

russelkaplan rka
auctioneers

**Art, antiques, objets d'art,
furniture, and jewellery
wanted for forthcoming auctions**

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



Montblanc limited edition,
Peter The Great, 18k gold
nib fountain pen
SOLD R36,000



Emile Gallé orange and
white glass cabinet vase
SOLD R9,000



French three-panel floor
screen, 20th century
SOLD R17,000



Edoardo Villa, Flight,
welded steel construction
SOLD R70,000

■ Volume 26 – Number 05 ■ 10 February 2022 ■ 9 Adar I 5782

■ south african Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

www.sajr.co.za

Beth Din implores survivors of child abuse to come forward

NICOLA MILTZ

The Beth Din of South Africa this week issued a first-of-its-kind message urging survivors of child abuse not to be afraid to report cases which may lead to a breakthrough. This signals a major step forward in acknowledging that there's a problem with reporting cases in the community – something activists in the field have been lamenting for years. Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein acknowledged the Beth Din's move and the halacha attached to it as "one of the most important weapons to protect current and future victims from being violated". The Beth Din said it was "aware of the reticence" that

victims have of reporting molestation "due to the feared personal consequences". It nevertheless "implored" victims to take "the difficult step" of reporting any such behaviour to a registered Child Protection Organisation (CPO). "Such steps may not only ensure that the perpetrator is brought to justice, but will also prevent them from being able to continue such activities with even more victims," the message read. The unprecedented message, delivered by dayanim Rabbis Dovid Baddiel, Gideon Fox, Yoel Smith, and Matthew Liebenberg, came amid mounting pressure from the public for cases of this nature to be effectively and timeously addressed. This, together with many rumours of longstanding allegations of child abuse

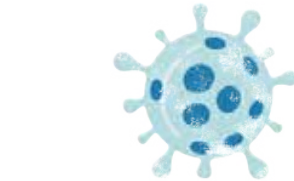
in the community, which remain secret due to fear of coming forward. There's also the perception that crimes of abuse are being swept under the carpet by institutions and authorities. The dayanim said further, "If the allegations are found to be credible and ultimately the perpetrator is incarcerated as a result, we wish to make it clear that this is in perfect alignment with Jewish law. "Such people, who pose a real and ongoing threat to the community and who rely on our silence to continue their activities, are considered a threat to society as defined in the Shulchan Aruch, and one is therefore obligated to alert the authorities." Their message has been welcomed by child-abuse activists and members of the public desperate to see action in securing justice for victims of abuse. "This is a bold, brave, proactive, and courageous move by the Beth Din," said Rebbetzin Wendy Hendler and her partner, Rozanne Sack, who head up Koleinu SA, which runs anti-abuse educational programmes at Jewish schools and shuls, an anonymous helpline, and provides support for victims. Said the chief rabbi, "This statement of the Beth Din, which represents the accepted international rabbinic view on this issue, is a vital part of our community's fight against child abuse." The question is why now? Insiders say the move follows pressure globally following high-profile sexual-abuse cases; ongoing, effective training within the community around issues of abuse; as well as cases recently brought to its attention. "There's a general waking up in the world, and South Africa is following suit, which is a good thing. The impact of this will be amazing. It's a massive step in the right direction," said Hendler. Fox told the *SA Jewish Report* that child abuse was a "scourge in the community", and there had been a lot of discussion on this topic following international events. This had shone a light on local issues, and had started the process of "breaking the silence". "Victims are afraid to come forward, they are fearful of the potential implications for their families and

on future *shidduchim* [matchmaking] should the matter go public. These are real and understandable concerns and we have to figure out how to assuage these fears to ensure they're not victimised further," he said. "We want to encourage them to feel safe to come forward and lodge complaints where they exist." "It's difficult to proceed when a victim doesn't want to lay a charge. This allows the perpetrator to continue the abuse. We shouldn't create a safe environment for people to perpetuate these crimes," he said. A general movement worldwide to encourage victims to come forward was sparked by a number of high-profile cases of abuse which have shone a light on child abuse and its handling. Gut wrenching revelations exposed by *Haaretz* late last year of the abuse conducted by celebrated ultra-Orthodox Haredi author and therapist, the late Chaim Walder, rocked Orthodox communities worldwide. While Walder maintained an adored and beloved image for children, he sexually exploited girls for years, the *Haaretz* investigation revealed. On 27 December 2021, he committed suicide, leaving a gutted Haredi community bereft and in disarray over its response to allegations of sexual abuse. Another earlier *Haaretz* investigation last year found that Yehuda Meshi-Zahav, the celebrated ultra-Orthodox Israel Prize winner and founder of the Zaka rescue organisation, had for decades allegedly exploited his status, power, money, and even the organisation he headed to assault teenagers and children, boys and girls. Abuse cases like these have spurred many in the community to stand up, calling on institutions to act effectively, with some in the South African community vowing to tolerate the silence no longer. Dissatisfied and frustrated with communal and civil institutions and the slow pace at which cases of this nature progress, members of the community have turned to social media to spur some movement. The Beth Din encourages victims to report incidents to CPOs such as the Johannesburg Chevrah Kadisha Community Services, Jewish Community Services Cape Town, or an organisation specialising in dealing with such matters such as the Teddy Bear Clinic.


You save a life, you save the world



Cadena South Africa volunteer Dr Jordan Leppan teaches the community of Nanisi camp in Malawi how to filter water following the damage caused by Cyclone Ana. See page 7.



UNPARALLELED TIMES REQUIRE AN UNPRECEDENTED RESPONSE




R32,8 m

COVID assistance*

16 640

vaccines administered




17%

new families receiving financial assistance



www.jhbchev.co.za

*to community members and residents



ChevrahKadisha

Appliance Repairs on Site

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

Call Jason
082 401 8239 / 076 210 6532

★ FREE QUOTATIONS ★

They are marching

to Pretoria Pretoria **PRETORIA!**

Why? To take up residence

at Jaffa
at Jaffa
at JAFFA!

Warm friendly atmosphere, fabulous food,
gorgeous gardens, interesting activities,
lovely accommodation, excellent care if needed.

SEE FOR YOURSELF



Contact Mark

www.jaffa.org.za | (012) 346 2006 | admin@jaffa.org.za



SAVOY PHARMACY PERCELIA PHARMACY

MONDAY – FRIDAY
8:30am – 6:00pm
SATURDAY:
9:00am – 1:00pm
LAST SUNDAY
OF THE MONTH
9:00am – 1:00pm

☎ (011) 885-1200/1
savoy@medicarehealth.co.za

MONDAY – THURSDAY:
8:30am – 6:00pm
FRIDAY: 8:00am – 4:30pm
SATURDAY: CLOSED
SUNDAY
AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:
9:00am – 1:00pm

☎ (011) 640-4321/31
percelia@medicarehealth.co.za

FRANK SOLOMON HEARING CENTRE

Have a love at first sound experience.

Phonak Audéo™ Marvel

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

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



AFFORDABLE RANGE
FOR PENSIONERS

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

Fairmount
6 George Ave,
Sandringham

Additional branches in
Benoni and Germiston

We are COVID-19
compliant

VEHICLES WANTED

Any make, any model, any condition
Best prices guaranteed!

☎ Arnold Orkin 082-823-7826
AUTO AFRICA

Top leaders pay tribute to struggle hero Max Coleman

TALI FEINBERG

President Cyril Ramaphosa, top politicians, and civil society leaders joined the Coleman family on Wednesday at a memorial to honour the life and legacy of the late Dr Max Coleman.

Coleman, who died at 95 on 16 January this year, was an anti-apartheid activist, human rights commissioner, and businessman who made an immeasurable contribution to South Africa. He was most well-known for his leadership and contribution to the Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC), which he and his wife, Audrey, joined when one of their four sons, Keith, was detained by the notorious security police of the 1980s. The couple devoted their hearts and souls to the needs of detainees, working tirelessly behind the scenes to provide everything from food packages to legal assistance. In September 1988, Coleman was elected chairperson of the newly established Human Rights Committee.

It was two months before his passing that he and Audrey were formally honoured by the country by being awarded the Order of Luthuli Silver Award by Ramaphosa in recognition of their contribution to the fight for liberation and promotion of human rights.

Now, weeks after his passing, Ramaphosa took time on the day before his State of the Nation Address to deliver remarks at Coleman's memorial ceremony, which was hosted by the Kagiso Trust and the Coleman family. Coleman founded the Kagiso Trust in 1985 along with other civil society leaders to overcome poverty through sustainable-development programmes.

Neil Coleman said the family didn't want his father to be "lionised or hero-worshipped"



Minister of public enterprises, Pravin Gordhan, pays tribute to the late Max Coleman at the memorial ceremony

Photo: screengrab

and they saw his contribution as part of larger movement of people in "the darkest years of repression". He said his family's experience of detention was "like a parking ticket" compared to what other detainees and their families went through. He also noted that this year is the 40th anniversary of trade unionist Neil Aggett's death, and his murder in detention was one of the toughest moments for the Colemans.

Coleman said his father never stopped championing human rights, justice, and the voices of the voiceless. "Max wasn't interested in politics or factions, he was interested only in what the movement was doing to improve people's lives. He hated corruption and dishonesty. To honour Max and others, we need to develop a new generation of 'servant leaders', to serve society and not benefit themselves.

"He also hated injustice, inequality, and poverty, which he saw as forms of violence," Coleman said. "He showed us what it meant to live a principled life. He was a humble doer of deeds and respected people from all walks of

life and engaged with their lived realities. His greatest hero was Audrey – she was a relentless dynamo who the security police dreaded. They say that the only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing. Well, our dad did something."

Minister Pravin Gordhan, a close friend of Coleman, said, "Auntie Audrey and Uncle Max had a massive and indelible impact on thousands of South Africans. I remember clearly the meetings in your house where activists discussed resistance and struggle. Above all, I felt your presence in my police cells in each of my detentions, especially after the passing of Neil Aggett. We could see the impact of the work that you initiated. Those were dark and fearsome days, and were characterised by your courage and respect for others and their well-being."

He said the Colemans could have decided to "enjoy the fruits of being whites in apartheid", but instead devoted themselves to the betterment of South Africa for all. "Some would call him a man for all seasons" Gordhan

Continued on page 7>>

Torah Thought

Robes and responsibilities

This week's Torah portion, Tetzaveh, conveys that each person has a role in perfecting this world, and should be allowed to perform in the areas in which they shine. This way, we're following Hashem's plan as set out in the Torah.

Tetzaveh is the only portion from the beginning of the book of Exodus onwards where Moses' name is never mentioned. Rather, it focuses on Aaron, the clothing he and his sons will wear, and his dedication to the priesthood. It's as if Moses deliberately stepped back and let his brother have the glory. Later, the Midrash will comment on this. "Who are the brothers the Psalmist referred to when it said, 'Here is what is good and what is pleasant, for brothers to dwell together?'" (Psalms 133:1).

Moses and Aaron honoured one another. Moses took the kingship, and Aaron the priesthood, and they didn't hate one another. Rather, each was proud of the greatness of the other. In today's times, we can learn from these brothers. Each of us has a small part to play in perfecting this world, just as we meet other people who have their own small parts. Often, these other people can do the parts we cannot do. Like Moses, each of us needs to step aside and allow the other to do their part. As we say in our daily prayers, together we will be able to perfect this world as a kingdom of G-d.

In Tetzaveh, we learn about G-d appointing Aaron and his sons as priests. There's a detailed description of the priestly clothing and an explanation of how to properly sanctify the priests. Aaron is commanded to make incense offerings to G-d every morning on an altar. G-d explains that once a year, Aaron will make an offering on that altar to atone for all of the Israelites' sins.

While the Israelites were in Sinai and built the sacred space, initiating the worship of the covenant, so too were individuals inducted for sacred worship. They had to wear specially made and consecrated garments. They were simple, but as time passed, we could see more decorations on them. The garment had the robe, tie, breastplate, and mitre complete with bells. Those are the bells that we see on our Torah scrolls during the our services and festivals.

Rabbi Julia Margolis,
Beit Luria Progressive
Synagogue



Rabbi Robert Jacobs once pointed out an interesting observation to me. "Note that the *tzitzit* – the fringes that have become part of the traditional Jewish outfit – weren't mentioned in the text."

Different commentators explain that special clothes distinguish a priest from the people and serve as a constant reminder to them of his sacred duties and responsibilities. The beauty and distinction of the priest's clothes also remind them of the significance of the job they do for G-d and the people, intimating that what a person wears matters. Aaron and his sons needed to be as holy as the clothes they wore in order to fulfil their responsibilities as priests. And while we may find it fun at times to dress differently than we normally do to project a certain image, we must always remember the core essence of who we are and how best to represent and fulfil the roles that we have accepted in life.

Having said that, I feel that while a certain uniform or costume identifies a person's role, it's who a person is underneath the clothing that's the most important, don't you?

Shabbat Times brought to you by

Spencer Schwartz from You Realty
Residential Property Sales and Rentals (countrywide)

	Starts	Ends
Johannesburg	18:15	19:25
Cape Town	19:15	20:17
Durban	18:15	19:20
Bloemfontein	18:15	19:38
Port Elizabeth	18:15	19:49
East London	18:15	19:38
Jerusalem	16:42	17:59
Tel Aviv	17:03	18:01



YOU REALTY NATIONAL SALES AGENT 2021

Thanks to Hashem, and all my sellers, buyers, family and friends, who supported me to achieve this recognition.

Call Spencer for honest advice and effective results.

Spencer Schwartz • 084 524 4616
spencer@yourealty.co.za

You.
Realty

South African
Jewish Report
The source of quality content, news and insights

Editor Peta Krost Maunders – editor@sajewishreport.co.za • Sub-editor Julie Leibowitz
Journalists Nicola Miltz • Tali Feinberg • Junior Reporter Saul Kamionsky • Photographer Ilan Ossendryver • Editorial co-ordinator Martine Bass – editorial@sajewishreport.co.za

Proofreader Kim Hatchuel Advertising Britt Landsman: 082 292 9520 – britt@sajewishreport.co.za • New business development manager

Laura Kaufman laura@sajewishreport.co.za • Design and layout Bryan Maron/Design Bandits – bryan@designbandits.co.za • Distribution Sandy Furman

Subscriptions Avusa Publishing (Pty) Ltd. Tel: 0860 525 200 • Board of Directors Howard Sackstein (Chairperson), Dina Diamond, Herschel Jawitz, Shaun Matisonn, Benji Porter. • Advertisements and editorial copy do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff and board of directors. Tel: 011 430 1980.



Is there a victory in the Thulsie twins deal?

NICOLA MILTZ

Security experts have cautioned that South Africa faces a monumental battle against terrorism in spite of communal organisations this week hailing the successful conviction of the notorious terrorist twins, Tony-Lee and his brother Brandon-Lee Thulsie.

Following a plea bargain in the Johannesburg High Court, the Johannesburg twins this week pleaded guilty to trying to join the Islamic State in Syria and of conspiring to carry out terrorist attacks in its name in South Africa.

Major fears of terrorist attacks at Jewish installations including schools and shuls reverberated at the time of their arrest in 2016, sending shockwaves through the community.

Tony-Lee was sentenced to 11 years and Brandon-Lee to eight. The sentences were each reduced by the five years and seven months they had already spent in prison since their arrests in Johannesburg in July that year.

The convictions and sentences ended a protracted legal battle of endless postponements, including a recent attempt by the Thulsies’ attorneys to have the case returned to the regional court where it had begun or have it thrown out of court.

“This is a watershed moment,” said Zev Krengel, the vice-president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies adding that the Board was satisfied that justice had been served.

“We’re grateful that the authorities, with international help, were able to intercept, arrest, investigate, and successfully prosecute these terrorists. South Africa is a safer place against this threat of radical Islamic terrorism,” he said.

The “Thulsie Twins” twice tried to leave South Africa in 2015 – once via Mozambique – to travel to Syria to join Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). According to reports, they were blocked each time by authorities tipped off by family members.

