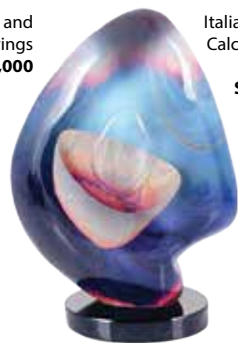




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# South African Jewish Report

The source of quality content, news and insights

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## BDS fail as Black Coffee warms massive crowd in Israel

TALI FEINBERG

Grammy Award-winning South African artist Black Coffee left the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement out in the cold on 1 September, when he performed to a sold-out crowd in Rishon LeZion, Israel.

This multi award-winning DJ, record producer, and song writer, whose real name is Nkosinathi Maphumulo, returned to the Jewish state just four years after his last performance there.

While his 2018 show caused an uproar in South Africa, it didn't deter him from returning to his Israeli fans. This time, he ignored a press release from extremist group Africa4Palestine, instead putting his energy into his art.

One Israeli fan, Yonny Melman (38), from Netanya, stayed out until 03:00 to watch the gig. "There was a great vibe. He even played a few Hebrew songs. There were people of all ages in the audience, having a great time," he says.

"Black artists like Black Coffee are vulnerable to vicious BDS accusations implying that if they don't support the anti-Israel boycott, they are betraying their community," says Lana Melman, the author of *Artists Under Fire: The BDS War against Celebrities, Jews, and Israel*. "They are the unspoken victims of the BDS campaign which disparages them, threatens them, tries to interfere with their right to earn a living, and regularly throws them under the bus." Melman is also chief executive of Liberate Art, an organisation fighting the campaign for a cultural boycott against Israel.

"Contrary to what BDS proponents want you to believe, most artists refuse to be intimidated by BDS assaults on their reputation and careers," says Melman, who has worked with almost a thousand artists pressed to boycott Israel and has prevented numerous cancellations of concerts.

"Alicia Keys responded to the campaign against her by telling the *New York Times*, 'I look forward to my first visit to Israel. Music is a universal language that's meant

to unify audiences in peace and love, and that's the spirit of our show.'"

The South African Zionist Federation's (SAZF) Benji Shulman notes that this is the third time that Black Coffee has performed in Israel to a sold-out crowd. "It's evidence that South Africans continue to ignore the BDS's aggressive cultural boycott campaign," he says. "In 2018, BDS, as well as the ANC [African National Congress] and EFF [Economic Freedom Fighters] drove a major campaign to undermine his visit to Israel. This time, however, the adverse happened, and 3.4 million of Black Coffee's followers were exposed to the vibrancy of Israel's cultural scene through the videos he posted on

policies of the ANC. Should artists be faulted for having opinions contrary to those of their government?" she asks. "Surely, disagreeing with the ruling party isn't the same as undermining it and, in fact, is a sign of democracy. Artists have an obligation to be free thinkers and uncover the truth, which they do when they go to Israel and see it for themselves."

South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) Communications Head Charisse Zeifert says, "The SAJBD is delighted that Black Coffee again chose to perform in Israel and hasn't allowed himself to be bullied by the BDS movement. He joins countless other respected artists from around the world who regularly visit that country.



Photo: Omri Silver @omrisilver

Instagram. Cultural engagement is crucial to dialogue, and the SAZF encourages artists to experience Israel's democratic diversity for themselves."

Meanwhile, "BDS attempts to manipulate the emotions of black South Africans by falsely accusing Israel of apartheid," says Melman. "This deceitful comparison diminishes the suffering of black South Africans, and is a cynical exploitation of one group of people to malign another.

"Black Coffee is being castigated for 'veering from the

"The BDS movement tends to rely on wishful thinking rather than facts when it talks about a cultural boycott between Israel and South Africa," she says. "There are regular interactions in the sporting, films, music, literature, and arts spheres. Though BDS sometimes attempts to scupper events, the overall effect has been minimal. The SAJBD encourages continued exchanges between Israel and South Africa, and believe it's an excellent way of building bonds between our two peoples."

Ari Ingel, the director of Creative Community for Peace (CCP), describes his organisation as "an entertainment industry non-profit organisation started 10 years ago to promote the arts as a bridge to peace, counter rising antisemitism, and the cultural boycott of Israel. We work with hundreds of artists every year, from Jennifer Lopez and Rihanna to the Black Eyed Peas and Maroon 5.

"Africa4Palestine is extremist and its members have really fringe views," Ingel says. "They're trying to bully artists into not coming to Israel by flooding their social media with bots, trolls, and fake accounts and harassing them. If it really was 'apartheid' or 'ethnic cleansing', they would want artists to see it and come back and say, 'Yes, this is horrific.' But they understand that Israel doesn't line up with their narrative. That's why they don't want artists to see it for themselves.

"CCP encourages artists to see Israel and the West Bank. That way, they can get a well-rounded perspective," says Ingel. "We also encourage artists to use their voice as a bridge to peace, because one thing that really brings everyone together is music and the arts."

He notes that South African BDS movements used the same tactics with the Miss Universe contest in Israel when South Africa's candidate, Lalela Mswane, was "bullied and harassed not to go. She got death threats. If this was a just movement, that's not the tactics it would need to employ. It publicly shames artists, as we see with Justin Bieber right now.

"BDS did the same to Lionel Messi, who got death threats, and Paul McCartney. Both came, with messages of peace, and that's something everyone should get behind. We cannot let extremists dictate the conversation. They're trying to break their message out of their small echo chamber and use influential artists to spread it. The best thing to do is ignore them, which is what Black Coffee did."

Though Africa4Palestine said Black Coffee was "setting himself apart from the rest of the civilised cultural world", his local contemporaries clearly didn't agree as he was awarded the South African Music Awards' International Achievement Award on 28 August.

Continued on page 6>>

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2 SA JEWISH REPORT

Germany apologises to Munich  
Massacre victims

At a ceremony held on the air base where 11 Israeli athletes and coaches were murdered during the 1972 Munich Olympics, German officials apologised for the “lack of protection” that led to the tragedy and agreed to establish a joint research commission to look more deeply into the events surrounding the terror attack.

“We cannot make amends for what has happened,” said German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Monday, 5 September. “I ask you, as the head of state of this country and on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany, for forgiveness for the lack of protection of the Israeli athletes during the Olympic Games in Munich and for the lack of clarification afterwards; for the fact that what happened could happen.”

Germany also reached a compensation deal of about \$28 million (R481.6 million) with the attack’s surviving family members days before the commemoration, a significant increase from a previous offer that staved off a planned boycott of the ceremony by the victims’ families.

Israel advances plan to build 700 units in East  
Jerusalem

Israel’s government advanced a plan to build as many as 700 new apartment units in a suburb of Jerusalem that opponents say encroaches on a Palestinian village that straddles the country’s contested pre and post-1967 lines.

The Jerusalem planning and building committee on Monday approved a plan for a new neighbourhood called Givat Shaked which would include high-rise buildings that come right up to the edge of Beit Safafa, a village that was split from 1948 until 1967, when Israel captured eastern Jerusalem in the Six-Day War.

Haaretz quoted residents of the village as saying that the intention appeared to be to limit the growth of the Palestinian neighbourhood while increasing the Jewish population in the disputed city.

The new village is also seen as part of a plan to cut off south-eastern Jerusalem from the West Bank.



8 – 15 September 2022



Veteran Al Jazeera journalist  
Shireen Abu Akleh

Israel says its forces probably killed Shireen  
Abu Akleh

An Israeli soldier very likely fired the gunshot that killed Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in May, an analysis released by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on Monday has concluded.

But no one present during the killing, including the soldier considered likely to have fired the fatal shot, will be punished, military officials said, and the army released a statement saying it was still possible Abu Akleh had been killed by Palestinian gunfire.

The official conclusion marked a shift from the Israeli government’s previous positions about what happened. At first, officials said they believed a Palestinian was likely to have killed Abu Akleh, citing a video they said was from the scene. Soon after, they conceded that it was possible that an Israeli soldier had fired, but said they couldn’t know for sure.

The shooting took place as Abu Akleh and other journalists were reporting on an IDF operation in Jenin, a West Bank city that has become a stronghold for Palestinian militant groups.

Abu Akleh’s family said it wasn’t satisfied with Israel’s admission of likely culpability. It wants a trial by the International Criminal Court and for the United States to press for greater accountability.

• All briefs supplied by JTA

Torah Thought

Battle plans and our secret weapon

The Torah gives us a profound psychological insight into the nature of human beings. This life-changing concept gives us the tools to do the work required to achieve spiritual greatness.

We have within us two powerful inclinations. The first is our altruistic striving for truth, goodness, and morality – our positive inclination. This is challenged by the other part of our being, our self-centeredness and insatiable appetite for power and pleasure – the negative inclination.

These two controlling forces are engaged in constant battle. The challenge of life is to become aware of this inner struggle, detecting the true motivation behind our intentions and behaviour. Our purpose is to strengthen and follow our positive inclination, thereby defeating our lower self. This is a constant battle throughout our lives.

The Torah reading this week makes a clear reference to this struggle. “When you go out to war against your enemy and Hashem delivers him into your hands...” (Devarim 21:10). Rabbi Moshe Sternbuch explains that instead of addressing the entire army, the verse uses the singular form “you” referring to each individual. The classic work of Kabbalah, the Zohar, explains that the enemy referred to here is also the negative inclination, and only Hashem can deliver the enemy into our hands.

To win a war, a person first needs to recognise the presence and threat of the enemy. Then, they must develop the correct strategy and tactics. The Chofetz Chaim

(1838-1933) points out that the words, “When you go out to war” imply that a person can win this fight only if they are aware of the battle and engage in combat.

If we passively let nature take its course and choose not to fight, we have no chance of winning this war. The negative inclination will do all it can to sabotage and destroy our life. Unfortunately, we see this all around us.

Our mission is first to see the enemy, then develop a battle plan

Rabbi Danny  
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and employ the correct weapons. Understanding the Torah view of life, learning Torah, and observing the mitzvos are powerful artillery in this war. Our secret weapon is turning to Hashem for assistance. Only with Hashem’s help can we overcome this powerful adversary.

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# Fire suits for Ukraine, with love from South Africa

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Firefighters in Ukraine are now more likely to have the equipment they need to deal with the horrors of the war thanks to the efforts of caring South Africans.

Sixty firefighting suits valued at R1.2 million as well as firefighting boots and gloves are en route to Ukraine, courtesy of the South African public.

“As so many civilian facilities in Ukraine were being bombed and the firefighters didn’t have enough equipment to get into those buildings and rescue the people inside, we said, ‘We’ve got South African manufacturers. Let’s send firefighting equipment from South Africa.’”

They sought a local manufacturer and contacted Marcé, a company owned by a 32-year-old female entrepreneur whose motto, “We exist to save lives”, seemed

this assistance. It’s a real message to Ukrainian people from South Africans, and it will be well received.”

Abravitova said she was amazed at how many South Africans contributed to the fundraising effort. “We hope that with this support, our firemen fighting the Russian invasion will be safe and able to save more lives,” she said.

Tim Hutchinson, the chief executive of South African drinks company DGB, the owner of top wine brands including Boschendal and Bellingham, recruited friends and colleagues into helping the campaign.

“We all wanted to make a difference. It’s close to my heart,” he said. “I remember as a little boy when we lived in Zambia, we ended up with refugees coming over the border and a refugee family sleeping in our garage. My friends in Europe live in small apartments but they have Ukrainian families in the spare room.”

Abravitova said about seven million people had fled Ukraine, while about 16 million were internally and externally displaced. “A lot of Ukrainians are outside, so the number of people living in Ukraine is less than the people who are coming back



Howard Sackstein and Ukraine Ambassador Liubov Abravitova

SA Jewish Report chairperson Howard Sackstein, The Angel Network, and South African firefighting manufacturer Marcé, were behind the campaign to help the people of Ukraine.

“Why did a bunch of South Africans who have no connection whatsoever to Ukraine think it was important to donate this [equipment]?” asked Sackstein, who co-ordinated the donation, at the official handover of the equipment to Ukrainian Ambassador to South Africa Liubov Abravitova last Thursday, 1 September, at Marcé’s premises in Centurion.

“We’re faced with one of the greatest human rights challenges of our generation,” Sackstein said. “We’ve seen a sovereign, independent country invaded, and millions of people, especially civilians, murdered and tortured. As the people of South Africa, we felt we had to do something. We felt we couldn’t be bystanders.”

