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Travel restrictions for South Africans discriminatory and unnecessary, olim say

TALI FEINBERG

ver the past 18 months, hundreds of South African olim and their family members have been unable to see each other thanks to Israel's draconian travel restrictions.

Complaining that they feel discriminated against, these olim are now asking why they cannot see their South African families when tourists can come to Israel on holiday, the "South African" variant is no longer the dominant variant of COVID-19, and family members have been vaccinated

Writing on the Facebook group "Reunite Olim with Their Families" on 23 July 2021, one young oleh, Josh Sher, described his frustration. "At this point, it's apparent that most countries are struggling with the same Delta variant. First-degree relatives of olim have been granted permission to enter the country to visit their loved ones from all over the world. However, for South African olim living in Israel, our families have not been allowed into the country," he wrote.

"South Africans are receiving the Pfizer vaccine, and will go through the same process as every other country in order to fly to Israel [taking a polymerase chain reaction test before flying, proving vaccination, filling out the necessary documentation, etc] but South African parents and first-degree family members of olim are still not allowed to travel to Israel," he wrote.

"The situation seems extremely prejudiced. The Israeli government allocates time and resources to encourage young individuals to make aliyah, yet now that we are here, with no support or family for many of us, we have had to go nearly two years with our families being denied the right to see us," Sher wrote. "We have been given no indication that these laws might adjust in the

near future and as olim, many of us are left feeling discouraged, disappointed, alone, and hopeless."

He asked if anyone could "offer advice or suggest a platform where we can unite and voice this concern. Perhaps form a petition that calls for those South African family members that can prove their vaccination to be granted permission to enter Israel just like all the other countries experiencing this Delta variant."

His post elicited a flood of responses from Israelis with family in South Africa. "Thank you for this post. I'm absolutely fuming day in and day out. This is ruining people's lives," wrote one person.

"I'm a South African olah getting married at the end of August, and due to this ridiculousness, my parents and siblings most probably won't be coming," wrote another user. "I haven't seen my family for two years. I'm expecting a baby soon, and they won't let in my vaccinated parents in from South Africa. It's not fair nor logical," said a third

"I feel like Israel is determined to alienate world Jewry ... and it feels like the Israeli government, while undeniably trying to protect its populace, is playing a ruthless game of cat and mouse with many of us who just cannot fit into narrow criteria. The dividing lines have little to do with public health, or the criteria aren't really thought through," wrote another member of the group.

Another South African, speaking on condition of anonymity, said her mother tried endless channels to be allowed into Israel to see her dying sister. Even after she was fully vaccinated, she was denied permission, and the sister has since passed away. "Coupled with her grief is extreme disappointment at not being able to fulfil





her duty to be with the family at this time of loss. It's been devastating for her."

Speaking to the SA Jewish Report from Israel, Sher said, "I made aliyah in April this year. My sister, who made aliyah about four years ago, has been trying to see my parents for the past year and a half. We have tried so many times, both to go back to South Africa and to get my parents here. But we get fined 5 000 shekels [R22 290] for going to a country on the red list [which South Africa has been on for the past year and a half].

"For South Africans, it's practically impossible to get here. They would have to travel to a 'green' country, spend two weeks there, and then apply for a permission letter to enter Israel, which isn't guaranteed. All this is also extremely costly. In addition, it's a COVID-19 risk to go in and out of different airports.

"What frustrates most of us is the fact that now South Africans are being vaccinated and some – like my parents – have been vaccinated twice already with Pfizer. This is the same vaccine they are giving to Israelis. Moreover, the largest cohort of South African olim made aliyah to Israel last week."

Sher said he suffered from a chronic illness, so when he tested positive for COVID-19 recently, "I honestly just needed my parents support", but they weren't allowed in. "It's unjust considering the fact that just yesterday, I passed about 20 maybe 30 American young adults on a tour, as well as another group (20+) of Asian tourists. How are these individuals any less at risk of spreading the virus than fully vaccinated South Africans who aren't coming on a holiday but rather to visit their children? We see this as extremely unfair."

Asked if Telfed could help, he said, "This is more about having the support of my

Continued on page 4>>

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From a day of giving to a day of dividing

The billboard on William Nicol Drive near Sandton

Mandela's people

stand with Palestine

TALI FEINBERG

andela Day, celebrated on 18 July each year, is designated as a day of giving to others and building bridges between communities, but one anti-Israel group chose to mark it by erecting two giant billboards with the words "Mandela's people stand

The divisive advertisement could have cost up to R30 000 to R35 000 per board per month, according to an industry expert speaking to the SA Jewish Report on condition of anonymity.

The billboards were erected along major highways

of lenses

in Gauteng, and depict a photo of Nelson Mandela's grandson, Chief Zwelivelile

"Mandla" Mandela. He's a member of the African **National Congress** (ANC), a member of Parliament, and a vocal anti-Israel critic.

most recent newsletter of anti-Israel group Africa4Palestine, the billboards went up "coinciding with this year's international #MandelaDay ... [as] a joint initiative between the Royal House of Mandela and Africa4Palestine. Several other billboards are being rolled out in South Africa and other African countries."

The billboards include three logos: Africa4Palestine, Mvezo Komkhulu (the Mandela

homestead), and the Mvezo Traditional Council. One billboard is located outside East Rand Mall and another on William Nicol Drive near Sandton.

The industry expert says the organisations could have negotiated each board down to "R20 000 per board per month in today's market, assuming they negotiated a

South African Jewish Board of Deputies National Director Wendy Kahn says she first saw one of the billboards when she was driving as part of a delegation to deliver much-needed relief to communities in the East Rand, who were desperate for food following looting and

"It struck me then, as it has before, how much money the BDS [Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement] is investing in its divisive campaign, including on this expensive billboard. The need in our country is so great, and it chooses to spend large sums of money on promoting its propaganda instead of assisting hungry and desperate South Africans a few kilometres away. Talk about putting one's political agenda above the welfare of one's fellow citizens!"

Why would the Mandela name lend itself to a billboard so in opposition to the mandate of Mandela Day? "Given the polarisation over the Palestinian issue as a result of the recent Gaza conflict, it has become easier

for organisations which were perhaps more neutral to move into open support of one side, especially if they had sympathies from the get-go," says local political analyst Daniel Silke.

"Sympathy for Palestine is now felt across a wide variety of South African nongovernmental organisations and related groupings. The atmosphere of partisanship from the South African state gives these organisations the ability to be much more open and vocal in their allegiance."

Asked what this means for the South African Jewish community and if we have a space to express ourselves as Zionists, Silke says, "I think [the space] has shrunk. Pro-Zionist expression is now critiqued in the most extreme terms. The danger is that the rhetoric is now seemingly sanctioned from the ANC, which has largely given up a more even-handed approach to the Palestinian issue. With legitimisation coming from the state, the rhetoric serves only to fuel further anti-Israel sentiment - and possible antisemitism.

"There are real dangers that sanctioning extreme rhetoric can have a consequential effect on negative actions," he says. "The ANC needs to be aware that sanctioning the extreme critique of Israel can unleash antisemitism even if that wasn't the original intention.

Continued on page 15>>



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Torah Thought

The joy of celebration

'You shall observe the festival of Sukkot seven days after you have gathered in your grain and your wine; and you shall rejoice in your festival, you, and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the orphan, and the widow, who are inside your gates. Seven days you should hold a festival for G-d ... and you will have nothing but joy." (Deuteronomy 16: 13-15)

Happiness is an attitude to life as a whole, while joy lives in the moment. As American author JD Salinger once said, "Happiness is a solid, joy is a liquid." Happiness is something you pursue, but joy isn't. It discovers you. It has to do with a sense of connection to other people or to G-d. It comes from a different realm than happiness. It's a social emotion.

A long time ago, I read a beautiful explanation by Rabbi Ruttenberg of the verses from our portion Re'eh. The

commandment to be joyful is really a commandment to throw a party, to have a celebration, to bring people together, all the while making sure that even those most on the margins of society are included. Because our joy isn't really joy if it's available only for the privileged. That's not holy rejoicing.

This commandment isn't to feel joyful, but rather to get out into the community, and celebrate. It suggests that acts of celebration will lead to feelings of joy. As a consequence of doing a good thing, "You will have nothing but joy."

I'm sure that you have experienced the feeling of being miserable, and all you want is to get under the blanket and hide from the world. But sometimes the doing leads to the feeling, sometimes when we drag ourselves out, put on some special clothing, and go to the dinner or party or other social event, we discover that being out and being

Beit Luria

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does, in fact, raise our spirits. Sometimes getting out in the world and enjoying what the world has to offer can bring us to this feeling of exaltation.

We should embrace the Jewish practice of humility in happy occasions, and we should equally place importance on embracing the moment of great love and happiness, and taking that moment to give thanks for the blessings that surround us.

Judaism has joy in sounds and tastes, smells, dancing, laughing, hugging, and connecting. It's about being part of the world, being with the world, and knowing that all of it is a blessing.

Let's dance into the high holidays and rejoice, but let's remember to take the time to go inward, to be humble.

Jewish Report

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Duduzane Zuma and the Jewish 'uncle' in Mozambique

PAULA SLIER

ot many people know first-hand that Jewish anti-apartheid activist Albie Sachs "made the worst butter and jam sandwiches on brown bread". It's these personal memories that make Duduzane Zuma, the son of former South African President Jacob Zuma, intriguing to interview. The 37-year-old comes across as polished and polite, while exuding an air of confidence and humility.

Sachs lived down the road from the Zumas in Maputo, Mozambique, where Duduzane grew up. All the leaders and operatives of the African National Congress (ANC) lived in and around parts of the city.

"I remember Mr Sachs' apartment quite clearly. I would've been about five or six years old, and not a word of a lie, he used to babysit us. We called him 'Uncle Albie' as that's how we knew him. It was quite an intricate involvement because there were times when we were left in his care. The last time I saw him was the period before the car bomb that was put on his door handle which unfortunately left him limbless. I remember that day. I remember that explosion."

Zuma grew up with Jews, both freedom fighters and children at the International School he attended. Although he is from a Christian background, he was always interested in the community. It's unsurprising that he has quite a number of close Jewish friends - he even credits an Israeli as an elder of his - and has a



South African public and population. As his father, I'm definitely going to be looking to him for guidance and teaching. I've always advocated for him to understand his Jewish roots and his place in the world as a Jewish man. And I'm glad that he's doing that at the moment."

As for Israel, in spite of being invited multiple times to visit - and wanting to - Zuma hasn't yet had the opportunity. He answers diplomatically when asked about claims that Israel is an apartheid state. "At this point, I will be able to make my decision only when I travel to Israel. I don't want to be that person that offers commentary and I haven't seen the situation for itself. Seeing is believing for me. So I can't come to that conclusion at this point."

But he does believe that if his father was still president, South Africa wouldn't have downgraded its embassy in Ramat Gan.