“From what we understand, it was an important plea bargain in which vital information was handed over,” said Krengel, “It’s a harsh sentence which sends a strong message that any form of terrorism – even if you’re planning a terror attack – won’t be tolerated. The case has set a precedent that if you get intercepted, you’re going to lose a decade of your life.”

The Thulsies plotted to carry out terrorist

attacks against the enemies of ISIL in South Africa, including Western embassies and diplomats, Jewish interests, and mosques of the Shia Islam sect.

The original 11 counts against them under the Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorist and Related Activities Act (POCDATARA) were reduced to three.

The charge of “conspiring to carry out terrorist attacks in South Africa” was applied only to Tony-Lee, which was why he got the longer prison sentence. He was accused of plotting, with an individual known only by the alias Abu Harb, to attack “Shia mosques, Jewish events and/or conferences, and foreign interests at airports”.

Brandon-Lee was charged with downloading the manual “How to Survive in the West; A Mujahid Guide (2015)”, which teaches how to conduct jihad, including instructions for acquiring weapons, making explosives, and evading arrest.



Brandon-Lee and Tony-Lee Thulsie

Security experts said this week that legally, it was the best outcome for the State as it finally put to rest a case which had been dragging on for too long.

Unfortunately, though, the case highlighted several weaknesses in current legislation related to terrorism in South Africa, which makes it difficult to secure successful convictions.

Dr Barend Prinsloo, senior lecturer in security studies at the School of Government Studies at North-West University said, “One of the major weaknesses is that the POCDATARA bill allows for the inclusion of *mens rea* arguments. Such arguments are based on the thought processes and speculation about the intention of the accused to commit a crime (conspiring), and these are notoriously difficult

to prove in court. As such, the sentences were quite hefty since neither of the twins actually acted on their “conspiracy to carry out terrorist attacks in the name of ISIS/L”.

He said it was a victory for the State to get the accused essentially to admit to *actus reus* (the intention or actual doing of the crime). But he said the State’s case would have been much stronger had there been a solid definition of terrorism in legislation.

“The legal fraternity relies on such definitions to prove that any accused’s deeds or acts conform to a specific definition,” he said.

Legislation should also consider the inclusion of definitions of “extremist activities” rather than terrorism as the nucleus for the proof of conduct, he said.

Should we be concerned? “Yes and no,” Prinsloo said.

“South Africa has sent troops to Mozambique to counter the extremist insurgency in the northern parts of the country. This indicates a deeper understanding by the state of the strategic consequences of extremism if left to proliferate.”

However, it’s a legal test case and very difficult for the State to prove *actus reus*, Prinsloo said. “More importantly, we should be concerned if the State doesn’t review its current legislation related to terrorism and doesn’t include well-

sourced and thorough definitions of terms such as “extremism”, “radicalisation”, and/or “reactionary change [of society]”, to name a few.

Does South Africa have its finger on the pulse as far as these types of terrorists are concerned?

“No it doesn’t, neither does it extend to other types of extremism, from the left and the right of the political spectrum, or foreign based,” Prinsloo said.

Jasmine Opperman, a security consultant specialising in extremism and political violence from the Armed Conflict Location & Event

Data Project, said terrorism wasn’t an easy legal process, and to prove intent beyond doubt remained a highly complicated matter subject to interpretation.

Though it was important to acknowledge the completion of the case, there were still many concerns. “How will the Thulsies be when they get out of prison? This remains to be seen, and it’s a concern,” she said.

Jevon Greenblatt, the head of operations of the Community Security Organisation in Gauteng, said the Thulsies got a sweet deal.

“We don’t know the exact details of the plea bargain, but I believe the sentence was light if you look at what they were conspiring to do,” Greenblatt said.

“Our concern is what’s going to happen to them when they’re released from prison? Have they become more radicalised in prison? They appeared in court wearing a keffiyeh, making a political statement. Are they now poster boys and role models for future extremists?”

Greenblatt said he was concerned that the sentencing wouldn’t serve as a deterrent.

Willem Els, security analyst at the Institute for Security Studies, said the case provided solid proof that ISIS was active in South Africa, whereas before it was just speculation. He cautioned that there were many “red lights”.

“The Thulsie twins were converts who were targeted and radicalised. This is the strategy of ISIS and other radical groups, so one wonders how many other recruitment drives are out there. We don’t know, and there’s a serious lack of intelligence capacity, operational support, and guidance.

“The NPA [National Prosecuting Authority] and the Hawks have realised the value of good investigation. However, if intelligence isn’t up to scratch, these radical elements know they will walk free. We have to raise our game, this is the reality in the country.”

Els also expressed concern about whether the Thulsies would be successfully rehabilitated during their incarceration to prepare them to reintegrate into public life.

“If not, they will continue their radical actions, and this poses a serious challenge to intelligence operatives already under severe strain.”

JAWITZ

PROPERTIES

INVEST IN PROPERTY IN ISRAEL
FROM R5 MILLION

Contact Herschel Jawitz in strict confidence
082 571 1829 | herschel@jawitz.co.za

FOR SALE

LINKSFIELD | R 2 850 000

Large welcoming pool with outside sauna. Open plan lounge / dining room. Lounge lead into an enclosed entertainment patio. Open patio off the dining room area. Well fitted kitchen with double oven, granite tops and double sink. Separate laundry room. 4 bedrooms (main en suite) with bic and laminate flooring. Flatlet potential. Double staff accommodation. Walking distance to King David School and Linksfield Shul. Easy access to main highways and byways. Genuine seller wants sold.

4 2.5

Web Ref: RL82530

Joel Harris 082 926 0287
Laureen Shalpid 083 789 0229

FOR SALE

GLENHAZEL | R 2 200 000

Asking more. 3 large entertainment areas overlook a beautiful established garden. Open patio area leads off two of the entertainment spaces. Beautifully crafted wooden doors lead into a large kitchen with separate scullery and breakfast nook. Extra study area or piano enclave off the kitchen. 4 large north facing bedrooms. 2 bathrooms (M.E.S). Lots of built-in cupboards. Good security. 3 staff rooms/storage area plus bathroom. Double electric garage, triple carport and lots of off-road parking.

4 2

Web Ref: RL84961

Joel Harris 082 926 0287
Laureen Shalpid 083 789 0229

FOR SALE

WAVERLEY | R 7 995 000

Generously proportioned rooms throughout ensuring an abundance of natural light that invites the outside in, giving a blend of comfort and classic features. 4 Beds, all en-suite, 2 Studies, large work-from-home and guest Loo surrounding a central courtyard. Superbly maintained garden and boasting 2 separate cottages, excellent staff quarters and a double garage that enters the house. Security with cameras, solar geyser, air conditioners/ceiling fans, Morso gas fireplaces in the lounge and passage, generator, large Jojo tanks for water storage.

4 4.5

Web Ref: RL85001

Chrissie Hammer: 082 568 0440

FOR SALE

MORNINGSIDE | R 1 999 000

2 Gorgeous Bedrooms (main en suite). 2 magnificent fully renovated bathrooms. Kitchen fitted with ample cupboard space & granite tops. Space for 2 appliances + fridge/freezer. Open plan living/dining to covered patio with spectacular feature windows & greenery. Upstairs loft lounge opening onto insane decked patio, with views for days! Entertainers patio to die for! Safe & Secure, with 24/7 professional security. 2 covered parking's. Beautifully maintained sparkling complex pool. Superb position with easy access to all arterials and amenities. Taking Offers! Ready! Set! Go!

2 2

Web Ref: RL84397

Sandra Luntz: 083 679 1247

“Tinder Swindler” befriends SA man onboard flight

NICOLA MILTZ

It was the flashy gold Rolex wristwatch encrusted with jewels that first caught the eye of Johannesburg businessman Jake Mendelow (not his real name) when he spotted the man now known to him as the “Tinder Swindler”.

They were both standing in the first-class line at OR Tambo International Airport waiting to board a Lufthansa flight to Germany in October 2017.

“He was wearing a yarmulka and was decked out in fancy designer clothes,” said Mendelow, who prefers that his name, known to the *SA Jewish Report*, is withheld.

“I know watches, so I said to him, ‘Listen, you can’t wear a watch like that in Johannesburg, you’re going to get taken out,’” said Mendelow.

“In an Israeli accent, he said to me, ‘I’m not worried, you don’t know who I am. I have lots of security.’ I then asked him who he was, and he introduced himself to me as Maor Leviev. He said his uncle was a billionaire diamond dealer who he happened to work for.”

It turns out this was another of his aliases. “Maor” was actually the infamous serial fraudster, Israeli con artist Shimon Hayut, who had changed his name to Simon Leviev.

Hayut has spent the past several years posing as Simon Leviev, the son of billionaire Russian-Israeli diamond mogul, Lev Leviev. He’s now known as the scandalous “Tinder Swindler” featured in the hit Netflix series by the same name released last Wednesday.

The series, which has had everyone talking, is a true-crime documentary which looks at the lavish life, times, and crimes of conman Hayut, who was arrested in 2019 for posing as Leviev, a high spending billionaire on the dating app Tinder, in order to defraud women out of hundreds and thousands of dollars. He refers to himself as “the prince of diamonds” and in order to fund his grand lifestyle of private jets, luxury hotels, and fast cars, he conned a number of women, many out of their life savings. To make his story more believable, Hayut legally changed his surname to Leviev and hired a crew of fake employees and business associates. He also claimed to be a high-powered chief executive who constantly travelled for work. After successfully wooing his victims by showering them with expensive gifts and declarations of love, he started to swindle money from them with tall tales about how his life was in danger. He messaged them, telling them to “send money now” as his enemies were after him.

In the series, three women, Cecilie Fjellhøy, Pernilla Sjöholm, and Ayleen Koeleman, all from different countries who were duped by Hayut, come together to share their shocking and life changing experiences. They are still picking up the pieces after Hayut/Leviev wrecked their lives financially and emotionally. Hayut has been trapping women on Tinder at least since 2015, and has defrauded them out of staggering amounts of cash – the television series suggests roughly \$10 million (R154.4 million). He always assumes the fake persona, that of the ultra-suave diamond industry kingpin who has access to private jets and designer wardrobes. He was eventually arrested after journalists from *Verdens Gang* working with Koeleman set up a sting operation leading to him being caught in 2019 during a joint operation between Interpol and Israeli police.

Outrageously, Hayut, after serving a few months in jail for his crimes, is reportedly at it again, leading the high life.

However, following the airing of the documentary, there’ll be no more swipes for the fraudster who was this week banned from Tinder as well as other dating apps such as Match.com and PlentyofFish after his scams were revealed.

Meanwhile, Mendelow, who landed up sitting next to Hayut/Leviev on a connecting flight from Frankfurt to Dusseldorf had no idea he was a notorious conman.

“He seemed very nice and friendly. He never tried to con me.”

The two men struck up a conversation and the beginning of a new acquaintance by chatting about random things like the line of business they were in.

“I told him I was in the property game, he told me he was in diamonds,” said Mendelow.

“Maor” told him he was going to Dusseldorf to fetch his girlfriend “from the Eastern Block” to take her on a trip to Rio de Janeiro for the weekend.

“I asked him if she was Jewish, to which he replied no, she was not,” said Mendelow.

He even sent Mendelow a location pin when he arrived in Rio, which he still has on his phone.

The *SA Jewish Report* has listened to a number of WhatsApp messages sent to Mendelow over a period of time.

In one of them, “Leviev” tells Mendelow he will be arriving in Johannesburg en route to Cape Town and will be there over Shabbat. They chat about meeting up for Shabbat, which didn’t happen in the end.

However, the two remained in contact sporadically on and off, but haven’t seen each other since their first encounter.

Mendelow realised who he was only this week after a

colleague insisted that he watch the series on Netflix, showing him a picture of the conman.

That’s when he realised that it was the same man he had met more than four years ago.

“I couldn’t believe it,” he said.

Shimon Hayut, 31, comes from a poor, broken family in an ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood in Israel. He has cultivated a stylish, debonair, and suave persona, and posts jaw-dropping pictures of his uber opulent lifestyle in glamorous locations around the world on Instagram. He even has a picture of himself with Table Mountain in the background. He claims he spent time in jail in South Africa, which hasn’t been verified.

The Netflix documentary has been trending since its release, with many in the community reacting on social media.

Some are gobsmacked as to how women could have been duped by Hayut/Leviev in the first place. Many local celebrities have poked fun at the bizarreness of it all, and have turned it into a challenge which has gone viral.

In the Tinder Swindler challenge, celebrities post chic photographs of themselves at lavish night clubs and on private jets captioned with, “Send money now my enemies



Simon Leviev, aka The Tinder Swindler

are against me.”

On a Netflix recommendation Facebook page, one man commented that students from Rhodes University would have come across Hayut if they were at the institution from 2005-2012, claiming he was dodgy even then.

Mendelow told the *SA Jewish Report* he spoke to lots of people when he travelled on business. “I meet people on aeroplanes all the time. Fortunately I wasn’t his target market, but he wouldn’t have got any money out of me, I don’t trust anyone.”

He said he didn’t know what he would say to him if he saw him again.

“I’d start with ‘Howzit’, he said, and perhaps ask to see his watch to determine if it was fake”.

‘My goal is to obliterate child vulnerability,’ says SA-born MBE

SAUL KAMIONSKY

When Johannesburg-born Professor Lorraine Sherr saw a letter in her post box in England, she thought it would be of no significance. However, it turned out to be an official letter from Buckingham Palace.

“I felt disbelief, as if they had got the wrong person,” she told the *SA Jewish Report* this week.

The letter informed Sherr, a professor in the medical school at University College London, that she had been named as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in Queen Elizabeth II’s New Year Honours List for 2021. The award was for her services to vulnerable children and families.

On 25 January 2022, Sherr attended the award ceremony at Windsor Castle, where she received her MBE medal from Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge.

“It was beautiful to be invited to the castle and to go and sit among the wonderful paintings,” says Sherr.

The Queen wasn’t in attendance. “The day before, our headlines in our newspapers were about the Queen getting into her helicopter and leaving Windsor for Balmoral Castle because she knew I was coming,” Sherr jokes with a chuckle.

She described Prince William as “a remarkable person who knew about my work and asked about it”.

“I was able to tell him about my current work, which looks at the huge impact of COVID-19 on children experiencing orphanhood across the world. He had no idea of the figures.”

Sherr grew up in South Africa, attending Cyrildene Primary School and Athlone Girls High School.

“I wonder if I’m the only Athlone graduate with an MBE, or will there be many more to come?” she asks.

Having studied psychology at the University of Warwick in Coventry with a PhD on the importance of communication in healthcare, Sherr has been at University College London for the past 30 years.



Lorraine Sherr receiving her MBE medal from Prince William



Lorraine Sherr with her husband, Avrom Sherr at Windsor Castle

“I teach medical students about the importance of mental health and ensure that tomorrow’s doctors understand that physical health goes hand in hand with mental health,” she says. “My research is linked to vulnerable children and families.”

Sherr has a wide portfolio of academic research and is published nationally and internationally. She has a long record of research conducted in Africa looking at vulnerabilities such as HIV, COVID-19, poverty, teen pregnancy, mental health, and adversity.

“I have numerous projects in South Africa,” she says. “One to One implements my learning through play in the Bright Start Programme in the Cape. And I have evaluated Mad About Art, an art therapy programme in Knysna. We use art therapy to support the mental health of children and families affected by HIV.”

Sherr is working with a study group on teen pregnancy in Cape Town which focuses specifically on mental health and HIV. “We’re looking at the effects of teen pregnancy in the presence of HIV in a teenage mom compared to teen moms without HIV,” she says. “Of course, you look at the layer of vulnerabilities, trying to provide interventions.”