Sackstein approached Abravitova after an SA Jewish Report webinar at the start of the invasion, telling her that many South Africans wanted to help Ukraine but didn’t have a way to do so.

This marked the beginning of the campaign. “We received donations of a huge amount of money, not just from South Africa, but from places like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and England, from businesspeople and ordinary South Africans,” said Sackstein. “They wanted to send a gesture of love from the people of South Africa to the people of Ukraine.

fitting. The firefighting suits Marcé manufactured for Ukraine consist of three layers – an inner layer which keeps water out, a middle layer which keeps heat out, and an outer layer which is durable and flame retardant.

“We could have done it quicker and cheaper if we had done it in Europe and shipped it across the border, but we would have lost the message,” said Sackstein. “The message is that we wanted the people of South Africa to do it.”

The Angel Network’s role is to see that every rand donated goes towards helping people in Ukraine.

to their homeland.

“As of today, 92% of the Ukrainian population believes we will win this war. I’m part of that group. We see a lot of ordinary Ukrainians helping the military and territorial units, starting with providing food cooked in their homes and ending with our agricultural sector planting and harvesting at places under attack. The country’s inflation rate is already 31%, but if we lose people helping on the ground, we won’t be able to move the economy forward. People realise this, and are coming back to do something small to help us survive.”

Asked about the South African government’s stance on Russia’s invasion, Abravitova said, “We’re calling on all the countries of the world to help us because the devastation and casualties, especially amongst civilians, are huge. We would welcome any humanitarian assistance from the government of South Africa, but smaller organisations such as The Angel Network and different Ukrainian initiatives in South

Africa are also very important.”

The Angel Network founder Glynne Wolman said, “The people of South Africa have such big hearts. We heard the cry of the Ukrainian people and couldn’t remain silent in the face of the humanitarian disaster faced by so many innocent victims.”



Photos: Ian Ossendryver

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# Cape Town CSO “like angels sent to take care of me”, says US tourist

NICOLA MILTZ

“Sadly, I’ve spent a lot of time in ambulances, but this was by far the best ride I’ve ever had.” These are the words of American tourist and cancer warrior, Sandra Goldman, who received urgent medical assistance from the Community Security Organisation CSO (security and medical) in Cape Town last week.

Goldman hasn’t stopped singing the praises of the CSO since the organisation came to her rescue at the weekend, when she fell dangerously ill.

“It’s scary being sick on holiday especially in a foreign country,” said Goldman, 64, who is touring South Africa with five of her close friends from North Carolina to “live every day to the fullest”.

“The CSO were like these angels who came to my aid when I was at my most vulnerable,” she told the SA Jewish Report.

Her friend made a frantic call to Goldman’s husband’s friend, labour lawyer and deputy shadow minister for employment and labour, Michael Bagraim, asking for help.

He alerted the CSO and within minutes, the emergency situation was under control and she was taken by ambulance to the Netcare Christiaan Barnard Memorial Hospital for further observation.

“The CSO paramedics were so patient and calming,” said Goldman, who is the executive director of the Hebrew Cemetery in Charlotte, North Carolina.

“They acted fast and were discreet. I asked them not to use sirens as I didn’t want a fuss. They were incredibly caring and friendly, and this was so comforting.

“It felt like they were angels sent to take care of me. When you’re away from home and your husband is thousands of kilometres away, it’s very stressful. The CSO immediately put me at ease. You can feel the

difference between those going through the motions of their job and those who really care about your well-being, doing it because they believe in it. There’s something about being amongst Jewish people. Never mind where you are in the world, you’re family.”

Bagraim recalls receiving this “unpleasant and shocking call” from the Americans, who suspected a heart attack.

“I immediately telephoned the CSO Medical Response Team who were unbelievably efficient in getting all the salient details in a calm and respectable manner. In spite of the fact that I was emotional and speaking hurriedly, the operator

managed to calm me down and get everything she needed.

“The whole operation was handled in a professional, efficient, and effective manner. The feedback I have received from the Americans is that the service wasn’t just world class but far more effective than anything they have experienced anywhere in the world,” he said.

“Our community deserves enormous accolade for the way in which we’re able to service not only our own community but guests from abroad. I’m deeply humbled by this experience, and not only applaud the CSO, but implore others to support it whenever they can.”

The CSO’s Dani Janks said, “Our mandate is to protect Jewish life and the Jewish way of life. This is why we exist, and why our volunteers and full-time medics do what they do 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. CSO Medical is about saving lives, but there’s so much more to it. It’s about caring for our patients as people and taking care of our community, from near or far.”

Goldman, who is still recovering, said the touring group is hoping to enjoy a few days in the African bush before flying home.



US tourist Sandra Goldman with member of parliament Michael Bagraim

Goldman, whose husband was born in South Africa, wanted to “show her friends this beautiful country”. So, she planned an adventure combining a mixture of tourist sites from the educational to the purely recreational.

After three inspiring days in Gauteng visiting places like Soweto, Constitution Hill, and the Cradle of Humankind, the group headed for the Cape, going to Hermanus, Stellenbosch, and Franschhoek, visiting vineyards along the route such as Hamilton Russel and Babylonstoren.

Goldman said she started to “feel off” in Franschhoek, and went to the doctor on her friends’ insistence. Her symptoms gradually grew worse, but she tried to rest hoping her condition would improve.

However, no stranger to bouts of ill health since her first cancer diagnosis in 2010, she knew something wasn’t right. By the time they reached Cape Town, she began feeling really ill as her symptoms of a racing heart, light headedness, and dizziness became progressively worse.

“I was really fearful. I thought I may be having a heart attack or a stroke,” she said.



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# Truss looks to continue in Johnson’s footsteps on Jewish issues

CNAAN LIPSHIZ – JTA

Britain’s new prime minister says she has a lot of Jewish friends, and that she’ll be a friend to her country’s Jews and to Israel.

Liz Truss replaced Boris Johnson as prime minister of the United Kingdom (UK) on Tuesday, 6 September, following a reshuffle in their Conservative Party. A liberal turned right-winger who at 47 is one of the youngest people to ever hold the post, Truss cited a Jewish boss as an inspiration, and vowed to fight antisemitism in an interview with *The Jewish Chronicle* of London.

The UK’s decision not to back a 2017 international statement in support of a two-state solution in Israel was a watershed moment in the country’s Israel policy – part of a rightward shift after Johnson’s predecessor, Theresa May, assumed power. Previously, the UK had typically voted with other European countries to back policies and statements that were more critical of Israel.

Truss says she’s committed to the Conservative Party’s outlook on Israel. “There’s no greater friend to the UK than Israel,” she says. On the campaign trail, she even suggested that she would be open to moving the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, as the United States did under President Donald Trump.

Like Johnson, who has used friendly language in relations to Jews and Israel and whose maternal great-grandfather was a Moscow-born Jew, Truss says she has positive associations with Jews.

“I had lots of Jewish friends at school,” Truss, who was president of the Oxford University Liberal Democrats, the left-leaning party that is popular among London Jews, told the *Chronicle* last month in an interview published



Then-UK Foreign Minister Liz Truss and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid on 29 November 2021

Photo: Stefan Rousseau/PA Images via Getty Images

on Monday. “One of my close friends eventually moved to Tel Aviv, actually. I saw him quite recently when I was on an official visit. He’s now a patent agent in Tel Aviv.”

At Shell, an oil company where Truss began her career as an accountant, she worked under an Orthodox Jew, she told the *Chronicle*. He was “the best boss I ever had, and a big influence on me”, she said.

“I remember that at work it was great during the winter because he would leave early for Shabbat every Friday. In the summer, he was there until much later,” Truss said. “That was one of my first experiences seeing how Jewish life could be incorporated into corporate life. It really impressed me how proud he was of his religion.”

Later in life, she said, she realised her boss had modelled the values held by her Conservative political party. “So many Jewish

values are Conservative values and British values too, for example always taking steps to protect the family unit and the value of hard work, self-starting, and setting up your own business,” she told the *Chronicle*. “The British Jewish community is incredibly proud of this country, and so are Conservatives.”

A hardline promoter of the UK’s ongoing disengagement from the European Union following the 2020 Brexit, Truss is likely to continue Johnson’s policies on immigration and the economy, which is in crisis in part because of

## Israel targeted Iranian nuke programme, says former Mossad chief

ROLENE MARKS

The Mossad, Israel’s national intelligence agency created along with the modern state of Israel, has an enduring mystique.

When we think of the Mossad, images are conjured up of daring operations like the kidnapping of Nazi criminal Adolf Eichmann or Wrath of G-d (in retaliation for the murder of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics, the 50th anniversary of which was commemorated this week).

People around the world are intrigued by Israel’s external covert force and its ability to reach far beyond Israel’s borders as it endeavours to protect the Jewish state against any threats.

The Mossad’s ability to neutralise threats in far-flung places was confirmed last week by Yossi Cohen, the organisation’s former director, who addressed participants at the gathering in Basel, Switzerland, celebrating 125 years of Zionism.

It was only fitting that when discussing the challenges facing Israel and the Jewish people, the number-one global threat, the possibility of a nuclear Iran, was high on the agenda.

Speaking to a packed audience in English, Cohen dedicated the bulk of his address to Mossad’s covert operations.

“During my term as Mossad director, countless operations were conducted against Iran’s nuclear programme,” he said. “Without going into too many details, I can tell you the Mossad had many successes. We operated around the world and on Iranian soil itself, in the very heartland of the ayatollahs.”

Many are familiar with what was probably the most daring – and dangerous – operation, infiltrating Iranian territory and bringing the country’s nuclear files back to Israel. Cohen said this was proof that Iran, which steadfastly claimed that its nuclear programme was for energy purposes only, had lied.

He also addressed the ongoing nuclear talks, saying that Israel “will continue to do whatever needs to be done” to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear arms if a deal is signed. “We can never allow a regime that calls for our destruction to get its finger on the nuclear trigger,” Cohen said.

Israeli officials including Defence Minister Benny Gantz, current Mossad Chief David Barnea, Prime Minister Yair Lapid and others in the security

double digit inflation rates.

Responding to a *Jewish Chronicle* survey showing a sharp rise in antisemitic incidents in British schools, Truss, who was born in Oxford to a university professor and a nurse, said, “I want to see the scourge of antisemitism eradicated. That means driving it out from our culture, starting with schools.”

And Iran, she said, couldn’t be allowed to gain a nuclear weapon. The UK is still party to the Iran nuclear deal, which is currently being renegotiated.

As foreign secretary, Truss, a mother of two who was first elected to parliament in 2010, challenged the singling out of Israel at the United Nations, according to Stephen Pollard, a former editor-in-chief of the *Chronicle* who interviewed Truss for Monday’s article.

Truss’ claim to have taken a “strong stand in tackling antisemitism at the international level”, he wrote, “stands up”. At the United Nations Human Rights Council, she ensured that Britain “voted with Israel”, Pollard wrote, in keeping with the country’s shift under May and her successor, Johnson, from long-held voting patterns on Israel. She even clashed with foreign service officials to do so, she told Pollard.

“Bodies like the Human Rights Council,” Truss told Pollard, “have been used to peddle a particular agenda which frankly have strong elements of antisemitism.”

establishment have all embarked on a campaign to drive home this very point.

Cohen also alluded to Iran’s proxies, Hamas and Hezbollah, which are situated on Israel’s borders in the south and north respectively.

“Iran seeks to encircle Israel, from Gaza in the south to Lebanon and Syria in the north. It funds, trains, and arms terrorist groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad, enabling them to shoot thousands of rockets at Israel’s civilian population,” he said. “This fanatical regime must never obtain the ability to accelerate its weapon of mass destruction that would be used against the Jewish state.”

In the past week, Syria is reported to have told Iran not to launch attacks on Israel from Syrian territory as it doesn’t want to be embroiled in a war between the two countries. Israel regularly strikes Iranian targets which use Syria as a base to launch attacks on the Jewish state.

It wasn’t all doom and gloom. Cohen touched on the vital role Mossad has played not only in operations to protect the state, but those that benefit the region as a whole. He spoke about the role it played in helping to secure the Abraham Accords, the agreements that have brought normalisation between Israel and Morocco,

Sudan, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates.

“The work of Mossad isn’t just intelligence gathering but also the promotion of peace. We saw these results in the signing of the Abraham Accords. I pray that more nations from our region will join the peace trend,” Cohen said.

