work
Email: debсанд23@gmail.com



Debby Bear
Experience: Experienced Personal Assistant looking for a full-day job
Education: Matric Northlands Girls High, Durban; BA in Psychology Wits; Secretarial Diploma Birnam Business College; Various computer and sales courses during the course of my career
Looking for a job in: Personal Assistant, Secretarial, Admin, anything similar
More information: I have worked in sales, secretarial, and management positions, however my longest position was as PA to the CEO of a jewellery company for the last 18 years. Although my original role was PA, I soon took on any challenge that was thrown at me including sales, marketing, moving the offices twice, assisting the Financial Director, and more. I am always willing to do whatever is asked of me.
Email: debbybear17@gmail.com



Dilyse Abelman
Experience: I am a PA and administrator in office management



Education: Matric Springs Girls High
Looking for a job in: Admin or secretarial
More information: Have had vast experience in the field of secretarial and admin. Am reliable and honest and have had very few jobs in my career.
Email: dilyse@telkomsa.net



Donna Arden
Experience: Experienced with a diploma in Cranio and Massage Therapy as well as years of salon work. Baby/Childcare Manager, Au Pair, Tutor
Education: King David High School; Anatomy, Physiology, Body and Beauty
Therapy Diploma: Aromatherapy Diploma; Life Orientation Workshops; Creative Writing Workshops
Looking for a job in: Baby and Childcare Manager; Au Pair; Admin Assistant; Online social media content writer
Email: donna.arden@gmail.com



Gary Bolel
Experience: Looking for new opportunities in any field. Ran my own promotional gifts and importing company for 30 years before BBBEE and COVID-19
Education: BCom Wits University; Matric Highlands North Boys High
Looking for a job in: Admin, Logistics, Sourcing/ Supply Chain
More information: Have been Managing Director/ Owner of Hi-Lite Agencies (Pty) Ltd from June 1987 to present. Marketing and import of corporate promotional goods and advertising products to large multinational and national corporations, offering innovative and high-quality products, while at the same time providing service excellence.
Email: hilite@africa.com



Gay Ayache
Experience: Team Manager, general organiser, typing, editing, and proofreading
Education: Matric Good Hope Seminary High School; first year BA; diploma in Librarianship UCT
Looking for a job in: Manager of staff of elderly people who have no children in South Africa, organiser of homes, relocation
More information: I live in Cape Town and am a divorced mother of two adult sons. I worked at UCT Jagger Library, and then Medical Library on the Groote Schuur Hospital Campus for seven years. In Israel, I worked at what was then the Beilinson Hospital Medical Library in Petach Tikvah. When we returned to South Africa, I assisted my ex-husband in establishing his jewellery manufacturing business. I have managed three guest houses for many years. I organised and catered for the conferences at one of the guest houses. In the last four years I managed the team of a staff of 11 for an elderly patient with dementia.
Email: gayayache@gmail.com



Gideon Rodgers
Experience: Experienced primary school teacher looking for part-time and permanent employment in Johannesburg
Education: Matric National School of the Arts; BMus University of Pretoria; PGCE (Intermediate and



Senior Phase) Unisa
Looking for a job in: Intermediate phase teacher, class music teacher, primary school teacher
More information: I am a certified educator, and have been teaching since 2015; I've taught class music at Wendywood Primary, Saxonwold Primary, Sandhurst Pre and Preparatory, and in 2019 I taught at Pridwin Preparatory, fulfilling the practical requirement for my PGCE.
Email: gideonrodgers2@gmail.com



Ilana Tatz
Experience: Experienced and very efficient office administrator looking for half-day job in the northern suburbs
Education: Matric Carmel College Durban 1984;
Secretarial Studies
Looking for a job in: PA or Administrator
More information: My work experience ranges from Personal Assistant to Office Administrator, with years of experience in managing small to medium offices. My talent lies in observing existing structures, analysing what needs to change, and implementing it in order to maximise organisational effectiveness. My accomplishments include enhancing turnover and streamlining and improving administrative procedures.
Email: ilana.tatz@gmail.com



Jonathan Davis
Experience: Experienced CA for part-time/temporary and consulting opportunities
Education: B.Acc (Wits); CA(SA)
Looking for a job in: Looking to assist with process improvements and to drive profitability in small to medium sized businesses
More information: 58 years old, married. Many years experience in senior financial positions in both listed and unlisted environments. Focus on analysing businesses, IT systems, and improving efficiencies.
Email: jonathanmdavis.613@gmail.com



Jonathan Swartz
Experience: Experience in warehousing and managing a retail shop
Education: Matric at Eden 1992
Looking for a job in: Warehousing or managing a retail store
More information: I'd like to work in a warehouse or manufacturing environment.
My skills include: Operational Manager; general warehouse routine; interpersonal skills; retail sales; conflict resolution and application of labour law; and attaining objectives through teamwork.
Email: jonathanmarcschwartz4@gmail.com



Julio Woznica
Experience: Sales, business, management, tourist guide
Education: Varsity and diplomas
Looking for a job in: Tourism, management, agent, sales rep
More information: Had my own business for 25 years, and have been in tourism for the past two years
Email: zillaw@gmail.com



Justin Benatar
Experience: Looking for a full-time or half-day position in an organisation that is affiliated to or associated with, but not limited to, the tourism and travel

industry, hotel management, general operations, sales and/or event/project management.
Education: National Diploma: Tourism Management (Unisa); Diploma in Reception Operations and Services (City and Guilds of London Institute); Diploma In Food and Beverage Service (City and Guilds of London Institute); Matric with Exemption
Looking for a job in: Event management, operations and logistics, project management and/or sales
More information: Most of my working life has been involved within the tourism, event management and project management industry. I have also worked in general operations and sales.
Email: justinbenatar@gmail.com