She’s also involved with a Global Challenges Research Fund hub looking at evidence to accelerate achievements for adolescents in Africa. She’s doing this jointly with South African-born Professor Lucie Cluver, the youngest female professor at Oxford University.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sherr helped put together COVID-19 parenting tips, reaching more than 134 million users. She undertook this as part of the United Kingdom Research and Innovation Global Challenges Research Fund team.

“The urgency of the need struck us and overnight, we were able to gather together a global team,” she says. “We used sound evidence-based interventions to inform the tips. They were picked up globally on virtual platforms, through radio, and even governments who distributed the tips with food parcels. Our evaluation now suggests that more than 200 million people have been reached.”

Sherr will feel satisfied that her work is complete only when she obliterates vulnerability.

Asked how she plans to accomplish this, she says, “Governments need to pay attention. I started out looking at vulnerability linked to health conditions, and my expertise is mental health. But I was looking at a combination of vulnerabilities – you know, when a child has layers upon layers of shocks and traumas. We are now working on a five-year project called the Accelerate Hub, in which we are showing how combinations of interventions can boost the effects. We’re trying to give guidance to governments about how to cluster pensioners.”

She says her Jewish identity has been part of everything she has done. “My earliest values came through the Jewish youth movement in South Africa where you had opportunities to explore and express your political and moral ideas. You take your Jewishness with you. Some of our best ideas came through on Shabbat and in informal meetings.

“You never leave South Africa, you just go away,” says Sherr. “I come back frequently. Almost all my research is either in South Africa or Africa. I travel all over Africa to the most desperate and desolate of places.”

Besides receiving an MBE, a highlight for Sherr is that her career has allowed her “to champion a set of Jewish values on the importance of life, family, and happiness”.

Looking to the future, she would like governments and policymakers to respond quickly and competently to the vulnerabilities facing children across the world.

“More children have experienced orphanhood from COVID-19 than there have been deaths,” she says. “The deaths have concentrated global attention, yet the plight and needs of children are pushed aside. I will continue to rally attention and evidence to get children and families at the centre of programming.”

Victory as Israel remains AU observer

TALI FEINBERG

The debate about Israel remaining an observer at the African Union (AU) has been suspended, with the organisation instead forming a committee to re-examine the issue.

And in his official remarks on 6 February 2022 at the summit in Addis Ababa, AU Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat defended his July 2021 decision to grant Israel observer status.

He also criticised those who had campaigned against it – possibly pointing to South Africa – and implied that they had double standards.

The former Israeli ambassador to South Africa, Arthur Lenk, told Israeli media, “This is a loss for the extreme countries Algeria and South Africa, who tried to railroad the rest of the continent into something the continent doesn’t want. It’s clear that they don’t have the two-thirds vote that they would want, and in any case, the AU doesn’t vote, it reaches consensus.”

Lenk said that if the AU wanted to have influence in the Middle East, then building a deeper relationship with Israel was crucial, “and that seems to be the path we’re on”.

Fake news about the decision was quickly spread on social media, especially in anti-Israel quarters in South Africa. From the spokesperson for the department of international relations and cooperation (DIRCO) to the Palestinian ambassador in South Africa, politicians twisted the news in a last-ditch attack on Israel.

But back in Ethiopia, Mahamat held firm, explaining the four reasons why he had granted Israel observer status. The first

was the high number of AU member states that recognise Israel. “The number doesn’t leave any doubt. Forty-four members of our organisation recognise Israel and have established diplomatic relations with that state,” he said. “Seventeen have opened embassies in Tel Aviv. Twelve have opened consulates there, not to mention that a large number of African states have opened their markets and economic space to Israeli enterprises and signed co-operation agreements in fields such as education, defence, security, intelligence, nuclear co-operation, agriculture, technological innovation, health, economy, and finance.”

Four-fifths of AU member states had developed a relationship with Israel, he said, and the observer status was “a faithful reflection of a tangible, irrefutable reality: that of the recognition of Israel on a very large scale in Africa”.

The second reason was because of “the number of member states that expressly asked for this accreditation. This appeared to me to be larger than that of the member states that didn’t recognise Israel. Which number should I comply with? The majority or the minority?”

The third motivating factor was the AU’s support for a two-state solution, which it could push for through Israel’s observer status.

The fourth reason was the role that the AU could play in resolving the conflict. “Do we have less confidence in our organisation that we cannot imagine that it can play a role in the resolution of a conflict which concerns us politically and emotionally?” he asked. “Why should we deprive ourselves of the use of a political and diplomatic tool to contribute

to peace between the two peoples? Why recognise this right to an African or non-African state from elsewhere and deny it to the AU?”

Possibly pointing to South Africa, he said, “Frankly, I find it hard to understand the consistency of this rejection with the recognition of Israel by any member state whose national flag flies in the heart of Tel Aviv and which hoists, in the heart of its own capital, the Israeli flag while organising in its honour a grand ceremony of presentation of credentials. What is this logic that allows a member state to enjoy the recognition of a state at home and to refuse it to the organisation whose overwhelming majority recognises this state? Frankly, I would like someone to explain this kind of double standard to me.”

Finally, he criticised those who had campaigned against the decision. “I cannot fail to stress the extent to which I find it inadmissible for member states to go and sign petitions with other states, which aren’t members of our union, against any decision by one of our organs. There is undeniably a real double fault here – of those which are members of our organisation and of those non-members to whom we have granted observer status and who have arrogated to themselves the right to publicly criticise our decisions. This attitude of contempt for our organisation is unacceptable and truly reprehensible.”

Meanwhile, DIRCO spokesperson Clayson Monyela was criticised for spreading fake news when he tweeted, “The African Union assembly has suspended the unilateral decision by the chairperson of the AU commission to grant Israel observer status.”



He later deleted the tweet, saying “Apologies for the earlier confusing language. I’ve deleted the tweet. The statement should read, ‘The AU summit has deferred the final decision on Israel’s observer status in the AU to a committee of heads of states.’”

The Embassy of the State of Palestine Facebook page released a statement that was also fake news. “The ministry of foreign affairs and expatriates welcomes the decision of the African Union to suspend granting apartheid Israel an observer state at the African Union,” it said, in clear denial of reality.

Where to from here? “Observer status for Israel remains intact for now,” said local political analyst Steven Gruz. “The committee to study the issue has both Israel supporters like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Senegal, but also hardline opponents in Algeria and South Africa. The AU is deferring a divisive decision for a year. That will really tell whether Jerusalem’s Africa policy bears fruit.”

Said local political analyst Daniel Silke,

“The fact that Israel wasn’t excluded shows there was sufficient resistance to South Africa and Algeria [trying to exclude Israel]. It also shows that South Africa’s influence in the AU isn’t what South Africa thinks it is. The broader diplomatic push to recognise Israel remains the predominant force in the AU.” He said the year of review gave Israel an opportunity to strengthen her relationships with Arab and African countries further.

“In the end, there’s a certain ‘kicking the can down the road’, and ‘let’s evaluate this again rather than split the AU on the issue’, and I think there was a desire to keep relative unity in the AU,” said Silke. “So this was a compromise that all could agree on, at least for the moment.”

Asked if South Africa would continue to lead the campaign against Israel’s observer status at the AU, Gruz said, “South Africa won’t let this one die quietly. It has been incensed and implacably opposed to the observer status decision by the AU commission chairperson. I don’t see it giving up the fight so easily.”



BUY

✈

GET

BUY A TICKET TO ISRAEL
AND GET A TICKET
FREE!

BOOK NOW>

For purchase 08 Feb – 12 Feb 22
Travel 15 Feb 22 – 31 March 22

Terms and Conditions Apply. E&OE.

Schedule as follows:

TLVJNB – 14FEB DEP 21h00LT ARR 05h40LT (MON)	JNBTLV – 15FEB DEP 22H15LT ARR 07h00LT (TUES)
--	---

Time change from:

TLVJNB – 28MAR DEP 22H30LT ARR 06h25LT (MON)	JNBTLV – 29MAR DEP 23H00LT ARR 08H35LT (TUES)
--	---

WEF from Jun 22

TLVJNB – 10JUN DEP 06H15LT ARR 14H10LT (FRI)	JNBTLV – 11JUN DEP 23H00LT ARR 08H35LT (SAT)
--	--

Weekly until the end of **MAY**; Additional flight will be added to the schedule from **JUN 22**. The system has been updated with the above schedules and flights are available for bookings. Flights are subject to change in accordance to Israeli Government regulations

Visit **www.elal.co.il** for Information requirements for entering and exiting Israel **BEFORE YOU FLY. BOOK NOW WITH PEACE OF MIND** for information on flexibility in changing flight tickets.

Taking tikkun olam to the eye of the storm

TALI FEINBERG

On the night of 22 January 2022, tropical storm Ana hit Madagascar, Mozambique, and Malawi, bringing torrential rains and causing major flooding. Due to its poor infrastructure and lack of preparation, Malawi suffered the most damage. Though it would be easy to think that it isn't our concern, for Jewish humanitarian-relief organisation Cadena, providing assistance was a top priority and a chance to put Jewish values into action.

"Cyclone Ana hit Malawi about two weeks ago, and it was one of the most affected areas," says Cadena's director of international alliances, Miriam Kajomovitz. The organisation recently opened a branch in South Africa, which offers hope and help not just to this country but to the continent at large. It has previously sent volunteers to assist aid missions in Kenya and Mozambique, so sending a group to assist on the ground in Malawi was just another way to make an impact where it was needed most. Cadena has just returned from five days in the country, where 110 800 people have been displaced.

"Before the cyclone, Malawi was already a vulnerable place without food, water, and with a tremendous lack of hygiene," says Kajomovitz. "The cyclone made it even more vulnerable. Many lost their homes, there's no electricity, the water in the rivers was completely contaminated, and people were getting sick from it. Many are still missing."

It's one thing to hear about such a disaster, but quite another to see it in person. "We arrived a few days after the cyclone," says Steffi Czarny, who led the mission. "People were trying to rebuild their houses, although many places were still flooded. Most of the houses are completely destroyed. There are more than 127 displaced person camps, and each camp has about 7 000 people. It's estimated that they will need to stay there for about three months until they somehow manage to get their houses back.

"Everywhere we went, we saw desperation," she says. "People were starving because the fields are damaged, so there's no way to cultivate food and they have nothing to eat. A lot of people were also dehydrated because they didn't have



A Cadena volunteer with the community of Nchalo camp, after giving them water filters and solar lamps

access to drinking water. Many were ill. But we also saw resilience – people trying to look for solutions to get back on their feet."

Klaas Mokgomole is South African and also led the mission. "It's meaningful to work for Cadena because we go out there and assist communities," he says. "We're on the ground for people. It's a good thing that the Jewish community is responding to all this need."

"The most challenging part was the desperation of not being able to help more or enough," he says. "More than 50 000 are hungry and desperate, but not many organisations and people are helping. Cadena had limited resources for this mission because of a lack of funding and interest in the situation in Malawi. With the resources we had, we decided to focus on drinking water and medical support. We couldn't help with food."

Though they devoted resources to the essentials of water and medical care, "it wasn't enough. The lines for our doctor were made up of more than 300 hurt or sick people," Mokgomole says. "Hearing everyone asking us for food and seeing how hungry they were was hard."

Cultural differences and the

language barrier were also challenges, "but we managed well. People manage to communicate their problems and they also understood perfectly how to use the water filters."

This was one of the most inspiring aspects of the mission. "In spite of not

been able to help everyone, to see how much it meant for those we were able to help was fulfilling," says Czarny. "There's no better feeling than seeing the relief felt by someone because he was given medical attention. Also, to see people that haven't had water for days drinking the first sip of clean water from the filter."

Cadena also brought solar lamps which provided much needed light and electricity. The water filters offer an immediate and long-term solution. "They're not for just now, but for years ahead. We taught people how to use them, which is priceless, because drinkable water is a basic need. Also, by using clean water they will get less skin infections, less stomach diseases, and improve their hygiene in general. Living in a camp with another 7 000 people without resources ... we cannot even start to explain how bad it gets," she says.

Finally, "we brought them hope", says Mokgomole. "The fact that an organisation from so far away came especially to give them water or a lamp made people feel hopeful and happy because they felt someone cared."

"A humanitarian crisis like this is something that the Jewish community of South Africa shouldn't be indifferent to – first, because Malawi is a neighbouring country, and second, because there are resources to help," says Czarny, who is Jewish.

"Tikkun olam [healing the world] is something that should characterise every Jewish community, and that means that we shouldn't be indifferent to any problem, not just the ones nearby. Human suffering doesn't see race or culture, and we should be emphatic [about that] not only as Jews but as humans."

"Disasters caused by a natural phenomenon can be the most devastating, and although it affects the more vulnerable communities as a consequence of an historic inequality, nobody is exempt even if they have resources. Malawi is very close to South Africa, and the Jewish community could make a huge difference to these people, either through Cadena which is a Jewish organisation, or any other way they want," says Kajomovitz.

"It would be great for the South African Jewish community to be known as the one that helped," she says. "Cyclone season has just started, and we can help the many vulnerable countries impacted by them. Cadena will continue to work in Malawi in this emergency phase, and we're also going to Madagascar. We need help with resources and volunteers. We're also dealing with disasters in other regions of the world. For some reason, people are indifferent."

To get involved or support Cadena, email miriam@cadena.ngo or projects.sa@cadena.ngo

Top leaders pay tribute to struggle hero Max Coleman

>> Continued from page 2

said, describing the many realms in which Coleman quietly made an impact.

"It's hard for the post-1990s generation to imagine the courage it took to stand up to the security police," Gordhan said, noting that Coleman was "an organiser and a mobiliser who engaged in a struggle for a wider set of causes and organised around them until his last days". The younger generation, "who think using their thumbs to type on Twitter is enough to make a difference", could learn from the Colemans. "It's going to take much more than that to get South Africa right."

"What would the Max of the 1980s say to us today?" asked Gordhan rhetorically. "He would plead with us not to give up on the democratic dream. He would say our social contract is broken, but it's our responsibility to build a new social contract that works for the majority. He would say it's time for a new solidarity with the poor and the marginalised. He would want the spirit and boldness of the DPSC to find itself in our society and activism. He would say that the Freedom Charter and the Constitution are the lodestars that we need to follow as a nation. The most important question, which he answered in his life, was "whom do I serve?" He served society as a whole, and the global good."

Reverend Frank Chikane addressed Coleman as "the father of detainees" and Audrey as "Mama Audrey ... because you are like a mother to all of us". The apartheid system, Chikane said, "radicalised our father and mother ... detaining children radicalised them and catapulted them to the front line of the struggle".

Addressing the place of "white comrades", he said their role was critical. "The apartheid system didn't know what to do with them. We took cover behind them at times. But the security police treated them as traitors and tortured them worst of all." He said their solidarity was invaluable.

A number of Coleman's grandchildren paid tribute to him through music. Keith's youngest son, Sam Coleman, performed his piano composition, *Elegy for Max Coleman*, while a guitar improvisation based on *What a Wonderful World* was performed by Neil's eldest son, Ruben Coleman. An opera performance was given by Denira Coleman, the eldest daughter of Colin Coleman.

Commenting on the livestream of the event, former Finance Minister Trevor Manuel wrote, "May I join with the many to extend sincerest appreciation and condolences to Audrey and the family. The life lessons from Max will live on in the best of us."

HOLD REAL ESTATE

SECURING YOUR FUTURE IN ISRAEL

*Your Dreams,
Our Business*

**LET US HELP YOU FIND THE
PERFECT PROPERTY IN ISRAEL!**

From new complexes in cities along the Israel's coastline to projects in new areas of development and growth, our portfolio offers a variety of solid investments for people abroad looking to buy property in Israel.



GIVAT SHMUEL

This new neighborhood is located in the city's most attractive location, the prestigious Ramat Dekalim. An ideal location for young couples and families who want to be part of a community.

**PRE-SALE PRICES FROM
NIS 2,300,000**



RA'ANANA

Great investment opportunity in north east Ra'anana, nestled in green surroundings close to educational institutions, shuls, shopping centers, and everything your family needs.

