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# What Ramaphosa didn't say at UN speaks volumes

**OPINION**

Every September, speeches by heads of state at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly's general debate are meant to take less than 15 minutes. Although often honoured in the breach, part of the art is knowing what to leave out.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa used his address on 19 September in New York to traipse through well-worn trails of the country's foreign policy. It's what he didn't say that's most interesting. And, of course, there was some Israel-bashing.

"We must work for peace in the Middle East," he said. "For as long as the land of the Palestinians remains occupied, for as long as their rights are ignored and their dignity denied, such peace will remain elusive. The actions of the government of Israel have imperilled the possibility of a viable two-state solution. The principles of the UN Charter on territorial integrity and on the prohibition on the annexation of land through the use of force must be applied in this situation."

This is a typically one-sided view of the conflict, heaping all the blame on Israel, with no acknowledgement of Palestinian terror attacks, indiscriminate rocket



President Cyril Ramaphosa addresses the United Nations General Assembly

Photo: South African government Facebook page

STEVEN GRUZO

democracy, we value the importance of engaging all parties to conflicts to achieve peaceful, just, and enduring resolutions. It's these principles that inform South Africa's participation in the African Peace Initiative, which seeks a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In this conflict, as in all conflicts, we have insisted that the UN Charter's principle of respect for the territorial integrity of every country should be upheld."

Language matters. Here, Ramaphosa describes Russia's invasion of a sovereign neighbour as a "conflict" between two states. But there would be no conflict without the invasion. And in spite of emphasising the importance of territorial integrity, South Africa once again refrains from condemning Russian aggression. At least he avoided calling the invasion a "special military operation", the euphemistic phrase preferred by Moscow.

Later, Ramaphosa said, "It's a grave indictment of this international community that we can spend so much on war, but we cannot support action that needs to be taken to meet the most basic needs of billions of people." This was a thinly veiled swipe at the West for bolstering Ukraine.

"As a global community," Ramaphosa said, "we should be concerned by recent incidents of unconstitutional

Continued on page 11>>

## Liberating the soul



Rabbi Danny Sackstein  
Sunny Road Kehilla

The Talmud (Rosh Hashanah 16b) tells us that there are three books opened on Rosh Hashanah: "Those who are completely righteous are immediately signed and sealed for life. Those who are completely wicked are immediately signed and sealed for death. Those who are in between hang in the balance until Yom Kippur. If they are meritorious, they are inscribed for life, and if they aren't found meritorious, they are inscribed for death."

The basic understanding of whether a person is "righteous" or "wicked" usually depends on the amount of *mitzvahs* and transgressions that person has performed. The righteous have more *mitzvahs* than transgressions, while the wicked have more transgressions than *mitzvahs*.

Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe in his book *Maamarei Yemei Ratzon*, cites the Alter of Kelm's challenge of this explanation. Since the Gemarah states that one who fails to observe even a rabbinic commandment is called wicked, how can righteousness be dependent on the ratio of *mitzvahs* to transgressions? One might have more *mitzvahs* than transgressions and still be considered wicked because that person failed to observe a rabbinic commandment. It must be, says the Alter, that "righteous" and

"wicked" in the above context describe a person's standing regarding *teshuvah* – repentance. One who is close to repentance is righteous, and one who is distant from repentance is wicked. Even if one has performed numerous sins, if that individual bemoans their lowly spiritual state and has a sincere desire to improve, in heaven, they are included in the book of the righteous.

According to this explanation, who are those who are "in between", who are neither completely righteous nor completely wicked? A person is either close to performance of *teshuvah* or far from it; they cannot be near and far at the same time.

The answer is that we are complex creatures. At times, we loyally serve our Creator, there are also times when we

serve our lower selves, doing as we please and ignoring our spiritual responsibilities. This describes those who are in between. Such a person might have areas where they are close to *teshuvah*. Yet in other areas, they serve their evil inclination, leaving them far from *teshuvah* as it doesn't occur to them that they have anything to rectify.

Our work on Yom Kippur is to recognise that we need to embrace our Creator at all times because then we liberate ourselves from the evil inclination. Attaining a spiritual level in which every aspect of one's life is geared toward serving one's Creator is a lifelong career, but it all begins with recognising that we have only one master. This recognition isn't just the cornerstone of *teshuvah*, it's key to liberating the soul.