Kira Wolf
Experience: Experienced Film Production Manager and babysitter/aupair looking for full-time job in Sandton and surrounding areas
Education: BA Live Performance from AFDA Johannesburg
Looking for a job in: I am very happy to be an Admin Assistant or a Personal Assistant. I would love to be involved with something to do with film, television, or theatre. I am also an experienced baby sitter and aupair and am looking for a new aupair family!
More information: Right now I am babysitting and looking for a new family who needs my assistance, but my absolute passion in life is film, television, and theatre. I am an actress, freelance Production Manager, and Producer with three years' experience. I was a Production Manager for a local radio station's social media team for a year and a half, and last year I was a producer on an Academy Award Winning student film.
Email: kiramwolf@gmail.com



Lara Osrin
Experience:
Education: Didn't get a matric, but was at school at Herzlia High School
More information: I love children. Would love to get married one day. I have worked with young children.
Email: laraosrin@gmail.com



Marc Lazarus
Experience: IT support, looking for full-time job in Johannesburg
Education: Matric; N+; Business Administration; Business Psychology in the workplace (short course); Started studying MCSE
Looking for a job in: Support engineer, manager, supervisor, senior staff
More information: 30+ years experience in computers of which 12 years was in a corporate IT department. Full load of computer knowledge, including film making, vb.Net, and Cobol programming, etc.
Email: marclazarus3@gmail.com



Mark Tankle
Experience: Restaurateur looking for catering or sales opportunities
Education: Matric Northview High
Looking for a job in: Caterer/ restaurant manager
More information: I have had 40 years' experience in the industry, working in and managing restaurants, canteens and corporate catering.
Email: mbt@global.co.za



Martine Abrahams
Experience: Experienced project and events manager looking for full-time work
Education: Herzlia; degree in fashion design from CPUT
Looking for a job in: Event manager, project manager, fashion designer, interior stylist
More information: I have been fortunate to have had a career in many aspects of design from fashion, home, events and project managing. I am honest, driven, and have the capacity to work on various things.
Email: martinecarly@gmail.com



Monique Leibowitz
Experience: Experienced Bookkeeper looking for work from home job in Dowerglen
Education: Matric Studywell College; Diploma Birnam Business College
Looking for a job in: Bookkeeper or Assistant Daycare Teacher
More information: Had my own business doing books for the legal sector. I also have experience working with children with special needs.
Email: moniquelei@worldonline.co.za



Moshe Bogacz
Experience: Part-time student seeks business internship
Education: IDF veteran; second-year Unisa Microbiology and Biochemistry
Looking for a job in: Business internship
More information: I was born in Johannesburg to a religious family. I am 23 years old. After school I volunteered in the IDF for two years. I am now a part-time student with Unisa. I wish to start my own business, and am looking ideally for a part-time job/internship, where I can get useful business experience.
Email: mossiebogacz@gmail.co.za



Penny Swisa
Experience: Librarian/copy-editor/proofreader seeking suitable position
Education: Yeshiva College Glenhazel; BA English, Psychology and Hebrew Wits; Library diploma Wits; Honours in Information Management UJ; Short course in copy-editing and proofreading UCT
Looking for a job in: I am ideally looking for work as proofreader, but have many transferrable skills.
More information: I am an active member of the Jewish community. I worked for 27 years as a librarian for a corporate media company. The past few years I have been doing content writing for an Israeli website, as well as editing and proofreading, primarily university theses. I am open to new work opportunities and challenges. I am a team player.
Email: foolproof29@gmail.com



Robin Meyerowitz
Experience: Database administrator looking for work in Cape Town
Education: Matric
Looking for a job in: Database administrator/capturer
More information: I worked for the Holocaust & Genocide Museum and the SA Zionist Federation in Cape Town to set up their bulk email, to migrate from MailChimp to Everlytic, and to collate data from

various databases.
Email: zsrrobin123@gmail.com



Ronit Sher
Experience: Looking for a teaching job in Johannesburg
Education: Matric King David High School Victory Park 1995; Child Care and Psychology Diploma Intec College; Bachelor of Education Foundation Phase, Unisa.
Looking for a job in: Education (teaching)
More information: Divorced, with three sons. Ten years' experience mainly in a pre-school environment.
Email: ronitsher78@gmail.com



Vacelia Goodman
Experience: I'm looking for work from home because I'm disabled due to Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and Fibromyalgia; Expressive Speech Dysphasia; IBS and Osteoarthritis; Urinary Incontinence.
Education: UEC Matric at Greenside High School; Diplomas for Microbiology Technology and Medical Microbiology from Witwatersrand Technikon; Certificates for Typing; Reception, Speedhand, and Switchboard from Anchor College; Uncompleted Admin Assistant Course
Looking for a job in: Legitimate work – non-telephonic work from home. I may need upskilling e.g. access to a computer because of my circumstances. I cannot work full day because I'm ill and desperately need the money, both here and in Israel when my aliyah comes through.
Email: vaceliag@gmail.com



Yariv David Kohaly
Experience: Safari tour operator looking for a creative position
Education: Yeshiva College Matric; honours in Investment Management
Looking for a job in: Chef or anything interesting
More information: Love a challenge and enjoy applying my mind creatively to problem solve
Email: yarivdavid14@gmail.com



Yaron Keizan
Experience: BSc Honours graduate
Education: Matriculated at Yeshiva College, BSc and Honours in Animals, Plants and Environmental Sciences from Wits
Looking for a job in: Open to many opportunities
More information: After my honours degree, I worked at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases working on malaria research for a year
Email: yaron.keizan@gmail.com



Zilla Woznica
Experience: Medical Practice Manager/Medical Receptionist
Education: Diploma in Diagnostic Radiography
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US Suffers back Biden in “vote of their lives”

TALI FEINBERG

“This is the existential election,” says Elan Burman, one of numerous South African Jewish immigrants across the United States who describe an atmosphere of fear, anger, and division ahead of the presidential election on 3 November. They hope for a better America based on values they hold dear.