**PRE-SALE PRICES FROM
NIS 2,850,000**



JERUSALEM

Located on San Martin Street in the new Katamon neighbourhood in southwest Jerusalem, the project will include two buildings, an 18-floor tower, and a 10-floor tower, with a variety of apartments available.

**PRE-SALE PRICES FROM
NIS 2,150,000**



Set up an appointment:

Contact Julian Nathan
✉ julian@hold.co.il

☎ +27 87 551 0734
☎ +972 58 631 9754

Visit our website:
www.hold.co.il



Cape Board efforts stop Stellenbosch exams on yom tov

TALI FEINBERG

Community members were appalled when Jewish students at Stellenbosch University (SU) told the *SA Jewish Report* about their anguish at having to write tests on high holy days in October 2021. But the Cape South African Jewish Board of Deputies (Cape SAJBD) has engaged with the university, which has implemented a policy to prevent it from happening again.

“The Cape SAJBD is mandated to protect Jewish life and the Jewish way of life,” says Cape SAJBD chairperson Tzvi Brivik. “We owe it to our community to champion its civil and political rights in all areas of public life, including academia. After receiving several complaints in 2021 from Jewish students at Stellenbosch University that tests had been scheduled over yom tov, we engaged with the university to ensure that Jewish students and all students whose religious and cultural beliefs don’t conform to the majority wouldn’t need to worry about assessments being scheduled over their high holy days.”

Looking back, Cape Board Executive Director Daniel Bloch says, “Seven students were impacted by the scheduling of tests over yom tov, with several submitting written complaints to us. They tried to engage their lecturers and faculty heads, but no accommodation was made. The students were appreciative of the Board’s assistance [at

the time], yet were left frustrated.” The Cape Board then took the issue forward.

One of the students who spoke to the *SA Jewish Report* described how she had to desecrate Yom Kippur in order to write her test. “I’ve kept Yom Kippur every year since Batmitzvah age, so it was weird not doing it. It’s the most important day of the Jewish year, and I feel like I should have kept it. But I had no choice. I understand that there are many Jewish holidays and it’s difficult to change dates. But Yom Kippur shouldn’t have an exam on it,” she said at the time.

Now, still speaking on condition of anonymity, she says, “I’m happy that SU decided to do this because it shows that it’s inclusive of our culture. It makes me feel more comfortable being at this university, that they take our religion seriously, as well as every other religion. I feel a lot more comfortable going into exam season knowing that Yom Kippur – the most holy day for me – will be a free day where I can keep the rules.”

Says Brivik, “We were initially in contact with the SAUJS [the South African Union of Jewish Students] representative at Stellenbosch and then had assistance from our colleagues at our national office in Johannesburg. After a few weeks of engagement with no real breakthrough, we took the matter to the Stellenbosch University ombudsman to find out more about the complaints process.

“We were then directed to contact the deputy-registrar and registrar, which we did. Executive Director Daniel Bloch and I met in-person with the registrar, deputy-registrar, and the deputy vice-chancellor of Stellenbosch University to discuss the matter further. Thereafter, it was discussed with the university’s transformation committee, and it was agreed that the university would draft a policy dealing with the scheduling of assessments over religious and cultural days – the culmination of which is the Religious and Cultural Days Policy.”

The policy states that no assessments will be scheduled on listed dates, but the university will remain “open and operational” on those days. The dates include 16 April (Pesach day one; day two is on a Sunday); 23 April (Pesach day eight); 26 September (Rosh Hashanah day one); 27 September (Rosh Hashanah day two); and 5 October (Yom Kippur). In the document, the university emphasises that Jewish holidays start in the evening, and therefore no assessments are to be scheduled after 17:30 in the evening before the day of these holidays. The dates apply only to the 2022 academic year. Future arrangements will be implemented based on the specifics of each academic year.

“As much as the university empowers students to raise issues directly with it, it was very open to us engaging on the students’ behalf as this matter affected seven Jewish students from different faculties,” says Bloch.

“We thank the university for its efforts to consider the religious beliefs of everyone by creating a safe environment where students can express and practice their religious beliefs.”

Going forward, Brivik says all university students should check their assessment dates and timeously bring any clashes to their lecturers’ attention. “If the lecturer is unable or unwilling to help, the student must escalate the matter to the faculty head, student representative, or deputy-registrar. Of course, the Board is able and willing to engage on the student’s behalf where no reasonable accommodation has been made.

“This important step by the university to acknowledge and accommodate religious diversity should be celebrated by all faiths and communities,” he says. “Now, students whose religious and cultural practices don’t conform to the majority can be assured that their access to assessment opportunities isn’t hindered. In order to build a South Africa that belongs to all and where we’re truly united in our diversity, we must empower minority groups to be heard and respected in all social spaces.”

SU Registrar Dr Ronel Retief said it was important to the university to follow up on this issue and engage with the SAJBD because, “Stellenbosch University respects the religious beliefs and cultures of all staff and students. It was important for us to explain the challenges that the university

experienced to accommodate the requests of students for assessment-free days during 2021.”

This was especially important “given the impact that the pandemic had on our institutional calendar, which had to be shortened drastically with very little room for ad hoc rescheduling. We also indicated our commitment to scheduling assessment-free days during 2022 to accommodate students from various religions and cultures.”

Dr Zethu Mkhize, the head of the university’s transformation office, says the new policy is building on a draft guideline that was developed in 2020 “with the purpose of promoting cultural, religious, and spiritual engagement that values religious and cultural pluralism at Stellenbosch University, and to support the religious, cultural, or non-religious identities of all stakeholders.

“The draft document prioritises initiatives of social inclusion, which will promote a welcoming and enabling institutional culture as well as student access and success. Religious pluralism is a cornerstone of multiculturalism and social inclusion. The document is meant as a source of information on the various days of observation for religious faiths in South Africa with a specific focus on the potential impact on university activities at SU. The intention is to update the guidelines annually in response to the needs of the SU students.”

Ruling against Mogoeng has direct implications for Desai

OPINION

BENJI SHULMAN



Last week, by a two-to-one majority decision, the Judicial Conduct Appeals Committee (JCAC) found former Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng in contravention of the judicial code, specifically on two points of misconduct.

The first was, “Involvement in political controversy by commenting on, criticising, and proposing changes to the official policy of the South African government towards Israel”. The second, “Participating in an extra-judicial activity that is incompatible with confidence in or the impartiality or independence of judges, by expressing a view on the diplomatic relations between South Africa and Israel”.

The comments by the former chief justice, which were initially made on a *Jerusalem Post* panel, were made in the context of expressing the desire for peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

The South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) maintains that the former chief justice’s utterances were neither controversial nor sufficient to be involved in “political controversy”. His comments included: “Some possibly then expect of me to be very hateful of Israel and the Jews, I [am] not. I love [the] Jews, I love Israel. I love Palestine. I love the Palestinians. I love everybody.”

The former chief justice felt obliged to apologise because, in his words, the JCC

(Judicial Conduct Committee) is a “creature of statute – law” and, as the rule of law forms the basis for our democracy, its ruling must be upheld. However, he has maintained that his stance in support for Israel remains unchanged.

Furthermore, based upon the JCAC’s decision, there are a number of important consequences, which arise not only in terms of the discourse surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict and the judiciary, but specifically the SAZF’s complaint against Judge Siraj Desai.

The substance of the SAZF’s complaint is that Desai’s relevant comments and actions went well beyond the scope of the ethical conduct required of a judicial officer. That Desai has involved himself in multiple political controversies is indisputable. While doing so, he has exploited his status as a high court judge to promote partisan political causes.

One of the instances of Desai’s clear



infringements of the judicial code involved his depiction of the United States (US), one of South Africa’s most important trading partners, in an interview on Iranian state media, as “the great Satan”. This amounted to a clear criticism of South Africa’s foreign policy and of its cordial and mutually beneficial relationship with the US.

Desai has a long history of endorsing and promoting the anti-Israel political lobby. This includes leading an anti-Israel tour to the Gaza Strip with BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement) activists, and participation in BDS activities and events.

The BDS movement is notorious for its zealous anti-Zionism and its fostering of enmity towards the South African Jewish community.

In spite of his long-standing links with advocacy organisations such as BDS, in 2015, Desai presided over a case brought by BDS activists and, regardless of an obvious conflict of interest, failed to recuse himself from hearing that matter.

In 2018, Desai welcomed and supported the Palestinian militant group, Hamas, during its trip to South Africa. This, in spite of the fact that the Hamas charter explicitly calls for violence against Jewish people and the destruction of the state of Israel.

His use of the prestige of the judicial office to promote publicly a highly partisan and controversial anti-Zionist and anti-American campaign is clearly contrary to the precepts underlying the judicial code of conduct.

Given that the JCC found that the former chief justice’s mild utterances regarding peace and dialogue amounted to conduct unbecoming of a judge, we trust that the JCC will find that Desai’s far more fervent promotion of anti-Zionist and anti-American groups, combined with his failure to recuse himself when hearing a case brought by the very group whose cause he so enthusiastically promotes, was in plain contravention of the code.

It will be up to the JCC to uphold consistency on this issue if we aren’t to see a double standard in the way that the judiciary handles public utterances of its judges.

• Benji Shulman is the director of public policy for the South African Zionist Federation.

ANN HARRIS: CHAMPION OF AFRICAN JEWRY

Two for the price of one, that was what the South African Jewish community was getting when in 1987, Rabbi Cyril Harris arrived in the country to take up his position as chief rabbi of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues. Accompanying Cyril Harris was his wife of 27 years, the Manchester-born and London-trained and practising solicitor, Ann Harris. It was apparent from the outset that she was going to be a chief rabbi's wife with a difference.

Lawyer, academic, social-justice activist, Jewish communal leader, human-rights advocate – these are just some of the areas in which Ann Harris has made her mark over the years, both in her native United Kingdom and in South Africa, the country that she made her own over the past 33 years and counting.

Harris' influence hasn't been confined to these two countries. Over the years, she has increasingly involved herself in Jewish communities throughout Southern African, from Namibia in the west to Mauritius in the east, from Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique on South Africa's borders, to Zambia and even Kenya in the north.

Her involvement in African Jewish affairs has largely revolved around her long association with the African Jewish Congress (AJC). Established in 1994 shortly after South Africa's transition, the AJC is a forum through which smaller and geographically-isolated Jewish communities of sub-Saharan Africa can build bridges and assist one other to maintain Jewish life in their regions.

It also represents African Jews, giving them a voice in international Jewry through its affiliation to the World Jewish Congress. Harris has represented the region at a range of high-level international conferences and events, first as an ordinary member of the AJC executive, then as a vice-president, and then as president since 2014.

Throughout this time, she has worked closely with Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, the chief executive and spiritual leader to the AJC since its founding. She has frequently joined him in his visits to AJC-affiliated states and to many international Jewish conferences.

"Ann had hardly been a year in South Africa when she travelled to Zambia as part of a delegation sent by the organisation Jews for Social Justice, to meet representatives of the African National Congress in exile in Lusaka," said Silberhaft. "For any Jewish leader at the time, this was a bold and indeed controversial step to take. This was late 1989, when the ANC was still a banned organisation and many political dissidents, most notably Nelson Mandela, were still in jail. No-one, of course, knew then how much South Africa was about to change."

She came under fierce attack in influential quarters for going to Lusaka, but characteristically stood firm. She stressed how short-sighted it would be for Jewish leaders not to recognise that major changes were about to take place in South Africa, and how it was incumbent upon them to prepare themselves

and the Jewish community for that change. Subsequent events completely vindicated her stance. To its credit, the Jewish leadership welcomed the transformation process. Cyril and Ann Harris were among the first out of the starting blocks in this regard.

Following the transition to democracy, their focus shifted to social upliftment, where both became extensively involved in Jewish efforts to address the inequality that was apartheid's legacy. Harris became a long-serving executive member of Tikkun (now Afrika Tikkun), an organisation co-founded by Cyril Harris and Bertie Lubner, which was the Jewish community's outreach programme for those disadvantaged under apartheid. She also chaired the Oxford Synagogue Skills for Adults Centre, which had been set up a decade earlier on the initiative of Rabbi Nachman Bernhard for the benefit of disadvantaged people in Johannesburg.

"Ann's approach to social upliftment combines idealism with a practical vision infused and energised by the Jewish historical experience in South Africa," said Silberhaft. "On the founding of Tikkun, she later wrote, 'If we were to be involved in the building of a new and just society, our goal had to be to assist disadvantaged families and communities to give their children the chance to be tomorrow's productive citizens. We looked back on our role models, the founders of our community, who brought with them to these shores exactly those values – care of the family and building community structures which could assist them in the fields of education, healthcare, and family

support.'"

She also continued to be active in the civil-rights field. As a lawyer, she involved herself extensively in women's rights, including serving on the South African Law Commission's

Committee on Jewish Divorce which led to the passage of the Divorce (Amendment) Act of 1996. For many years, she was extensively involved in the Wits Campus Law Clinic, including serving as the chairperson of its governing committee and as acting director from 1993 to 1996.

In common with her esteemed late husband, Harris has always shown a strong attachment to smaller Jewish communities and a desire to assist and encourage them in keeping Judaism and the greater Jewish heritage alive in their regions. On their arrival in South Africa, the couple embarked on a roadshow to visit as many centres of Jewish activity around the country as possible, large or small. This brought them into contact with many communities in the small country towns, all by then considerably shrunken but still adhering tenaciously to their religion and traditions.

Harris's attitude is well summed up in the tribute she paid to the remaining members of the Kimberley Jewish community on the centenary of their synagogue in 2004, "While it's sad that a community of such stature, one of the first bastions of Jewish life in South Africa, has suffered an inevitable decline in numbers, all who took part were delighted to be able to support and salute those who still keep the shul alive and to marvel at their optimism, resilience, and loyalty to our traditions."

After serving with distinction for a number of years as one of the vice-presidents of the AJC, Harris was the obvious choice to succeed Mervyn Smith as AJC president on his death in November 2014. One of the genuinely great communal leaders that South African Jewry has produced, Smith left a formidably large pair of shoes to fill. It's fortunate indeed – for the AJC and the Jewish communities of Southern Africa in general – that in Harris, the organisation found just the right person to continue the legacy of its esteemed founder.

Addressing Harris directly at the most recent AJC annual general meeting in Cape Town on 31 January 2022, Sam Levy of the Honen

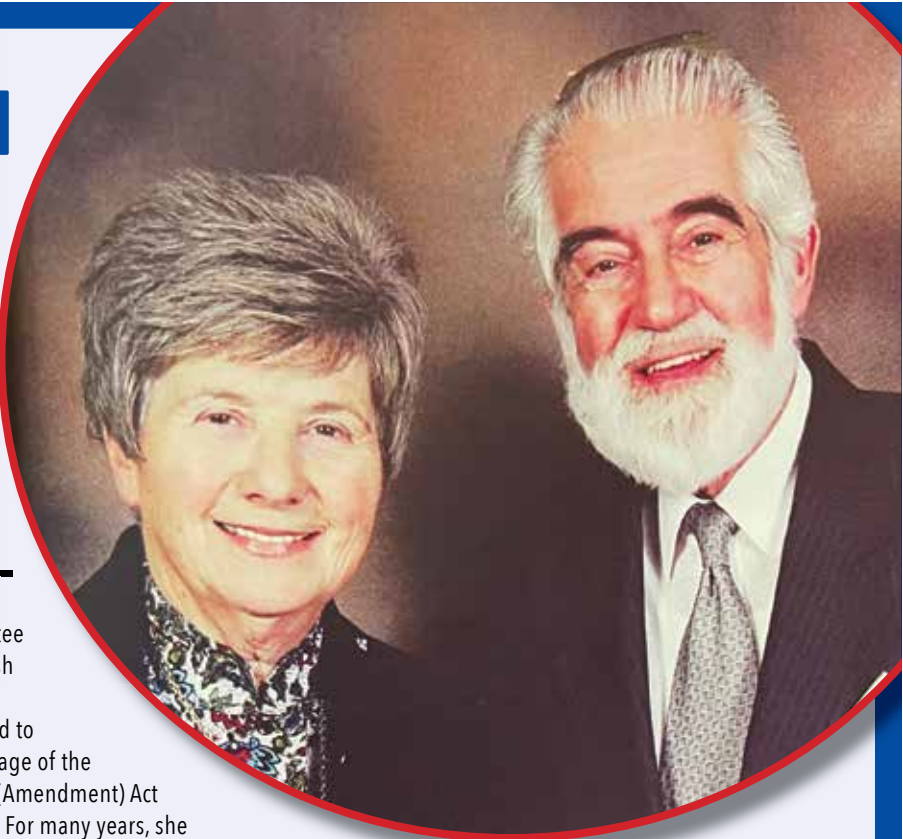
Dalim community in Maputo said, "You have worked tirelessly to encourage, defend, and support the Jewish communities of this part of the continent, from Namibia in the west to Mauritius in the east. No mitzvah and no community has been too small to merit your focused attention. Indeed, your attachment to numerically smaller communities far removed from the big and well-endowed centres of Jewish life has helped to keep these communities alive. Is it a small mitzvah when

the Torah is read publicly in Harare? When a Jewish museum is dedicated in Mauritius? When a child is Barmitzvah-ed in Maputo, reading from the Torah you brought there? Appearances to the contrary,

there is, in fact, no such thing as a small mitzvah, just as, to quote the Lubavitcher Rebbe, 'There is no such thing as a small Jew'.