The audience responded to Cohen’s address with a standing ovation.

Israel is the fruition on the Zionist dream, whose seeds were planted at the first gathering in Basel 125 years ago, and whose future is ensured by organisations like the Mossad whose covert and overt operations guarantee that its borders and civilians are kept safe, all while diligently pursuing peace.

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Yossi Cohen

Photo: World Zionist Organization Facebook page



# Bill Browder predicts ongoing war in Eastern Europe

JULIE LEIBOWITZ

There's no reason to expect Russia's war with Ukraine will end any time soon because the stakes are too high for President Vladimir Putin, Bill Browder, the well-known author and prime Putin adversary told the *SA Jewish Report* in a webinar on 1 September.

"It could go on for more than eight years. Russia has a lot of money, and can do lots of things with it," Browder told the webinar audience, referring to Russia's oil and gas cache. "Don't ever count Putin out. It will continue to escalate."

"Putin has a history of invasions, and every time, his approval rating goes up," Browder said. "He came to power by killing Chechens – unbelievable atrocities – then invaded Georgia. Then, he invaded Ukraine in 2014. The story [then] about supporting Russian-backed separatists was complete nonsense. "He had to do something after the COVID-19 pandemic and economic contraction in Russia. He faced a possible uprising of a million people. Russia actually has no beef with Ukrainians," Browder said, debunking explanations for the latest war that include Russia's desire for a return to the Soviet empire or its need to defend itself against unchecked expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

"This is just a greedy, criminal man who wants to stay in power. The war has been a disaster for Russia, with close to 50 000 troops dead and 40 000 incapacitated so far, equipment messed up, but Putin has an approval rating of 83%. In democracy there would be a price to pay, but this is a dictatorship. What's 50 000 people in a country of 150 million?

"If Russia wins the war, Estonia's next. If Ukraine pushes Russia out, it will take Putin out as well. Nobody will compromise."

A successful financier, activist, and the author of

two books, *Red Notice* and *Freezing Order*, Browder has become famous for his more than 17-year battle against corruption by the Russian government, oligarchs, and plutocrats, and for getting 34 countries including the United States to pass the Magnitsky Act, which sanctions those responsible for gross human rights abuses.

The Act is named after Browder's Russian lawyer, Sergei Magnitsky, who was investigating the theft of \$230 million (R3.9 billion) in taxes which had been paid by Browder's investment company, Hermitage Capital, to the Russian government.

Browder's exposure of Russian state corruption, his subsequent deportation from the country, the theft, the investigation, and the brutal death of Magnitsky in custody – "killed after a year in detention by eight Russian guards with rubber batons" – are all detailed in the books.

So, too, is Browder's court-room dramas to track the stolen money, laundered internationally, and freeze the assets of its beneficiaries, one of the main being Putin himself. He was assisted by the discovery that "anytime anyone transfers dollars from anywhere, it goes through a New York bank for a millisecond".

En route, he managed to disqualify a conflicted anti-money laundering lawyer named John Moscow, who turned on his former client, and overcome a judge suffering from Alzheimer's. He also fended off attempts to kidnap him and a blonde "honey trap".

"I'm a guy who never gives up," Browder said modestly.

But he lives under no small threat, being sentenced twice in absentia by Russia, and placed on no less than eight Interpol wanted lists.

The bodies pile up in Browder's two books, and there have been seven suspicious deaths of Russian oligarchs just this year, the latest of which took place on 1 September, when Lukoil executive Ravil

Maganov fell from a window in a Moscow hospital. But Browder believes, "killing me on the street won't solve their Magnitsky problem. They plan to arrest me, torture me into confessing to being a criminal,

told the webinar. Browder points out that he's run into a brick wall trying to get South Africa to pass a Magnitsky Act because Pretoria supports Russia. "The South African government is rotten to the core," he said. "It's shameful. These former champions of human rights are now siding with Putin/Russia's oppression."

Putin, who Browder estimates has a personal net worth of about \$200 billion (R3.5 trillion), ultimately pulls the strings on Russia's criminal empire, Browder says. "He takes 50% of the wealth of every oligarch, so no 'oligarch uprising' will be in the offing following sanctions."



Bill Browder

and then die a slow death in jail."

Whenever he crosses international borders, he fears kidnap by Russian security. He came close after he was arrested in Spain in 2018, when it took the intercession of Browder's huge Twitter following including none other than former United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson – then foreign secretary – to secure his release.

"I can't go to 95% of the countries in the world including Thailand, Dubai, the entire African continent," he says, pointing out that many governments support Russia.

One of them is South Africa, where Browder has a house in Cape Town, which was once his "happy place", but he can't visit now for fear of arrest. "I was told by friends who have friends at ministerial level [during the Zuma years], 'Don't come here, we'll arrest you and hand you over to Putin,'" he

Though Putin is still making lots of money through oil and gas, Browder believes international sanctions against Russia are biting, and the pie is getting smaller, "hence the fighting and killing".

"The country is in a terrible depression, and it's only going to get worse," he said. "We've managed to freeze more than half the central bank reserves, the Russian army is hollowed out by corruption [and the war], oil service companies are no longer helping the country to pump oil, but oil/gas revenue remains the elephant in the room."

Ironically, Browder, who once intended to become the "biggest capitalist in Eastern Europe", compares himself to his grandfather, Earl Browder, who was the leader of the communist party in the United States. "He was fighting for the little guy on the shop floor. I'm fighting against injustice from dictators," he says, "I'm tenacious."



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# From horror to healing: soldiers and survivors share stories

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

A soldier breaks down as he speaks of losing multiple friends in Gaza during Operation Protective Edge. A survivor recalls the last time she saw her father before he was taken to Buchenwald concentration camp. They may have faced wars in different generations, but as Israeli soldiers and Holocaust survivors revealed their scars at a recent Johannesburg tea, they understood their connections and the hope they share through the state of Israel.

“I hope you realise that without your stories, the state of Israel would never have existed in the first place,” said Ohad Poraz, addressing the survivors. Poraz is the Israeli leader of a delegation visiting South Africa from Brothers

COVID-19 pandemic. “Through these delegations to South Africa, the soldiers realise that their injuries are for a global cause and not just something they carry themselves,” said Saul Jassinowsky, the head of the delegation in South Africa. Over the years, volunteer South African host families have opened their homes to more than 120 Israeli soldiers from BFL who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and have a unique story to tell. He’s taken delegations around the world, but Poraz said there was something special about the Johannesburg Jewish community. “The love for Israel and for us, the injured soldiers, is something I’ve never seen before. Because of that, we find the strength to speak about what happened to us because nobody will judge us.”

With this sharing, something many battle to do even with close family, comes significant healing. “A lot of us haven’t cried in years as we don’t feel comfortable. Here, everyone is embracing you and crying with you. It gives us so much strength and motivation because it’s not just for the week we spend here, we stay in touch with the families that host us for the rest of our lives.”

At the tea, as the soldiers shared their stories and talked to Holocaust survivors, the meaning and history of the country they fought to protect was illuminated. “Most of the things that we’re doing now are based on their bravery and will to survive,” said soldier Omri Ohayon, on meeting Holocaust survivors.



Helene Sieff, Irene Fainman, and Omri Ohayon

Dutch-born survivor Irene Fainman felt an additional connection to the soldiers because her South African husband served in the IDF as a young man, she told the *SA Jewish Report*. Discussing how she survived the Holocaust, Fainman recalled how Dutch Nazis came into her family’s Rotterdam home when she was six years old and gave them ten minutes to pack a suitcase.

“We walked through the night and slept on a warehouse floor. The next morning, we were on a train to a camp on the Dutch-German border called Westerbork. Every Tuesday at that camp, 1 000 Jews were sent to Auschwitz.” Though her beloved father was sent to another camp, Buchenwald, never to be seen again, Fainman, her mother, and brother narrowly escaped being sent to Auschwitz, essentially a death sentence.

“One of the Germans took a shine to me because she thought I looked very Aryan as I had blonde hair and blue eyes,” recalled Fainman. “One day, she called my mother in and there was a list with our names on it – my maiden name was Krausz – to go to Auschwitz the next day. And she said to my mother, ‘I’m not letting them take you and your children away’.

“I’ll never forget this, there was the list, and she took a red pencil, she crossed out Krausz, Krausz, and Krausz, and she put the names of three other Jewish people whom I will never know. They went and didn’t come back, and we’re here. That’s luck, don’t tell me it isn’t. People say to me, ‘Hashem saved you.’ Of course he didn’t. Why save me? I was one little girl, why didn’t he save the other one and a half million innocent Jewish children who died in the Holocaust? Why me, why not them? You don’t have to agree with me, but I’m entitled to my opinion.”

Also in attendance was Israeli Ambassador Eli Belotsercovsky who spoke of the sacred work done by BFL as well as the special connection the Holocaust survivors and soldiers share through acts of heroism. He honoured the survivors, and said Israel owed the visiting soldiers a debt of gratitude.

“These soldiers are struggling to build their lives. Those who haven’t gone through this can’t really understand how difficult it is,” he said. Yet, judging by the stories they bravely shared and the connections they formed, it’s clear that they’re on the right track.

Ohayon said his own connection to the Holocaust had influenced his journey. “My great grandmother was one of four siblings. They were all born in Poland, two stayed, one left for Israel just before the war, the other one, my great grandmother, went to Argentina.” Her sister, Gela Seksztajn, who married Izrael Lichtensztejn, remained in the Warsaw Ghetto.

“From a young age, Gela was a painter who painted portraits of children in the ghetto. When war broke out, she and Izrael understood that they didn’t have much time left, so Izrael took all her paintings and put them in bottles of milk. He hid them in a secret place in the ghetto. After the war, where the couple and their daughter, Margalit, were killed, Gela’s paintings were found and delivered to Israel. Today they are displayed in Yad Vashem and the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Krakow.”

Included in one bottle of milk was Gela’s will. “She wrote her will for the next generation, saying we should do all we can to prevent such devastation from ever happening again,” said Ohayon, who himself was injured during a tunnel operation during Operation Protective Edge and now has PTSD.

“After I embarked on rehabilitation and Operation Protective Edge ended, I decided to go back to my unit. However, I wanted to be on the side of those who give injured soldiers medical care.” Ohayon went on to complete a paramedic course and head up combat medical care in his unit.

“I printed and framed Gela’s will, and put it in my office so I could look at it every day and remember why we’re doing what we’re doing,” he said. “Being here in front of Holocaust survivors, this amazing community, and my great friends, is fulfilling Gela’s will and making sure that such devastation will never happen again. Being able to protect and defend the Jewish state for this generation of survivors, especially, isn’t something I take for granted.”

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As it stands, by Tuesday this week, we have received more than 600 nominations for all nine categories. This is a record number of nominations at this point in the run-up to the awards ceremony.

Interestingly, there has been a particular increase in the number of nominations in the entrepreneurial category. Perhaps this is because more and more people are starting up their own businesses since the COVID-19 pandemic.

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coalface when your nominee goes to accept his or her award.



2019 Lifetime Achiever Award winner, Sir Mick Davis



Tekla Challmers and IDF Soldier, Ben Uri

for Life (BFL), a non-profit organisation where injured Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers support one another through the lingering traumas they face. At the tea, the soldiers and survivors met and shared their stories, the hallmark event of an annual BFL trip that was paused for the past two years because of the

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# Zambian Jews left a lasting legacy

TALI FEINBERG

“What did Jews have to do with the development of modern Zambia? Everything!” That was the assessment of geophysicist Paul Bauman, who recently visited the Gateway Jewish Museum in Livingstone. Indeed, the small but significant Zambian Jewish community punched above its weight in the century or so that it flourished in the southern African country (also known before its independence as Northern Rhodesia).

University of Oxford historian Hugh MacMillan who authored *Zion in Africa: The Jews of Zambia* with Frank Shapiro says of the early Jewish settlers: “The Jews arriving in Northern Rhodesia were economic migrants and refugees, escaping persecution and looking for a place where they could make a better living.” In the words of Helen Mohrer, a German Jewish refugee: “Northern Rhodesia was very good to us, and as Northern Rhodesia grew, so we grew with the country.”