"It was a strange thing that it happened quite quickly after he stepped down. If anything, South Africa should have an embassy in Israel, and the ANC should take a completely different stance to what's happening in that part of the world and engage with the issues. We're not going to agree on everything, I get that. But discussion and communication is the first port of call when it comes to resolution."

He says the ANC's decision to downgrade relations must be understood in its historical

"I think it's unfortunate. I use the term

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Palestinian people; nobody else is going to solve the issues for them.

"My take is simple. We have our own issues in South Africa. We have issues that we need to focus on, and the time to be part of other solutions elsewhere in the world will come if we feel we have to do so, if we want to be a voice on the table. But for now, let's focus on what's happening in South Africa.

"Does everyone have a right to their opinion? Of course. But as it stands, and I'm speaking specifically to a foreign policy that the ANC has taken which is obviously government policy, it's very fragile. I think it needs to be dug into and relooked at. We're sitting in a new time with new people, and there's a new way to deal with issues. I believe there are more people who want to resolve this issue amicably."

Zuma believes South Africa can contribute to the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, but only if it changes its stance.

"The stance as it exists takes South Africa off the table. As a matter of fact, dare I say, by virtue of pulling its ambassadorship away, South Africa has actually chosen a side, or seems to have

chosen a side. We have a very good relationship with the Muslim community in South Africa, but South Africa needs to rise above being seen to be taking sides because as it stands – this is my view, I may be wrong – it looks like the government has chosen a side. So, South Africa's role in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian issue has been made irrelevant by the decision to revoke the embassy."

Zuma is saddened by the recent violence, and says it was unfortunate and unnecessary.

"The Jewish community is a part of us. From my side, moving forward, there's a guarantee you will be a part of the future of this country. You've offered a lot to South African society, and still have a lot more to offer. So as much as I may be misunderstood, the Jewish community will get to know me, will get to understand that what I want for the country is exactly what they want for the country. The majority of black people in this land aren't looking for a handout; they are just looking for an opportunity. If people have something to gain, it means they have something to lose, which will change the whole dynamic of our socioeconomic environment."

Compromise sought in Sheikh Jarrah dispute

BEN SALES - JTA

srael's Supreme Court has proposed a compromise that could avert the contentious eviction of dozens of Palestinians from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in eastern Jerusalem.

The neighbourhood, also known in Hebrew as Shimon HaTzaddik, was home to Jewish families before Jordan captured the area in the 1948 war for Israel's independence. Jordan then gave the Jewish families' homes to Palestinians who were displaced from Israel and prohibited from returning. Now an Israeli group that obtained the original Jewish families' ownership rights is trying to evict the Palestinian families from the homes.

The neighbourhood has been the site of legal battles and protests rooted in the competing broader Israeli and Palestinian claims to eastern Jerusalem. Protests over the pending evictions helped spark the conflict in May between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

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At a hearing on Monday, 2 August, Justice Isaac Amit suggested that the Palestinian families stay in the homes as "protected tenants" who are legally protected from eviction for life, according to The Jerusalem Post. In exchange, they would have to pay a small amount of rent to the Israeli owners.

"What we are saying is, let's move from the level of principles to the levels of practicality," said Amit, according to Haaretz. "People must continue to live there, and that's the idea, to try to reach a practical arrangement without making various declarations."

But the Israeli owners are demanding that the Palestinian residents formally recognise the Jewish residency rights. The Palestinian families worry that accepting the deal would constitute relinguishing their claims to the property in future potential court

The hearing ended inconclusively, and the judges asked the Palestinians' attorneys to submit a list of people who are eligible for protected tenancy.



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Kept in a cage for telling a Jewish story

TALI FEINBERG

"They threw us into a cage that was three or four steps across. It was completely dark," says Rudy Rochman. He is one of three filmmakers who were held for 20 days by Nigerian authorities after they arrived in the country to make a documentary about the Igbo, a community with Jewish links. They were finally released on 27 July following international pressure, and they aim to continue to tell their Jewish story.

Yet the memory of their captivity will stay with them for years to come. "There was writing on the walls of people who had clearly been there a long time," says Rochman. "There was mould everywhere,

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Nigerian Jewish community members asking Rudy Rochman questions about Israel, the day before they were detained

and bottles of urine from people who were there before us [relieving themselves]. There was no bed. We slept on the floor surrounded by bed bugs and mosquitoes. There was no air conditioning in terrible heat."

It was in these conditions that he, Noam Leibman, and David Benaym spent a large part of their detainment. They spent three Shabbatot there, but managed to mark it in various ways. On the first Shabbat, they asked for grapes and crackerbread over which to make the brachot, and in later weeks, they were given challah by Chabad.

"I've never missed a kiddush in my life," says Rochman. "Even in these conditions, I managed to say it." They were also able to mark Tisha B'Av with a siddur from Chabad

"On the sixth day [of detainment], they let us shower for the first time. It's not a shower like you might think. In Nigeria, they don't use toilet paper, they use a bucket of water and their hands to clean themselves. So we had to use that same bucket with water from the sink."

At one point, they were moved into a cell which had more space and light, but it also had two new cellmates. One was accused of orchestrating a bombing, the other of selling guns. Both had been held for about seven years. The absurdity of the situation hit the Israelis hard, as they realised they were being detained with criminals. The filmmakers hadn't even been arrested, and never were. After

> 20 days, they were deported to Israel. They were given back their passports and phones only when they were on the plane.

Rochman says Nigeria has a complicated history of ethnic divisions. One group, the Igbos (or Ibos), are a minority, but are the most educated and entrepreneurial. In this context, they have been persecuted and oppressed. They fought for independence in the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970). Although they lost, some separatists are still calling for change. It was these people who tried to hijack the filmmakers' visit, linking it to their demands for freedom on social media.

Meanwhile, amongst the Igbo are those who see themselves as the descendants of the Israelite tribe of Gad. They practice Jewish traditions like brit milah and kashrut, and have a strong sense of

community. "Their culture and how others treat them is almost identical to the Jewish experience," says

It was in this context that he and his team went to Nigeria to make a documentary series titled We Were Never Lost about communities in far-flung places that have Jewish links. Their first episode would focus on the Igbo, and they brought a Sefer Torah with them to give as a gift.

"We had a few days of amazing filming, but our guide told us that our social-media posts were going viral with conspiracy theories. We made a social media post clarifying that we were there only to make a film." However, the police arrived the next

According to Rochman, "There were 15 armed men with ski masks. They said it was a 'friendly invitation' to answer a few questions." However, considering the fact that they were armed, the filmmakers felt that they didn't have a choice, and agreed to go with them. They were taken to a location two hours away, and their passports and phones were taken from them.

They spent their first Shabbat in Nigeria on the floor of a cell. The next morning, they were awoken at gunpoint and driven nine hours to the capital. It was there that they were placed in the cage. Rochman realised that if they weren't arrested, they wouldn't be given the rights of a prisoner. They were left completely alone on the Saturday and Sunday, and were questioned on the Monday. After five days, they finally saw an ambassador.

They were given bread, but asked for kosher food from Chabad. They hoped that this connection would get word out about where they were.

Not knowing if and when they would be released was the toughest part. "But our spirit was that we needed to fight this," says Rochman. "I looked for

ways to make weapons as we may have had to defend ourselves against the other prisoners. I broke off a piece of metallic curtain rail and sharpened it. We protested as much as possible, but there is only so much you can do."

When they were told they could leave, they didn't believe it at first. They were deported to Israel, and it's been a whirlwind experience ever since. "I don't think any of us have really slept yet. It's overly stimulating after three weeks with nothing." They were told of how thousands of people said tehillim 24/7 and prayed for their release. They believe that without this spiritual support as well as efforts behind the scenes, they would still be locked up.

They have been working on a video on what they went through, but ultimately, "We want to turn the conversation back to the communities. We went to tell a story, and unfortunately, we became the story." They still plan to feature the Igbo, although they won't be able to go back to Nigeria. "But we will go back to Africa," Rochman says.

"We called our series We Were Never Lost because they knew who they were," he says. "They've just been lost to our consciousness. My father is Ashkenazi, my mother is Sephardi, and their families come from all over the diaspora. Yet, they all had the same experience of suffering and expulsion."

He says his own family history shows how scattered Jews are and yet how we're all connected. Interacting with these peripheral communities "is like finding out you had a brother you never knew about". He strongly feels that "every Jew comes from Israel. We were just born and raised in other places because we have been displaced over generations."

Rochman was born in France and lived in Israel until he was three, when his family moved to the United States. But he always saw his destiny as being in Israel, and made aliyah at the age of 17. He defines himself as a "Jewish and Israel activist", and his days include speaking, educating, and creating conversations between Israelis and Palestinians.

Rochman believes there is a big difference between being an advocate and an activist. "An advocate is like a fan on the sidelines, while an activist is playing the game." For him, the latter is the only way to be. "My tikkun olam [healing the world] is to help am Yisrael [the people of Israel] to transcend their problems, unite, and achieve their

Asked about the trademark scarf he wears, he says, "It's a sudra – a native Jewish head covering. The patterns on it are Magen Davidim. I created it, and am working to revive the sudra, which was worn 3 000 years ago."

It's just one of the many ways he is building a connection between the Jewish past and future. Meanwhile, the Torah that he and his team brought to the community in Nigeria is still there - creating a link between Israel and a people who may just be one of the lost tribes.

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Travel restrictions for South Africans discriminatory and unnecessary, *olim* say

>>Continued from page 1

parents here, and they [Telfed] could never really fill that gap."

Liat Amar Arran, the director of the Israel Centre South Africa, said these are government regulations, but the centre is "trying to help [Israel] understand how much the Jewish community is suffering as a result of these regulations. The Jewish Agency is trying hard to fight for [the easing of regulations] but we do respect the health ministry's decision. We had a meeting between it and [local virology expert] Professor [Barry] Schoub, and we're trying to arrange another meeting to present data from here."

Schoub told the SA Jewish Report that "the prolonging of the restrictive blacklist of travel to and from South Africa by Israeli authorities is difficult to understand from a public-health point of view. It continues to cause considerable frustration and, in some cases, great hardship, and is unnecessary.

"Certainly, it can be appreciated that the Israeli authorities were understandably cautious when that country seemingly brought COVID-19 under control with one of the most successful vaccine campaigns in the world," he said. "In the earlier part of the year, keeping a wary eye on the Beta variant made good

public-health sense. It's the most difficult of all the variants to tame with the vaccine, and it was the dominant variant in South Africa.

"However, the highly contagious Delta variant has changed the picture significantly. The Beta variant has almost disappeared from South Africa, and has now been replaced by Delta, similarly dominant in

"There is no evidence that the extent of the circulation of the virus is more extensive in South Africa," Schoub said. "In fact, Israel, with a current seven-day average of daily cases of 250.7 per million population, is even 35% higher than the 185.9 per million population in South Africa. Of course, with the extensive vaccination coverage in Israel, the mortality rate there – 0.47 per million population – is 12 times lower than the 5.75 per million population for South Africa.