"This conviction is so deeply rooted, that you have made it your business as the president of the African Jewish Congress these many years to make sure that the wider Jewish world hears the voice of the communities of our region, that our interests are defended vis-à-vis our respective governments, that our needs for ritual support are met, and our community spaces, whether synagogues, schools, or cemeteries, are protected and respected," said Levy. "Yes, the small clutch of Jewish communities that make up this organisation might not fill one London synagogue. Why then make the extraordinary effort that any economist will tell you is, at the least, inefficient? Because you know in your bones, together with Yehuda Hanassi, that 'we do not know the reward of mitzvot'.

"This, then, is a vote of thanks, the simplest words of gratitude, for your steadfast leadership of the African Jewish Congress these many years. You faithfully occupy yourself with needs of the community – literally, with wine for kiddush and havdalah, charity for the poor, and everything in between. May Kodesh Boruch Hu reward you, give you good health, and may He continue to send blessing and success to the work of your hands."



Oudtshoorn story uncovers more long-lost connections

TALI FEINBERG

When Blake Andrew embarked on a journey to discover his forgotten Jewish roots, he never imagined that his quest would touch the lives of others across the oceans. But since his story was published in the *SA Jewish Report* last week, incredible new links have been found, allowing one 101-year-old woman in England to connect with family she never knew she had.

Andrew grew up in Zimbabwe, was raised Christian, and felt strong ties to the Scottish roots of his grandfather. His grandmother’s story never came to light until seven weeks ago, when he found out that she was the daughter of the late Reverend Myer Woolfson, a prominent Oudtshoorn rabbi.

Now living in Johannesburg with his own family, Andrew (51) says the last week has been “a complete whirlwind” as people across the globe have celebrated his story and he has been put in touch with even more relatives. “Suddenly there’s this whole Jewish side to my family that I never knew! It’s mind-blowing.”

Perhaps the most incredible aspect is how one woman in Cape Town spotted a connection that had been lost in the sands of time. Jacqui Singer says that after reading the story, she realised that a 101-year-old woman in London named Jeanette Bloom was also part of the Woolfson family. And yet Bloom had lost contact with all her relatives – until now.

In a tale filled with coincidences, Singer says that her daughter, dietitian Lana Pinshaw, was working in a London hospital when she noticed that her patient, Bloom, lived across the road from her. Not only that, but both have roots in Oudtshoorn. Pinshaw was born there, as was Bloom’s father – Sam Woolfson. He was the son of Reverend Myer Woolfson, and just like his sister, Dorothy, (Andrew’s grandmother), he also married out of the faith. He had travelled to London to go to yeshiva and become a rabbi, but then served in World War I and got injured. He landed up marrying his nurse, Mabel, and they had one child – Jeanette. Family lore tells that Sam insisted that Jeanette marry someone Jewish, which she did. She still lives in the home she grew up in and turned 101 on 27 January 2022.

“I got goose bumps when I realised the connection,” says Singer. Pinshaw has been Bloom’s closest contact ever since they met as Bloom has only one relative in South Africa that she kept in contact with. But because of Singer’s incredible detective skills,



Jeanette Woolfson celebrating her 100th birthday in 2021, complete with a card from the Queen

Like Woolfson, he’s connected to the clan through Henry, his great grandfather. “It’s always fascinating to build out these branches and realise how disparate [yet close] people’s lives can be, all while stemming from common ancestry,” he says. “I didn’t know of

Blake or Jeanette. I dabble in genealogy, but have spent a lot less time on my maternal grandfather’s line, since I thought we had most of it documented. I have added Blake to the online family tree at MyHeritage, so he now has access to the full picture too. “David’s sister, Janine, had a similar experience in matric,” remembers Burman. “She had some friends over to the house and one of them pointed to Myer’s portrait and asked, ‘Why do you have a picture of my great-grandfather in your house?’ Of course it was her great-grandfather too. I guess with big families come these discoveries.” But the story isn’t over as Andrew hopes to make his way to Oudtshoorn in the next few weeks as part of his journey of discovery. New relatives and friends like Woolfson and Singer hope to join him. And all around the world, family members will pray that Bloom recovers and comes out of hospital, where she will find out about relatives across the globe that she never knew she had.

Israel in danger of delegitimisation over UN apartheid lie

SAUL KAMIONSKY

The United Nations (UN) has launched “the most egregious [awful] anti-Israel effort” in history through the latest UN Human Rights System, the general name of the UN council’s independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanism.

So said Anne Bayefsky, the president of Human Rights Voices, on Tuesday, 8 February. Bayefsky has been keeping tabs on the UN for almost four decades.

She’s referring to the UN’s latest effort to create an unprecedented open-ended inquiry into systematic abuses in Israel and the Palestinian territories. The inquiry is ongoing after being established in late May 2021. It’s tasked with scrutinising alleged abuses and their “root causes” in the decades-long Middle East conflict. The inquiry is chaired by South African jurist Dr Navi Pillay, who, Bayefsky said, “is notorious for her anti-Israel bias”.

The inquiry is “operationalised in a way which is dedicated to the destruction of a Jewish state through lethal politics”, Bayefsky said. Bayefsky, also director of the Turo Institute on Human Rights and the Holocaust, was speaking in a webinar titled “The UN’s War on Israel”, organised by the South African Zionist Federation.

“It’s no secret that the UN is anti-Israel,” said Olga Meshoe Washington, the chief executive of DEISI (Defend Embrace Invest Support Israel) International. “It makes its bias very clear. We see it with Israel being a standing item on the agenda for meetings of the UN Human Rights Council. We see its anti-Israel bias in the number of ridiculous resolutions that condemn Israel for human-rights abuses, never mind the fact that real abusers of human rights get a free pass.”

Bayefsky recounted how the UN responded when Hamas launched about 4 300 rockets at Israel last spring. “It convened an emergency session at the behest of Islamic states and, in UN terms, the so-called ‘state of Palestine’. The UN Human Rights Council convened this emergency session within days. [The organisation] takes years, if ever, to deal with grotesque human-rights violations around the world, but when Israel had the audacity to fight back, the council held an emergency session, even though by then, there was already a ceasefire agreement.

“The UN adopted a resolution over the objection of every Western state, not a single one voted for the resolution. It created a commission of inquiry that virtually didn’t have anything to do with the conflict that had just taken place. It was an inquiry on all the root causes of the conflict, ever, with no start and end date.”

Bayefsky said this inquiry was “permanently based at the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, composed to a great extent by lawyers who have essentially created an in-house law firm to victimise, delegitimise, and criminalise Israel and Israelis when they act in self-defence”.

She said this was part of a four-pronged plan. “Number one, label Israel as a racist state guilty of apartheid. Number two, because that’s a crime against humanity, take Israel to the International Criminal Court. Three, get the entire global community on board with the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions [BDS] organisation. Lastly, encourage a complete arms embargo on the state of Israel, so Israelis can’t engage in self-defence.”

Bayefsky said people could respond to this by telling the truth and making the facts available to the UN, whether it wanted to listen or not. Through Bayefsky’s website, www.humanrightsvoices.org, anyone can submit their experiences of living in or visiting Israel to the Pillay-chaired inquiry.

“This will allow us to say that we gave it the information, which it ignored,” said Bayefsky. “Your submissions will reach media and ordinary people who are open-minded and want to hear the facts.

“You experienced apartheid in South Africa. The other side is now attempting to appropriate your history and experience. You are one of the only ones who can speak with an authoritative voice.”

Bayefsky said Israel wasn’t an apartheid state because, “Arabs sit on the Supreme Court and are ambassadors who represent the country abroad, voluntarily. If they wish to do so, they can serve in the Israel Defense Forces. Arabs currently have a political party represented in the ruling governing coalition in Israel.”

The UN is tying itself into knots to figure out how it can apply the word “apartheid” to Israel, she said. “Apartheid is a crime, and it wants to haul Israel before the International Criminal Court. If it can criminalise the country, an arms embargo will ensure Israel has no military victory.”

“Israel is in imminent danger, real danger of delegitimisation through this apartheid lie,” Bayefsky said.

Pamela Ngubane, a historian and the general manager of the South African Friends of Israel, said, “I know from my own experience that Israel isn’t an apartheid state. I would never have dreamed of seeing someone who looks like me being an ambassador for South Africa abroad. Yet, Israel’s diplomatic core is representative of the entire demography, so there are so many things that could be said about how it’s just a libellous lie.”

Reverend Kenneth Meshoe, the leader of the African Christian Democratic Party, said, “We should do our best to ensure that we increase the presence of those who love Israel. Start new chapters. You go to many universities, and don’t see anything or any group of people who love Israel. But those who hate Israel are on every campus.

“We need to ensure that educational programmes reach all universities, to increase knowledge about what’s happening in the Middle East. I can assure you



Anne Bayefsky



Kenneth Meshoe



Olga Meshoe Washington



Pamela Ngubane

that the majority of South Africans love Israel. “The UN is biased. It claims to be promoting peace and security in Israel, when it’s part of the problem. Until it’s told to its face, ‘You are the problem’, the problem in the Middle East won’t be solved. The UN needs to take the position of facilitator of peace because at the moment, it’s not doing so. It’s anti-Israel.”

Whoopi’s whoopsy on race touches a nerve

GABE FRIEDMAN – JTA

She may not have meant to, but this week, Whoopi Goldberg waded into a charged discourse that has polarised the Jewish community and those who seek to discriminate against them for centuries.

The controversy began brewing on *The View* the daytime talk show she co-hosts, during a discussion last Monday about the recent controversy over a Tennessee school board’s decision to ban *Maus*, the iconic graphic memoir about the Holocaust. The genocide wasn’t “about race”, Goldberg said, it was instead about “man’s inhumanity to man”. And it involved “two white groups of people”.

The comments immediately went viral and struck a nerve, leading to what Goldberg described as a deluge of accusations of antisemitism and Holocaust denial, and criticism from groups like the Anti-Defamation League.

In spite of multiple apologies, the storm reached a climax when ABC decided to suspend Goldberg from *The View* for two weeks “to take time to reflect and learn about the impact of her comments”, in the words of ABC News President Kim Godwin. Jews across the political spectrum, including many who objected to Goldberg’s original remarks, criticised the decision to suspend her.

Was the Holocaust about race?

“Race” is notoriously difficult to define. Is it, like Goldberg claimed, a group of people with shared physical characteristics? Can other social, economic, and anthropological

classifications factor in?

Jews have long debated whether they are a “race” or something else. Judaism is a religion, practiced by people of all varieties and races across the globe. But Jews don’t have to be practitioners to regard themselves or be accepted by other Jews as Jews. The Jewish tradition of “matrilineality” – defining as Jewish a child born of a Jewish mother – points to a biological definition of Jewish identity. But Judaism also accepts converts.

Taken all together, these various understandings have led Jews to regard themselves (and others to regard Jews) variously as a people, a nation, a tribe, a family, and a faith – sometimes in various combinations, sometimes all at the same time.

But Hitler, like many antisemites before him, specifically – and repeatedly, in writings, laws, and speeches – labelled Jews as a physically impure Slavic-descended race, in contrast to what he termed the blonde, blue-eyed, genetically pure German Aryan race. Nazi propaganda promoted pseudoscientific ways to supposedly identify Jews – by the size of their nose and lips, or the shape of their heads, among other things.

Hitler was obsessed by what he considered the biological fact of Jewish identity, and wrote that the Final Solution was inspired in part by his drive to create a more “pure” and singular human race, rid of “Jewish” and other impurities.

The Nazis drew on a tradition of “racially” stereotyping Jews that scholars have traced at least to 1000 CE. The long, hooked-nosed trope, for example, appeared in everything from medieval paintings to fictional



Whoopi Goldberg attends a benefit event in New York City on 13 September 2021

as toxic “others”, regardless of what they believe or practice. And on the other end of the political spectrum, some left-wing progressives lump all Jews in with a largely white oppressor class.

With that last name, is Whoopi Jewish?

The extra thick layer of irony underlining this controversy is that it involves a celebrity who wasn’t born Jewish, but who adopted a Jewish stage name because of what she has described as her positive feelings toward Jews and Jewish culture, not for religious reasons.

Why does any of this matter?

Because so many antisemites and European ultra-nationalists are intent on denying that the genocide of the Holocaust happened, or insist that it has been exaggerated, Jewish groups are adamant that the facts of history not be distorted, intentionally or not. Such “accidental” distortion, many argue, can be antisemitic in effect, even if not in intent.

Others suggest that Goldberg’s comments reflect an emerging ideology that’s trying to downplay the historic persecution of the Jews. As Daniella Greenbaum, a former producer at *The View*, wrote in *The Washington Post*, “It’s an ideology that tries to turn Jews into white people, that tries to erase Jewish vulnerability and oppression, to squeeze Jews who have light skin into modern American categories of race and ethnicity, and which also myopically categorises the hatred against them into American considerations of what racism looks like.”

PESACH AT THE PRESIDENT

GLATT KOSHER PASSOVER

Bantry Bay, Cape Town | 15 – 24 April 2022

The iconic President Hotel invites you to experience a true Yom Tov Passover at the most-loved hotel in Cape Town. The highest level of Kashrut will be maintained under strict, expert Rabbinical supervision through the **Cape Beth Din**. The President Hotel offers breathtaking views of the Atlantic Ocean set against the backdrop of the

famous Lion’s Head and Table Mountain, a stone’s throw from the Sea Point Promenade and beachfront. Located in sought-after Bantry Bay, within the **Eruv** and easy walking distance of **5 Shuls** and surrounded by Cape Town’s top attractions including CBD, V&A Waterfront, Camps Bay and more.

HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN LOOK FORWARD TO

- Exquisite Pesach Cuisine by Avron’s Catering
- Serving Glatt Kosher, Cholov Yisroel, Bishul Yisroel
- Kosher Dairy and Meat Kitchen
- Seder Accoutrements (Private, Semi Private or Rabbi-led Seder Options)
- Fully Stocked In-house Shul
- Stimulating and Dynamic Guest Speakers
- Chol Hamoed Entertainment
- Boxed Lunches for Chol Hamoed Excursions
- Unique and Inspiring Experience

- Spacious Rooms and Apartments
- Exceptional Personal and Friendly Service
- Kids Programme
- Supervised Kids’ Play Area and Games Areas
- Babysitting Services
- Outdoor Infinity Pool
- In-house Spa, Hair and Nail Salon

FOR INFORMATION OR TO BOOK

Email pesach@presidenthotel.co.za

or call +27 (0)21 434 8111

the PRESIDENT HOTEL

cape town

AVRON’S PLACE

Experience Cape Town. At The President.