Litvak Jews first came to Zambia at the end of the 19th century, and many settled in the capital, Livingstone. Reaching about 1 000 Jews at its peak, its members included significant figures in Zambia's economic and political life. Among the most influential was Simon Zukas, who played a key role in Zambia's struggle for independence from Britain, in which he was exiled by the colonial government for being a “danger to peace and good order”. He went on to be a government minister after independence, and remained in Zambia until his death last year.

Among the most influential Jewish immigrants were the Susman brothers, Elie

and Harry. They arrived in 1901, coming from an Orthodox family in Lithuania. As pioneer cattle-traders, they settled in Livingstone and went on to build a business empire. They were staunch Zionists, contributing significantly to Jewish communal activities. Elie later moved to South Africa where, in partnership with Max Sonnenberg, he established the Woolworths chain.

Another Harry from a younger generation, Harry Wulfsohn, would also make his way to Zambia, from Latvia in 1929. At the age of 14, he came to Africa with 10 pounds in his pocket, not knowing a word of English. He began to work with Harry Susman, his mentor, and together, they built a vast empire including 225 000 acres of farms, 25 000 cattle, 30 butcheries, a dairy, piggery, 150 retail stores, and Zambezi Sawmills. Both families maintain ties to the country to this day.

Harry's son, Edwin Wulfsohn, along with his two sons, met Zambian president Hakainde Hichilema in August 2022. The meeting was organised by African Jewish Congress (AJC) Chief Executive Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, who has a warm relationship with the president.

As a governor of Tel Aviv University (TAU) and in collaboration with the Lusaka Jewish community, Wulfsohn orchestrated a partnership between TAU and the new Copperbelt Public Health University. Zambia and Israel have positive relations, including exchanging ambassadors.

The president, Wulfsohn, his sons, and Silberhaft discussed the relocation and

upgrading of the Gateway Jewish Museum in Livingstone. The museum was founded by the late David Susman. It's administered by the AJC.

“We're forever improving the information and display,” says Silberhaft. He says the

in the areas known as the Line of Rail and the Copperbelt. They built rural stores, developed farms and ranches, and played a significant role in developing towns and new industries such as textiles.

Abe Galaun is another example of economic success. This chairperson of the Lusaka Hebrew Congregation and former member of the Lusaka Chamber of Commerce, flourished in the country, even during the post-colonial period of economic decline. His family owned eight farms totalling 25 000 acres of land, and retail businesses such as butcheries, grocery stores, a hotel, and the first non-segregated movie theatre in Lusaka.

Their contributions to the economy included supplying cattle, developing dairy production, and exporting tobacco, coffee, and horticultural items. Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda once dubbed Galaun “the man who feeds the nation”. Writing about the community, David Saks noted that Galaun's company calendars always started in October to coincide with Rosh Hashanah.

Women such as Frieda Glasser, Helenne Illion, Peggy Rabb, or Hessie Lowenthal, also made an impact economically and religiously. The devoutly Orthodox Glasser, for instance, owned the first bakery and dairy in Lusaka. These women were active in Jewish communal organisations and were important in building Hebrew congregations.

Contributions to public life included Hyan

Schulman, the first Jewish mayor of Ndola in 1937; Maurice Rabb, twice mayor of Livingstone in 1951 and 1956; and Dennis Figov, twice mayor in Luanshya. Jews also served as mayors in Broken Hill and Kitwe.

In the 1930s, Sir Roy Welensky was the leading political figure in Northern Rhodesia. From 1959 to 1962, Rabb was elected to the national legislative assembly. From 1962 to 1968, SW Magnus was a prominent member of the Zambian parliament. After 1968, Magnus was appointed a high court judge.

Other immigrants who made an impact include included the Pinshow, Elkaim, Kollenberg, Gersh, Kopelowitz, Diamond, and Tow families, amongst others. Stanley Fischer, the governor of the Bank of Israel from 2005 to 2013 and vice-chairperson of the Federal Reserve Bank from 2014 to 2017, was born in Zambia and partially raised in the Zambian Jewish community.

In 1978, the Council for Zambia Jewry was founded in Lusaka to oversee Jewish communal activities. There were shuls in Livingstone (along with a congregation hall), Lusaka, Mufulira, Kitwe, Ndola, and Luanshya. There are eight Jewish cemeteries around the country.

The community began to decline in number after Zambia's independence in 1964. “By the late 1970s and early 1980s, Jewish political leaders became disillusioned with Kaunda's government as it degenerated into one-party rule,” notes Bauman. “At the same time, visa requirements were relaxing and entrepreneurial opportunities opening up in other countries.” It led to the shrinking of the Zambian Jewish community, which left its mark in the space of one or two generations.



Photo: Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft  
Harry, Edwin, and Jason Wulfsohn in front of the exhibition of Zambezi Saw Mills

museum is likely to be moved to the Livingstone Museum in the near future, which will be more central and secure. “We have been working with the local municipality and authorities. In its current location, the screens were stolen, but if it's moved, it will be more secure. We can then improve the exhibition.”

The museum gets about 350 visitors a month. “This includes tourists from all over the world and local schoolchildren. It's part of their syllabus in Grade 10.” The museum is run by the AJC and funded by the sale of community assets in Zambia. It's administered by the national museums council, which consults the AJC.

The museum tells the story of how Jewish migrants established trading communities

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# Haunting Karoo images on auction in Joburg

**Old Johannesburg Warehouse Auctioneers** has grown into a flourishing business with three branches, located in Johannesburg, Pretoria, and the Winelands. Auctioneers of antiques, art, jewellery, collectables, carpets, classic vehicles, coins, collectables, and more host online auctions throughout the year spread out between the branches. The owner, former Springbok rugby player Christiaan Scholtz, started off 27 years ago dealing in antiques, collectables, and art. The Melville shop, Ossewa Antiques, which he owned and operated for more than 20 years, has become the latest location for the company's auctions. The newly refurbished OJW Clubhouse Melville venue will host select smaller auctions with highly sought after pieces, one of which is taking place next Saturday, 10 September, a date worth diarising.



A total of 375 magnificent art and antique lots are included in this auction. Fantastic furniture, magnificent jewellery, silver, ceramics, carpets, and the art collection of late Dr Piet Roux is the main part of the auction. Roux befriended the artist, Johannes Meintjes, on the Meintjes family farm Grootzeekoegat. The Meintjes family acquired the homestead in 1859, originally built in 1824 as home and fortress against the Xhosa nation during frontier wars. Here, three preceding generations farmed with sheep, and this is where his father died when Meintjes was only five years old. The family had little choice but to move away to Riversdal. For more than 20 years, Meintjes dreamed about his return to Grootzeekoegat to claim his inheritance and reunite with his past. Two years after his return to South Africa from Europe, he withdrew to the isolated family farm, inexplicably bound to his family heritage. Here, he gave expression to his art, wrote all his important manuscripts, and built up a prestigious library.



No visitor to Grootzeekoegat can escape the haunting atmosphere and sense of mystery that hangs over the legendary Stormberg and Bamboesberge, and the aura of things unknown and unseen that pervades the silent veld stretching out beyond the farmhouse. It's almost impossible to pinpoint it, but something of the primeval spirit of that place, of its timelessness, its loneliness, and the deepest, most enduring and indestructible part of man is reflected in the canvasses painted by Meintjes. Together with his wife Ronell, Meintjes became part of the people of Molteno, the town closest to Grootzeekoegat. He was a prolific artist and at the time of his death in 1980, he had painted more than 1 336 paintings, hundreds of sketches, and created dozens of sculptures.

Roux, who hails from Molteno, also couldn't escape the atmosphere of the place and the person, and became an enthusiast of the artist's work, acquiring many pieces for his private collection.

Thirteen of the Meintjes art works are included, but of special mention, *Karoo Lovers*, a hauntingly beautiful large-scale oil, is the piece that started their bond. The painting, done as a commission, was executed in 1976.

Many beautiful Piet van Heerdens, Gregoire Boonzaiers, and Alice Goldin oils are also included from Roux's collection. Also of special mention in this auction is a spectacular Neil Rodgers, *Young woman seated in a crisp white shirt*, and a rare portfolio of Salvador Dali lithographs from the opera *Carmen*. Fantastic Norman Catherine works and great sculptures are also catalogued.

The auction catalogue is online on the website [www.oldjwauctioneers.com](http://www.oldjwauctioneers.com) as well as the free app (Oldjw Auctioneers). Viewing for the public will be open on Thursday, 8 September, from 16:00 until 19:00, and on Friday, 9 September, from 09:00 until 15:00 at 1 8th Avenue, Melville. For more information, contact the Joburg office on 011 836 1650 or email [info@oldjwauctioneers.com](mailto:info@oldjwauctioneers.com).

Consignments for future auctions take place all year round. Get in touch with your nearest branch (Johannesburg/Pretoria/Wellington) to be included in an auction.



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## Conversion debate roils German Jewish community

TOBY AXELROD – JTA

Jews in Germany have been shaken this summer by a diminutive cantor with a big voice. But not in the way one might think.

True, Avital Gerstetter has one powerful set of pipes, as anyone who has heard her lead services at Berlin's Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue can testify.

But now, Gerstetter – the first German-born female cantor – is a persona non grata in that very sanctuary in former East Berlin after she penned a column critical of conversion in Germany in *Die Welt*, a major German newspaper.

In the column, titled, "Why the increasing number of converts is a problem for Judaism," Gerstetter charged that too many people in Germany convert for the wrong reasons – such as to atone for their family's Nazi past or to identify with the victims rather than perpetrators – and she criticised the fact that converts fill numerous Jewish leadership roles in Germany.

"I know that one shouldn't talk about the *giur*," Gerstetter wrote, using the Hebrew word for convert and citing Jewish law's frowning on differentiation between converts and people who were born Jewish.

worshippers, regardless of whether they were born Jewish or converted".

Gerstetter is planning legal action against the Jewish Community of Berlin over her dismissal.

Gerstetter laid out two arguments in her column. First, she said that though conversion had helped revitalise the post-Holocaust Jewish community, the number of converts had "risen sharply" in the past three decades, and Jewish communities had been too quick to approve some conversions.

Those with Jewish fathers have a legitimate reason to convert, she said. But others, she said, may be motivated by a disconnect from the faiths of their parents, or – in a uniquely German twist – by a "wish to be allowed to switch to 'the other side', from the perpetrator's family to a new, Jewish family construct as a bizarre form of abstract reparation".

What's more, Gerstetter argued, too many of the new converts are becoming rabbis and community leaders, leading to what she said was a Judaism not steeped in experience and tradition, but rather "a theoretical Judaism, almost an entirely new religion", one that she called "soulless".

Many German Jews reject Gerstetter's contention that converts are attenuating the

country's Jewish community and character.

"To speak of a growing problem is out of the question," said Rabbi Andreas Nachama, who heads the General Rabbinical Conference, or ARK, Germany's progressive rabbinical body.

And "to speak of a 'dilution' is generally forbidden for ethical reasons alone and is an impertinence",

Nachama said, on behalf of the ARK. "All in all, *gerim* [converts] are an enrichment for communities."

But others say Gerstetter has a point. Conversions "have gone out of proportion. It's a symptom of trauma for both sides," said Barbara Steiner, a historian and therapist whose 2015 book, *Die Inszenierung des Jüdischen* (The Staging of Jewishness), examines the conversion of Germans to Judaism after 1945.

Though it's impossible to pin down the number of Jewish converts in Germany today, official records suggest that they make up only a small proportion of the overall Jewish population.

In all, there are about 100 000 members of Jewish communities under the Central Council of Jews in Germany, and as many more who aren't affiliated. A great majority are Jews who arrived from the former Soviet Union since 1990.

Within the past 21 years, 1 697 people converted in, according to the Central Welfare Board of Jews in Germany, an average of about 80 people a year over that period. In 2021, a total of 43 conversions were completed, and of those, the majority were Orthodox, according to a source close to the Orthodox beit din, or Jewish religious court.

The question of how many of those converts have assumed formal leadership positions in their communities is even harder to answer. Whether that matters is core to the dispute Gerstetter brought to the fore with her column.



Avital Gerstetter

"But can this be true always and everywhere?" she asked. "The very large number of new Jews has led to a considerable change in Jewish life in Germany. In some services and during some speeches, I feel more reminded of an interreligious event than of the visit to the synagogue I have been familiar with since childhood."

In the synagogue where she worked for two decades, her column hit hard. Its rabbi, Gesa Ederberg, converted to Judaism while studying at New York's Jewish Theological Seminary in 1995. A number of synagogue regulars have converted as well. Many perceived Gerstetter's column as a personal attack.