"It therefore makes little epidemiological sense to fear importation of this variant virus into Israel, and to continue this unnecessary blacklisting of travel from South Africa," Schoub said.

The SA Jewish Report reached out to Israel's Department of Health but it chose not to

5 – 12 August 2021 SA JEWISH REPORT **5**

SAJBD chair elated at protection order against Nazi sympathiser

NICOLA MILTZ

"Relief and elation" describes the emotions of Professor Karen Milner, the Gauteng chairperson of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) on obtaining a final protection order against Nazi sympathiser and white supremacist Jan Lamprecht last week.

"It was a combination of the two," she told the SA Jewish Report after having to endure several hours and at least six closed court proceedings sitting uncomfortably close to the man who made her fear for her safety in online posts after she laid crimen injuria charges against him a year ago.

"I felt positive that the magistrate recognised the clear racism and antisemitism of his utterances and writings, especially during this time of rising global antisemitism," she said.

While waiting for their case to be called on Thursday, 29 July, Milner felt an eery chill in the corridors of the Randburg Magistrates Court as she read through some of the pages documenting his vile antisemitic and racist views.

"His comments online had become quite personal, so there was a certain amount of discomfort when I saw him sitting there," she said.

As she went through some of the legal documents in preparation for the case, she said there was also a "level of disbelief that I was sitting next to someone who could think such things and hold views that were so

unbelievably appalling".

It was hard to grasp that she was within spitting distance of the ordinary looking, middle-aged man who had displayed such unmitigated hatred in his writings and on his website.

"There was a sense of unreality, and you wonder what kind of person would say these kinds of things," Milner said.

Lamprecht openly and unashamedly despises Jews, gays, blacks, and all people of colour.

His appearance is nondescript, "someone you'd walk straight past in the street and not for one second think he looked like a typical Nazi sympathiser or neo Nazi", said Milner.

It's difficult to believe Lamprecht, who admires Adolf Hitler, has remained under the radar for so long, especially when you listen to some of his homemade videos posted online.

In one recording, Lamprecht lauds Charleston Church mass killer Dylann Roof for "popping off some blacks".

A quick glance through his website reveals a man who loathes Jews, saying things like "Hitler was too nice to them". He refers to Jews as "the race of shit", "racial enemies", "lying scum", and "those liberals".

He tells his supporters that the practice of Judaism should be made

illegal like the Spaniards did in 1492. "We cannot co-exist with them," he

has said. He also calls the COVID-19 pandemic the "scamdemic". He wore a mask

at last week's court appearance, but those present noticed how frequently it slipped beneath his nose.

Lamprecht, who has worked in information technology, calls black people "Bravos", refers to President Cyril Ramaphosa as the "Black

Jew", and to politicians as "Bravo Rulers". He calls Israel "That Middle Eastern Country".

According to the SAJBD, the magistrate commended Milner for pursuing justice.

The SAJBD welcomed her judgment, saying, "It was found that the website owned by Lamprecht devalued the Jewish community and other racial groups. The consistent, unashamed nature of his website led Professor Milner to fear for her safety. She was the one person who was sufficiently identifiable in the threats from him and his followers. He nevertheless continued to publish his antisemitic and racist comments, and while the results were foreseeable, he never desisted from doing so."

Consequently, the magistrate confirmed the interim protection order, and added further conditions with a view to protecting Milner from any future harassment.

Milner said she was grateful for the unwavering support of Advocate Laurance Hodes, attorneys Ian Levitt and Nick Kourie, as well as SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn.

"They provided me with this circle of protection, for which I'm very grateful," she said.

"Not once has Lamprecht shown an iota of remorse or regret – on the contrary," said Milner.

Around Rosh Hashanah last year, Milner was unnerved when she received a threatening email. It was full of hate and vitriol directed at her and Jews.

She had a feeling it was linked to the charges of *crimen injuria* that she had laid a few months earlier against Lamprecht, an English-speaking "ex-Rhodesian" who has spewed anger at Jews and others for numbers of years on social media.

When she clicked on his white supremacist, pro-Nazi website to see where the email may have originated, she saw a photograph of herself posted on his website, *HistoryReviewed*, along with her personal details and disparaging comments about her. It became clear how one of his online supporters got her email address.

It was a "horrible" email, she said, not from Lamprecht himself, but related to the criminal case against him "unsettling" and "disturbing", especially since this post elicited further "disturbing" comments from some of Lamprecht's supporters.

It resulted in Milner applying for a protection order against him.

Lamprecht's inciteful videos help to spread inflammatory material. He lauds lone-wolf white supremacists, including Pittsburgh Tree of Life Synagogue mass shooter Robert Bowers.

Milner said she was "hugely relieved" that the final protection order had been granted, and that however stressful it had been, she didn't regret taking the action she did.

Levitt, said, "This is a huge victory, and well-worth the fight in spite of the length of time the case took." He cautioned antisemites and racists, that "no matter how long it will take, our resolve is strong, and we will show you that there are consequences to your hatred".

Milner said she was absolutely delighted that once again, the South African courts had recognised that hate and antisemitism have no place in our society, and that those targeted would be protected.

There are still reams of racist, antisemitic articles on Lamprecht's websites, and dozens of videos posted online on his channel.

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



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6 SA JEWISH REPORT 5 - 12 August 2021

Israel's relationship with Africa runs deep

he South African government recently acted surprised that Israel had rejoined the African Union (AU) as an observer. History tells us that it shouldn't have.

Connections between Israel and Africa go back more than a century. The founder of Zionism, journalist Theodor Herzl, wrote in his seminal book, Altneuland (1902), "Once I have witnessed the redemption of the Jews, my people, I wish to also assist in the redemption of the Africans.'

In African intellectual circles in the early 1900s, the idea of national Jewish liberation was a popular one. For instance, the founder of Pan-Africanism, Marcus Garvey, championed what was known as "Black Zionism", and once asserted that "many white men have tried to uplift them, but the only way is for the Negroes to have a nation of their own is like the Jews, that will command the respect of the nations of the world with its achievements". Liberian diplomat/journalist Edward Wilmot Blyden referred to "that marvellous movement called Zionism" as a model for African emancipation.

Once African countries started gaining independence in the 1960s, these ideas gained currency at continental level.

Kwame Nkrumah, the president of Ghana, expressed it best in 1961 when he said, "We understand one another, Jews and Negroes. We were both oppressed for a long time, and now we both have our own independent states."

It was more than just commonalities between national ideologies, however, that drove the early Africa-Israel relationship. Israel made an attractive diplomatic partner in Africa. As a small country, Israel was in no position to be an agent of neo-colonialism. In fact, having recently overthrown the British, Israel was a good example of a successful liberation struggle.

Also, African states and Israel shared many of the same developmental challenges. President Julius Nyerere observed in 1957 that, "Israel is a small country ... but it can offer a lot to

a country like mine. We can learn a great deal because the problems of Tanganyika are similar to Israel's." This resulted in a vast array of joint projects across the continent including construction, agriculture, aquaculture, healthcare, hydrology, youth movements, regional planning, engineering, community services, and many others.

John Tettegah, the secretary-general of Ghana's trade union movement, said his visit

Volta (Burkina Faso). Israel's friends included President William Tubman's Liberia (which voted for the establishment of the state in 1947 at the United Nations (UN)) and Emperor Haile Selassie's, Ethiopia.

By 1973, Israel had established relations in Israel, of which a number were based in Jerusalem. Included on this list were those of the Ivory Coast and Kenya. Israel also gained

with 32 African states. Many opened embassies



world, they outweigh Israel." After 1973, Israel's relations in Africa were reduced to only four states. In

2002, the old OAU was replaced with the AU. In the process, Israel was excluded from the new formation by Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi from Libya.

Since the low point in the 1970s, Africa-Israel relations gradually improved along with the end of the Cold War and apartheid as well as

> increased interest in Israel's agricultural, water, health, education, and security technologies. Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also prioritised relations with African states during his time, and made several visits to the continent. In the past year, Africa-Israel relations have received an additional boost with the Abraham Accords bringing several North African countries including Sudan and Morocco into the

All these developments made it inevitable that Israel would push once again to become a part of the AU, and regain its place as an observer on the

body. The chance came this year, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo taking over as chair of the organisation from South Africa, and Chad taking the role of chair of the AU Commission, both Israeli allies on the continent.

The decision to re-admit Israel to the AU has been met with some howls of protest from the likes of South Africa and Algeria, however it remains to be seen if they will be able to reverse it. Both sides have much to benefit from the relationship. One can only hope that this latest chapter in Africa-Israel relations will result in improved lives and more peaceful relations in both regions of the world.

• Benji Shulman is the director of public policy at the South African Zionist Federation. This article is a version of a presentation done for the African Centre for the Study of the United States, Wits University, 2021.



to Israel had "given me more in eight days than I could obtain from a British university in two years". African states also appreciated the experiment that Israel was undertaking by bringing in Jews from all over the world. Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta believed that, "You have built a nation with Jews coming from all corners of the world; we want to build a unified Kenya of a multitude of tribes joined together through *harambee* [working together]".

Many African citizens also went to Israel to study at its tertiary institutions, including the Weizmann Institute of Science, Hebrew University, and Mount Carmel Center, which was dedicated to training women in the developing world.

By 1965, most major African leaders had visited Israel, coming from the Central African Republic, Chad, Dahomey (Benin), the Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Uganda, Mali, and Upper observer status on the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). In return, Israel was a regular backer of anti-apartheid resolutions at the UN, eventually having the most votes against apartheid of any western nation.

However, Israel-Africa relations weren't always smooth, and were subject to continuous pressure by Arab states. But African leaders resisted. Nyerere, said, "We're not going to let our friends determine who our enemies are."

The real blow came after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The Arab states threatened any country which had relations with Israel with an oil embargo. They also promised aid to those African countries that broke ties with Israel. The strategy sent the oil price rocketing, leading to a global economic crisis, but proved strategically successful. African states weren't able to resist any longer. President Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal stated the situation plainly, "The Arabs have the numbers, space, and oil. In the third

The highs and lows of being a Hatzolah Wellness caller

n mid-June, when COVID-19 cases began climbing to unprecedented levels in our community, I was privileged to be asked to become a Hatzolah COVID-19 Wellness caller. I, a university student without a medical qualification, joined a team of at least 80 other more experienced and trained individuals (now numbering 110), many of whom had been caring for COVID-19-positive patients since the beginning of the

My responsibility? To call twice daily at least 25 patients infected with COVID-19 who were considered high risk due to their age or comorbidities. I captured their vital statistics and general well-being on an ingenious data system, as well as taking action to assist them if their health deteriorated.

So, what was it like being a Hatzolah Wellness caller during the height of the third wave?

It was like being an amateur swimmer trying to rescue those drowning in the COVID-19 wave on shore while trained lifeguards were consumed with taking care of those stuck in deep, choppy seas.