DAAPHNE KUHN presents

LOCKED upside DOWN

songs, stories... and sanitizer!

a new musical revue conceived by and starring

Sharon Spiegel-Wagner

Lorri Strauss

Cathrine Hopkins

directed by

Alan Swerdlow

THEATRE ON THE SQUARE, SANDTON

9 - 26 February

THEATRE ON THE SQUARE

COMPUTICKET

computicket.com | 083 377 4969 / 011 883 8606

www.presidenthotel.co.za

pesach@presidenthotel.co.za

+27 (0)21 434 8111

#atthepresident

Igniting change, OneSpark at a time

SAUL KAMIONSKY

OneSpark’s founders and joint chief executives, Greg Smith and Josh Kaplan, have been named in *Beyond Exclamation* magazine’s “Top 10 Most Inspiring CEOs to Watch Out” for in 2022.

This is the duo’s second international honour in one year, with the company in existence for only two years. OneSpark won the title of the World’s Most Innovative Company in Life Insurance in 2021.

It’s not surprising that their motivation is, as Kaplan puts it, “to change the world”. Responding to the Beyond Exclamation award, he said, “To be recognised provides further motivation to continue our mission to innovate for the betterment of our clients and the pursuit of a better world.”

Launched in 2020, OneSpark is a tech-based, socially responsible insurer, which builds products that aim to change people’s lives, save people money, and make the world a better place. Its name comes from the idea that it just takes one individual, the spark of an idea to change the world.

“We launched it in, arguably, one of the most difficult times to do so,” Kaplan told the *SA Jewish Report*. “Over the past 24 months, we have faced multiple once-in-a-century events, from a global pandemic to riots and unrest. In spite of these challenges, our team has done an enormous amount of work not only to make OneSpark a success, but to help make South Africa a better country.”

Smith and Kaplan met around 2016 when they worked at Discovery. “We’re complete disrupters,” says Smith. “We do things differently and think differently. We aren’t scared to go against the grain and do things right.”

Smith says their winning recipe “has everything to do with our people, our culture. I’m in awe every day of the incredible talent that sits within OneSpark, how brilliant every single person is. To have amassed such a strong team with a common vision and goal humbles me every day.”

They attended King David High School Linksfield at the same time, with Kaplan being two grades below Smith. They both loved their time at the school.

“Given a choice, if I had to go back and do it all over again, I wouldn’t hesitate to go back to King David,” says Kaplan. “This passion for my school extended into my working life, where I have had the privilege to do some work for the King David Schools Foundation.”

Smith had many mentors in academics and sport at King David. “Each of them played their part in helping me to be the best version of myself, to go out into the world and be able to study actuarial science, work at Discovery, and then be in a position to start my own company.”

Kaplan describes the key factors that motivated him and Smith to start OneSpark.

First, their frustration with the life insurance industry meant they wanted to “put clients and their best interests at

the heart of our products and everything we do”.

Second, their realisation that life insurance, as a product, hadn’t evolved in more than a century meant they had to “throw away everything that was done before and start again”.

Lastly, “We wanted to use cutting edge technology and actuarial innovation to design products that not only give better protection at a more affordable premium, but also uplift and empower our clients and society at large, improving lives.”

They have designed dozens of award-winning insurance products such as an education-protection product and one of Africa’s first and largest social-impact bonds. The former was crowned as the World’s Most Innovative Life Insurance Product in 2018, while the latter was designed to help solve the #FeesMustFall crisis. “We have

one of the world’s smartest underwriting models in which a lot of our clients don’t need to go for medicals,” says Smith. “[We have] the world’s first pay-as-you-need life insurance model, so it’s transparent. We take a percentage of the premium to run the business. We hold the premiums in kind of a fund, and then pay out to our clients. We treat the money as if it’s their money, not ours.”

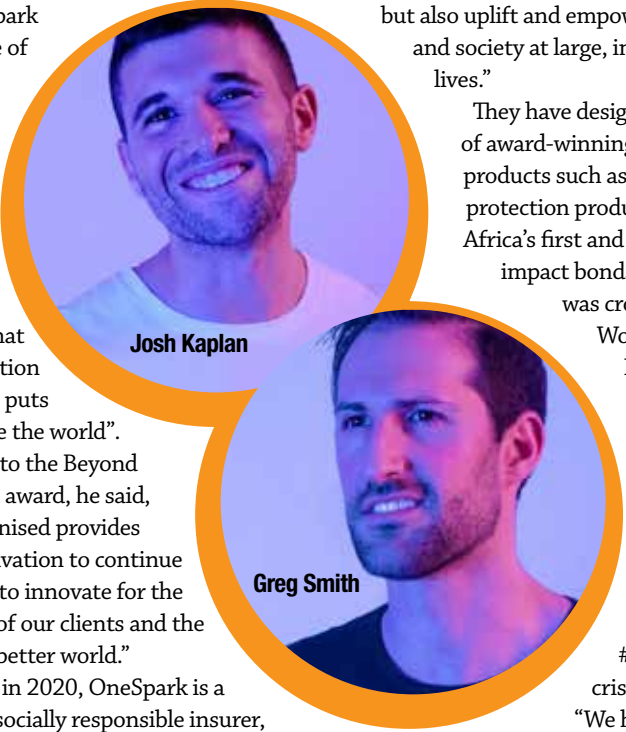
Kaplan believes their goal to help change South Africa aligns closely with the mission of OneSpark’s brand ambassadors, Springbok Captain Siya Kolisi and Proteas bowler Lungi Ngidi. “We met their managers,” says Kaplan. “Both Siya and Lungi are incredibly proud and passionate South Africans.”

Smith, too, loves South Africa, so the civil unrest in 2021 broke his heart. However, it sparked an idea. “We called in our executive, and challenged it to do something bigger,” says Smith. “We ended up raising hundreds of thousands of rands. We fed more than 30 000 people. We rebuilt tuck shops in schools and internet cafes.”

This is one of Smith’s most memorable moments. “When everyone else sits down, we stand up. We are a voice that won’t be silenced. We’ll do our utmost to make change, and will use OneSpark as something bigger than ourselves to make that change.”

Summiting Mount Kilimanjaro in 2019 is a moment that stands out for Kaplan. “I love all things adventure and adrenaline inducing, so Kilimanjaro and a few other mountains have always been on my bucket list,” he says.

While climbing Africa’s highest peak, Kaplan endured blizzards, storms, and rain, which, he says, “made the trip quite difficult, especially when you can’t see more than a metre in front of you. That being said, I loved every second. In a sense, because you’re completely cut off from the rest of the world, it feels like a few days of deep meditation where all you have are your own thoughts to keep you company. This gave me some time for deep introspection, and helped catalyse my thoughts about starting OneSpark.”



How antisemitic conspiracies contributed to the Texas hostage drama

JONATHAN D. SARNA

The man who took a rabbi and three congregants hostage in Colleyville, Texas, on 15 January believed that Jews control the United States (US). He told his hostages, as one revealed in a media interview, that Jews “control the world” and that they could use their perceived power to free Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani convicted in 2010 for trying to kill American soldiers and plotting to blow up the Statue of Liberty. The hostage-taker also demanded to speak to New York’s Central Synagogue rabbi, Angela Buchdahl, so that she would use her “influence” to help get Siddiqui released.

By invoking Jewish “power”, the gunman, later identified as Malik Faisal Akram, a 44-year-old British national, seemed to echo Siddiqui’s antisemitic views that Jews were responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks and had infiltrated American political and nongovernmental organisations. During her 2010 trial in New York, Siddiqui demanded that Jews be excluded from serving on her jury.

As a scholar of Jewish history, I know that myths concerning “Jewish power”, “control”, and “conspiracy” have circulated in America since before the Civil War, and continue today. They provide a simple, albeit imaginary, explanation for bewildering social changes that people find hard to explain and confront.

Antisemitic literature

As immigration brought Jews in larger numbers to America’s shores, particularly from Russia, one of the first overtly antisemitic books ever published in the US, Telemachus Thomas Timayenis’ 1888, *The American Jew: An Exposé of His Career* warned that Jews had “acquired a hold on this country such as they never secured on any nation in Europe”.

Actually, Jews comprised much less than 1% of the population at that time. Still, Timayenis, viewed as “the father of antisemitic publishing in America”, claimed that they controlled Wall Street, the clothing and tobacco trades, politics, journalism, and more.

Timayenis and his antisemitic books were largely forgotten for almost a century. Now, however, they are readily available on the internet.

Protocols and conspiracy theories

In the 20th century, the publication that did the most to disseminate the myth of a Jewish conspiracy to control the world was the forgery known as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Described by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum as “the most notorious and widely distributed antisemitic publication of modern times”, the work first appeared in Russia as part of a disinformation propaganda campaign by Russian monarchists to prop up embattled Tsar Nicholas II.

Subsequently, the forgery went through numerous translations and adaptations, reaching every corner of the globe. Its explosive allegations influence people to this day.

The *Protocols* purports to be the minutes of late 19th-century meetings attended by world Jewish leaders, the “Elders of Zion”, keen to take over the world. They set forth different stages of the supposed behind-the-scenes Jewish plan for global conquest: everything from manipulating the economy and controlling the press to promoting liberalism and pornography. They even articulate an ultimate goal: to re-establish the line of King David and anoint “the King of the Jews”.

The *Protocols* form a classic conspiracy theory. The work provides a compelling, easy-to-understand explanation that connects a wide range of disparate phenomena roiling society. Nothing happens by accident, the *Protocols* and all conspiracy theories insist, and things seldom are what they seem. Conspiracy theorists believe that powerful controlling forces – in this case, the Jews – shape and manipulate events behind the scenes.

Believing imaginary conspiracies

Precisely because they offer a simple explanation – “the Jews are responsible” – and flatter believers into thinking they possess secret knowledge others lack, conspiracy theories like the *Protocols* are notoriously difficult to disprove.

After all, individual Jews, much like their non-Jewish counterparts, may well have engaged in some of the activities the *Protocols* and similar conspiracy theories describe. And the phenomena recounted – social, economic, political, and cultural changes transforming the world – are certainly real enough. For many conspiracy-minded folks, that’s usually validation enough.

Beyond the *Protocols*, a wide range of other conspiracy theories involving Jews have circulated over the past century. The great carmaker Henry Ford, influenced in part by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, devoted extensive resources in the 1920s to proving that the “international Jew” was the “world’s foremost problem”, responsible for perceived ills that ranged, in his view, from urbanisation to the modern music and dance that he hated.

Under intense economic and legal pressure, Ford publicly apologised in 1927 “for resurrecting exploded fictions, for giving currency to ... gross forgeries, and for contending that the Jews have been engaged in a conspiracy”. Yet Ford’s *The International Jew* remains available for purchase around the world and on the internet.

Conspiracy theorists targeted famed European Jewish bankers, the Rothschilds, as well. *Niles Weekly Register*, perhaps the most widely circulated magazine of its time, ascribed particular power to the Rothschild banking family which, it claimed, “govern a Christian world – not a cabinet moves without their advice”.

Almost 200 years later, echoes of the “Rothschild myth” live on in Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene’s infamous 2018 post alleging that Rothschild-owned Jewish space lasers set California’s forest fires in order to clear out land for a lucrative high-speed rail line.

In recent years, George Soros, a Hungarian-born American billionaire investor and philanthropist of Jewish origin, has been blamed for a host of what the extreme far right perceives to be society’s ills. These conspiracy theories falsely attribute to Soros the anti-Trump protests, refugee problems in Europe, and the Black Lives Matter movement, among other trends.

Anti-Catholic, anti-Masonic, anti-Mormon, and anti-Muslim conspiracy theories have likewise attracted legions of followers.



Law-enforcement officials outside Congregation Beth Israel synagogue on 15 January 2022 in Colleyville, Texas

In the Islamist circles from which Aafia Siddiqui and the gunman who took hostages in Colleyville sprang, however, the favourite target remains the Jews. Attacks on “Jews”, “Jewish power”, and the supposed Zionist control of America are commonplace.

The reason has almost nothing to do with real Jews and a great deal to do with a phenomenon that historian David Brion Davis noticed about 60 years ago: in environments shaken by “bewildering social change”, people find “unity and meaning by conspiring against imaginary conspiracies”.

• Jonathan D. Sarna is University Professor and Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History, Brandeis University. This article originally appeared on [theconversation.com](#).

Jews ramp up protest against Beijing Olympics

TOBY AXELROD – JTA

On a recent Friday afternoon, with the Beijing Olympic Games only three weeks away, Mischa Ushakov and Padma Wangyal chained themselves to the entrance of the Allianz insurance giant’s headquarters in Germany’s capital.

They had two demands: that Allianz “drop its sponsorship of the Games in China, and comment on the human-rights abuses of the Chinese government”, Ushakov said.

“We gave them a one-week deadline,” he said.

Ushakov, 23, is a co-founder with Bini Guttmann of Never Again Right Now, a two-year-old Jewish group dedicated to raising awareness about China’s persecution of its Uyghur Muslim minority. Wangyal is a 73-year-old Tibetan exile. Never Again Right Now joined forces with the Tibet Initiative Deutschland for the Allianz protest.

Their protest failed to move Allianz. But when the Beijing Winter Olympic Games open on Friday, they and other protesters will be back, this time at the iconic Brandenburg Gate.

They are also planning a “humanistic” torch relay in 15 German cities to mark the start of the Olympics – which they are calling the “Genocide Games”.

“As a Jew in Germany, you’re always seen as a so-called genocide expert,” Ushakov told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. “When Bini and I started this campaign, we hoped that as Jews talking about genocide – and some of us are descendants of Holocaust survivors – we would get more attention.”

Ushakov’s group is far from alone. In London, Jewish groups will join a demonstration at Piccadilly Circus. In other cities, there will be demonstrations outside Chinese embassies and consulates.

Since 2015, China has cracked down on its Uyghur population – a Turkic Muslim minority with a presence in the country’s western Xinjiang region – placing them in so-called re-education camps, which can be spotted in satellite photos. Reports smuggled out of China and spread in mainstream media tell of police and military brutality, sexual crimes, and forced sterilisation. Members of the Uyghur diaspora have been cut off from their families in China for years, even decades, and some reportedly have been pressed to spy for China under threat of harm being done to their relatives.

The Pentagon reported in 2019 that at least one million people out of a total population of about 10 million Uyghurs had been rounded up and put through the camps since 2015.

The United States, Britain, Canada, and Australia are holding a diplomatic boycott of the Games. Though Israel has remained largely silent, ostensibly due to warm relations with China, prominent Jews elsewhere have raised their voices: British Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis last year joined a British Jewish protest campaign, calling on the public to “taint the [Olympic] brand ... in protest against the unspeakable atrocities that are being committed today against the Uyghur Muslims”. European Parliament Member Raphaël Glucksmann of France, who is Jewish, launched a campaign to boycott international retailers linked to Uyghur forced labour.

The US Holocaust Memorial Museum has



Mischa Ushakov, the founder of Never Again Right Now, at the Allianz headquarters protest in Berlin on 21 January 2022

published information about the persecution on its website, and major US Jewish organisations like the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League have spoken out on the issue.

“People being persecuted for things like wearing beards or prayer shawls, these are things that the Jewish community knows too well,” said Serena Oberstein, 42, the executive director of Jewish World Watch, a California-based organisation established to raise awareness about genocide. Last year, it held a protest outside a Chinese consulate on the anniversary of the 1938 Kristallnacht pogrom against Jews in Germany.

“This isn’t the Holocaust: there’s no perfect comparison,” Oberstein said. “But for me, the stories we’re hearing coming out of the region are too familiar to the stories I heard growing up from my grandfather” – a soldier who helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp in Germany.