Ederberg said Gerstetter raised important questions. "The phenomenon of so many converts in Germany is a really interesting and sometimes problematic phenomenon," Ederberg said. "Being conscious and open about it is something that's required of people who have converted, including myself."

But Gerstetter was negative about most conversions, Ederberg noted, asking, "How can she lead our prayers if this is how she feels?"

A few days after the column ran, a post appeared on the synagogue's Facebook page announcing that Gerstetter had been "released from her duties by the Jewish Community of Berlin until further notice".

There was no explanation included, but the synagogue's Facebook page also posted a separate statement on the same day emphasising that it "welcomes all



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# Moshal scholarships change lives for students and their families

PETA KROST

While many shrug their shoulders with a sense of helplessness at South Africa’s joblessness, the Moshal family, originally from Durban, have taken to educating and ensuring the future of those who would have fallen through the cracks.

Using their own personal funds, through the Moshal Scholarship Program, South African-born entrepreneur and philanthropist Martin Moshal and his family are providing a university education for 513 young people right now. And, they have already helped 453 young people who have since graduated, now in the workplace. Of those, there are 122 medical doctors, 24 vets, and 34 engineers, among other successful graduates.

Their employers include Ernst & Young, KPMG, the health department, Mediclinic, First Rand Group, Dimension Data, and other top South African companies.

The human stories behind this are vast, Moshal Scholarship Program Chairperson Yael Lavie told guests at the organisation’s annual event on Saturday, 3 September.

“Hellen is a chartered accountant working for Makosi,” said Lavie, Martin Moshal’s cousin and the co-creator of the programme. “Hellen still sometimes can’t believe she has already bought her mother the double story house of her dreams. She always remembers the many nights that her and her family went to bed hungry.”

Lavie went on to tell snippets of other incredible stories of the scholars to the audience of dignitaries and past and present students.

There’s Athi, who was born in the Eastern Cape. “I don’t think she believed she would be a successful medical officer when her father pushed her and her sibling out of their home, forcing them to grow up with their grandparents,” Lavie said.

Then she spoke of Tendai, who grew up in a township surrounded by drug abuse and crime. “He’s now working as an electrical engineer, contributing to building his parents’ house in Zimbabwe.”

Siphosethu’s home was burned down when she was a little girl, and her family were left homeless. “In Grade 4, she was her family’s breadwinner,” Lavie said. “She refused to let this experience define her, and today, she’s a project manager at Dimension Data.”

As for Galaletsang, she lost both her parents before she turned 14. “She’s now a senior associate consultant at a management consulting firm and a huge inspiration for her younger brother,” said Lavie.

Sewa is a successful software engineer at Meta in Ireland, after growing up in the North West to a family who were fully reliant on government grants.

Claver was born in Congo, and forced to flee his home and country at the age of 12. “He’s now doing extremely well, working in financial engineering, and was able to get his mother an apartment and provide her with capital to start her own business, earning much more than she ever did before.”

Lavie was integral to the creation and sustenance of this unique programme in 2009. It seeks out unique individuals with potential who would otherwise not be able to get a tertiary education. It doesn’t just support them financially, but offers a holistic support system to give them skills and guidance that will get them through university and enable them to become contributing members of the economy.

“Martin isn’t just a successful businessman, he’s also a social entrepreneur who chose to make a substantial difference in the world,” Lavie said, talking about how the programme originated. “I’ll never forget the moment he approached me with this inspiring idea, saying, ‘I’d like to transform young people’s

lives through higher education’. This became part of my life’s mission.”

She said the idea that higher education could transform people’s lives and lead them to financial independence touched her in the deepest way. “I understood the meaning of this and at that moment, I knew I would make it happen.”

Between her and Moshal, they worked on a plan that would allow this dream to become a reality, leading young people on their journey to a completely new reality through higher education.

Today, an alumnus of the Moshal Scholarship Program earns six times more than their family’s combined income in their first paycheque, Lavie said.



Yael Lavie

Speaking to students and graduates at the event, she said, “You’re changing your reality and that of future generations forever. From an economic perspective, many of you are already – and the rest of you will be soon – part of a generation of prosperous and successful South Africans. What seemed impossible has become your reality.”

In spite of South Africa’s 34.5% unemployment rate, “with a sought-after degree, technological skills, and good English, the world is your oyster”, she said.

“I can proudly say that our Moshal alumni are transforming the economic and social situation of many in the countries in which they live.”

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# Counting blessings after child born with extra digits

TALI FEINBERG

When Lily Shifrin was laid on her mother’s chest after she was born in a Tel Aviv hospital, the doctor asked casually, “Did you see her six fingers?” Her mother, Bianca (nee Rubin), grew up in South Africa, and thought maybe he had confused his translation from Hebrew to English. But she quickly realised what he was talking about when she looked at her daughter’s hands and feet. Lily was born with six fingers on each hand, and six toes on one foot. Shifrin and her husband, Darren, were shocked, as was the doctor, who thought this would have been picked up on scans during her pregnancy. But it wasn’t, even though the extra fingers and toes are clearly visible on her pregnancy imaging. Lily is now a healthy seven-year-old growing up in Ra’anana, who loves to dance and draw. Today, one can hardly notice the scars from the amputations that she had when she was a year old, exactly six years ago. The condition is called polydactyly. “Children born with polydactyly could have one or more extra digits on their hands and/or feet,” says Shifrin. It’s common – about one out of every 500 to 1 000 babies are born with it. Shifrin grew up in Sea Point, went to Herzlia, and matriculated in 2002. “I have a degree in education and I taught at Herzlia,” she says. “In 2010, I went to Israel for what was meant to be six months. After about three months, I extended my trip. I was loving Israel and felt at home here. I met my husband six weeks before I was due to fly back to South Africa. “As it turns out, he was also born in Cape Town, but his family made aliya when he was two and a half. I flew back to South Africa but quickly realised that Israel was where I wanted to be. Later that year, I made aliya. I’m a teacher and my husband works for the Israel Electrical Company. We live in Ra’anana and have a freedom here that’s hard to describe.” From birth, Lily had to endure medical tests, most of which could have been performed on her mother if the condition had been picked up in pregnancy. “Lily’s first year was full of all the magical moments, but it was also very traumatic,” says Shifrin. “She had so many doctors’ appointments and check-ups. At six months, they put her under general aesthetic to do an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging]. By the time she had her amputation surgery at the age of one year and one month, she was terrified of doctors.” One of the most traumatic aspects was that “a professor of genetics kept telling us that Lily must have some kind of syndrome over and above that which caused the extra digits even though her development was completely age-appropriate”, Shifrin says. Shifrin’s maternal instinct told her that her daughter was healthy. “I wasn’t convinced and wanted another opinion. We found our way to one of the top geneticists in Israel, who once again checked her from head to toe and examined me and Darren. Eventually, we were told that while polydactyly is genetic, it seemed that

in Lily’s case, it was a spontaneous mutation and she was perfectly normal – if there’s such a thing.” They decided to amputate the extra digits as soon as Lily was old and strong enough to undergo the surgery. “We made the decision based on what we felt was best for Lily medically and emotionally, and to do it at a time that she would have no memory of the pain and recovery she went through,” says Shifrin. Part of the reason for doing the surgery was that the extra toe made it difficult to find shoes that fit, and she was already walking before she turned one. The extra fingers, which were small “pinkie” fingers, would catch on clothes and also had an impact on her development – for example, making a fist. Shifrin experienced a mix of emotions. On the one hand, she was traumatised, but on the other, she knew the condition was fixable. In doctors’ rooms, she would see children with complex challenges or incurable illnesses. So, it was difficult to accept that her pain was valid. At the same time, she was grateful for

top medical treatment, that there was a solution, and that her daughter was healthy. The road to surgery wasn’t easy as it required regular blood tests and x-rays. At first, surgeons said they wanted to do two operations, but the Shifrins implored them to make it one. And so, two orthopaedic specialists came together for a three-hour surgery. “The bones in her hand and foot were essentially double their size and split at the end. So it meant amputating as well as cutting that bone in half,” says Shifrin. She remembers how on the day of the surgery, “Lily was very unsettled.

She knew something was happening. Doctors usually give children a sedative before an operation, but it had the opposite effect on Lily, and she just screamed.” The recovery also wasn’t easy. “She had already been walking and feeding herself. Now she couldn’t do anything. She was more frustrated than in pain. At one point, she bit the bandages. But we were lucky, at one point they discussed putting all three limbs in Plaster of Paris, which didn’t happen.” Once the bandages came off, she went back to normal quickly and didn’t even need physio. However,

Shifrin noticed that she used to rub the sides of her hands, and once said, “I feel something here.” She’s unsure if this could be the “phantom limb” that amputees experience. Physically, the amputation has had no impact on Lily’s development. Her parents have never hidden it from her, and she sees her extra digits as something special. This wasn’t the end of tough experiences for Lily. When she was two, the family were at a Chanukah party when a dog bit her face, cutting her lip in half. “I heard a horrible growl and when I looked over, Lily’s face was in the dog’s mouth,” remembers Shifrin. Her daughter had to have 13 stitches. “I wonder why she had to endure so much, but she’s incredibly strong,” says Shifrin. She’s a go-getter – much more Israeli than me or Darren!” The couple have since had two sons, Ben (5) and Dylan (1). Neither was born with polydactyly. “At every scan and at their births, all I kept asking was to count their fingers and toes!” she says. She urges others to make sure this is checked. Shifrin says parents of children with challenges should never be ashamed and there’s always support if you look for it, especially in the age of social media. In turn, she would like to support the parents of children with polydactyly or other hardships. Looking back, she can’t believe the challenges they faced. “I’m just so grateful every day for my perfect and wonderful daughter,” she says.



Lily Shifrin at eight months old with six fingers on each hand



Lily Shifrin now

## SA has boxing champ with Nathan in his corner

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Award-winning Johannesburg boxing trainer Colin Nathan’s protégé, Sivenathi “The Special One” Nontshinga, was looking knackered, slouching on a stool in the corner of the boxing ring, his feet spread out lackadaisically in front of him. The Eastern Cape-born 23-year-old boxer had just walked to his corner following nine non-stop rounds of his International Boxing Federation light flyweight title bout against undefeated Mexican Hector “Baby Bull” Flores at the Centro de Usos Múltiples in Hermosillo, Mexico, on 3 September. Immediately, Nathan’s motivational tactics came to the fore. In an affable tone, he told Nontshinga, “You’re down. You have nine minutes to change your life. Do you want to turn your life around? Do you want it. Then, go get it!” Nontshinga gave Nathan the nod, and went on to finish strongly over the final three rounds, securing a split-decision victory. Two of the three judges scored in favour of the South African by margins of 116-111 and 114-113. As a result, Flores suffered the first defeat of his professional career, and Nathan was hailed by boxing pundits for his corner-motivation work which resulted in him producing a boxing world champion. “I can’t recommend this fight enough. Go back and watch it, you won’t regret it. Between the fight and Colin Nathan’s stirring corner work, it was like a movie fight in real life,” tweeted Corey Erdman, a Toronto-based boxing writer and commentator. American boxing journalist Dan Rafael tweeted, “Dramatic stuff in Nontshinga corner from trainer Colin Nathan before round 10 of this all-out war for vacant IBF 108 title on @DAZNBoxing...”



Colin Nathan with Sivenathi Nontshinga

And Sergio Mora, a former boxing champion turned commentator, tweeted, “Nontshinga’s trainer didn’t allow him to lose a split second in Mexico! He pushed his fighter across the finish line. Great corner work!” Nathan played down what some have called his “motivational masterclass”. “I was just doing my job. I realised how

hard we had worked to get him to that point. What I meant was that sometimes, physically, you have to put your life on the line to push through being either very good or great. Unfortunately, that’s what boxing requires. Giving your very best isn’t good enough. You actually have to descend into a very dark place in boxing to reach the next level. I just thought boxing is parallel to life, and the remaining three rounds could change his life. Literally, that’s what I meant.” Nathan was confident about Nontshinga’s chances of winning, but says, “Expectation doesn’t exist in boxing. It’s a cruel sport. The expectation is what we as a camp and South Africa wanted. Then he had to go out and achieve it. “Our preparation helped him to win. [There were] lot of delays with regard to the dates. It actually worked to our advantage because when it was initially scheduled, about six weeks earlier, we really would have had an uphill battle. Dealing with jet lag and us getting our visas so late were issues as well.” As a young fighter, Nontshinga aspired to be able to train with Nathan, one of the country’s most celebrated trainers who has coached the likes of Hekkie Budler, Moruti Mthalane, Simphiwe Khonco, and DeeJay Kriel. Nathan added Nontshinga to this list in January. “His father, who had been training him for his whole career, called me to a meeting and asked me to take on his kid,” says Nathan. Now Nontshinga trains six days a week at Nathan’s Hot Box Gym in Savoy Estate, Johannesburg. Having just seen his protégé become a champion of the world, Nathan aims to help Nontshinga win more titles and become a successful human being. “Every human being has a different



# Herz makes history in selection for Banyana Banyana

SAUL KAMIONSKY

“Do you have a passport?” Lauren Duncan, the JVW football team manager, asked 25-year-old defender Erin Herz at a training session held by the Johannesburg women’s soccer club on 29 August.