It was waking up at four in the morning in a start, thinking that I had heard the bone-piercing sound of my Hatzolah phone ringing, just to realise that it was only a

It was having nightmares about talking to patients who were deteriorating, and not acting wisely enough to help them. I had dreams of oversleeping, and missing the time to call my sickly patients. I also had visions of coming into contact with COVID-19, and having to be the one to take care of my deteriorating family at home.

It was telephonic exposure to the virus, making me

see it everywhere. Hearing my patients ask, "How did this happen to me? I was so careful, I didn't go anywhere?" caused me endless fear. I feared for my own parents as they did, indeed, leave the house (only to shop for food). If my overly cautious patients who never went out could contract COVID-19, so could we.

It was hearing all the COVID-19 symptoms and thinking that every time I had a bad night's sleep, an itchy eye, or heard a single sneeze in the house, it definitely was COVID-19. I would insist that we all test immediately. I was becoming "the COVID-19 police" of

It was doing calls on my favourite day of the week Shabbat. (We were given halachic exemption to do calls on Shabbat and chaggim.) So even the day of rest was infiltrated with the worry of "should I have alerted my supervisor [who also keeps Shabbat] for this", and "did I do enough?"

It was hearing about the suffering my patients were going through and sometimes not being able to do more than just listen. I heard about their physical pain, their emotional hardship, their financial trouble, and sometimes, unfortunately, their losses too.

It was having patients who were bubbly and cheery over the phone be admitted to hospital and return home sounding utterly exhausted and no longer in the mood

It was the knowledge that all healthcare workers and health facilities were swamped, and my job was to take care of patients to relieve the pressure. I bore the weight of knowing that patients who should ideally be hospitalised were my responsibility instead.

It was the worry that every time I asked for help from one of the incredible paramedics or from the admin team at Hatzolah, I was adding to their burden and inconveniencing them.

It was having patients say, "Stop calling me, I'm fine", and put the phone down on me, when all I wanted to do

But, it was also the small triumphs of a normal temperature after days of fever; when a patient completed days on an oxygen machine; or once a patient had finished isolating and could finally see their

It was the feeling of relief when a patient came home from hospital and sounded more energetic and happy.

It was the friendships made over the phone, sharing muffin recipes, learning Hebrew from a patient, and chatting about our shared passion for music.

It was a patient who completed the programme calling me on a Friday weeks later to wish me "good Shabbos".

It was the kindness I received in a sweet thank you message, warming up my heart and making my day.

It was the knowledge I gained, and the patience I had to learn.

It was hearing a 90-year-old patient with a number of comorbidities have absolutely zero symptoms, and an 100-year-old patient return home from hospital, feeling much better.

It was proudly telling a patient at the end of 14 days that they were doing well, and had "graduated from the

It was having the privilege of being part of an

unbelievable team, whose

members were willing to help one another. I'm so grateful to have witnessed their selflessness. There were my fellow callers, who were always there for advice and tips, and the crisis response team, which looked out for the mental well-being of everyone - even my own.

I'm in awe of the incredible nurses who ran into the fire of infectiousness every day from morning until late, as well as the knowledgeable and patient paramedics who the callers could turn to for any medical advice. Then there were the drivers, who probably drove the equivalent of Joburg to Cape Town and back in order to deliver equipment to many patients. Also, I loved the Pop team, which organised hundreds of balloons for recovered kids, bringing light and joy to their precious lives. Then, there was the superhuman admin team, which probably didn't sleep for six weeks while it held the lives of more than a thousand of our community at the peak of the wave in its caring and capable hands. I'm inspired and in awe of all of them.

It was the opportunity, finally, to be able to help during the pandemic in a way that wouldn't threaten my

I'm so privileged to have had this opportunity. Thank you, Hatzolah!

What you do is unmatched. It was humbling to witness the lengths you go to in order to care for the happiness and well-being of the community. We are blessed to have you.

 This writer asked not to be named to avoid any complications with the work she's doing.

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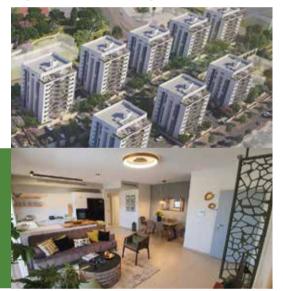




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10 SA JEWISH REPORT 5 – 12 August 2021

Australian athlete cheered by ex-SA family in Sydney

NICOLA MILTZ

lthough there have been many world-class Jewish Olympic athletes, it's safe to say that there haven't been many with strong Jewish South African connections.

Track and field sprinter Steven Solomon, 28, of Sydney, Australia, is one of them. He's the son of ex-South Africans, Dr Michael Solomon, originally from Cape Town, and his wife, Lucille, from Durban.

The determined athlete gave his loving family enormous *nachas* at this year's exciting 400m athletic events. He clocked a personal best of 44.94 to make it into the semifinals, beating South African World and Olympic record holder and gold medallist, Wayde van Niekerk.

Solomon fell just short of qualifying for the final.

At the weekend, in stifling morning heat at about 12:00 midday Sydney time, Solomon, the Australian co-captain and the 400m finalist from the London Olympics, ran better than he has ever run before to make the semifinals.

His family thousands of kilometres away in Australia watched this race from the comfort of their Sydney home.

A home video taken on a cell phone shows the family in a nail-biting moment of tension and excitement as the athlete powered his way around the track, finishing second.

"Man, talk about nerves," said his

father this week

Michael, an orthopaedic surgeon specialising in hip and knee surgery, told the *SA Jewish Report* that his son was "in the best shape of his life and gave it his all".

Solomon went on to stop the

clock on Monday, 2 August, in
45.15 to finish in third place of
his semi-final and 13th
place overall at the
Tokyo Olympic
Games. It was a
performance that
he told his family
he was happy
with, although
he conceded
that his main
goal was to
make the final.

"While I'm delighted that he's running so well, I'm also half looking forward to his retirement. It's so stressful," the proud father jokingly told the SA Jewish Report.

Steven Solomon

In the video, which was later aired on Australian television, you see Steven's sister, Bianca, 25, and their mother sitting on the couch silently looking nervous at the start of the race. As

Steven begins to make headway, their faces light up, and they begin screaming, "Go Steven, go!" louder and louder ending in a frenzy of

jubilation, tears, and hugs. Michael is seen hopping up and down, fist pumping the air and whooping as his son outperforms all expectations.

Even the family's Labrador, Luna, makes a tail-wagging appearance.

The moment was all the more sweet considering all the trials and tribulations the athlete has experienced in his running career.

"It hasn't been

been many ups and downs," said Michael.
According to *The Age*newspaper, Solomon faded from international prominence after London, largely through injury and studying in the United States, but managed to

plain sailing. There have

He made the final at the London Olympics as a 19-yearold, but then didn't make the games in Rio in 2016. Rio was

"re-discover his best at the right

a hard experience for him as he was coming back from hamstring surgery.

"He has trained so hard. He was gutted when he narrowly missed Rio, and was more determined than ever to make these Olympic Games," said Michael.

Solomon has an impressive resume of athletic achievements spanning more than a decade, making him one of the most experienced and respected athletes in Australia. Some said he was the perfect captain to lead the team in Tokyo.

Solomon's family is still on a high after the 44.94 he ran on Sunday, which wouldn't quite have got him to the final, but it was a personal best and a glorious moment the family will never forget.

Michael said he and his wife, who were married in Claremont Shul, left South Africa in 1988 shortly after he completed his medical degree at the University of Cape Town. Michael has returned several times for class reunions and to lecture.

"My wife still has elderly relatives in Durban. Steven absolutely has connections to South Africa, and has visited the country twice, once as a baby," he said.

The family spend most Friday nights together, sometimes in the company of their many ex-South African friends, all of whom have children whom he said were "very attuned to South Africa".

"Steven's girlfriend, Gabi

Blomson's, parents are also from Durban," he said.

Born in Sydney, Solomon attended Lindfield East Public School and Cranbrook School. He planned to follow his father into medicine after accepting an athletic scholarship in track at Stanford University where he studied human biology. He set track records at Stanford.

"Steven went to Stanford, and then did one year post graduate in business studies at Duke University," said his father.

Always a sporty kid, he first began track training in 2009 and that year, won the U17 All Schools Championships in 400m. He has competed twice for Australia in the Maccabiah Games, first in soccer then as a track athlete.

The confident athlete told the *Sydney Morning Herald* it was "beautiful to be back at an Olympic Games".

"Rio was such a hard experience for me, coming back from hamstring surgery, every weekend for six months missing the qualifier by 0.04, 0.10, 0.11, 0.15. It was such a hard thing, but that experience gave gravity to what I'd done in London ... Personal bests don't come every week. I had to wait nine years for my personal best."

The family is patiently looking forward to reuniting with the star athlete and wishing him a hearty *mazeltov* in person, but it has to wait it out until he comes out of quarantine.

Bringing SA expertise to the Paralympics

TALI FEINBERG

ports and exercise-medicine expert Professor Wayne Derman has worked with elite athletes for his whole career, so when he was appointed chief medical officer to the Paralympics Games in Beijing in 2008, he felt like it was a step backwards. That is, until he met the athletes themselves.

"I realised [that] it was the ultimate challenge in sports medicine," he says. "You're working with athletes at the highest level, and then they have this added layer of disability and each one is different. It was the most magnificent transformation in my own learning, compassion, and awakening."

So, when it came to the Paralympics in London and Rio de Janeiro, he was first in line to take on the same role. Now, he is about to step onto a plane to the Tokyo Paralympics – and it may just be his biggest challenge yet.

"I'm excited. I haven't travelled in a year and a half, and I used to take an overseas trip a month [before the pandemic]," he says. He is part of the medical team of the International Paralympics Committee, which consults doctors whose athletes have complicated or difficult issues.

He's also going as a doctor to a number of South African Paralympic athletes, but he's not the official team doctor. On top of all that, he will be conducting an injury and illness surveillance study for the entire Paralympics, together with Stellenbosch University.

"The study was initiated by the desire to make sports safer," he says. "You can't measure illness and injury if you don't know which sports are higher risk."

They found that the most dangerous sport for a disabled athlete is blind soccer, also known as 5-a-side soccer or football 5-a-side. It's an adaptation of soccer for athletes with a visual impairment, and is played with modified FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) rules.

To ensure fair competition, all players wear eyeshades. Each team has a goalkeeper who is sighted. The ball makes a noise due to a sound system located inside that helps players orientate themselves. Teams have off-field guides to assist them. "The game can lead to head injuries or concussion, so we've taken steps to heighten awareness and made changes to make it safer," says Derman.

The study is specifically for the Paralympics, but there is a similar initiative at the Olympics. "This year, there is the added 'layer' of COVID-19," he says. "For some time, we've been trying to implement an illness-prevention programme. The most common illnesses contracted by athletes are respiratory tract illnesses, which can take them out of the games. So, we were trying to implement a programme of sanitising, early isolation, and so on, but were battling to get it instituted. With the pandemic, it's been done for us!"