## Torah Thought

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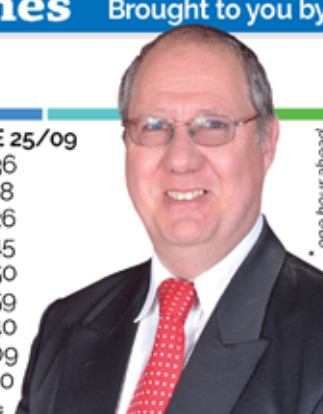
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Cape Town	18:25	19:17	18:26	19:18
Durban	17:34	18:25	17:35	18:26
Bloemfontein	17:53	18:44	17:54	18:45
Gqeberha	17:56	18:48	17:57	18:50
Plettenberg Bay	18:05	18:57	18:06	18:59
East London	17:46	18:39	17:48	18:40
Jerusalem*	18:00	19:12	17:54	19:09
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Just months after the people of Israel left Egypt in the year 2448, they sinned by worshipping a golden calf. Moses ascended Mount Sinai and prayed to G-d to forgive them. After two 40-day stints on the mountain, full Divine favour was obtained. The day Moses came down the mountain (the 10th of Tishrei) was to be known forevermore as the Day of Atonement – Yom Kippur.





# Injured acrobat lifted by donation of prosthetic arm

LEE TANKLE

A chance meeting at Orange Grove School in Johannesburg inspired Gary Meyers, a South African architect now living in Australia, to raise enough money for a new prosthetic arm for Kerry-Lee Brandt Salamon who gave birth to a baby girl this week.

It took him six weeks and a GoFundMe page to reach the goal of 22 000 Australian dollars (almost R270 000) to change her life. Brandt Salamon, who is an occupational therapist but also worked part-time as a pole acrobat and aerial dancer, had to have her arm amputated after a horrific accident in 2014.

She had been rehearsing for a show at Sun City in August of that year when she fell six metres headfirst because of a failed rigging system. She had been performing a trapeze sequence with another acrobat who was holding her from above when the rigging broke.

Brandt Salamon was in hospital for six months in a coma, and had to undergo several surgeries, including brain surgery and ultimately the amputation of her arm.

“They told me I’d never recover and would be a vegetable,” Brandt Salamon told the *SA Jewish Report* earlier this year. “The fact that I’ve recovered as much as I have and that I’m still recovering has shocked everyone – even my sister, who is a doctor herself.”

But Meyers took her recovery to another level.

He met Brandt Salamon on one of his numerous trips to South Africa in early 2023. Meyers was helping his friend, Barbara Novick, with a literacy and numeracy programme at Orange Grove School. “Kerry-Lee was helping the children in the cold school hall, and I noticed her,” Meyers told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“He approached me and talked to me about my arm,” she recalled. “I told him that I wanted to get a prosthetic arm to replace the one that I had already.” At this point, Meyers simply informed Brandt Salamon and her doctor that he would make sure she got her new

prosthetic arm. “I told her doctor to order the parts for the new arm,” said Meyers.

“At first, I thought it was a joke,” said Brandt Salamon, “but clearly it wasn’t.”

Said Meyers, “I don’t believe money should stand between someone being able to have a



limb.” He started the GoFundMe campaign at the end of May.

“It was a big risk for me. If I didn’t get any donations, I would have had to foot the bill. In any charity work I do, I’m always the first and last person to donate,” he said.

“I reached out to as many people I could think of to try and get them to donate.” As a King David Linksfield alumnus, he reached out to ex-Davidians far and wide.

“I didn’t know where the money would come from, so when it started to come, I was confused,” said Brandt Salamon.

Meyers is no stranger to charity work. “I’ve been involved in fundraising for organisations such as Animals For Australia since 2010,” he said. “After my heart attack in 2018, I decided I wanted to do even more charity work.”

Thereafter, he embarked on massive walking expeditions to raise money for the St Vincent’s Hospital in Sydney. Before coming to South Africa in May, Meyers had just completed a 330km walk from Sydney to Canberra.

“I arrived in Canberra on 2 March, where I was greeted by



David Hurley, the governor-general of the Commonwealth of Australia, the highest-ranking person in the area,” he said.

The GoFundMe had a phenomenal response, and the goal was met within six weeks.

“I’m still in shock that I was able to have my arm fixed. It’s honestly insane,” said Brandt Salamon.

“I’ve donated because I feel this is one of the best causes Gary Meyers

has ever been involved in, and he has done quite a few,” wrote a donor on the site.

Another said, “Because Kerry’s attitude is a contagious inspiration to anybody who would read her story. Giving back is contagious in a good way.”