“Yes, what do I need it for?” responded Herz.

“Don’t worry, you’ll find out,” Duncan said.

Feeling anxious by this request, Herz said, “It’s something you must tell me now.”

“Just stretch and I will tell you afterwards,” was the reply.

Once Herz had stretched, Duncan finished her address ahead of JVW’s next match by saying, “I want to wish good luck to Cimone [Sauls] and Erin. They will be representing Banyana Banyana at the COSAFA [Council of Southern Africa Football Associations] Cup.”

Herz was shocked and excited. She’s likely to be the first South African Jewish woman to play for Banyana Banyana, something she hadn’t expected to happen for a long time.

Three days later, she was on a plane with the Banyana team heading to their camp in Gqeberha, where the COSAFA Women’s Championship is taking place from 31 August to 11 September.

Banyana is the most successful team in this tournament, for teams from southern Africa, having won the trophy seven times since 2002.

Herz’s selection for the national team came about because the coach, who was the main selector, knew of her talent. “Her assistant coach used to be my coach at Wits [University of the Witwatersrand], so I knew her,” says Herz.

Herz made her national team debut in Banyana’s opening 2022 COSAFA group-stage match, a 3-0 win against Angola on

31 August. “It was incredible, almost unexplainable,” she says.

different sports for about five years on and off in the primary school and high school, but this is my first year coaching the first team. We haven’t done as well as we could have. It’s been hard to get the players together with the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Grade 8s, 9s, and 10s are exciting. They are going to be great in the next few years. This potential is important.”

An alumnus of Reddam House Bedfordview, Herz first expressed an interest in playing soccer when, as a youngster, she saw a girl playing soccer with boys at Old Eds.

“My mom was at the gym, and

there was a young soccer academy or something training there. All the young boys were about my age and there was one girl. I said to my mom, ‘I want to be like her.’ My mom phoned around and found a team for me to play for. It was called Girls Sport, an all-girls team. I started there when I was eight.”

Herz likes the full body and mental intensity of soccer. “It requires focus and intent,” she says. “I also like the team aspect, the group of people who are always around. They back me and I back them. We look out for each other, laugh together, and cry together.”



Photo: ISAFA.net Facebook page

Erin Herz in action against Angola in her debut for Banyana Banyana

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# “What About the Boys?” tackles toxic masculinity at the core of GBV

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

“Boys don’t cry”; “man up”; “be strong”. With one of the highest rates of rape and femicide in the world, South Africa has long faced a gender-based-violence (GBV) crisis, underpinned by such patriarchal and sexist norms.

To end this scourge, we need to address the underlying causes before they take root, which is the aim of Primestars’ latest national edutainment programme, “What About the Boys?”

“This is a one-of-a-kind preventative programme,” says Martin Sweet, the managing director of youth-development-programme facilitator Primestars, which to date has worked with more than a million children through its various maths and science, financial literacy, career guidance, and entrepreneurship edutainment initiatives.

“A big focus of ‘What About the Boys’ is to move boys from the conventional expectations of manhood and the norms that they understand. When you’re told not to be vulnerable and you hold everything inside, a host of negative emotions and behaviours emanate. Yet, psychologically, if you can teach people that the norms have changed, they’ll adopt them,”

Sweet says. He equates toxic masculinity to a cave. “Once a young man is inside, you can’t get him out, but if you can shut off that cave to young men early on, in the long run, you can solve GBV.”

A multifaceted programme, “What About the Boys” aims to do just that by bringing 10 000 Grade 9 to Grade 12 boys from public schools in urban, township, and rural areas to cinemas throughout South Africa to watch a powerful movie that tackles GBV with relatable characters within a school setting. More films are planned.

Screenings are followed by the distribution of a booklet to drive behavioural change. The movie is only the first step in the implementation of a national mentorship movement, with discussions starting in cinemas, continuing on free digital platforms, and going into schools.

Pupils also sign a #DoBetter pledge referenced in the film. Here, they select and tick boxes on a list detailing various ways in which they can commit to doing better as men. These include pledges such as, “I pledge to use my heart and my mind and not my fists to solve problems.”

“This #DoBetter pledge comes from a Jewish idea,” says Sweet. “In shul, on Yom Kippur, you get a punched card with a list of



Pupils from Liberty Community School streaming in to watch *What About The Boys*

*mitzvot*. You insert a pin next to the *mitzvah* you commit to taking on for the year. It’s the same concept.”

Storytelling – the central medium through which the programme operates – is also rooted in Jewish culture, says Dean Goldblum, an up-and-coming actor who stars in the *What About the Boys* movie. “Art across all media lives at the centre of the Jewish soul, now and throughout Jewish history,” he says. “Judaism is centred on oral tradition and storytelling. Passing stories down from generation to generation is what informs and makes us a community.”

Storytelling is also a cornerstone of African culture, says Goldblum’s co-star, Buhle Mvalo. “For the black community, healing is very much the foundation of storytelling,” he says. Mvalo experienced this first-hand while making *What About the Boys*. “I lost a very good friend, Jesse Hess, to gender-based violence at the hands of her own cousin in the same week of the highly publicised murder of Uyinene Mrwetyana. I disclosed this to my co-stars onset and let them know why G-d put me in the position to tell this story, and why it was important to do so authentically.”

Goldblum recalls the impact that the murders of both Hess and Mrwetyana had on campus when he was studying at the University of Cape Town (UCT), where Mrwetyana was also a student. “I was at all the protests, and it shook every student I came across to the core,” he says. “One of our lecturers at UCT Drama School suggested that we create a men’s room at drama school where we’d

have meetings every Friday so that men could hold each other accountable. Here, men figured out solutions for men.

“This feeds so well into the project we’re working on. Being part of such a purpose-driven movie is an honour. Every element of the project is centred on uplifting, reimagining, and shifting young boys’ perspectives on what it means to be a good human being.”

Speaking of GBV and its impact on the youth, Mvalo says that too many of the black boys who see the film have witnessed such incidents for themselves. “Starting with storytelling, we’re going to heal a nation of damaged, traumatised young boys who didn’t bring this upon themselves, it’s just what they’re forced to see.”

That’s not to say that GBV is specific to a particular sector of society. “What I love about the movie is that it’s not just set within the black community, it shows the issue on a bigger scale, it’s not defined by your race or how wealthy your family is,” says Mvalo. “There’s a problem, and that problem is GBV. It’s largely because of mentorship and education, which is something we’re now addressing, which is why this programme is a game changer.”

Sweet has extended an invitation for Jewish schools to participate. “GBV isn’t segmented to any one community, it affects

them all,” he says. “The Jewish community has problems too. Boys from all sectors of society need to learn to treat women with respect. Men need to know they can cook and clean and be vulnerable, and they shouldn’t view women as property. There shouldn’t be shame about homosexuality, something the film addresses too. Masculinity has evolved, and that’s as much a lesson for Jewish schools as it is for the public schools we currently serve.”

Sweet’s commitment to education emanates from his upbringing. “My parents came from Poland and Lithuania. They were Holocaust survivors, and their primary aim was

to get me educated. Nothing was more important. If they didn’t put food on the table, they still found the money to put me through varsity. That is what this country needs now, and that’s why educating 90 000

black kids a year through Primestars – the biggest private sector tutor to the public sector – is so important to me.”

The “What About the Boys?” programme was founded through a private-public partnership where those at the highest levels of government and business work together to stop GBV. Speaking of the importance of working together for the greater good, Sweet quotes rabbinic sage Hillel the elder, who said, “If I’m not for myself, who will be for me? If I’m only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?”

“Jewish people aren’t an island unto ourselves, we’re part of a wider community,” says Sweet. “We’ve got to get involved, we’ve got to be part of the solution to problems that this country faces, otherwise we’ll be left on the sidelines.”

• For more information, visit: [www.primestarsdigital.co.za](http://www.primestarsdigital.co.za)



Dean Goldblum

The King David Schools' Foundation invites applications for the position of a full-time

FUNDRAISER

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2. Assist in planning and coordinating fund-raising events

3. Be well networked in the community

Job Skills & Qualifications Required:

1. Exemplary communication abilities (verbal and written) and dynamic / outgoing, yet poised personality.

2. Fundraising experience advantageous

3. Proficient in Microsoft Outlook, Word and Excel and comfortable on social media

4. Identifies with the ethos of a Jewish Day School

A curriculum vitae and contact information of two referees should be emailed to Joanne Dexter at [dexterj@sabje.co.za](mailto:dexterj@sabje.co.za)

Closing date for applications: 23 September 2022

The SABJE retains its full discretionary right to interview only short-listed candidates. Should you not hear from the school by 7 October 2022, please accept that your application has not been successful.

The King David Schools' Foundation, in line with POPIA (Protection of Personal Information Act), will attempt to ensure the confidentiality of all applicants for this role. All reasonable measures will be in place to protect personal information which will be used in the recruitment, selection, and reporting process. By submitting your application for this position, you are recognising and accepting this disclaimer.

## SA has boxing champ with Nathan in his corner >>Continued from page 16

personality. It’s the same with fighters,” says Nathan, comparing Nontshinga to his other fighters. “For me, it was a significant win because South Africa needed a legitimate world champion again. The world champion was with me and lost in London 18 months ago. So, I felt like I owed it to the country to produce another world champion.”

Introduced to boxing by his father, Nathan is the third generation of his family involved in the sport. Travelling extensively to support boxers in fights around the world, he says boxers in South Africa have the talent and ability needed to succeed against boxers from any country.

“It’s just about trying to put all the pieces of the puzzle together, so that will always be a little tricky,” says the Boxing South Africa 2017/2018 Trainer of the Year. “Please G-d, I’ll produce another world

champion. Building relationships and showing respect for fighters makes a big difference with the athletes I get behind. Even if I’m not training or managing them, I’m always willing to give my time and help anyone who needs assistance.”

After all, Nathan is nicknamed “*Nomakanjani*” (No matter what). He was bestowed with the sobriquet in 2007 after he was asked for his prediction and replied, “This is what’s going to happen, *nomakanjani*, no matter what, no doubts.”

There’s no doubt about Nathan’s standing in boxing. According to the *Sowetan*, “Nathan has built a career that can be mentioned in the same conversation as his teacher, Freddie Roach, the legendary American widely regarded as one of the best boxing trainers of all time. He’s also credited for the success of Manny Pacquiao.”



South African Board of Jewish Education  
ועד הרושן ויטוריו דייטום אפיסקא



King David Schools' Foundation



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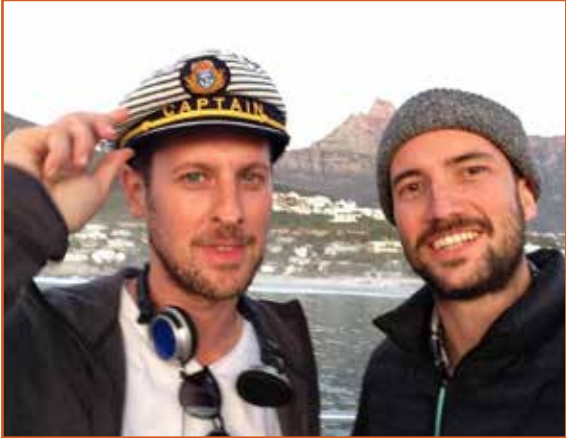


# Tali’s Baby Diary slays the SAFTAS

NICOLA MILTZ

Film makers and directors, Ari Kruger and Daniel Zimblar, are more than just winners of a prestigious South African Film and Television Award (SAFTA). The pair, who won this year’s best director in a TV comedy for *Tali’s Baby Diary*, are also lifelong best friends and godfathers to each other’s children.