When he's not at the Paralympics, Derman has a full schedule as director and chair of The Institute of Sport and Exercise Medicine (ISEM) at Stellenbosch University's Tygerberg Campus. He's also the director of the FIFA Medical Centre of Excellence, and co-director of the South African International Olympic Committee Research Centre for Injury Prevention and Protection of Health of the Athlete.

In these roles, he does a large amount of research and academic writing. He also works in underresourced communities, such as in the ISEM's rehabilitation centre in Bishop Lavis on the Cape Flats. And, Derman works to ensure safety in sport, with a particular focus on rugby at university level. He trains doctors in sports and exercise medicine, and is currently supervising 14 doctors from around the country doing their MSc (Masters) in sports medicine, which he sees as "a great honour and privilege". He also spends two days a week seeing patients in private practice.

Finally, he manages to fit in his own exercise routine, especially running. And as the father of four, his children keep him on his toes – especially his youngest, who is following in his dad's footsteps with a true passion for sport.

Amidst it all, he found time

raise your mitigation score."

recently to help develop a free online tool to assist event organisers to assess and mitigate COVID-19 risk during endurance-sports events. "You enter the country and area you are in, the number of people you expect, and mitigating factors like limiting numbers, having sanitiser available, and staggering the start. The tool will then calculate how safe your event is in terms of COVID-19. It will make suggestions about how to lower your risk score and

Derman says the tool, available on the World Athletics website, is already being used, and will allow event organisers to bring back sport in circumstances in which it's safe to do so.

Reflecting on the Olympics, he says "COVID-19 represents a huge challenge", and the event highlights "a lot of hard and considered work by a lot of people, who came together to make it the safest games possible in the current circumstances".

"Statistics show it's working well," Derman says.
"We're only halfway through, but the positivity rate
for COVID-19 at the Olympic Games amongst athletes
and staff is only 0.02%. Meanwhile, the numbers in
Tokyo itself are just rising. But it's not the Olympics
that's causing that rising rate. The games are totally
sealed off. The workforce is tested every day, and this
ongoing monitoring is really working."

He says it's a highlight to work with Paralympic athletes because "there are no prima donnas". On the para-athletes to watch in these upcoming games, he recommends keeping an eye on sprinter Charl du

Toit, who has cerebral palsy, and Anrune Liebenberg, who has an arm amputation. Both will be running the 400m and 200m, and are "gold medal contenders."

Then, he recommends watching Ntando

Mahlangu, a double amputee track star who he predicts will "set the stage alight".

He believes the pandemic "will change the face of sport - and life as we know it. For athletes, travel is already a high-risk period of when they could get ill, and the pandemic has highlighted that. So precautions like wearing a mask when travelling are here to stay - especially for

hletes."

ne Derman

He is on the planning committee for the winter Paralympics and the winter Olympics to be held in Beijing in March 2022. "We are taking the same counter measures like testing and tracking – it's just as radical. So this isn't going away soon. I think flexibility and resilience in the face of sudden change are the main teachings of the pandemic."

For young people thinking of going into sports medicine, Derman says, "It's a great career choice. When I did sports medicine I had to forge my own path, now it's a recognised specialty. It's not only about elite athletes, it's about mitigating chronic diseases. Exercise is the strongest preventative strategy in preventing heart and lung disease, cancer, and diabetes. So, sports medicine will continue to play an important role in society."

With his qualification and experience, Derman could go anywhere in the world – but for now, he's staying put. "In spite of the fact that South Africa has been through a rough time, I remain very optimistic. I'm here for the long run."

Finally, he says, "The Olympics are special, but the Paralympics are extra special. They give the gift of perspective and gratitude. I hope you'll be watching!"

The Jewish women lighting the Olympic flame **MIRAH LANGER**

he Olympics isn't just the site of the greatest sporting prowess in the world, it's also a source of national nachas. This Women's Day, 9 August, we celebrate some of the great Jewish female athletes taking part at the Tokyo Games.



Medallists: Avishag Semberg -Taekwondo, Israel

Avishag Semberg has proven her mettle in Taekwondo, winning a bronze for the Israeli team at the

very first day of this year's Tokyo Games. Competing in the women's under-49kg category, she's the youngest Israeli to get a medal. And, she's certainly not done yet, recently telling *The Times of Israel* that her next goal is gold at the Paris 2024 games.

Of both Ashkenazi and Sephardic roots, Semberg grew up Gadera in Israel. According to The Jerusalem Post, she first became interested in Taekwondo in Grade 1. At the martial arts club where she began training, she met fellow Taekwondo talent Nimrod Krivishkiy. Having trained together since childhood, their bond has since turned to love, and she is now in a long-term relationship with the 22-year-old.

Last year, Semberg enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), and serves in the home front command. The Friends of the IDF (FIDF) tweeted after her victory, "FIDF is so proud of Avishag Semberg. Athlete, IDF soldier, and now Olympic medallist - is there anything she can't do?"



Jessica Fox - Canoe Slalom and Kayak Slalom, Australia

The wonderful "water-whizz of Oz", Jessica Fox is frequently cited as the most successful paddler in history. These games have been

no exception, with her having already achieved a gold in women's canoe slalom and a bronze in kayak slalom.

According to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA), although Fox was born in France, her family moved to Australia when she was four after her father was appointed as a coach for the country's Olympic team.

Fox's story is one of intergenerational talent. Her mother, Myriam Jerusalmi, who is now her coach, was an Olympic champion herself, having won bronze for kayak slalom at the 1996 games. Her father, too, was an Olympic canoeist, and her sister, Noemie, is also part of the canoeing clan, taking part in slalom canoeing.

The 27-year-old has previously spoken about the family pride that motivates her. "Both my parents competing in the Olympic Games is something pretty special. Winning a medal is something that you dream [of], and I'm proud to follow in my mother's footsteps,"



Lilia Akhaimova - Gold in **Team Artistic Gymnastics,**

Akhaimova is one of Russia's golden girls after nabbing top spot as part of the country's

artistic gymnastics team. Competing under the banner of Russian Olympic Committee, Akhaimova attained the top score for vault in the team finals.

The 24-year-old hails from Vladivostok, a city with a rich Jewish history dating back to the 19th century. Akhaimova's family lived in the area until 2012, when they moved to St Petersburg to give her and her sister, Luba, more sporting opportunities.

When not training, Akhaimova is a big fan of social media, posting extensively on Instagram and TikTok. At university, she studied sport and health. It clearly has been a big year for her as in addition to participating in her first Olympics, she received the title of Honoured Master of Sport in the Russian

According to a message posted on Facebook by the Russian embassy in the United States, Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Akhaimova and her team, saying, "For the first time ever, Russia has won the Olympic gold in the artistic gymnastics team event. This success has become a worthy prize for your talent and perseverance in reaching your goals, for your team spirit, solidarity, and beautiful, graceful performance."

Upcoming Events:



Linoy Ashram - Rhythmic Gymnastics, Israel

The 22-year-old Adidas-sponsored Ashram is Israel's darling. Having set a number of records and won the European all-around title ahead

of the Olympics, she's now considered one of Israel's biggest hopes for glory at these games.

Born in Rishon LeZion, her family is of Yemini and Greek origin. She said that she began gymnastics as a small child because she simply couldn't keep still.

She's studying education, and describes herself as a perfectionist. One of her routines is set to Hava Nagila, although she incorporates lots of different musical genres into her routines. According to the *Hey Alma* website, she even has a back-bend turn named "the Ashram" after her.

The women's rhythmic individual all-around gymnastics qualifications take place on Friday, 6 August.



Sue Bird - Basketball, **United States**

An icon of the Olympics, Sue Bird, was one of the United States (US) flagbearers at the opening ceremony this year. The 40-year-old

is competing in her fifth Olympic Games, hoping to nap a fifth gold medal for basketball

Born in New York, according to JTA, Bird was granted Israeli citizenship in 2006. Though she did so in order to be able to play in European teams, she said she learnt a lot about her cultural heritage in doing so.

According to Sports Illustrated, Bird used to keep her gold medals in her sock drawer, although she now puts them in a safety-deposit box. Her fiancé is acclaimed US soccer star Megan Rapinoe.

Bird has been instrumental in the fight for better pay and benefits for the female players in the US's Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA). Former WNBA player Dawn Staley is quoted by *Time* magazine as saying that Bird "gives a voice to women who are underpaid and underappreciated".

The women's basketball finals take place this weekend.



Jemima Montag -Racewalking, Australia

A first timer at the game, Montag's parents' "meet-cute" story began at the 1989 Maccabiah Games where her father was playing cricket and

her mom competing in heptathlon.

According to the *Hey Alma* website, though Montag tried a variety of sports and dance, she found her niche in racewalking, saying that her "combination of endurance, hypermobile joints, and fiery competitiveness are a great trio for racewalking".

Montag sites her Holocaust survivor grandparents as her inspiration, holding close their lessons about

The women's race walking final take place on Friday.



Alix Klineman - Beach **Volleyball, United States** When Alix Klineman wasn't selected for the US Olympic team for indoor volleyball for the 2016

Rio Olympic Games, the now

31-year-old decided to switch to beach volleyball to continue her Olympic dream. This gamble paid off, and she is now ranked second in the world with her partner in the game, April Ross.

Born in California, Klineman is a graduate of Stanford University, having gained a degree in Art Studio. In 2015, she was inducted into the Southern California Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

The Women's Beach Volleyball semi-finals and finals take place this week.



Maor Tiyouri - Marathon, Israel

When the Women's Marathon event takes place over the weekend, Maor Tiyouri will represent Israel with pride. The 30-year-old from Kfar Saba comes from an Iraqi and Iranian

Jewish background. Though she studied and now trains in the US, her heart is made of pure milk and honey.

She told *Hey Alma* that being a Jewish athlete and representing Israel, a "small country that has known so many hardships" was an honour and a privilege.

Stephan Welz & Co.

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Chev vaccination site injects hope in Joburg's bleakest month

uly will go down in history as one of the bleakest months ever experienced by the Johannesburg Jewish community, which recorded 113 deaths in one month.

In response to the severity of the impact of the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community, the Chevrah Kadisha has been on a mission to vaccinate as many members of the community as fast as

According to Saul Tomson, the chief executive of the Chev, over the past 12 months, there has been a 35% increase in the number of deaths compared to the prior 12-month

period. "Sadly, the Johannesburg Jewish community has one of the highest excess death rates in the world," he said.

Tomson was moved by the community's pain as well as his family's own grief following a personal loss to COVID-19 during this month of despair.

The growing sense of mourning propelled him and his organisation to push the Gauteng Health Department into granting the organisation a license to operate a public vaccination

"We have seen the tremendous effectiveness of the vaccine on our own elderly residents and staff, and the desperate need to accelerate the rollout of the vaccine for the community at large," he said this week.