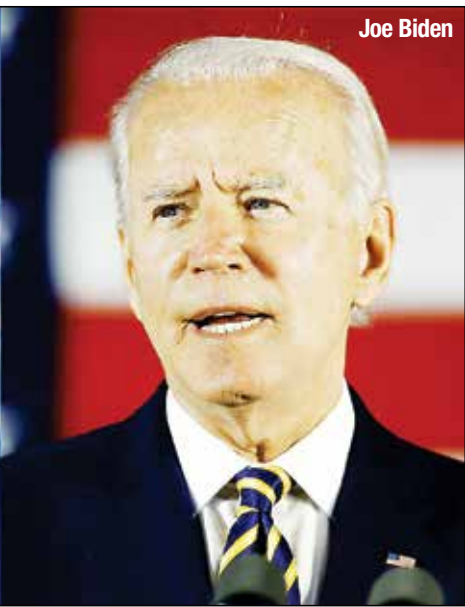
Burman has lived in the US “for a total of 11 years, off and on” and currently lives in the suburbs of Washington DC, which he refers to as “the heart of the political morass”. Where he lives, “Biden/Harris [presidential candidate Joe Biden and running mate Kamala Harris] signs are everywhere. There is palpable optimism and a sense of incredible anxiety – the entire electorate realises this is probably the most consequential election in a generation. 2020 will define the very fabric of American society. The ghosts of 2016 loom large.”

Avi Perpinyal, who has lived in Chicago for nine years, says, “Regardless of affiliation, people see this as being the most important and consequential vote of their lives.”

Hylton Wener, who has lived in New Jersey for 14 years, says, “People are nervous. They fear



Donald Trump



Joe Biden

some sort of ‘civil war’ especially if [President Donald] Trump loses. There is also the fear, as ratified by Trump himself, that he has no intention of accepting the election result if he loses.”

Liat Rabinowitz, who has lived in New York City for 18 years, says, “It’s truly a challenging and tense time. The country feels divided, frustrated, and in many ways angry. I think America is really hurting and in a dark place. We are in the midst of a chaotic moment in American history, and the stakes are tremendously high.”

Burman says he will cast his ballot for the Biden/Harris campaign. “I have little doubt Biden and Harris will win the

popular vote, but as has become evident too many times in recent years, this doesn’t guarantee the Electoral College and the presidency,” Burman says. “For a country that has touted itself as a paragon of democratic virtue, there



Avi Perpinyal

are a lot of shenanigans that go into winning an election that though arguably legal, disenfranchise voters and discredit the notion of one person, one vote.”

He says there are numerous issues at play in this election. “Should the US pursue an isolationist ‘America-first’ approach, or does it have a role to play in promoting and supporting progressive ideas throughout the world? Should the country pursue hardline capitalist policies, or ought the wealthiest country on earth do a better job in caring for its least fortunate as a matter of policy? Should a country be driven by science or populist sentiment? The fact that climate change is even being debated here alarms me no end,” says Burman.

“It’s imperative that the South African Jewish community recognise the growing tide of white supremacy in the US, and what this means for the Jewish community locally and globally,” he says. “On most accounts, the most generous reading is that Trump



Liat Rabinowitz

has done nothing to stop the scourge, while others contend that he is actively fuelling these supremacist flames by appealing to raw nationalism.”

Wener says he will also vote for Biden/Harris. “Although the country is divided, the hope is that if more people come out to vote, change can happen. I also believe that many centrist voters will swing against Trump. Many of them are voting for anyone but Trump.

“South African Jews need to understand that this election shouldn’t be won on one decision, to move the US embassy to Jerusalem,” says

Wener. “Trump is an egocentric racist who is tearing the fabric of America. His strong-arm tactics,



Hylton Wener

blatant disregard for science, and belittling of anyone who doesn’t agree with him isn’t an example for the rest of the world, especially our children.”

For Wener, the president’s tweet saying, “Don’t be afraid of COVID” is personal, as he lost his father to the pandemic. “In the US alone, more than 225 000 have died



Cyril Waynik

from coronavirus. His constant downplaying of a global pandemic is a slap in the face for those that have died, as well as their families left behind to pick up the pieces.”

Paul Wayburne, who has lived in the US since 2016 and resides in California, will also vote for Biden/Harris. He notes, “This election isn’t only about the president and vice-president. We are voting for a city mayor, city council members, a representative in congress, members of public-school boards, and proposed laws.

“I worry about the far left of the democratic party, which, unfortunately, is getting stronger. However, I can’t vote for Trump, who continues to minimise the danger of COVID-19. He failed to act in a manner that would have mitigated its effect on America,



Elan Burman

and continues to act irresponsibly by holding mass rallies and putting the lives of US citizens at risk,” Wayburne says.

“Most of all, the president should unite Americans. Trump doesn’t even try. He doesn’t behave with civility, and embarrasses our country. His character and behaviour is enough for me write him off as a candidate. He’s a bully, and a bad example for our children. People are tired of the hate and division. They want a president and government that won’t cause our blood pressure to rise whenever we turn on the television.”