Even former Springbok Rugby Captain Francois Pienaar reached out to Meyers and Brandt Salamon, writing, “Dear Kerry, what an incredible story of resilience. You

have gone through so much and continue to fight. I can imagine that at times it must be difficult to keep up the fight, to keep spirits up, and push forward.

“With the love and support you have combined with your strength and determination, you cannot fail. Sometimes success doesn’t quite look like what we thought it would and at times, life hurdles you onto another path, as traumatic as that has been for you, reading your story,” Pienaar wrote.

“I commend you for this superhuman achievement against all odds. Stay strong Kerry, and may your story provide hope and inspiration to others facing life-changing traumas and challenges. You can be proud of your mind and body.”

Combined with the excitement of repairs to her prosthetic arm, Brandt Salamon found out she was expecting a baby girl, who she gave birth to earlier this week. “I was already six months along when I found out I was pregnant. It was a shock,” she said. Having her new arm made the pregnancy even more exciting. “I was practising picking her up. It’s honestly amazing that I was able to meet Gary, and I can now hold my perfect daughter with my new arm,” she said.

## UCT allows third ‘terrorism’ engagement in one year

>>>Continued from page 1

as such. The other issue is that speakers are confirmed as addressing students in one capacity, and then it’s revealed during the talk that they are part of another organisation.

“These are presentations and no more,” Jacobson says, but if Jewish students don’t feel safe, “they should voice their concerns to UCT leadership, as they should do whenever any controversial speaker comes to campus.”

“They can reach out to the Cape SAJBD on [sajbd2@ctjc.co.za](mailto:sajbd2@ctjc.co.za) or contact SAUJS. The Cape SAJBD can provide a ‘know your rights on campus’ handbook to students,” Jacobson says.

In addition, students, parents, invested parties, and the community “can write to the UCT leadership and share their concerns”, Jacobson says. “Though the Cape SAJBD is engaging with UCT, the students and parents are the actual clients and as such have the right to voice their opinions.”

Following the March incident when members of Hamas and PIJ addressed UCT students via video call from Iran, Moholola told the *SA Jewish Report* the university was aware of the event and concerns raised by SAUJS prior to the event. He went on to say that it wasn’t “an institutional event, but one hosted by a students’ society”.

At the time, the chairperson of SAUJS Western Cape, Erin Dodo, said, “I believe this impacts on the safety of Jewish students and students in general and makes UCT a place for violence to be excused.” Dodo did everything she could to stop the speakers from

addressing that event. The SAZF and Cape SAJBD also engaged with UCT on the matter.

After the incident in May, when Al-Assi addressed students, and SAUJS, the SAZF, and Cape SAJBD raised their concerns with the university, Moholola reiterated that events hosted by student organisations weren’t institutional events. He said UCT management wasn’t involved in inviting the speakers, “nor does management necessarily align with any views held or expressed by any invited speaker”.

“Our universities should provide spaces of rational debate and inclusive engagement, and not hotbeds of hostility,” Polovin says. “Places of learning in South Africa ought to be clear on the dangers of incitement and hosting speakers who would call for the discrimination against Jews and the destruction of Israel.”

“Our primary concern on campus is the well-being and safety of Jewish students,” Jacobson says. “We will continue to engage with UCT.”

“UCT has an almost 200-year legacy as a world-class teaching and research institute,” she says. “From our ongoing engagements with the leaders of the university, we know that they are all committed to ensuring that the campus remains a haven both for free expression and safe study. We’re confident Jewish students have no good reason to worry about their personal safety or about giving full expression to their Jewishness.”

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# Waterless hospitals highlight health risks and delays

NICOLA MILTZ

As taps ran dry at several Gauteng public hospitals, doctors and healthcare workers, many of them Jewish, have had to dig deep to push through the stench in their commitment to delivering healthcare and saving lives.

Health facilities such as Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital, Helen Joseph Hospital, and Pholosong Hospital in Ekurhuleni have experienced water supply interruptions, some continuing for days. Residents in affected areas have also been frustrated by water cuts and low water pressure.

The Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) said these latest interruptions were due to “various challenges experienced by the water utilities, Rand Water, and Johannesburg Water and the respective municipalities”.

Hospitals have reservoirs and some have boreholes as part of the back-up system when there are supply disruptions. “However, the system becomes strained when the interruptions are prolonged,” said GDoH head of communications, Motalatale Modiba.

Johannesburg Water and Rand Water say multiple reservoirs are under strain.

One Jewish doctor at Rahima Moosa, who asked to remain anonymous, said the smell got so bad, he’d do anything to avoid using the toilet.