“The Nazi party used the Berlin Games to strengthen its reputation in the world. Two years later came Kristallnacht. [Today], we know what authoritarian regimes that systemically persecute people do when they build concentration camps, ghettos, and forced labour camps,” she said.

The level of Jewish protest has ramped up as the Games have drawn closer. Last week, the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity took out a full page advert in *The New York Times*, signed by French Jewish philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy, former Soviet refusenik Natan Sharansky, and Wiesel’s son, Elisha, urging athletes and corporate sponsors to “walk away from these

Games unless Beijing takes steps to reunite Uyghur families.”

Of all the groups taking up this issue, none have been more active than Jewish ones, said Washington D.C.-based attorney, Nury Turkel, the chairperson and co-founder of the Uyghur Human Rights Project.

“‘Never again’ is relatable to what the Uyghurs are going through,” said Turkel, 50, who was born during the Cultural Revolution in a Chinese re-education camp for Uyghurs and came to the US in 1997. “It looks like [Chinese leader] Xi Jinping is using Hitler’s playbook: targeting the social elites, the intellectuals, religious leaders, going after women and children, using slave labour, and using the fanfare around global events to normalise their behaviour. When the Berlin Olympics took place, Hitler had already built [the concentration camp] Dachau.”

The call to action is urgent, said Mia Hasenson-Gross, the executive director of the London-based Jewish charity René Cassin, which has been a major force galvanising Jewish activism in the United Kingdom on the Uyghur issue.

“Uyghur women are forcibly sterilised; children are forced to denounce their language and cultural tradition; they are under surveillance,” Hasenson-Gross said. “If we stop the Chinese government now from its acts of preventing births, from acts of future destruction, then we have a chance at preventing the genocide of the Uyghur people.”

There are also lone Jews standing up, like Andrew, a 50-something Orthodox Jewish businessman in London who didn’t reveal his full name. Twice weekly for the past year and half, he has been protesting outside a Volkswagen showroom on a busy street in Southgate, asking the German company to leave the Uyghur area, where it has a factory.

For athletes, protest has its own challenges. First, Olympic athletes have no say in where the Olympic Games will be held, said former Olympic skier Noah Hoffmann, who is Jewish. He recently co-founded Global Athlete, which aims to correct what he describes as an imbalance of power between sports

administrations and athletes.

“The power that the International Olympic Committee [IOC] wields is immense,” said Hoffmann.

The other challenge is the danger of speaking up in China. “I believe in the power of athletes to be forces of good ... so I hate telling them to stay silent in China, but the risks are just too high there,” he said, noting the recent disappearance of Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai after she accused a retired Chinese Communist Party official of sexual assault.

“The use of sport to distract from genocide isn’t new,” said Hoffmann, whose great-grandmother left Holland before the Holocaust.

The IOC “has never been held to account for its strange affinity with totalitarian regimes around the world”, said Turkel, who urges the public to denounce corporate sponsors and refuse to watch the Games.

Back in Berlin, Ushakov said he and Wangyal unchained themselves from the Allianz doors last month after a security official told them their concerns would be discussed at company headquarters in Munich.

But Allianz spokeswoman Anja Rechenberg said their demonstration “doesn’t change anything”. “For us, this is a long-term commitment. Allianz is a strong supporter of sport, and in this framework, we have an eight-year commitment to the Olympic Games.”

Allianz is one of many German firms that have uncovered and publicised their Nazi past. But the company hasn’t learned the right lessons, said Berliner Tenzin Yangzom, 30, the executive director of the Tibet Initiative Deutschland, who contacted Never Again Right Now for help with its Allianz protest. “It’s very important to have the voices of the Jewish campaign.”

“This world was given the promise of ‘Never Again’, and that meant on one hand, combating all forms of antisemitism and standing with Jews – of course,” Never Again Right Now co-founder Guttmann said in a call from Vienna. “But the promise also meant preventing genocide and mass atrocities around the world. The world has failed in that mission again and again.”

THE PENTAGON REPORTED IN 2019 THAT AT LEAST ONE MILLION PEOPLE OUT OF A TOTAL POPULATION OF ABOUT 10 MILLION UYGHURS HAD BEEN ROUNDED UP AND PUT THROUGH THE CAMPS SINCE 2015.



* Valentine’s gifts * Birthdays * Thank you * Baby * Anniversaries * Events corporate gifts * Cool gifts *

We love gifts. They make celebrations more fun, allow us to say thank you, and show someone you care. You get to choose from our curated gift boxes, or if you’re feeling adventurous, build your own. We offer everything from pamper products to artisanal food, drinks, snacks, and more. And we’ve just launched our VALENTINE’S DAY range.

Contact us on info@pomegranategifts.co.za, call Belinda on 083 679 3383 or head to www.thepomegranategiftcompany.co.za. We courier to your door, or you can collect through Pargo countrywide. Delivery is nationwide, while stocks last.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram on @ThePomegranateGiftCompany

Happy shopping and gifting

Making the silence of genocide speak

TALI FEINBERG

How do you explore an entire community that was obliterated? How do you capture the individual victims of genocide? These are some of the questions that haunt us as Jews. For award-winning artist and photographer Barry Salzman, they are the driving force behind his work.

Salzman's images capture the arc of atrocities across space and time in the 20th century. The result is startling, unsettling, and provoking, forcing the viewer to look at the role they can play in making "never again" a reality.



I was carrying my doggy backpack

Salzman was born in Zimbabwe, where he lived until soon after his Barmitzvah. He spent the rest of his childhood in South Africa and emigrated to the United States soon after finishing his studies. Now, he's back in Cape Town to exhibit at the Investec Cape Town Art Fair (ICTAF), and his work will also make its way to the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre in April. No matter where he has gone, his Jewish identity has motivated him in the stories he wants to tell and the questions he wants to ask.

"Both my father's parents were born in Zimbabwe," Salzman says. "My maternal grandparents were from the island of Rhodes, and came there as part of a pre-war emigration wave. My interest in genocide stems strongly from my Jewish heritage and the Holocaust, and my work focuses exhaustively on 20th century genocide, from Namibia, to Poland, Rwanda, Rhodes, and the Ukraine. It's an ongoing project, and I still hope to explore the Bosnian, Armenian, and Cambodian genocides.

The governing principle is a critique of society and our role in stopping the reoccurrence of atrocities. It looks at our unwillingness to confront and engage, and our responsibility to bear witness."

It's been almost a decade since he began this work, but it almost never happened.

"I wanted to do a project exploring identity and the cultural heritage that stays with you your whole life, no matter where you go or what you do," Salzman says. In his own family, he saw that the strong Sephardic culture of Rhodes remained a pivotal feature, while Ashkenazi heritage was less prominent. This led him to start a project interviewing Jewish survivors of Rhodes. At first, he decided there would be no mention of the Holocaust, because he didn't feel like he had the experience to carry those stories. In addition, many of the people he interviewed had never spoken of their

experiences.

"But it was extraordinary. I would ask them their name and where they were born, and that was it – they began to tell their story. Maybe it was because they were at a stage of their lives when they realised they may never have another opportunity," Salzman says. In that safe space, survivors began to share memories, and Salzman felt obligated to record them and share them with the world. The result was *It Never Rained on Rhodes*, a short documentary that captures the idealised, longed-for community that once was and can never be replaced.

His ongoing project, *How We See the World*, explores how the landscape is a witness but also indifferent to genocide.

It's a metaphor for how humanity also witnesses so much and how we try to evade responsibility. "I compare it to watching a scary movie through a gap in our fingers – we know what's going on, but we put up a filter to prevent the impact."

These images are purposefully aesthetically pleasing, and Salzman hopes that they go up on walls and evoke important conversations in living rooms and around Shabbat tables. "The minute we restrict these discussions to museums or schools, we become part of the problem," he says. He understands that people need to compartmentalise in order to function, which is why he thinks art plays such an important role in engaging viewers in a new way.

Salzman's possibly most startling work is *The Day I Became Another Genocide Victim*, a series of "portraits" of clothing worn by Rwandan genocide victims on the day they were killed. *I was wearing my favourite party dress, I was wearing my favourite shoes, but one got lost, and I was carrying my doggy backpack* are just some of the work's titles. This is also a project that almost never came about.

"It found me," says Salzman. He was in Rwanda photographing landscapes when news broke of a mass grave discovered near Kigali. "We went to see the excavation, and clothes were just coming out of the ground, piling up. It almost compounded the dehumanising way in which these victims



In The Eye of the Beholder 2020, Namibia

were killed. As each piece was carefully laid out, still damp from the earth, I found myself imagining that person's story."

Salzman was so affected that a few days later, he applied for permission to photograph the items. While the people helping him wore gloves, he insisted on gently detangling the clothes from bones, skulls and dirt with his own bare hands.

"I had to handle the garments, separate them, and show that each one belonged to an individual human being. It was the most extraordinary experience. These are definitely portraits of real people, not still-life images. And the thing is, how do you ever stop? There must be millions of garments like this buried around Rwanda.

"A survivor told me that she was lying under a pile of bloody bodies, pretending to be dead and hiding from the killers, when she heard one of them say, 'I just need one more, then I'll get to a hundred.' In tribute to her, and in defiance of the way that perpetrator reduced people to numbers, I decided to stop at a hundred," says Salzman. "The last image is just a grey square called *We Were*, because the large majority of victims will never be individually identified, and many of their clothes [and bodies] were hacked to pieces."

ICTAF is the first time that the project will be exhibited in its entirety. Its display at the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre will begin on 7 April 2022, the 28th anniversary of the day that the Rwandan genocide began. The exhibition will most likely be up for a full 100 days, which

is as long as the massacre lasted. Salzman's goal is for this exhibition to be seen by as many people around the world as possible by the 30th anniversary of the genocide in 2024.

He notes that people feel they "know this story" because they have been inundated with Holocaust and genocide history their whole lives. "But actually, we don't know this story, and we'll never truly understand the loss and trauma that people endured. The more I learn, the less I know."

But, by bearing witness now and in future generations, we may just touch the surface and explore what's underneath.

- The Investec Cape Town Art Fair will take place at the Cape Town International Convention Centre from 18 to 20 February 2022.

Maus isn't simple – that's why it's great

OPINION

ANDREW SILOW-CARROLL — JTA



Art Spiegelman once complained that *Maus*, his classic memoir about his father's experiences in the Holocaust, was assumed to be intended for young adults because it took the form of a comic book.

"I have since come to terms with the fact that comics are an incredible democratic medium," he told an interviewer.

"Adults" seemed to agree. *Maus* won a Pulitzer Prize citation and an American Book Award, and remains 36 years after its first appearance in hardcover one of the most searing accounts ever written of the *Shoah* and its impact on the children of survivors.

I remembered Spiegelman's concern after a Tennessee school board voted last month to remove *Maus* from middle-school classrooms, citing its use of profanity, nudity, and depictions of "killing kids". The reaction to the ban from outside McMinn County was swift and angry. Booksellers offered to give copies away. A professor offered local students a free online course about the book. Sales soared. The fantasy writer and graphic novelist, Neil Gaiman, tweeted, "There's only one kind of people who would vote to ban *Maus*, whatever they are calling themselves these days."

But the debate over *Maus* has in many ways done a disservice to Spiegelman and his epic project.

Because to read some of the comments from defenders of the book, you'd think *Maus* is a challenging but ultimately tween-friendly introduction to the horrors of the Nazi years – a sort of *Shoah* textbook with mouse illustrations.

However, *Maus* isn't, as Spiegelman once pointed out, "Auschwitz for Beginners". It's not – or not just – a book about "man's inhumanity to man", the phrase that actor Whoopi Goldberg got in trouble for using to explain the Holocaust. It's infinitely wilder, woollier, and more unsettling than that. It's about the complex relationship between a father who has experienced the worst a person can experience and a son raised in relative middle-class comfort. It's about mental illness and how a mother's suicide haunts the child who survives her. It's about guilt in many forms, and how it can be transmitted through generations.

I hadn't looked at a copy of the book in years before the current controversy, yet I could still recount by memory its opening almost frame by frame. A 10 or 11-year-old Artie is playing with friends in his neighbourhood in Queens, when they abandon him on the way to the playground. Artie comes home to find his father Vladek in their driveway and explains through tears that his friends had skated away without him.

"Friends? Your friends..." says Vladek. "If you lock them together in a room with no food for a week ... THEN you could see what it is, friends!"

With this little slice of childhood trauma, we're suddenly deep into the world of *Maus*, where, as the first chapter proclaims, Vladek Spiegelman "bleeds history". Spiegelman doesn't deliver saintly characters oppressed by cartoon villains. His father, like his son, is

deeply human and anguished, buffeted by his time in the camps and his wife's suicide, and consumed by his own ingrained if understandable prejudices.

At one point in the second volume, Vladek complains to Spiegelman and his wife about the "coloureds" who, he says, used to steal from their co-workers in the Garment District. It's an unflattering version of his survivor father that Spiegelman could easily have left out of the book, but there is nothing easy about *Maus*.

This week, a writer asked me to consider publishing his essay about *Maus*, in which he objects to the portrayal of Vladek's miserliness, both Spiegelmans' "narcissism" and the books' examples of "Jewish self-loathing".

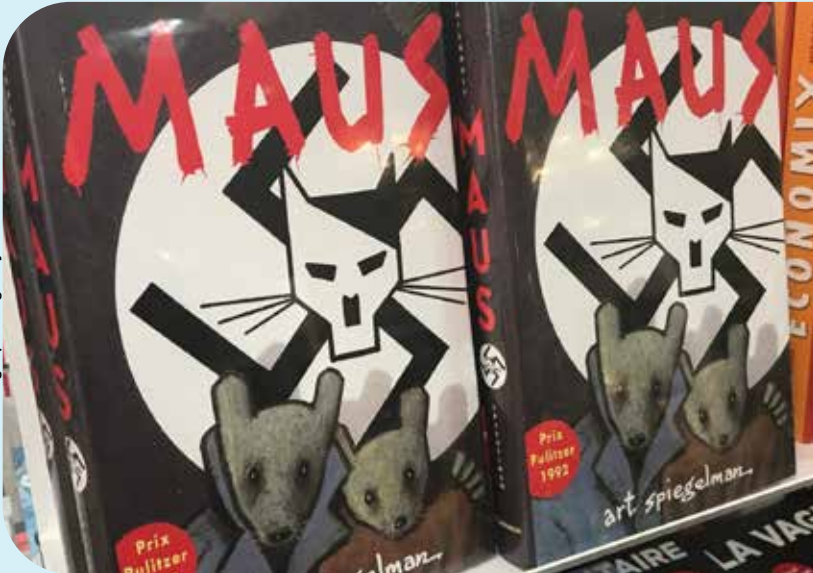


Photo: Jewish Telegraphic Agency

Maus won a Pulitzer Prize citation and an American Book Award

He's not wrong, exactly. But the triumph and tragedy of *Maus* is its veracity – a commitment to the facts of Auschwitz matched by its honesty about the complexities and ambiguities of its victims and survivors. In an interview for the book *MetaMaus*, Spiegelman explains that his book "seems to have found itself useful to other people in my situation, meaning children of survivors. The mere idea of a child of survivors resenting and resisting his parents was breaking a taboo that I hadn't expected."

I don't see the harm in exposing children to books that may be beyond their years. And, given the flood of content that comes the way of any child with a cellphone, laptop, or television set, I find the idea of "protecting" kids from violent and sexual imagery in the name of education incredibly quaint.

But let's not pretend that *Maus* is ready-made for the teen market. *Maus* is "adult" not because of its depiction of corpses, its nudity, and the acknowledgment that people have sex. It's adult in that it refuses to sugar coat not just the horrors of the Holocaust, but the personalities of its victims.

It's not, in short, a book I'd give to a tween without hoping to discuss it, before and after, to help them understand not only what they might not understand, but to confront the things that none of us understands.