Perpinyal says he will also vote for Biden/Harris, and he thinks they will win. “As polarised as this country is, I think the majority of folk understand that Trump’s presidency has been, on the whole, detrimental to our health, democracy, climate, and image abroad. We all lose if the world becomes further divided, and democratic values continue to erode.”

He has a close group of Israeli expatriate friends who, he says, “were fierce Trumpists until just recently. While they think Trump has been ‘good for Israel’, they now realise that the rest of his actions are egregious enough to call it quits. One friend said that the deadly consequence of his COVID-19



Paul Wayburne

response was simply unforgivable.”

Other South African expatriates in the US are experiencing a similar shift. Cyril Waynik, who has lived in the US for 58 years, “voted for Trump initially because I felt politicians on both sides were so entrenched in their ideology that little was ever accomplished and that someone in the business world would get things done. Trump was very also pro-Israel. My reason for not voting for him this time is his ego and stupidly anti-presidential manner.”

For Wayburne, the stakes in this election couldn’t be higher. “[It’s about] the future of America as a democratic state and global security,” he says.



The South African Board of Jewish Education invites applications for the role of:

Jewish Studies Head of Department, King David Linksfield Junior & Senior Primary School

King David Linksfield Junior & Senior Primary Schools are co-educational ISASA affiliated Primary Schools, situated in Linksfield, Johannesburg. The Junior School is from Grade 1 to Grade 3 and the Senior School is from Grade 4 to 7. Both schools strive to encourage children to be kind, committed and independent thinkers with a genuine love and connection to their Jewish roots. The opportunity exists for an Educator to be appointed as the Jewish Studies HOD of the Junior and Senior Primary Schools, reporting directly to the Heads of School.

- Specific qualities, knowledge and skills of the successful candidate will include:**
- A relevant educational qualification and experience (including Higher level Jewish Learning experience such as Midrasha/Yeshivah/Seminary)
 - Be an observant Jew/Jewess
 - Strong leadership qualities with a passion for maximising the potential of each child. Previous leadership experience is advantageous
 - Well-developed interpersonal skills with the ability to successfully engage with all stakeholders
 - Strong leadership and communication skills coupled with effective administrative and organisational skills
 - Sound computer literacy capabilities
 - A progressive educational philosophy, aligned with current curriculum trends and best practice
 - A respect for and passion of the Jewish and Zionist ethos of the school and a commitment to the South African Jewish community
 - Registration with SACE

Please send your application in confidence to: nerwichd@sabje.co.za
Closing date for applications: 2 November 2020
The SABJE reserves the right not to make an appointment
Only shortlisted candidates will be interviewed



The Kretzmer from Kroonstad who made *Les Misérables* sing

TALI FEINBERG

Herbert Kretzmer, who wrote the lyrics for the English version of *Les Misérables*, died in London on 14 October, nine days after his 95th birthday. Known to family and friends as “Herbie”, he was born in Kroonstad, south of Johannesburg in 1925. He was one of four sons of Jewish-Lithuanian immigrants who ran a grocery shop and later a prosperous furniture store. “Herbie always said he was just a little ‘okey’ from Kroonstad, and he didn’t know why people imagined he was something more than that,” says his niece, Linda Rosenberg.



“Almost all of Herbie’s patrilineal cousins, grandparents, uncles, and aunts were murdered on 8 August 1941 [in the Holocaust],” wrote Michael Kretzmer, whose late father was the songwriter’s first cousin. Describing the “unimaginable sadism, torture, and rape on the part of the 80 Lithuanian murderers, 50 of them townsfolk and neighbours from his home town Birzai,” who murdered so many of their relatives, he says: “Herbie Kretzmer was the perfect response to that enduring wickedness.

“Because, in spite of all this terror and pain, the extraordinary Kretzmers of Kroonstad chose life and thrived. There were four brothers: one became a respected dentist; another a successful businessman; another [Elliot Kretzmer] became the mayor of Johannesburg; and Herbie wasn’t only a songwriter but also a critic, author, and journalist of great renown. It humbles me how these shattered families, strewn around the unwelcoming African veld with nothing but determination and courage, turned their lives around within one generation.”

According to *Associated Press*, “Though his [Kretzmer’s] childhood under the vast expanse of South African sky was ‘blissful’, he wanted by the age of 11 to become a ‘newspaper man’ so he could get closer to his heroes on screen.”

From Johannesburg, he moved to Paris in 1953, playing the piano at night in a bar in return for a meal. A year later, he moved to London, and fulfilled his dream of having an award-winning journalistic career that included stints at the *Daily Express* and *Daily Mail*.

His interviews read like the ‘who’s who’ of 20th-century entertainment, including Muhammad Ali, Judy Garland, Groucho Marx, David Niven, and Frank Sinatra. Some interviewees, like Peter Sellers and Terence Stamp, became close friends.

Music was his other passion. He wrote weekly songs in the 1960s for *That Was The Week That Was*, the BBC’s ground-breaking satirical show that proved the launchpad for the careers of luminaries. Some of these singles became hits, like *She*, which he wrote with French singer Charles Aznavour.

“He was almost a last minute choice to do the lyrics of *Les*

Misérables,” says theatre veteran Percy Tucker, the founder of Computicket. The previous lyricist had spent a year and a half writing the songs before it was concluded by producer Cameron Mackintosh that his lyrics, though brilliant, were “unsingable” in a popular show. He called Kretzmer in a panic.