Because of the Chev's aggressive, early push to vaccinate residents and staff, its residential facilities have virtually been fully

n a world first, Israel has begun

administering third doses of the

COVID-19 vaccine to Israelis

60 years and over. Those eligible

messages alerting them to go to

reported any side effects.

are receiving phone calls and SMS

their nearest health office. To date,

That's the good news. The bad

five months, new coronavirus cases

Daily new infections have spiked to

more than 2 000, up from a handful

of cases per day a few months ago,

and about 160 people are currently

hospitalised with severe symptoms.

More than 6 400 people have died

in the country are nearing 4 000.

news is that for the first time in

no-one who has received the jab has

protected during the third wave, Tomson

"There have been very few hospitalisations and almost no deaths. In the context of July, in which we recorded the highest number of deaths in the community's recent history, our residential facilities have been largely spared."

This was remarkable, he said, given the age and frailty of residents, which has been documented as the major determinant of the severity of The Chevrah Kadisha vaccination site

Hatzolah's vaccination site at KosherWorld in Johannesburg

Tomson's personal tragedy affected him acutely. His late father-in-law, Alec Levy, 70, passed away from COVID-19 in June. Levy was well known and respected in the community. He was a highly regarded financial advisor and a trustee of the Rambam Charitable Trust, with a strong communal leaning.

This, along with the rising COVID-19 death rate in the community and the resultant

> economic suffering experienced by those affected, was "very painful", he said.

"There was too much suffering and sadness. Something needed to be done," said Tomson.

Two of the Chev's senior managers called an urgent meeting with key role players at the health department. "They were passionate, professional, and frankly,

> wouldn't take no for an answer," he said. A week later, their vaccination site was up and running.

"During July, we really saw the worst of this pandemic. It motivated us to become involved in getting the whole community and everyone associated with the community, including

communal organisations, other nongovernmental organisations, domestic

Hatzolah on mass vaccination drive

Hatzolah launched its COVID-19 vaccination site last Wednesday, 28 July, and has vaccinated close to 1 600 people to date.

"We are averaging about 300 vaccinations a day," said Darren Kahn, Hatzolah's executive general manager. "We have an energetic team of volunteers and nurses. For a smooth and quick experience, come to our site, situated above KosherWorld, 1 Long Avenue,

"It fits in with Hatzolah's motto of saving lives. The more people are vaccinated in our community and surrounding bubble, the safer our families. We want to see everyone vaccinated, so when we saw the Pikitup guys passing us, we jumped at the opportunity to assist them. It was a brief pause in their job. We took them upstairs, and within 20 minutes, they were back on route," he said.

The site is open Sunday to Thursday, 08:00 to 16:00, and Friday 08:00 to 14:00. It's closed on Shabbat and public holidays. Call 072 605 7511 or register on http://www.hatzolahvaccines.co.za/

The organisation has also launched Hatzolah Vaccinates on the Move for those who are unable to leave their homes to get a COVID-19 vaccine. If you are eligible, register on https://linktr.ee/vaccinationdrive.

and shuls vaccinated as quickly as possible," said Tomson.

The Chevrah Kadisha vaccination site in Sandringham has been operating for nearly two weeks. It has already administered thousands of vaccines.

It has been responsible for creating about 20 much-needed jobs for members of the community including several retired pharmacists who help to prepare vaccines on site, as well as several other administrative personnel.

The site and its staff have been praised by all those who have visited for operating in a streamlined, professional, and speedy

Tamar Dakes, who got vaccinated at the Chev, said, "Thank you to everyone at the Chev. I was vaccinated in eight minutes, checked in and out. Was a pleasure to be supported by so much care and love for our people, for all people."

"Many thanks and much appreciation for what you do. I took my long time helper and friend in for her COVID-19 vax this morning at the Chev - Sandringham. Having made her an appointment, Diana was treated as a priority. All the info needed is given on the printed online questionnaire to save time, which it did! We arrived at 09:20, and she was able to leave at 09:40. A truly professional service to the community. I'm so proud to be Jewish," said another grateful community

"Earlier this year, the health department was impressed by how we managed to vaccinate all our elderly residents on site with their first Pfizer jab. Our protocols and things like our onsite pharmacy, medical staff, and parking satisfied the department's requirements. We were the first aged home in Gauteng to vaccinate our residents, and we continued to push relentlessly for the second jab," said Lijahne Beetge, the group's care manager.

& Johnson vaccination during the Sisonke

resident over 60, as well as most of Johannesburg's Holocaust survivors, were vaccinated.

Residents were scheduled to get the every day, and were relentless. We got our entire allocation exactly 42 days after the first dose [the minimum time in terms of government policy], and our

responsibility. It's a way to give back to our

• Contact www.jhbchev.co.za/vaccine to make a booking.

second dose only in mid-July, "but our team phoned the health department

team immediately got to work. They went room to room, vaccinating virtually every resident. "We see this as life-saving work

Members of the public need to book a date and time to visit the site. There are no walk-ins. It's open Sunday to Friday for all who are EVDS (Electronic Vaccination Data System) registered. There is no charge or medical aid necessary, and everyone is welcome,

vaccine is clearly having a positive effect. We are grateful to be a part of it," Tomson to prevent more unnecessary deaths."

All staff members received the Johnson trial at Helen Joseph Hospital. In May, every single Chevrah Kadisha

and as an extension of our communal wonderful community and the broader community," Tomson said.

Tomson said. "In spite of these tragic fatalities, the said. "Our goal is to try as best as we can

preventing spread and severe illness," he workers, staff at kosher restaurants, schools, And now it's a third vaccine

"It shows the power of the vaccine in

disease and hospital admission.

Pfizer vaccine were effective against the highly contagious Delta variant. As it turns out, seemingly not.

This third dose is expected to increase patients' immune systems' awareness of the coronavirus, creating a vaccine-based "memory" in the body that allows it to identify and more strongly respond to the virus. But this isn't necessarily true when it comes to the Delta variant, which is more contagious than previous strands. This means a smaller quantity of virus is necessary to cause infection. The assumption is that giving a third dose of the vaccine to older adults can boost the immune system in the event that immunity weakens over time, as well as boosting the vaccine's response even if it hasn't waned, among populations at increased risk of serious illness if they are infected.

The demand for the third booster has been relatively high among Israelis 60 years and older, so much so that phone lines to health organisations crashed due to the number of people calling to schedule appointments. Still, not everyone is thrilled. According to a survey released on 30 July by the Social Policy Institute at Washington University and the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, Israel, only 52% of Israelis who received two shots of the COVID-19

vaccine say they will have a third shot. Among those under the age of 60, only 47% said they would take the shot.

The main concern is that the long-term impact of the vaccine is still unknown, and as the Delta variant spreads across the country, including re-infecting a high percentage of vaccinated individuals, more people believe that the vaccine doesn't work. According to the health ministry, more than half of all new cases are people who were fully vaccinated.

country to launch a COVID-19 booster campaign, effectively becoming a testing ground before approval by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

It's believed that in order for the dose to be effective in halting the rising rate of serious cases, at least one million Israelis need to receive it. Even afterwards, it will still take several weeks to determine exactly the effects of this third dose.

Israel is the first country to launch a COVID-19 booster campaign, effectively becoming a

testing ground before approval by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Israelis are concerned about this, as they are that they might not be receiving accurate information about the pandemic or the vaccines. Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, accusations have been levelled at the Israeli media for exaggerating the risk of the virus.

The FDA has also been unwilling to approve Ivermectin, a drug used to fight parasites in third-world countries, to reduce viral shedding among non-hospitalised patients with mild to moderate COVID-19. But now, the Sheba Medical Center in Tel Hashomer has released the results of a study, finding that the drug could help reduce the length of infection for people who contract coronavirus - for less than \$1 (R15) a day.

In the study, about 90 volunteers over the age of 18 who were diagnosed with coronavirus and were staying in state-run COVID-19

hotels were divided into two groups - one received Ivermectin while one received a placebo. Nearly 72% of those treated with Ivermectin tested negative for the virus by day six. In contrast, only 50% of those who received the placebo tested negative There were no significant side effects among the Ivermectin users.

Still, the World Health Organization continues to recommend against using the drug except in clinical trials.

As Israel prepares for another lockdown during the upcoming September Rosh Hashanah holiday period, more Israelis are more afraid of the economic impact of the virus than of contracting it. The list of countries regarded as "red" - in other words, no-go zones - has increased, as has the requirement to enter into mandatory quarantine when arriving from abroad. South Africa has been on the red list for some time for travellers to and from Israel - and this is unlikely to change any time soon.

from the virus in the country. The latest data suggests that people vaccinated in January appear to have just 16% protection against infection now; while in those vaccinated in April, the effectiveness is 75%. Some experts have questioned the veracity of the data, but most agree that there's no

harm in administering a third dose even if it may not end up boosting protection. In other words, the risk from a third dose is no greater than the risk of getting coronavirus itself.

It wasn't an easy decision to reach. Israeli experts were divided over whether the initial two doses of the

5 – 12 August 2021 SA JEWISH REPORT 13

Rabbi tells of child sexual abuse and recovery

MIRAH LANGER

e told his eight-year-old-self that he was so sorry for the horrors he would endure as the victim of sexual abuse for the decade that would follow. He implored his small self to remember it was never, ever his fault. He directly addressed the perpetrator – his childhood nanny – and he forgave her, not because she asked for it or deserved it, but because he wanted to free his mind to do positive work for the rest of his life.

In the 18 months since Utah Chabad Rabbi Avremi Zippel, 29, gave his victim-impact statement to the court – as his now-septuagenarian childhood nanny was convicted of 131 counts of sexual abuse against him, and jailed – he has continued to speak out. Believed to be the first Orthodox rabbi to do so, he has made his experience public to offer solace to those who still suffer.

"It has given me the ability and opportunity to be an advocate for this issue in my community, to provide a voice for those who often don't feel like they have a representative in the world around them. They feel alone, they feel isolated. They feel like no one quite understands their plight. Having this opportunity is the single greatest gift that I think the Almighty G-d has ever given me," Zippel told a webinar co-hosted by a number of Chabad centres around South Africa this

During his talk, he detailed how his parents were emissaries of the (Lubavitcher) Rebbe, and "from as far back as I can remember" his dream was to emulate his father.

Born in Canada, but growing up in Salt Lake City in Utah, he was home schooled along with his siblings as there was no Jewish school in the area at the time. In 1999, when Zippel was eight, the family hired a nanny to help with the day-to-day running of the household. In the decade that ensued, she would wreak havoc on his life. Yet, even after she left, he swore to himself that he would "never tell a single soul about what had happened".



Nevertheless, "The funny thing is that a lot of these trauma issues, they don't play by the rules that we would like to enact for them. They still find a way to crop up in our lives, and the trauma that I suffered continued to bother me continuously."

By the time his wife had their first child in 2016, "I would say that it was getting worse instead of better." His parents and wife, perturbed by the unexplained changes in

him, urged him to seek professional help. Reluctantly, he agreed, quipping that, after all, his wife and mother are indeed "very strong Jewish women".

Sitting in a therapist's office, Zippel recalls uttering the words for the first time: "'I think I was sexually abused as a kid.'
That began a lengthy process of healing."