In short, it's a book that should be taught, and taught well.

- Andrew Silow-Carroll is the editor in chief of "The New York Jewish Week" and senior editor of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (@SilowCarroll).

Short shul services should outlast the pandemic

In my defense, I had recently lost my mother when I was asked by a fellow kaddish sayer to please slow down as he was finding it hard to keep up with me. I momentarily contemplated the next 11 months ahead, and said, “Nope. Not going to happen.”

After a few seconds of him staring blankly at me, I realised he was hoping for more than that. And so, I added, “Instead of me slowing down, why don’t you go home and practice.”

My wife and family weren’t proud of my behaviour, but when he finally returned to shul some weeks later, it was clear that he had followed my suggestion and kept up the pace very nicely indeed.

Continuing the theme, “Things that should outstay the pandemic”, I have yet another suggestion. Shuls. I recommend that we keep the services short, our rabbis concise, and the after-service kiddush chopped-herring free.

No one has missed long services, long speeches, and it’s unlikely that anyone aside from a hungry few who wouldn’t remove their masks long enough to fit both the kichel and the herring in their mouths in any event will have missed either of those Eastern European “delicacies”.

We need to be kind to ourselves and accept that we have also lost shul fitness. The fitness required to sit in a service for hours is no different to that of running or kickboxing – one being good for the soul, and the other for the heart. They are similar in that without practice on an ongoing basis, ability is lost, and it becomes more and more difficult to get back to prior levels.

It’s also worth considering how we managed to drag the services on for so long. What we

INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



actually did for a three-hour Shabbat morning service when 1.5 to two hours does fine is a mystery, and it seems a massive stretch in a post-pandemic world.

From this side of the pandemic, the wasted hour in shul seems a little sad. It’s time we will never get back, and before we allow the shul-time-creep, we might want to add up the hours lost over say 10 years and think about what we could have done with that in the alternative.

Vigilance is required, and just like we need to erect fences to stop us from building rafts and from mixed dancing (G-d forbid), we should ensure that after two hours on a Shabbat morning, both the aircon and the lights switch off.

It’s rare to find a Jew who likes a long shul service. Practically, the longer it goes on, the higher the level of talking, the less people stay in their seats, and the less chance the poor rabbi has of getting a word in elsewhere.

And whereas in the past I might well have carried an extra Concerta in my pockets for those “you never know when you might need it” moments, it seems that a shorter, more focused service is a better alternative.

The days of a four-hour Shabbat service are past. And unlike bell bottoms, but much like Black Label, is unlikely to return anytime soon. Understanding that this is what the congregant is looking for and what they are able to manage is an important part of getting non-herring eaters back to shul.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Israel’s AU accreditation unchanged, what of SA govt?

The African Union (AU) decided at its executive council meeting on 6 February to defer a debate on whether to withdraw Israel’s accreditation to the bloc until its next summit in 2023. Instead, a committee composed of eight heads of state and governments was set up to consult member states, build consensus on the matter, and present recommendations at the next meeting. The outcome was essentially positive.

Encouraged though we are by this outcome, it’s a lamentable reality that South Africa was one of the countries at the forefront of trying to get Israel’s accreditation revoked. In an unusually frank communication to President Cyril Ramaphosa and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Dr Naledi Pandor (which featured substantially in the *Daily Maverick’s* report on the issue), the Board denounced “the obsessive manner” in which South Africa was attempting to exclude Israel from the AU. Why, we asked, was the government bent on pursuing a policy so wholly inconsistent with the way it has approached other foreign disputes? Whereas this country generally sought to assist in conflict resolution by acting as an honest broker and using its own experiences of dialogue and negotiations to engage with all relevant parties, when it came to the Israel-Palestine question, such even-handedness and openness to hearing all sides was glaringly absent. Instead, South Africa was aligning itself with hardline anti-peace factions that rejected any kind of engagement with Israel. So far did this unreflecting hostility go that to express it, the government was even prepared to foster division and ill-feeling between AU member states, thereby undermining the very unity and co-operation that



ABOVE BOARD

Karen Milner

the organisation was set up to achieve.

That being said, however, a week is a long time in politics, and that’s particularly true in our own volatile political environment. With the question of Israel’s AU accreditation on the back-burner for the time being, it’s to be hoped that the government will reconsider its current approach and instead, recommit itself to a policy predicated on dialogue and engagement with all parties concerned.

South Africa a safer place after Thulsie verdict

This week, the extraordinarily prolonged trial of the Thulsie brothers finally concluded, with both receiving substantial prison sentences. The Thulsies were arrested in June 2016 on charges of planning to carry out Islamic State-inspired terrorist attacks in South Africa. Among those listed as possible targets were a Jewish school, the South African Zionist Federation, and “Jewish community events”. We commend our law-enforcement agencies on their effectiveness in detecting the threat and taking decisive action against those responsible. Likewise, credit is due to the National Prosecuting Authority for following this complex case through to a successful conclusion in spite of innumerable delays and stalling tactics on the part of the defence. Thanks to them, South Africa is a safer place, and the crucial information gained in the process will be of considerable help to the authorities in ensuring that it remains so.

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

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

Making and baking at KDVP



Pamela Kantor, Reuven Kantor, and grandad Farrell Ben bake challahs at KDVP Primary

Grade 1 parents from King David Primary School Victory Park and King David Ariel enjoyed an uplifting evening baking challah – an annual ritual for parents to unplug, relax, and connect with their children. A special treat for every child was the launch of the book, *The Fabulous Tale of Fish & Chip*, by PJ Library in South Africa.

Readers make the grade at Yeshiva College

Yeshiva College honoured World Read Aloud Day on 2 February by partnering older and younger grades. Grade 5 read to Grade R in the nursery school, and Grade 4 read to Grade 1. It was hard to determine who enjoyed the interaction more, but it was evident was that it was enjoyed by all.



Liora Bacher, Liya Perez, and Gila Sassoon

Letters

DR PANDOR, WHY DO YOU WANT A BANTUSTAN IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

Dr Naledi Pandor, Gaza has been independent since 2005. As Gaza’s southern border is on the border with Egypt, Gaza is of interest to the African Union. Israel is on Gaza’s northern border, so Israel is indirectly associated with the African Union, via Gaza.

In 1973, there was a civil war in Jordan. An “illegal” land claim to the West Bank, occupied by Jordan from 1948 to 1967, was ceded to Jordanian terrorists to end the Jordanian civil war.

Now, in South Africa, we know that Bantustans don’t work. So, why do you want a Bantustan in the Middle East – a Bantustan between independent Gaza and the former Jordanians?

As the Palestinian issue started only after the Jordanian civil war, Jordan was and is the Palestinian state. Lobbying for a United Nations mandate for Egypt to once again administer Gaza is constructive.

– Dr Gerald Levin, Johannesburg

LOOKING FOR INFO ON LEAH ROSIN

I’m looking for any descendants or anyone who can give me information on the married surname and if possible the contact details of Leah nee Rosin, born February 1939, who married Selwyn. Leah was the daughter of David Meyer and Naomi Rosin, formerly from Theunissen in the Free State.

Kindly contact Ada at 011 646 9538.

AUDIT • ADVISORY • TAX



CLARITY. ORDER. DIRECTION.

Our team of over 1 400 professionals, operating from 7 offices in South Africa, offers a unique combination of local market knowledge coupled with an international network, personal service and a professional approach. We shine a unique lens on clients’ businesses to see the people beyond the numbers and establish where they are going.

www.bdo.co.za



© 2019 BDO South Africa Services (Pty) Ltd.

TL08042

Spielberg does it again with best-director nomination

ANDREW LAPIN – JTA

Steven Spielberg's remake of *West Side Story* drew seven Oscar nominations on 8 February, including for best picture and best director.

Spielberg's best-director nomination makes the Jewish Hollywood legend one of only four filmmakers in history ever to be nominated at least eight times for best director. (Two of the others are also Jewish; the third is Martin Scorsese.) He has won the award twice before, for *Schindler's List* and *Saving Private Ryan*. With this nomination, Spielberg also makes history as the only director to have ever been nominated for the award across six different decades, beginning with his nod in 1978 for *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*.

Spielberg, Maggie Gyllenhaal, and Andrew Garfield were the most prominent Jews to nab Oscar nods this year. The year's nominations also included a high-profile Jewish snub: *West Side Story* screenwriter Tony Kushner failed to score a best adapted screenplay nomination.

Gyllenhaal got a best adapted screenplay nomination for her take on *The Lost Daughter*, based on the Elena Ferrante novel, which she also directed. (*The Lost Daughter* also received nominations for lead and supporting actress.) Gyllenhaal has received one other Oscar nomination: for best supporting actress for 2009's *Crazy Heart*.

Elsewhere in the acting categories, Garfield was nominated for best actor for his portrayal of Jewish playwright Jonathan Larson in the musical *tick, tick... BOOM!* The movie was based on Larson's own stage show, and also received a nomination for best editing. It's Garfield's second acting nomination; his first was for starring in Mel Gibson's *Hacksaw Ridge*. And Kristen Stewart, whose started her performing career by singing the Dreidel song at a school Chanukah concert, received a best actress nomination for playing Princess Diana in *Spencer*, her first nomination.

Jewish actress and rock musician Alana Haim, who was expected to be a contender for her debut lead performance in *Licorice Pizza*, didn't receive a best actress nomination, though the film – about a young Jewish woman's coming-of-age in 1970s Los Angeles – received three, including best picture.

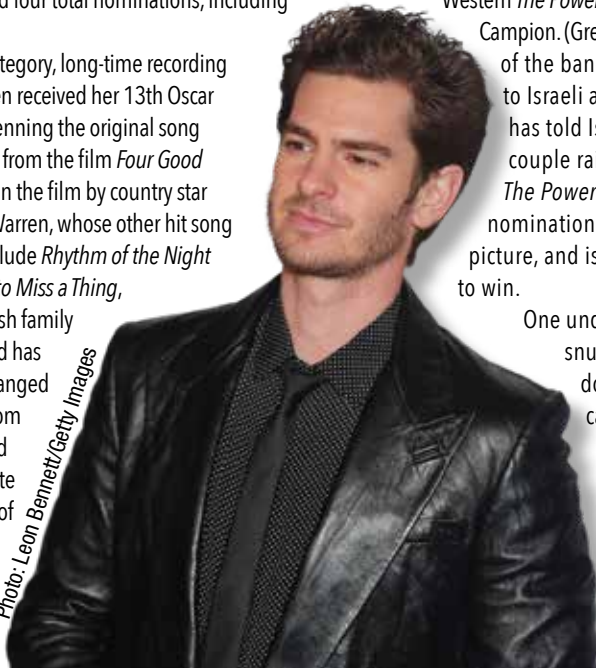
Veteran Jewish screenwriter Eric Roth, already an Oscar winner for *Forrest Gump*, was nominated again in the adapted screenplay category for co-writing the script to the sci-fi epic *Dune* with Jon Spaihts and the film's director, Denis Villeneuve. *Dune* nabbed 10 nominations in total, including best picture.

And David Sirota, a progressive journalist and former Bernie Sanders staffer who has tweeted about his Judaism as well as his criticism of Israel, was nominated in the original screenplay category for collaborating with Adam McKay on the climate-change satire *Don't Look Up*, which received four total nominations, including best picture.

In the music category, long-time recording artist Diane Warren received her 13th Oscar nomination for penning the original song *Somehow You Do* from the film *Four Good Days* (performed in the film by country star Reba McEntire). Warren, whose other hit song writing credits include *Rhythm of the Night* and *I Don't Want to Miss a Thing*, grew up in a Jewish family in Los Angeles and has said her father changed their last name from Wolfberg to sound less Jewish. In spite of her large stack of nominations, she has never won.

Three of the five

Photo: Leon Bennett/Getty Images





Valentines Specials

in store on couches, appliances, and beds

★

BIG DISCOUNTS

★

Furniture: Lazy Boy, Linea Classica Alpine & Grafton
Beds: Sealy, Simmons, Rest Assured & Contour
Appliances: Bosch, Defy, Samsung & LG

☎ 011 887 5456 | 011 440 9571
Nathan: 082 854 5706

Midways Mall,
280 Corlett Drive, Bramley Gardens

Monday to Friday 8:30 – 17:00
Saturday 8:30 – 13:00 | Sunday 10:00 – 13:00



i-deal

FURNISHERS

nominated composers in the original score category have Jewish backgrounds: Nicholas Britell, nominated for *Don't Look Up*; Hans Zimmer, nominated for *Dune*; and Jonny Greenwood, nominated for his work on the moody Western *The Power of the Dog* by director Jane Campion. (Greenwood, also a member of the band Radiohead, is married to Israeli artist Sharona Katan, who has told Israeli media that the couple raises their kids Jewish.) *The Power of the Dog* received 12 nominations in total, including best picture, and is considered a favourite to win.

One under-the-radar Jewish snub came in the best documentary short category, where the animated documentary *Camp Confidential: America's Secret Nazis*, about Jewish soldiers in World War II assigned

to look after a secret Nazi prisoner of war camp on American soil, failed to make the cut.

However, another short documentary with Jewish connections did score a nomination: *When We Were Bullies*, directed by Jay Rosenblatt, a long-time independent filmmaker who also works as programme director at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival. In Rosenblatt's film, he explores his own complicity in a school bullying incident decades prior.

Meanwhile, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, the Shakespeare adaptation from writer-director Joel Coen, didn't score any nominations for Coen but did earn three other nominations, including best actor for star Denzel Washington.

Announced in a virtual ceremony co-hosted by "Black-ish" star Tracee Ellis Ross, whose dad is Jewish, the nominations made room for some guest appearances. One visitor who dropped in was TikTok star and movie enthusiast Reece Feldman, who also worked as a production assistant on the set of the upcoming fourth season of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and has made videos poking fun at his Judaism.

Andrew Garfield attends the GQ Men of the Year Celebration in West Hollywood on 18 November 2021

MANY MORE SPECIALS IN-STORE



33⁴⁹

ALMOND BREEZE ALMOND MILK ASSTD FLAVOURS 1L EACH



108⁹⁹

NESTLE MILO 1KG



33⁴⁹

BOKOMO RUSKS BUTTERMILK & SLICED PLAIN 500G EACH



45⁹⁹

ILLOVO SAUCE SMOOTH ASSTD FLAVOURS 500G EACH



36⁹⁹

LANCEWOOD CREAM CHEESE JALAPENO & CHILLI 230G



Feigels

Yummy!

R220

per kg

Traditional beef curry



Where the pharmacist knows your name



19⁹⁹

DERMA-LOTION PROTECTIVE SKIN CARE FOR DRY AND CRACKED HANDS (100ML)



30⁹⁹

LABELLO MEDICATED LIP BALM FOR CRACKED LIPS

☎ 087-803-4000 📞 082-711-4342

✉ HOMETOWNPHARMACY@PROPHARM.CO.ZA



89⁹⁹

MONTAGU MANGO STRIPS 250G



18⁹⁹

EPOLL DOG FOOD ASSTD FLAVOURS 820G EACH



10⁹⁹

LUX BATH SOAP SOFT TOUCH 175G



77⁹⁹

TABARD INSECT REPELLENT AEROSOL 150G



34⁹⁹

TASTIC RICE LONG GRAIN ORIGINAL 2KG



18⁹⁹

TOP CAT CAT FOOD ASSTD FLAVOURS 425G EACH



35⁹⁹

ARWA PANTIHOSE SILKY SHINE MOONLIGHT SUPER LARGE 1'S

KOSHER **AT** EVERYDAY PRICES

CONCIERGE SHOPPING SERVICE
orders@kosherworld.co.za

Actual offers may differ from visuals shown. We reserve the right to limit quantities. While stocks last. E&OE

Offers valid till **16 FEBRUARY 2022** or while stocks last

1 Long Avenue, Glenhazel
011 440 9517 | www.kosherworld.co.za