“My dad, Elliot Kretzmer, was with him when Herbie was asked to write the new English lyrics. Herbie said that if he could write four lines that they loved, he would take the job. They loved them. Those lines were the beginning of the *Les Misérables* song *Master of the House*,” says Rosenberg.

In a 2013 interview with the *Guardian*, Kretzmer recalled, “I was so keen to work on a big musical that I’d have accepted if it had been *Three Blind Mice*. I begged extended leave, holed up in my house, and barely emerged for five months.”

Kretzmer always emphasised that he didn’t simply translate the show from the French version. “The word ‘translation’ makes me shiver. Words can resonate in one culture but not another, so I read the novel and then told the story in my own way.” He went on to expand the show by an extra hour.

Delving into how some of the songs came about, he recalled, “When we realised that Marius needed to express survivor’s guilt over the death of his friends, I came up with the song *Empty Chairs and Empty Tables*”. Meanwhile, *Castle on a Cloud* had the line “There is a prince on the road” in the French version, “but it seemed to me a young orphan would be dreaming of a mother figure rather than a lover,” so Kretzmer altered the words to reflect this.

But the song sung by Valjean to Marius at the barricades stumped him. The music he was given was “ridiculously at odds” with what was happening on stage, until co-director John Caird suggested that it sounded like a prayer. “The minute he said that, every door seemed to fly open. I stood for the rest of that night in my study and by 05:00, *Bring Him Home* was written – 17 days before the show opened.”

While it was criticised by early reviewers, the crowds loved it. “I have never been able to explain what happened,” Kretzmer later said. “The overnight success of *Les Misérables* has become a myth now, but it literally was overnight.” Up until the coronavirus crisis, it was the longest-running West End musical. He was able to retire at the age of 61, and according to his obituary in *The New York Times*, he earned about \$20 million (R330 million) from royalties.

Tucker was there on the night of the 25th anniversary celebration of the show, in which Kretzmer was honoured. “All the casts from all the productions all over the world joined in, and the audience stood and cried for nearly 15 minutes. Twenty-five thousand people were there, and it was difficult to say anything but hello – everybody who was anybody in theatre was trying to greet him. He received massive applause when he came forward to take his bow. It was one of the most emotional nights I have ever spent in the theatre.”

At the age of 87, Kretzmer was nominated for Best Original Song at the 85th Academy Awards and the 70th Golden Globe Awards for the song *Suddenly* from the 2012 film version of *Les Misérables*. He was elected a *Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* in 1988, and was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2011 for services to music.

But with all the accolades, he never forgot his South African past. He was extremely generous: “We had wonderful times with him whenever we went to the United Kingdom. We were treated to all the major West End performances,” says Molly Kretzmer, who married his late brother, Basil.

“Herbie loved the Afrikaans language. Whenever we chatted on the phone, he spoke only in Afrikaans. He came to visit us a few times, and just couldn’t get enough of our beautiful blue skies. He said nowhere in the world are the skies as blue as in Africa. He loved our country, even though he left so many moons ago. He never missed a Boks game!”

For Michael Kretzmer, the family’s greatest triumph was their continuing ability to love and show love, and to care for mankind” after the horror of the Holocaust. He sees this in Kretzmer’s lyrics, giving people a voice and hope in the face of oppression. “Did you know that protestors in Hong Kong and Belarus sang Herbie’s songs from *Les Misérables* as a rallying cry? I’m sure many of his songs will live forever, and I cannot think of a greater honour.”



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Deputy Head of School, King David Linksfield Junior Primary School

King David Linksfield Junior Primary School is a co-educational ISASA affiliated Junior Primary School, situated in Linksfield, Johannesburg from Grade 1 to Grade 3, which strives to encourage children to be kind, committed and independent thinkers with a genuine love and connection to their Jewish roots. The school has strong traditions, is community focused and has a high success rate across academics, sport and arts and culture. The opportunity exists for an Educator to be appointed as Deputy Head of this accomplished Junior Primary School, reporting directly to the Head of School.

The suitably qualified candidate should be dynamic, caring, and innovative and have a progressive approach to education. The successful candidate will be required to support, develop, implement, and manage strategies, programme, and initiatives enhancing all areas of the day to day running of the school.

Specific qualities, knowledge and skills of the successful candidate will include:

- A relevant educational qualification and experience in teaching at Junior primary level
- Strong leadership qualities with a passion for maximising the potential of each child. Previous leadership experience is advantageous
- Well-developed interpersonal skills with the ability to successfully engage with all stakeholders
- Strong leadership and communication skills coupled

- with effective administrative and organisational skills
- Sound computer literacy capabilities
- A progressive educational philosophy, aligned with current curriculum trends and best practice
- A respect for and support of the Jewish and Zionist ethos of the school and a commitment to the South African Jewish community
- Registration with SACE

Please send your application in confidence to: nerwichd@sabje.co.za

Closing date for applications: 2 November 2020

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The vital relevance of our past to the present

JORDAN MOSHE

History reverberates through the present, and the way our memories are formed depends on how we perceive our past.

“We’ve been made increasingly aware of the extent to which the past is present in our physical landscape, our political discourse, and civic life,” said Shirli Gilbert, professor of modern Jewish history at University College London.

“It’s become a subject of heated debate. What goes on when history enters the public realm?”

Black Lives Matter, Rhodes Must Fall, and similar events have shown the extent to which the past persists, posing questions about what happens when history enters the present public space.

Together with Jonathan Jansen, professor of education at Stellenbosch University, Gilbert unpacked the facets of collective memory in a webinar hosted by the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre last week.