“The toilets don’t flush when there’s no water, so it just sits there, it’s gross,” he said.

However in spite of this, he said these latest



Photo: Facebook

Rahima Moosa Mother and Child Hospital

challenges weren’t “the end of the world”. It was business as usual for healthcare workers, who “just got on with the business of the day”.

“The water issue is an ongoing thing, we just make a plan,” he said, and the hospital did its best to provide contingency measures. Johannesburg Water despatched water tankers to the health facilities to mitigate the impact on services.

The water disruptions, he said, affected different wards differently as there were one or two wards which had working taps while most of the taps were dry. “This situation, although mostly an inconvenience, has prompted creative solutions for handwashing, using bottled water and frequent hand sanitation.

“However, there are occasional mishaps when individuals forget about the water situation and realise it only after applying soap, or when you want to boil the kettle and it’s empty.

“Some days unexpected floods occur as the water supply returns overnight and taps have mistakenly been left open,” he said.

This necessitates a rush to mop floors, use towels to absorb water, and redirect patients while waiting for areas to dry. These interruptions also result in longer instrument cleaning times, causing a backlog in the operating theatre, the doctor said.

Without water, thorough handwashing and scrubbing before and after surgeries becomes challenging, leading to requests for staff to

bring five litre bottles of water to work or to use an external tap, he said.

Jack Bloom, the Democratic Alliance Gauteng Shadow Health MEC, said the water cuts highlighted the “urgent need for water resilience measures” at Gauteng public hospitals.

“Hospitals should never run out of water as it shoots up the risk of infection and disease. It’s also distressing for patients, and surgery backlogs rise when operations are cancelled.

“With the latest water cuts, the toilets became smelly, and relatives had to bring in water when visiting their loved ones,” Bloom said.

Water resilience measures should include increased reserve water storage, the digging of internal boreholes, regular maintenance of water pipes, and pumps to get water to higher floors when water pressure is low.

“Every hospital needs a water plan in our new reality in which flowing water can no longer be taken for granted,” Bloom said.

Another doctor, who recently worked at Helen Joseph, said the water supply interruptions weren’t new, yet there was still no evidence of advance planning to ameliorate water shortages.

“I’ll never forget the recent sight that greeted me in the parking lot one morning when I arrived for work. There was a gathering of nurses queuing at one working tap outside the building, each holding a bucket to fill with water. It breaks my heart. It seems like this whole area of Johannesburg is being

forgotten about in terms of service delivery and infrastructure,” he said.

“Hygiene is the most important thing in a hospital. I wash my hands after every procedure and to go outside to do this at a tap is time consuming, never mind totally insane. Helen Joseph has a superb emergency department which will be greatly enhanced by the new casualty complex being built, but a hospital cannot function optimally without water. You cannot operate, you cannot sterilise, and patients cannot bath and clean themselves.

“Doctors and nurses go home at the end of a shift, what about the poor patients who can’t even flush the toilets. It’s disgusting. For colleagues who live at the hospital residences set up for doctors and nurses, going home after a long shift and not being able to shower isn’t a joke.”

At Edenvale Hospital, another doctor recounted the impact on patients a few weeks ago, when the hospital grappled with water interruptions caused by a burst water pipe and low water pressure, impacting most wards. For example, in the paediatric ward, there were infants in need of sterilised bottles and water for formula preparation.

The situation raised concerns about the potential transmission of infection among patients, especially those suffering from gastroenteritis or diarrhoea. To cope, the hospital implemented contingency plans, but there were moments when doctors resorted to using limited IV fluid for handwashing, staff collected water from an external tank using buckets, and large bins were filled with water for various purposes.

She recalled a challenging incident when she struggled to transfer water from a sizeable container for toilet use and hand hygiene. In the process, she accidentally spilled water. “I then had to locate a mop to clean the floors.”

Earlier this week, the GDoH announced that though the water supply had stabilised at the three affected hospitals, the supply problem wasn’t “completely resolved”.

“The department will continue working with the relevant stakeholders to improve its capacity and infrastructure to ensure that health services continue to be rendered even when there are service interruptions,” said Modiba.

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## Pope probably knew about death camps, letter shows

ANDREW LAPIN – JTA

A newly uncovered letter provides the strongest evidence yet that Pope Pius XII knew about the Nazi extermination of the Jews as it was happening.

The letter was sent by Reverend Lothar Koenig, a German Jesuit priest, in December 1942, informing Pius of the mass murder of thousands of “Poles and Jews” at Belzec, a Nazi death camp. It was discovered by Vatican archivist Giovanni Coco.