In 2018, Zippel, also decided to pursue justice, reporting the case to the police and then facing the difficult trial that led to his former caretaker, evasive and lacking remorse throughout, finally put

behind bars for 25 years to life.

Yet he cautions against a neat sense of closure. "People assume that when you ask a Chabad rabbi what the healing process was like and if G-d played a role, the answer will be, 'Oh absolutely."

The reality is far more complex. "It's fair to say that the Almighty and I have had a very complicated relationship over the years," Zippel said, "and it's a connection that constantly evolves.

"I spent the majority of my life pretty passionately convinced that the Almighty G-d hated me. This was a mentality that I developed

as a child, when these things started happening to me. I didn't really have the vocabulary or the understanding to realise that these things that were being done to me were a crime and weren't my fault." Instead, said Zippel, he became twisted with his own sense of blame, shame, and guilt.

"When I started therapy, I realised that an even more painful and lonely

How to arm your children against abuse

Although it's impossible to guarantee your child's safety from potential abusers, there are some steps you can take to protect them, says abuse survivor Rabbi Avremi Zippel.

First, parents needed to be open in age-appropriate ways about the possible dangers. "The greatest way to arm our children is to be honest with them that this sort of thing happens," Zippel says.

Moreover, parents need to nurture open communication with their children. "We know that children rarely speak to their parents or trusted adults about these experiences because by and large, they feel shame and fear the consequences.

"As parents, we have to share the sentiment that there is never any sort of topic, any sort of experience, or any sort of encounter that our children will go through that will be met by judgement or any sort of shaming on our part. Let them see that if they share something with us, they can come to expect unconditional love, acceptance, and understanding," Zippel says.

To the victims, Zippel says, "I often tell people to try [to disclose] it in small doses."

In his case, he says, telling a therapist was actually easier as the first step. Nevertheless, it's also important to tell close family and friends. Sometimes, says Zippel, survivors of abuse are reluctant to do this because they believe that they will burden their loved ones or affect the way they are seen by them. But this is a misconception.

"Just the proximity that they have to your life means that they have been touched by these experiences. By sharing this information, we're giving them the knowledge, the context, and the education they need to grow through this with us."

 To get help, contact Koleinu, a support service for abuse victims, www.koleinusa.co.za, or via the organisation's social media pages. place than thinking G-d hated me was thinking G-d had somehow ignored [me]."

He began to ponder, "What kind of G-d allows this to happen to a child? Not once or twice or five times but dozens and dozens of times? Not just G-d in the abstract, but the G-d that we learn about and think about, frankly the G-d I 'sell' as a rabbi – the all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful G-d. Did he just decide to remain oblivious to my suffering?

"Ultimately," muses Zippel, "those are questions to which I will never have a good answer. In that sense, I feel welcome to join the legions of human beings that have endured any sort of pain and suffering in their life and have questions and complaints to G-d."

Yet, there is a further development to his connection to G-d. "After I went public that I was a survivor of child sexual abuse, I had the opportunity to use my experiences to enact positive change in my community and in the world around me," Zippel said.

More than just patching it up, Zippel and his wife have fulfilled his childhood dream, serving as a community rabbi and rebbetzin in Salt Lake City. Yet, he said, this joyful success doesn't take away from the reality that "no one graduates from childhood trauma ... every single day, you wake up with the mentality that today, I have the ability to focus on being either a victim of my pain or a survivor who has come out to the other side. Every single day, I need to represent that eight-year-old child. This is a lifetime journey of healing."



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Hedy Lamarr, the beautiful genius who invented wireless

MIRAH LANGER

Hollywood star of the 1930s and 1940s who came from an Austrian Jewish background, Hedy Lamarr was most famous for her dazzling beauty, six marriages, exotic costumes, and some risqué roles. Now, it's revealed that she offered far more as a woman of science a stratosphere ahead of her time, a genius who hoped to help the war effort and, in fact, invented the technology that was the precursor to Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, and GPS.

"Her goal in inventing things was always to make life for others easier. She wanted to be able to help people in their daily lives and, of course, her big goal was to fight the Nazis," said Danielle Spera, the director of Vienna's Jewish Museum about this complex icon. Spera was speaking at a webinar co-hosted by the South African Holocaust & Genocide Foundation in collaboration with the Austrian embassy this week.

Lamarr was born Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler in 1914 to an assimilated Jewish family. Her father was a banker and her mother a concert pianist. The family lived in a wealthy district of Vienna, where Lamarr enjoyed a carefree childhood. Even more remarkable when reflecting on her later scientific pursuits is that Lamarr had little formal education, leaving school at 16 to pursue a career in film.

She gained fame quickly, especially after a role that contained a nude scene, which she was allegedly duped into performing on camera. Shortly afterwards, she married an older film director who was intensely jealous and controlling. She eventually fled this "golden cage", according to Spera, travelling first to Paris, then London, and then



Hollywood

Here, her name was changed, and her look refined. "Her beauty was staged to perfection. She became an overwhelming success and an international star." Wittily self-aware of the superficiality of this fame, Lamarr once quipped, "Any girl can be glamorous. All you have to do is stand still and look stupid." Her life became tabloid fodder as she navigated myriad relationships, also adopting one child and having two of her own.

Though her father died in 1935 before World War II broke out, Lamarr was able to save her mother's life by getting her out of Austria and into America. "They started a close relationship again," said Spera, noting that there are a number of letters showing great

affection between them.

Throughout her life, Lamarr was involved in invention. "She started when she was still a child, deconstructing and constructing her toys from afresh, taking apart a music box 'like a puzzle'.

"She was a genius," said Spera, who throughout her life was always finding practical solutions through invention. When during the war Lamarr heard about the problems of radio-controlled torpedoes being thwarted by signal jamming, she began to conceptualise a solution.

Along with a collaborator, George Antheil, who was also a

pianist and composer, Lamarr developed a system of transmitting radio signals whereby they hop between frequencies, therefore making interception more difficult. This frequency hopping technology was patented, and Lamarr and Antheil gave their invention to the United States Navy "as a contribution to the American war effort, but the system was too complex for immediate practical implementation". However, the technology was later used during the Cuban Missile Crisis, helping to prevent further escalation.

A recluse in her later years, Lamarr would speak – even to her children – only on the telephone. She died in Florida in 2000. As per her wishes, her ashes were scattered in the Vienna woods.

Slowly, in recent years, the full constellation of her erudition has been recognised. An exhibition held by the Jewish Museum in Vienna became one of its most popular ever.

Also speaking at the webinar was Heather Massie, an actor and writer who studied astrophysics and wrote a play about Lamarr. She has performed the show all over the world including in South Africa, and noted the impact it had on inspiring young people to pursue a love of science.

Massie said the story resonated across cultures and continents. "This way of communicating about science is powerful because storytelling is so important in the culture in South Africa."

She recalled how during a performance to students at a girl's high school, they all gasped when hearing of Lamarr's half a dozen marriages. Massie said she decided to improvise a little, and turn this into a teachable moment.

"I was able to stop for a moment and say, use that as a lesson. I had my character as Hedy tell them, 'Well, this is a lesson to you to choose well the first time. Choose someone who's going to support your dreams and support you as a woman in the world and in accomplishing all those things that you want to accomplish."

Since 2018, there has been further acknowledgement of Lamarr's scientific contribution through the creation of a Hedy Lamarr Prize in Austria. This award is given out by the City of Vienna to a young female researcher in the field of digital analytics. Lamarr will move even further into the limelight when an upcoming TV mini-series about her, starring Israeli actress Gal Gadot, is released.

Today, Lamarr's legacy continues to offer luminosity to the world in surprising ways. As she once declared, "All creative people want to do the unexpected."

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The Jewish athletes decorated in Tokyo

EMILY BURACK – JTA

he Jewish highlights of the Tokyo Olympics kicked off with Jewish basketball superstar Sue Bird serving as one of Team USA's two flag bearers at the opening ceremony, a huge honour

The lasting accolades, though, are the medals that winning athletes take home. Dozens of Jewish athletes are competing in the Games this year, but the fierce competition means that only some will enter the record books as gold, silver, or bronze medallists.

Here are the Jewish athletes who have clinched a medal, in chronological order. We'll continue to update this list until the last day of competition, 8 August.

Avishag Semberg won bronze in Taekwondo for Team Israel on day one of the competition.

Semberg, 19, was third in the women's under-49 kg category, giving Israel its first medal of the Tokyo Olympics and its first ever in the sport.

"I said to myself, 'I want this medal more than she does,' and I did it ... I have an Olympic medal at 19, it's a dream come true," Semberg said following her win.

Because of the pandemic, Semberg didn't stay in Tokyo long afterward, and she was greeted at Ben Gurion Airport with a festive reception and big celebration.

Jessica Fox of Australia won bronze in women's kayak slalom on day four of the competition. Two days later, she took gold in women's canoe slalom.

Fox, considered by many to be the greatest paddler of all time, was the only athlete to medal in both canoe slalom and kayak slalom. She finished a disappointing third in the kayak race, but rallied for the gold in the historic canoe event – it was the first time that women's canoe slalom has been contested at the Olympics.

Fox had previously won two Olympic medals: silver in 2012 and bronze in 2016. Her mom, Jewish Olympian Myriam Jerusalmi, won bronze at the 1996 Olympics in kayak slalom. Jerusalmi now coaches her daughter.

Lilia Akhaimova won gold with Team Russia in the women's team gymnastics competition on day four of the Games.

Akhaimova, who is competing in her first Olympics, earned the top score on vault during the women's gymnastics team finals, helping propel the Russian Olympic Committee, aka Team Russia, to the gold medal.

Akhaimova will compete in the women's individual vault competition later in the Games.

Team Israel won bronze in the mixed judo event on day eight of the competition.

After a disappointing showing in individual judo events, Team Israel took home a bronze after defeating the Russian Olympic Committee in the inaugural judo mixed team event. Team Germany, too, won a bronze in the competition, in one of the Games' few ties.

The win was emotional for many on the team. Sagi Muki said, "Everyone here gave their heart and soul, and that is what we won here." The bronze is Israel's sixth-ever medal in judo.

Israeli gymnast Artem Dolgopyat won gold in the men's floor exercise on day nine, giving Israel its second-ever gold in any Olympic event. The 24-year-old Israeli is one of many Jewish gymnasts competing at this year's Games. Born in Ukraine, he emigrated with his family to Israel at the age of 12.

"I don't know what it will be like when I go back to Israel – until now I definitely wasn't well known or recognised," Dolgopyat said. "I want to continue to be modest the way I am, not think about the things around me and just do my work."

He's already shifted his sights to the 2024 Olympics in Paris, hoping to repeat his success.

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5 – 12 August 2021 SA JEWISH REPORT 15

The lost art of being social

being the only couple at a restaurant.
Whereas after years of travel, I don't have a problem dining alone, I still detest almost nothing more than occupying the only table at a venue.