“Philosopher Maurice Halbwachs suggested that memory is a social process, that even our personal memories are shaped by larger social dynamics,” Gilbert said. “He distinguished between history and memory, arguing that the former aims for universal truth, whereas the latter is an understanding of the past shaped by needs and desires that don’t always align with the truth.”

This isn’t to say that memory is wilfully inaccurate, Gilbert stressed, but that it’s driven less by a faithful

documentation of the past than by the need to find a way to tell a personal story in the present.

“Memory isn’t an inevitable process but formed through a selective process of viewing the past and often shaping it with our present needs and interests,” she said. “We pick what



The Ghetto Heroes Monument in Warsaw, Poland

we want to memorialise and cast in bronze. This is neither good nor bad, but it’s entirely unavoidable.”

The Holocaust is a particularly challenging area where memory is concerned, remembered differently by various people over time whether they lived through it or not.

“Holocaust memory is a contested affair,” said Gilbert. “Questions over

how it should be remembered have varied across time and groups, and there is very little agreement about what meaning should be drawn.”

Different approaches to commemorating the Holocaust are evident in the variety of ways in which it is presented in museums globally, Gilbert said.

“They remember the past in different ways,” she said. “Official memory in Israel was torn between the need to remember and the desire to forget.”

In 1948, Israel strove to do away with the image of the defenceless Jew in the diaspora, but the Holocaust had proven the Zionist argument that without a state, Jews would always be vulnerable.

“This posed a real challenge of how to narrate the past,” said Gilbert. “In early years, you see Israel’s Holocaust commemoration making heroism a vital part of the story, emphasising rebirth. The Holocaust is placed on a continuum of Jewish life before and after, and Israel becomes part of that narrative.”

The American approach differed considerably immediately after World War II.

“There was a conscious decision by American Jewish leadership to avoid speaking about what had happened to avoid drawing attention,” she said. “Jews were emigrating to the United States, and it was better they didn’t draw attention to themselves.”

This turned around in the 1960s, but where Holocaust memorials and museums were built, their motivation

differed greatly.

Said Gilbert, “The main themes were American ideals. Liberty, pluralism, and democracy were placed at the centre. They preserved American ideals and encouraged Americans to realise their own idealised reasons for being, providing a way through which to mediate the past.”

“It’s neither good nor bad, but it’s inevitable. Grappling with the past involves stepping back and untangling the relationship between history and the way it’s narrated in the present.”

According to Jansen, the situation is equally complex in South Africa.

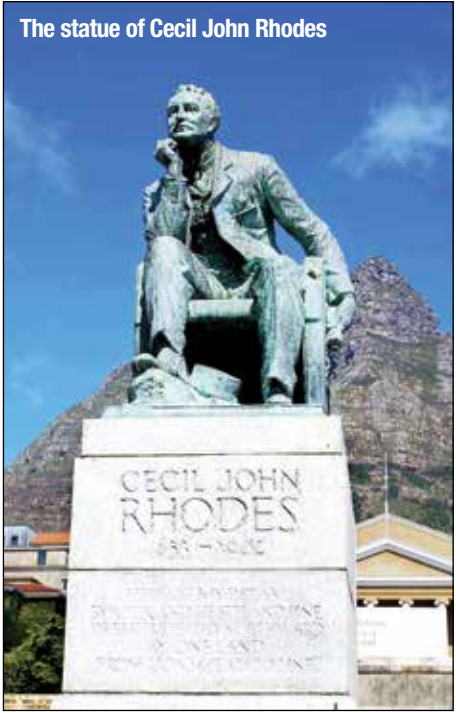
“I’m often puzzled by the way in which South Africa is at times obsessed with memorials, be they buildings or statues,” he said. “Since 2015, we’ve watched how people have responded to dealing with their past through interacting with these memorials.

“Before 2015, we were aware of statues like Rhodes, but we’d just walk past them on campuses. Suddenly students are throwing excrement at it, it sets off probably the most violent episode in the history of higher education here, and calls for a decolonisation of the university space.

“Why did a statue become such a sudden obsession?”

In the weeks that followed the Rhodes-statue incident, students took to attacking anything that resembled the statute, whether they were aware of its meaning or not. Jansen said that memorials for

The statue of Cecil John Rhodes



horses which served in the world wars were attacked in Uitenhage; King George’s bust was targeted in KwaZulu-Natal; a painting of Boer riders was vandalised (in spite of being the work of a progressive black artist); even a statue of Gandhi in Johannesburg was targeted.

“How does it happen that the Boer rider and Gandhi are attacked as part of the same movement?”, said Jansen. “Invisible memorials suddenly became visible, and are met with violence. It shows how South Africans deal with visible memory of a very present past.”

Jansen believes that the attack on the Rhodes statue was a proxy for deep discontent in post-apartheid society.

Universities contemplate a changing Middle East

STEVEN GRUZD

In an age when Israeli tertiary institutions are frequently targets for boycotts, the universities of Haifa and the Free State have bucked the trend and cemented a partnership.

The two universities signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate closely in 2018. On 14 October, they held a joint webinar to discuss key shifts in the Middle East.

Topics included the prospects of a nuclear-armed Iran, the position of the Palestinians after the Abraham Accords signed between Israel, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and China’s military base in the Horn of Africa.

Dr Eben Coetzee from the University of the Free State (UFS) said that Iran could have two functional nuclear weapons within six months following the launch of its first military satellite in June. Factors such as the invasion of Iraq by the United States in 2003, and Israel’s clandestine nuclear policy, had convinced Iran it needed nuclear weapons for deterrence and ultimately regime survival, Coetzee said.