“Ari and I started making stuff together – filming sketches, and comedy bits – when we



Ari Kruger and Daniel Zimblar

were at Herzlia High School,” he said. *Tali’s Baby Diary*, the hilarious sequel to Showmax Original’s *Tali’s Wedding Diary*, won five SAFTA awards this year including best comedy. Kruger’s wife, Julia Anastasopoulos (aka SuzelleDIY) as Tali, won best comedy actress. Kate Normington as Tali’s mom, Michelle, won best supporting comedy actress; and Richard Starkey and Gordon Midgley won best editing in a TV comedy. “We got 11 nominations which was extraordinary, and we were obviously massively

excited to win five,” said Zimblar. The SAFTAs celebrate the creativity, quality, and excellence of South African film and television talent and productions, and encourage entrepreneurship and the development of new talent within the industry. *Tali’s Wedding Diary* was the most awarded comedy at the 2019 SAFTAs, taking home five prizes. It was produced by Kruger and Anastasopoulos’ Sketchbook Studios. As the first Showmax Original when it launched in December 2017, it set a new record for first-day views on the platform. The hilarious “mockumentary” stars Anastasopoulos as Tali Shapiro, described as a “self-obsessed Joburg princess” who’s just moved to Cape Town and is filming the build-up to her wedding to her property-agent fiancé Darren (Anton Taylor). In season two, *Tali’s Baby Diary*, an unexpected pregnancy forces Tali into a desperate pivot from Insta-influencer to “wholesome momfluencer”. Meanwhile, Darren and Rael (Comics’ Choice nominee Glen Biderman-Pam, the man behind the viral *My Octopus Teacher* spoof *My Kreepy Teacher*) navigate Cape Town’s property game.

Zimblar, who was born in Johannesburg, attended many Jewish schools which he believes gave him an insight into Jewish life and times in South Africa. He went to Menorah Primary, Yeshiva College, and King David Linksfield, before moving to Cape Town and attending Herzlia. “So, you could say I know the source material quite well,” he told the *SA Jewish Report*. He studied screenwriting and directing at Columbia University’s School of the Arts, joining up with Kruger in the industry soon

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after his return. Zimblar described his friend, Anastasopoulos, as “an extremely great talent, and I think South Africa’s best comedy actress”. Winning the director’s award with Kruger was like “coming full circle”, he said. Their first short film, which they co-wrote and co-directed back in 2005, went to the African, Asian, and Latin American Film Festival in Milan. “We were flown over there. It was a real DIY first-film effort, I acted in it, Ari was the cinematographer, so this SAFTA feels like we’ve come full circle and it’s a real honour to share the award with him. We remain close, so he’s the best person to work and share this award with.” Kruger is the co-creator and director of the web-series *SuzelleDIY*, which collected more than 22 million views on YouTube. His short films have screened in festivals around the world. The *Tali* crew is currently developing the third season of the series. So what makes Tali funny? “There are so many funny people that work on it. There’s a family atmosphere in the writers’ room and on set, and we’re all friends and close. Comedian and screen writer, Gilli Apter, writes with the three of us, we have a great time and laugh a lot, and a lot of this translates to the screen,” said Zimblar. Why the Jewish angle? “Well, we’re Jewish,” said Zimblar. “We know the world. There’s the old screenwriting maxim which is to write what you know. This is a community we know and love and are part of. Its idiosyncrasies and peculiarities are things we find funny and are able to parody in a loving way. We all love Tali. Notwithstanding her shortcomings and her blinkered view of the world, she’s someone we know having grown up in that world.” The new season, *Tali’s Joburg Diary*, will premiere in November. According to the promotion, Tali – now the mom of a toddler – is returning to her roots as a Johannesburg kugel, this time battling the Hyde Park pram brigade to get her adorable little Jayden a place in the best preschool, Little Angels Hyde Park. “We’ve had a ball writing this season, so stay tuned because it’s going to be a wild ride and a lot of fun,” said Zimblar.

ADVERTORIAL

# Putt Putt your way to KosherWorld

**KosherWorld Centre** is now proudly the home of **Mobile Putt Putt**, which rents out putt putt layouts complete with putters, balls, and scorecards for kids’ parties, team building sessions, and corporate days. In addition, a nine-hole putt putt course is available daily on the first floor at KosherWorld Centre.



**Mobile Putt Putt** is available for hire at the cost of R1 600 an hour or R3 300 for a full day, including delivery, setup, and breakdown.

The business is the brainchild of Rushka Mofokeng, who has been serving our community through her business, CJ’s Party Shoppe, on the first floor of **KosherWorld Centre**, since 2016.

In mid-2021, Rushka, KosherWorld Centre, and Attorney, Howard Ross, put their heads together and formed **Mobile Putt Putt South Africa**.

The company acquired the rights to the name **Mobile Putt Putt** for the entire country with complete layouts available directly or on a franchise basis.


Putt Putt will be open to the public from Sunday, 4 September, at 10:00. It will cost R50 for two rounds of putt putt.

Kosher party pack goodies for kids will be available for sale at CJ’s Party Shoppe, or buy your own at KosherWorld.

**CJ’s Party Shoppe also offers balloons, gifts, baby shower gifts, décor, costumes and party accessories. Contact Rushka at CJ’s Party Shoppe on the first floor of KosherWorld Centre, 082 084 7794.**

Bring the whole family, and come to the home of **Mobile Putt Putt**. Fun for everyone!





## Maroubra Synagogue

VIBRANT | RELEVANT | COMMUNITY

### MAROUBRA SYNAGOGUE (SYDNEY)

#### Rabbinic Couple

Maroubra Synagogue is seeking a dynamic and experienced Rabbinic couple to lead our vibrant Modern Orthodox and Zionistic community, located in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, Australia.

Maroubra is a welcoming and inclusive community with approximately 350 member families who come from diverse backgrounds and levels of observance. With many younger families moving to the area, there is enormous potential for communal growth both in size and spiritual connection, requiring motivated Rabbinic direction at its forefront.

The congregation is looking for a Modern Orthodox Rabbi and Rebbetzin team who will provide spiritual leadership to our community and can connect with members of all backgrounds and at all stages of life. The successful team must be willing to become an integral part of the community and dedicate themselves to the challenge of meeting the congregation’s spiritual and intellectual needs.

The ideal couple will have post-ordination experience in a leadership capacity within a synagogue, and a proven ability to attract and build strong, enduring relationships with members. In particular, you must have a caring, open and accepting personality, an engaging sense of humour and a warm communication style.

The Rabbi will also hold the position of College Rabbi at Mount Sinai College (ages 2 to 12), which neighbours the synagogue. This role is to contribute to and maintain the Jewish ethos of the College and the close and long-standing relationship that exists between the Synagogue and school.

**The Rabbi and Rebbetzin need to:**

- Be role models for Torah values and live a Torah life
- Provide positive and inclusive leadership for the community
- Provide a warm, inclusive and open home
- Motivate and inspire all groups to become more involved with their religion and community
- Provide and coordinate education for the community

Leining is also an essential part of the role.

**For more information:** <https://www.maroubrasynagogue.org.au/rabbi-job-description/>

To submit your C.V. and cover letter in strict confidence, please email: [apply@maroubrasynagogue.org.au](mailto:apply@maroubrasynagogue.org.au)



# Lipschitz pounds Khayelitsha streets for higher purpose

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Durban’s most loved runner, Adam Lipschitz, will be among the 1 000 other runners lining up at the start of the inaugural Khayelitsha Half Marathon in Cape Town on 10 September, with the aim of helping the township accelerate out of crime, poverty, and gender-based violence.

He’s looking forward to his first township run. “I’ll enjoy it, especially because running can help solve problems in the area,” he says.

Lipschitz almost ended up sleeping in a shack while in Khayelitsha – at least according to the joke told by race organiser, Khayelitsha resident Vukile “Voox” Sonandzi.

In fact, Lipschitz even told him, “Don’t put me in a hotel in Cape Town. I’ll stay in the heart.”

“We live in a terrible place,” says Sonandzi. “But we’re saying maybe through sport we can change the narrative.

I invited Adam, who won a gold medal at this year’s Maccabi Games, because if you look on Facebook, he always speaks for the disempowered. I think this is why he accepted. He knows his presence can at least play a role. We can’t all be Mandelas, but even playing a small role makes a difference.”

Originally scheduled for 4 September, the half marathon was postponed following the denial of a permit last week.

Sonandzi has previously organised eight 10km races, but this will be his inaugural half marathon. “This race is a league race for the Western Province Athletics Association,” he says. “Adam is friends with most of the guys in the club. I saw Adam in Gqerberha at the SA Half Marathon Championships. I said, ‘We would like you to be the ambassador for our race because your presence on Twitter and Facebook is massive, and people love you.’”



Vukile “Voox” Sonandzi

Aside from the half marathon, Sonandzi is anticipating 800 runners for the 10km race, and 300 parents and children for the 5km fun run.

“Western Province Athletics is sending their runners in large numbers,” he says. “We might have the biggest race ever in Khayelitsha.”

The starting pistol will be fired by Anroux Marais, the Western Cape Provincial Minister of Cultural Affairs and Sport.

“We were hoping to get Bheki Cele to do it, but it’s too late now,” says Sonandzi, with a touch of sadness.

However, his biggest headache is the crime in Khayelitsha. “It’s engineered by social ills like unemployment and poverty. But even if you’re poor, nothing gives you the right to attack and kill others. There are other ways to fight the scourge of poverty.”

Sonandzi says Lipschitz’s presence at the race is a blessing in disguise. “If Adam comes to run in Khayelitsha, it will motivate other people who are afraid to come to Khayelitsha to think, ‘If Adam can do it, why can’t I?’”

Former Orlando Pirates midfielder Mark Mayambela and a multiple boxing champion

will also be running in Khayelitsha on Saturday. “They’re fit in their respective fields, but Adam brings running passion, fitness, and attitude,” says Sonandzi.

Sonandzi himself has run Comrades and the Two Oceans Marathon. He says he’s an avid reader of the *SA Jewish Report*, which he picks up at Sea Point Pick n Pay.



Adam Lipschitz

## Rabbi Fox helps raise awareness of gender-based violence

Rabbi Jonathan Fox, group rabbi of the Chevrah Kadisha, recently participated in a multid denominational event to raise awareness of gender-based violence. The event, held at Sandringham Police Station at the conclusion of Women’s Month, focused on increasing awareness of the problem in society. Representatives of different faiths were given an opportunity to say a prayer.

## JNF funds bomb shelters in southern Israel

The South African Jewish community raised enough money during the last war to enable the Jewish National Fund (JNF) to erect three bomb shelters in Eshkol in southern Israel, aimed at protecting citizens against rocket attacks.



Photo: Eilat Israela

Public bomb shelters

Bomb shelters’ walls are between 30cm and 40cm thick, and since 1994, Israeli law has demanded that every house have one. Even the youngest child runs to a bomb shelter after hearing a siren, knowing it as a place of safety.

Following a siren, people in Israel’s Eshkol region and the Gaza envelope have only 15 seconds to find shelter from missiles being fired from Gaza.

The situation has been escalating, culminating on

7 August this year, when 305 missiles were shot into the region 24 hours, a region measuring only 284 miles (457km).

Said Keith Isaacson, the head of security for the Eshkol region, “It’s quiet at the moment. We’re getting ready for the next escalation and the other side is getting ready for the next escalation. That’s what quiet means here.”

It’s evident that more

bomb shelters are urgently needed for the residents of southern Israel, and this is why the JNF has stepped in.

During the last war, these shelters saved countless lives, but many more are needed – near schools, hospitals, shopping areas, sports grounds and monuments, parks and playgrounds.

The Talmud teaches, “He who saves a single life, saves the world entire.”

For more information, visit <https://www.jnfsa.co.za/>

## From Israel to Langa with a bit of “Mensch” in-between

Though we grow and produce enough food to feed everyone in South Africa, we have staggering levels of food insecurity, malnutrition, and non-communicable diseases linked to diet.

Hunger or a lack of a nutrient-rich diet isn’t the result of food supply shortages. Rather, it stems from an institutionalised food system that fails to provide food security, a system that is governed in ways that all but ignore the reality of informality in South Africa – a shortcoming exposed with devastating consequences during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

The Jewish community is partnering with the Langa Agrihub, which together with non-profit organisation the Masakhe Foundation aims to increase the resilience of existing food producers, improve localisation, and contribute to a more circular food economy.