For me, it's the loneliest and the saddest feeling, and makes me wonder if the occupiers of our table are the only people left on the planet, everyone else having been vapourised or turned to ashes in the apocalypse.

The past few weeks felt exactly like that. With the country back to level 4, schools, places of worship, gyms, and entertainment venues closed, we were once again confined to our tables. So palpable was the feeling, that on Shabbat when I went to shul and saw people, I was pleasantly shocked to see that not everyone had either died from COVID-19 or made aliyah. Those being the only two options that I could think of.

To some extent, it was as if we emerged from hibernation, blinking in the harsh light, whilst trying to adjust to the strangeness of seeing actual people. People with full bodies who don't come with a mute button.

It also became clear to me that I have become socially unfit. Not in the same way that my family might think that I am, but in the sense that I have less social stamina than I once enjoyed.

Even being an extrovert and someone who is energised by other people, I found that the few conversations that I had with living, breathing people quickly exhausted me. In no time at all, I was overcome by the need to scurry home to the sanctity and relative silence of my home where I could have a little lie down.

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman

I had never considered people to be draining before, but then in times gone by, I was also more practiced. I might even once have been an athlete. Just of a different kind. The social kind.

The end of the third wave coinciding with the return of warmer weather is somewhat of a pathetic fallacy. The phrase "pathetic fallacy" was coined by John Ruskin, and is a literary term for the attribution of human emotion and conduct to things found in nature that aren't human.

It's a kind of personification that occurs in poetic descriptions, when, for example, clouds seem sullen, when leaves dance, or when rocks seem indifferent. Whereas we know logically that the heralding of spring has little to do with the end of the third wave, and that the sun is no brighter than it was the day before, it does feel like that.

Just as for me, being at the only table at a restaurant creates the impression that we are alone on the planet.

What's clear is that there isn't going to be an easy transition back to life as we knew it. It will take time to get used to the many things that we have been precluded from doing. And, much like an untrained athlete, we will need to build up stamina and strength before we are socially fit again.

Step one, however, is to walk outside, turn our faces towards the sun, and enjoy the change of season. Pathetic a fallacy or not.

----- A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Fighting a Nazi in court

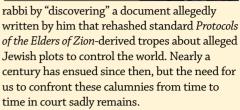
s Gauteng Council Chairperson Professor Karen Milner put it, it's not every day that one gets to fight an out-and-out Nazi and beat him. Last week, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) recorded such a victory when the Randburg Magistrates Court confirmed the previous imposition of a restraining order against white supremacist and crusading antisemite Jan Lamprecht. It was Professor Milner who in July last year laid a criminal charge against Lamprecht, resulting in her receiving hate mail and being subjected to online abuse after the latter retaliated by publishing her personal details along with disparaging comments about her on his website. In terms of the order, Lamprecht was compelled to remove the offending items, and has been interdicted from publishing any more such material.

The court's confirmation of the restraining order brings to a successful close the first stage of this matter. While the criminal case against Lamprecht is still to be heard, the legal proceedings instituted to date have already resulted in a distinct toning down of the inflammatory rhetoric on his website. Like others before him, he has learnt that when the SAJBD says there is a price to be paid for attacking Jews and that those who cross the line will be made to pay that price, we mean what we say.

The judgment brings to mind a previous instance of the SAJBD taking on proponents of Nazism in the courts and winning. This was the famed Grahamstown libel trial of 1934, when leaders of the notorious South African National Socialist Movement (better known to history as the Greyshirts) tried to frame a Port Elizabeth

ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev



As with a number of previous successful prosecutions that the SAJBD has conducted in recent years, this result was made possible by the unstinting support of Ian Levitt Attorneys. We thank Levitt and his superb team, in particular advocate Laurance Hodes and Nick Kourie, for the hard work and countless hours they have devoted to the case. It's indeed largely thanks to the selfless efforts of distinguished legal practitioners in our community that the SAJBD has been able, over the decades, to fulfil its core mandate of protecting the safety and upholding the dignity of South African Jewry.

A second relevant legal ruling handed down last week was the long-awaited judgment of the Constitutional Court in the Jon Qwelane hate-speech case. We have taken a keen interest in this matter, and indeed took part in the capacity of *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) with the South African Holocaust & Genocide Foundation when it was heard last year because of the relevance of its outcome to our own hate-speech case against the Congress of South African Trade Union's Bongani Masuku, currently before the Concourt. We will meet our legal team shortly to consider the implications of the Qwelane judgment.

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

o frame a Port Elizabeth 101.9 ChaiFM, every Friday from 12:00 to 13:00. This column is paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Letters

WE LOST OUR HOME, BUT GAINED MUCH BLESSING

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who helped us in so many ways, selflessly reaching out to a family known to some people, but certainly not to all.

The kindness was overwhelming. The generosity came from those who live here as well as those who have emigrated. Not a single day has passed that we haven't received something meaningful.

There are two sides to every coin. Yes, we lost our home of 36 years, along with the contents and a gallery of framed photographs depicting the milestones of our family. Yet, we gained the outpouring of love and kindness of so many. We are blessed still to have each other, food, clothing, and a warm and comfortable place to stay.

In time, we will have another place to call home, and we will continue to celebrate *simchas* with *mazel, brocha,* and *nachas*.

Thank you! May you all be blessed, and know only good health, happiness, and safety.

G-d bless.

- The Posner family

THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE - VACCINATION SAVES LIVES

In last week's SA Jewish Report (29 July 2021), our chief rabbi urged us to get vaccinated.

It's well known that according to the Talmud, saving a single life is considered as important as saving the entire world. When it comes to protecting human lives, almost all of the mitzvot fall away. Virtually every doctor and scientist around the world agrees that it's important to get the jab.

Yet, there are some conspiracy theorists with colourful beliefs who disagree.

When there's a disagreement, the Talmud always follows the majority view. The numbers and facts don't lie. These show overwhelmingly that vaccination saves lives.

In Israel, where most people are difficult to fool, almost everyone has been vaccinated. In fact, they are now going for additional booster shots in the holy land.

Should we differ in our views, let's agree to disagree. Unity and peace are important. Rather than hating the person just because of an idea, it's best to have the grace to rise above the disagreement. Hillel pointed out that to love your neighbour is the essence of Judaism. It's preferable to play the ball, not the man.

Talking about love and saving lives, we have an opportunity to help others who are struggling to register for vaccinations. Fortunately, the South African roll out is now moving quickly.

- Martin Zagnoev, Johannesburg

From a day of giving to a day of dividing

>>Continued from page 2

That's why critique of Israel requires a special understanding and balance of approach."

Meanwhile, others have criticised the cynical use of Mandela's name when the great statesman promoted an even-handed approach as much as possible. "Former President Nelson Mandela supported Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. He stated, 'We recognise the legitimacy of Zionism as a Jewish nationalism. We insist on the right of the state of Israel to exist within secure borders'," says South African Zionist Federation National Chairperson Rowan Polovin.

"He travelled to Israel, met its leadership, and accepted an honorary doctorate from Ben-Gurion University," Polovin says. "Madiba recognised that the overwhelming majority of South African Jewry identify proudly as Zionists. "The BDS movement wishes to try and suppress these facts. It has strategically allied itself to the late Madiba's grandson, Mandla Mandela, because of the Mandela name, which is being used to push a false and disingenuous apartheid narrative against Israel and to stir unnecessary division in Madiba's rainbow nation.

"Mandla Mandela is chief of the Mvezo Traditional Council, and has now lent the council's support to a billboard campaign by Africa4Palestine," says Polovin. "It's a sad misuse of tens of thousands of rands a month to display a misleading and divisive billboard instead of spending the funds on skills development and poverty alleviation for the people in the council's jurisdiction."

The *SA Jewish Report* reached out to Africa4Palestine and Chief Zwelivelile "Mandla" Mandela MP for comment but did not receive a response.



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Yeshiva angels to the rescue

rade 6 students at Yeshiva College Girls High School helped The Angel Network, Africa Tikkun, and Warm the World serve soup and bread to the needy in the school's parking lot on Thursday, 29 July. Hundreds of people received a blanket, a mask, a cup of soup, bread, and an orange. The enthusiasm and empathy of the Yeshiva students was such that many asked if they could do it again next week. It was a real handson experience, something they won't forget in a hurry.





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Herzlia awards honorary life membership to Natalie Barnett

nited Herzlia Schools' Board of Governors has awarded honorary life membership to Natalie Barnett for her services to the school. Barnett has served the school for 20 years, starting with the Parent-Teachers Association, then serving on the governors' board for about 18 years, two of which were as board chairperson.

"This award acknowledges Natalie's exemplary service over many years and in various capacities, including leadership, vision, commitment, empathy, constitutional

development, appropriate role definition of the governors, and succession planning. Special mention must be made of Natalie's introduction of the menschlichkeit pillar to Herzlia's values - Natalie personifies all of the attributes of this pillar!" said Matthew Gruzd, the chairperson of Herzlia's governing

"Natalie is extremely dedicated, uncompromising, smart, invested, professional, and empathetic," Gruzd said. "Large parts of what people

know and love, about Herzlia today comes from initiatives that she spearheaded."

"Natalie was at the forefront of the process of appointing an executive director for the schools," said Andries van Renssen, the executive director of United Herzlia Schools. "She was visionary in understanding its needs, recognising that change was imminent, and had the ability to articulate this with clarity. Natalie was tremendously valuable in her introduction of me into the Herzlia community and the

> workings of the Cape Town Jewish community. This support enabled me to move swiftly into a position where I could begin to implement practical initiatives and changes."

Said Barnett, "I salute all those who came before me, those who served with me, and those who continue to carry the torch. Kol hakavod l'kulam. Always remember, Im tirtzu ein zo aggadah (because if we will it, it's no dream)."

WIZO Cape Town plants seeds of sustainability in Khayelitsha

DEEP WATER HAKE

I&J HAKE MEDALLIONS 450G

noth Zion WIZO's (Women's International Zionist Organisation's) Cape Town's outreach arm made an impact in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, recently, with its first ever beginners organic gardening training course.

Fifteen local participants were trained in soil composting, mulching,

fertilising, and planting. The course, which was run in collaboration with The Angel Network and Group 18, was practical and interactive, giving the skills needed to achieve food security and sustainability in one of Cape Town's most impoverished areas.

WIZO South Africa President Shelley Trope-Friedman applauded this wonderful initiative, saying "This project is at the heart of the mandate of WIZO to educate, equip, and



Graduates of the first WIZO organic gardening course at the Makukhanye Centre, Khayelitsha. Esta Levitas is front left, and her daughter and course leader, Mikhaela Levitas, is front right.

> Under the guidance of Esta Levitas, WIZO Cape Town's head of outreach, the organisation will continue to work in Khayelitsha to help make a difference in the lives of those who need it most, breaking down socio-economic barriers and furthering the vision of WIZO.

Some items for the Khayelitsha gardening projects were donated by Israeli agricultural company Netafim, and WIZO hopes to use further Israeli technology in future endeavours.











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