“How dangerous would a nuclear Iran be?” he asked. Coetzee said Iran was unlikely to arm terrorists with a nuclear weapon. International surveillance would surely detect a transfer, and “it would be too unpredictable; you just never know how it would be used”.



Dr Eben Coetzee

In spite of Tehran’s belligerent rhetoric, Coetzee thinks a nuclear attack on Israel is also unlikely. Evidence shows that when near neighbours both have nuclear weapons (such as India and Pakistan), this constrains rather than aggravates their behaviour.

“Use of nuclear weapons would be beyond suicidal in the Middle East, and could destroy both Iran and Israel. I believe the introduction of nuclear weapons in Iran would stabilise the Middle East, to fill the vacuum of an unopposed nuclear Israel.” He admitted this was a dissident view.

Dr Ido Zolkovitz, from the University of Haifa’s Ezri Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, in another discussion, said the Abraham Accords were “a game changer” in an international order primed for these developments. “The Palestinians have worked to create a broad Arab and Muslim alliance against Israel,” Zolkovitz said, “and have asked those states not to normalise ties with Israel until there is a permanent agreement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The UAE and Bahrain agreements mark the collapse of the Palestinian conception of negotiations.”

The accords have prompted yet another attempt at reconciliation between Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank. Inconclusive talks took place in Turkey, which forms an anti-Israel axis with Iran



Dr Ido Zolkovitz

Photos: screen grabs

and Qatar. Both parties are riven with factionalism and succession battles.

Said Zolkovitz, “The Palestinian movement is at one of its lowest points ever. And it seems the Arab world doesn’t care. As a younger generation takes over in the Gulf, they lack the commitment to the Palestinian issues of their parents. The Palestinians need a new strategy to answer the onset of normalisation.”

The UFS’ Professor Theo Neethling analysed the significance of China’s military base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa, its first outside Asia. He outlined how the base is used for counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden, intelligence gathering, protecting Chinese citizens in East Africa, peacekeeping operations, and counter-terrorism. He also described China’s footprint in North Africa, especially its ties to Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco, dealing in arms, agriculture, and infrastructure.

“The Djibouti base is a Chinese expression of power in the Middle East and North Africa and a springboard for its ambitions,” Neethling said.

Other presenters discussed social media in Iran, Hezbollah, succession in the royal families in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, contemporary Iraqi conflicts, futures in the Middle East, managing identity politics, and the politics around the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

The Haifa-UFS partnership is only set to gain in momentum and significance.

Youth and social media – a world of chasing likes

NICOLA MILTZ

Online fame is the currency of our youth, say social-media experts who admit that while it can be dangerous and a damaging road to travel, it can also act as a force for good.

Youth today measure popularity or validation based on the number of followers they have on platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and TikTok.

“It’s the currency they deal in,” said clinical and forensic psychologist Pam Tudin, a youth and social-media expert. And they will go to great lengths to acquire it in the ever-changing digital world – the only world they know. Some even purchase Instagram followers and likes for pictures.

“On a good day, a teen is wobbling in terms of their self-esteem. There are so many areas in which they feel they come up ‘less than’. If you have fame online, you can somehow overcome some of those feelings of inadequacy,” she said.

However, psychologists agree it’s a hollow sense of achievement for a lot of teens because sustaining it is exhausting.

“Many have a deep feeling inside that at any moment, they are going to fall off the edge of the cliff of fame, and then the real struggle of ‘who am I without this fame’ is very hard for them to deal with.”

This feeling can be the same for ordinary youth in schools and suburbs, and those who have already hit the big time on YouTube – megastars with mega

followers who your children scroll, follow, and like with religious enthusiasm every day.

Ever wondered what your child is doing in his or her room for hours on end? They are downloading YouTube videos of their favourite online celebrities: from sporting stars, fitness enthusiasts to pranksters, dancers, and performers; or they’re gaming themselves or watching famous YouTubers play their



favourite game. It’s highly likely that your kids are dreaming of becoming famous on YouTube too one day.

With a big enough follower base, vlogging – posting videos online – can prove to be highly lucrative. YouTube original content creators are generating massive revenue, and kids are licking their lips with envy. If a YouTuber reaches 1 000 subscribers and 4 000 watch hours within a year, they can monetise their account with advertisements.

The world’s most popular YouTuber is Swedish-born vlogger PewDiePie. He’s well known for his *Let’s Play* videos, which document him playing video games. He has 105 million subscribers, and makes millions a month in merchandise sales.

“Many want to become influencers,” said Sarah Hoffman, an attorney who with Tudin created KlikdSA, a company aimed at giving parents and youth the tools to navigate the digital world.

Influencer culture is a large part of any teenager and young adult’s mindset.

“The purpose of the teenage years is to begin to identify with something other than their family unit. Influencer culture allows for immediate access to various ways in which they can identify with somebody or something that goes beyond their family,” she said.

An online influencer is an individual who has the ability to influence the buying decision of someone else’s target market based on their own following, said Tudin. Brands seek out influencers because they increase the brand’s reach.

According to Tudin, a good influencer is made up of three components. The first is audience reach – the number of followers. Then comes brand affinity, which is the influencer’s expertise or credibility in relation to the brand that they are selling. The last is somebody who has strength in terms of their relationship with their followers.

Having a large following doesn’t necessarily make for a good influencer. A lovely young girl does a make-up tutorial on YouTube, and because she’s authentic and has credibility and affinity with whatever make-up brand she’s using, she will gain credibility with her audience and develop a strong relationship with them.