The project, located a mere 14km from the Cape Town CBD in the under-resourced community of Langa, is the brainchild of the non-profit SA Urban Food and Farming Trust (SAUFFT), the parent organisation of the popular Oranjezicht City Farm and creator of the OZCF Market.

It supports urban farmers by supplying infrastructure such as seedlings and compost, and offers services such as tool hire, pack house, agriprocessing, and market access to assist farmers

working on farms scattered throughout Langa sustain their trade, eat, and earn more income by working as part of a network facilitated through the Agrihub.

The JDC, a leading global Jewish humanitarian organisation headquartered in Israel and the United States is bringing donor funding, Israeli agritech, curiosity, and learning right to the local



Site visit to the Langa Agrihub in August

Langa community.

The JDC works in partnership with South African Jewish social-justice organisation and nongovernment organisation Mensch.

Mensch’s role is to create impactful engagement across the two communities; to create market access via Jewish community procurement; to learn and share knowledge; to encourage the Agrihub as a space for experiential curricula-based learning for Jewish youth; to invite corporate team building; to organise Jewish

driven volunteering days; and to showcase the benefits of Israeli agritech and innovation.

For Mandela Day, Mensch, together with SAUFFT and local social enterprise Ikhyaya Le Langa, organised a Soup-A-Thon, a “farm-to-table” Langa experience. It planted 140kg of beautiful, organic, and nutritious ingredients, paid local farmers at market rate, and together with more than 120

Jewish volunteers, cut and chopped in two hours ingredients to make more than 500 litres of soup – a meal for more than 1 500 Langa residents.

This engagement has now been extended into the monthly Langa Agritour, in which volunteers meet farmers, visit the Agrihub facilities, and learn about the local economy.

The first tour in late August had a bus load of people including representatives from Jewish youth group Netzer,

the *Cape Jewish Chronicle*, Jewish Community Services, the Eliot Osrin Leadership Institute, the Cape SA Jewish Board of Deputies, and Mensch network members and volunteers.

“One visit, so many opportunities to create sustainability where it works best – the ability for people to earn income,” said one of those on the tour.

If you’re interested in finding out more about Mensch ([www.mensch.org.za](http://www.mensch.org.za)) or would like to join a tour, contact [jodi@mensch.org.za](mailto:jodi@mensch.org.za)

## Torah Academy Grade 1s sing for their siddur

Parents and grandparents filled the Torah Academy hall on Friday, 2 September, for the Grade 1 siddur concert. The kids practised for months, and it was finally their time to shine.



They sang to their hearts’ content in a beautiful performance, each receiving a siddur.

Rafi Liphosa, Azriel Khazin, Abraham Khazin, and Shlomo Diamond

## Hirsch Lyons’ Elul programme gets off with a bake

Hirsch Lyons’ Elul programme included a challah bake for the girls, and *shalosh seudos* and a *melava malka* for boys and girls. The scrumptious challahs will be donated to food fund Yad Aharon & Michael. The boys also had an evening of learning and *siyumim*. The children enjoyed a magical, musical *havdalah* ceremony at each *shalosh seudos*. They had a blast at the *melava malkas* – the girls glowed while stick dancing, and there was an atmosphere of *ruach* around the boys’ bonfire.



Rabbi David Levin and Yinon Falkson

## Spring spirit at Yeshiva College Primary sports day

Students at Yeshiva College Primary School did the school proud with their speed and spirit at the school’s sports day on Spring Day, 1 September. Teachers and parents also blew the school away with their enthusiastic participation.



Gadi Tomson, Ariel Finkel, and Jamie Nerwich

## Yeshiva Mizrachi Community revamps shul

The Yeshiva Mizrachi Community unveiled its renovated Beit Harav Avraham Chaim shul on 1 September. Built more than 60 years ago, the space was modernised to meet the needs of the united *kehila* (community) but it was also an opportunity to honour Glenhazel campus’s late rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Avraham Tanzer.

At the opening, Chief Rabbi Dr Warren Goldstein thanked the project’s generous donors and stressed the importance of beautifying that

which is important to us as a way of honouring Hashem. The shul’s overall structure was preserved,



The renovated Beit Harav Avraham Chaim shul

but the pews were removed to open up the space and adapt it to meet the way future generations seek inspiration. The new shul is pulsing with brightness and warmth, and aims to launch the campus to new spiritual heights, with Hashem’s blessing.



Absa  
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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# KwaZulu-Natal Jewry renown for philanthropy and activism

Durban is home to the third-largest concentration of Jews in South Africa as well as being, after Cape Town and Gqeberha (former Port Elizabeth), the country’s third oldest Jewish community. In spite of its relatively small size, the community continues to offer its members a full range of communal organisations, activities, and services, including a school, aged-care facilities, outstanding community headquarters in the form of the historic Durban Jewish Club, and an active Holocaust & Genocide Centre. On Monday evening, I was in Durban to meet with our regional branch, the Council for KwaZulu-Natal Jewry (CKNJ). During my visit I updated our KwaZulu-Natal colleagues on the work of the national board while in turn learning more about the activities of the CKNJ and its affiliate organisations.

It was heartening to see how KwaZulu-Natal Jewry, in addition to maintaining their own busy network of communal organisations, continues to be involved in so many areas of public concern. The community is deservedly renowned for its fine philanthropic record. Much of this social outreach work has been accomplished through meaningful social upliftment partnerships with Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi. This includes the acclaimed Chiva (Children’s HIV Association) project through which health professionals are brought out from the United Kingdom to help with the rollout of antiretrovirals in KwaZulu-Natal. It was therefore fitting that CKNJ President Susan Abro, National Director Wendy Kahn, and other community representatives were in attendance while Gilad

## ABOVE BOARD

Karen Milner

Stern delivered a prayer on behalf of our community at last week’s launch of the Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi Foundation.

CKNJ Jewry, with the indefatigable Abro leading by example, is likewise engaged in various important public-welfare initiatives, including confronting gender-based violence and promoting social cohesion through the educational programmes of the Durban Holocaust & Genocide Centre. The South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD’s) political and social justice liaison, Alana Baranov, is based in Durban and has been extensively involved over the years in working with vulnerable communities, including refugees. Baranov also represents the SAJBD on the steering committee of the Hate Crimes Working Group, a body that was co-founded by the Board following the countrywide outbreak of xenophobic violence in 2008. Anti-foreigner sentiment and its continuing fall-out on the street has continued to fester since those dark days. Last week, in the wake of further inflammatory statements by certain political figures who should know better, the Board issued a statement denouncing these trends and warning against the dangers of allowing them to continue. This led to Baranov being interviewed on Channel Africa, where she further articulated our stance on the issue and why it’s something that our democracy urgently needs to deal with.

• 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

# Yom tov lingo leaves people speechless

I could see that the recruit was struggling. The work environment was new to him, and he wasn’t keeping up. “It’s all about the vocab,” I explained. “Every organisation, every community, and every family have a set of words, expressions, and references unique to them. Understand what they are, and you won’t have an issue.”

He shifted his focus to the language used, and very quickly felt part of the company.

Which got me thinking what it must be like to stand outside the Jewish community this time of year, and listen in to some of our conversations. “Where you guys second day?” or “Geoff won’t do a big breaking” along with “Who is blowing for you?” can only be understood within the context of the upcoming festivals. And it might sound more than odd for someone eavesdropping.

It’s also a little less interesting than they might think.

“Can’t believe how late Rosh Hashanah is this year,” has to be another classic, accompanied by “Have you seen that they all fall on Monday and Tuesday!” as though this hasn’t occurred for millennia. Our amazement and incredulity is as refreshing as it’s perplexing, and somehow never dampens our shock about the earliness, lateness, or weekday-ness of this year’s festival timetable.

And then there are the prepared, the unprepared, and the forgetful. There are those who have already sent WhatsApp invitations for next year’s Sukkot, while there are those who are still meaning to invite people for last year’s Pesach seder. Families like ours spend an anxious *yom tov* not knowing where we’re meant to be, and live with the fear of arriving at the wrong house for a meal that was meant to be the next day. Or, worse still, not showing up at all.

Each year, we swear that we’ll write out the schedule and pin it to the fridge, but then *yom*



## INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman

*tov* comes so early, we’re once again taken by surprise.

My wife is a very nice person. She really is. She’s kind and caring and I love her greatly. But the stress of *yom tov* meal accuracy is sometimes overwhelming. “Where are we second day?” a question from my daughter can easily be met with a completely different answer to the same enquiry from me a few minutes before. Suburbs or countries might even differ. “What?” she’ll ask, after looking at my expression. “Wait. Where did I say we were?” And none of us are any closer to knowing which direction we should be walking when the time comes.

This year, we need to write it down and pin it to the fridge.

If there’s another phrase that’s particular to the Jewish community and this time of year – and maybe to me – it’s “Howard! It’s Elul!” as though the Jewish month and its association might have slipped my mind. Elul, for those not familiar, is a time of repentance and introspection, and apparently asks us to curtail our behaviour and behave more appropriately. It’s a refrain that not only has done little to encourage me in the past, it also seems to bring out the 14-year-old in me.

Language, syntax, and phrases illustrate many things about us. They reflect our country, city, education, and our community. More so at this time of year, being Elul, as we head toward Rosh Hashanah, which is late, and which I can’t believe falls on a Monday and a Tuesday!

# Yeshiva girls deliver Cirque du Soul extravaganza

Yeshiva College Girls High School’s Cirque du Soul, an adaptation of Cirque du Soleil’s *The Greatest Showman*, is on at the Theatre On The Square on 7, 8, 10, and 11 September.

The production showcases the unique and varied talents of its pupils, and challenges them to reach for the stars. Led by the Girls High School *minahalet*, Rebbetzin Natalie Altman, musical director Yael Benjamin has nurtured the girls’ confidence in their vocal ability, Yali Friedman has choreographed rhythm into their feet, and Rachel Falkson and Shaynah Crouse have adapted, directed, and produced an uplifting script.

The show is the beginning of the school’s drama, arts, and culture programme, which will inspire future projects across the

campus to inspire and uplift pupils. The production was inspired by the talented and exceptional Helen Heldenmuth, who treasured the time she shared with the pupils and is remembered affectionately by so many in the Yeshiva College family. The school aims to honour Heldenmuth’s memory with a special VIP performance on Saturday, 10 September. An inspiring story,



The dress rehearsal of Cirque du Soul

incredible costumes, and the hard work and dedication of the pupils promises to bring women an unforgettable experience.

Sunday 11 September	Time: 18:00. Contact: dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za
• The Chevrah Kadisha hosts a symposium on <i>Meaning Through Mourning</i> . Time: 10:00 to 12:30. Venue: Golden Acres. Contact: 011 532 9711 or melaniw@jhbchev.co.za	• ORT SA presents <i>Excel 202 with Dan Stillerman and Avi Levy</i> . Time: 09:00 to 10:30. Contact: 011 728 7154 or admin@ortjet.org.za
• Bnoth Zion WIZO Cape Town hosts Yom Tov Market. Time: 09:30 to 14:00. Venue: Weizmann School & Sephardi Hall. Contact: bnothz@ctjc.co.za or 021 464 6756	• Hatzolah hosts a talk on suicide prevention. Time: 19:30. Venue: Genesis Conference Centre. Contact: info@hatzolah.co.za
Monday 12 September	Wednesday 14 September
• The Union of Jewish Women presents Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft on <i>The true status of South African Jewry today</i> . Time: 10:00. Cost: R40. Contact: 011 648 1053 or info@ujw.co.za	• ORT SA presents <i>The Importance of SEO</i> with Renato Dequcinis. Time: 09:00 to 10:30. Contact: 011 728 7154 or admin@ortjet.org.za
• ORT SA presents <i>Leading yourself through times of uncertainty</i> with Lori Milner. Time: 09:00 to 10:30. Contact: 011 728 7154 or admin@ortjet.org.za	
Tuesday 13 September	Sunday 18 September
• The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre hosts a conference on <i>The psychological toll of the war in Ukraine</i> .	• The Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre hosts a webinar <i>The Jewish doctors of the Warsaw Ghetto</i> . Time: 20:00. Contact: dowi@jhbholocaust.co.za

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