“Although she might have only 1 000 followers,

when she says ‘buy Mac’ everyone buys Mac because they have recognised she is authentic in the way she comes across and that she has expertise in relation to the product.”

However, the minute teens realise that someone might have millions of followers but very little engagement and authenticity “the teens are out of there”, Tudin said.

So why the need for fame? There is always the illusion that fame is going to bring you something that you don’t have, but for Tudin, more interesting is the question why people follow them.

“We seek affiliation. We want to have a feeling of belonging. If I like this person or I comment on their post, then somehow I’m a little bit like them. When you do belong, it’s affirming.”

However, craving virtual attention can be soul destroying.

“Teens talk about how it can crush their day if they don’t get the likes they desire,” said Tudin.

They can get 10 000 likes, but if they don’t get the one like they want, they question everything about themselves.

“Chasing likes is a huge part of their lives. They check their phone in the middle of the night. They do something called sad fishing by putting up a post that says ‘terrible day’ in the hope of getting some sort of response.”

While this scenario sounds bleak, Tudin has faith in the youth, and is positive they will learn to channel their creativity in ways that will promote healthy self-esteem and self-worth.

They need to decide whether they want to be passive recipients who just scroll and like and live for the potential like in return, or whether they want to be contributors. “If they decide to be contributors, there is a far greater chance of them using social media for good and feeling good about themselves,” Tudin said.

Her advice is to worry less about how much time they spend online, and more about how much time you are engaging and spending with them.

“Let go of the wagging finger approach and focus more on how you can stay connected.”

Seeff embraces role as ‘headmaster of the board’

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

Rabbi Ricky Seeff, formerly the principal of King David Victory Park Primary School (KDVP), has taken up his new position as general director of the South African Board of Jewish Education (SABJE). This makes him responsible for the financial and operational management of 11 Jewish schools, including nine King David* schools, and for the vision and strategy of the board.

At the helm of KDVP, he revamped the school organisationally and introduced future-focused infrastructure like the media hub. He was an inspirational leader.

Describing the primary school as being in “an excellent place”, he says the board is an avenue for him to be able to contribute to the “ongoing legacy of excellence” in Jewish education and give of himself in a broader way.

He will share the title of general director with Rabbi Craig Kacev until 2020. Kacev, who Seeff describes as a leader and mentor, has held the position for the past 17 years.



and to enhance the scope and impact of the Jewish education offering,” he says. “We are investigating the addition of a *chumash* curriculum in the coming year, and will ensure that our students have a deep-rooted connection to their Judaism, intellectually and emotionally.”

There is no doubt that Jewish education has been affected by emigration and a shrinking community, But, Seeff says it’s not a crisis. “King David’s numbers have remained largely constant, or within a 3% variability, for the past 10 years, and we will continue to respond successfully to the everchanging needs in the community for well over 3 000 students in our schools.

“In spite of the challenges of 2020 that independent schools have faced, our community has remained resilient, and we will emerge stronger in the future,” he says.

“There are a number of excellent schools in Johannesburg, but none are able to offer what King David does. A King David education is far more than our excellent matric results. It transcends pure academics. What makes our schools special is the connection to community, the connection to a shared history, and the self-belief we imbue in our students that they can have an impact on the world in remarkable ways.”

Seeff emphasises the importance of community and values at this time. “Noah’s Ark is a paradigm for how to survive a world in chaos,” he says. “One needs a safe place, surrounded by family and community, in which one focuses on values and what’s really important in order to weather the storm. After 2020, we need community and community institutions more than ever, and I believe that the SABJE plays this role in the lives of our families. The board is a critical asset that I’m proud of, and I hope, *bézzrat Hashem*, that I’m able to do justice to this very important role.”

*Each King David campus has schools which are viewed independently due to their size and management structure.

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It was a moment of deep pain for the loss of the *tzaddik*, Yes who was also a mentor and friend, but one of great to t appreciation. As every student looked from the nursery school behind them to the glorious Yeshiva College Shul to their right, they understood that the beautiful school and Torah education



that they were privileged to receive was the fruit of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Tanzer's labours of love. Indeed, they are their infinite legacy.

HUNTER'S INCLUSION ON ACADEMIC PANEL GIVES HIS AGENDA LEGITIMACY

y Wiener

Whistleblowers South Africa

- Rowan Polovin, SAZF national chairperson, Johannesburg

SHIMONI'S ANALYSIS OVERLOOKS JEWS WHO WEREN'T ANC SUPPORTERS

Jews were prominent in organisations like the

It's a mistake to accord exclusive anti-apartheid virtue to Jews like Joe Slovo and Ronnie Kasrils, who would gladly have engaged in communist repression if it weren't for the fall of the Berlin Wall. Where were their voices when their beloved Soviet Union persecuted Jews and crushed revolts in Eastern Europe? – **Jack Bloom, Johannesburg**

Disclaimer: The letters page is intended to provide an opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not reflect the views of the *SA Jewish Report*. The editor is not obliged to use every letter and will not publish vitriolic statements or any letters with inappropriate content. Letters will be edited and – if need be – shortened. **Guidelines:** Letters are limited to 400 words. Provide your full name, place of residence and daytime phone number. Letters should be emailed to editorial@sajewishreport.co.za

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Thursday 22 October 20:00 SAST

A portrait of Mandy Wiener, a woman with shoulder-length brown hair, wearing a black blazer over a white shirt and a red necklace. She is smiling slightly and has her arms crossed.

Mandy Wiener

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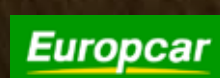


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