Pius’ actions during the Holocaust have been the subject of debate



Photo: ullstein bild via Getty Images

for decades. While serving as a senior Vatican official before ascending to the papacy, Pius signed a treaty with Nazi Germany. Later, as pope, he maintained a public silence as Italy’s Jews were rounded up and deported to death camps. Other scholars, meanwhile, have argued variously that Pius was unaware of the full extent of Nazi war crimes, and that he pursued secret back channels to funnel Jews to safety.

Scrutiny of Pius has intensified after Pope Francis unsealed the Vatican’s archives on Pius in 2019. Earlier

this month, researchers uncovered documentation listing thousands of Jews who had been sheltered from the Nazis in Catholic convents and monasteries.

Koenig’s letter leaves little room for doubt about whether Pius knew of the Holocaust.

“It was already well established that Pius XII had early reports of the Nazis’ systematic efforts to exterminate the Jews of Europe,” said David Kertzer, a Jewish Pulitzer-prize winning historian of the Vatican during World War II. The letter was sent to the Pope’s secretary, his closest adviser, which means Pius almost certainly saw it, Coco said.

The letter, which describes the persecution of Catholics in Germany, includes the information about Belzec in an appendix. It also points to a longer trail of papal communication about the mass murders. There are references to reports of the death camp, Auschwitz, and the concentration camp, Dachau, hinting at the existence of other documents sent to the Pope that haven’t been discovered yet.

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# Former military accuse Bibi of damaging Israel’s security



ROLENE MARKS

Israel’s ruling coalition’s plans to reform or overhaul the judiciary – depending on which side of the argument you stand – has been one of the most polarising events in the country’s history.

Israeli society has become more fractious, and this has filtered out to diaspora communities.

Out of all the sectors and industries objecting to the proposed overhaul, Israel’s security establishment has been the most vociferous critic. Should the independence of the judiciary be radically curtailed and vital checks and balances removed, Israel’s military and security establishment could be vulnerable to those who seek to employ lawfare at the International Court of Justice.

Thousands of reservists from a variety of units across all major branches of the military have threatened not to report for duty, citing lack of trust in the state of Israel,” the letter said.

“Netanyahu’s conduct and the manner in which he makes decisions could cause significant damage to the national security of Israel and also to the national security of Israel’s close ally – the United States,” it continued.

“It’s clear to us that the main motive for Netanyahu’s acts is his desire to stop the legal proceedings being conducted against him in the Israeli court on charges of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust, that were filed against him by the attorney general that he himself chose and appointed to the position. It’s clear to us that his actions are intended also to enable him to cancel the state commission of inquiry headed by former Supreme Court president, Justice Asher Grunis, which is investigating the ‘submarines and marine-vessels affair’”.

The letter continues to state specific incidents where the signatories believe that the prime minister is endangering the security of the country.

It concludes with a plea to Edelstein, who is a member of the Likud faction chaired by Netanyahu, and is the former speaker of Knesset.

“As chair of the Knesset foreign affairs and defence committee, it’s your duty by law to oversee the conduct of the government and its prime minister on such critical issues related to the national security of Israel and its future.”

Among the 82 signatories are Lt General Moshe (Bogie) Ya’alon, former defence minister and chief of staff; Carmi Gillon, former director of the Shin Bet; Commissioner Rafi Peled, former chief commissioner of Israel police; Ilan Mizrahi, former head of the national security council; Major General Danny Yatom, the former director of the Mossad; and others.

Earlier this week, the prime minister sat down for a conversation with the entrepreneur and owner of X, Elon Musk, and admitted



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu



Chair of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, MK Yuli Edelstein

government ministers making decisions that could render them vulnerable to criminal charges.

The Supreme Court provides an extra layer of legal protection, ensuring compliance with international law and investigating any possible transgressions.

Imagine National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir or Bezalel Smotrich, a self-described fascist who has a military portfolio in the West Bank, making decisions that Israel’s soldiers must carry out. Therein lies the rub.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is in New York this week ahead of his address to the United Nations General Assembly. As the prime minister was making his way “Stateside”, more than 80 former top defence and security officials released a letter in Hebrew and English warning of “significant harm” to Israel’s security as a result of the proposed judicial overhauls.

Netanyahu’s conduct and the manner in which he makes decisions could cause significant damage to the national security of Israel and also to the national security of Israel’s close ally – the United States.

Addressing the letter to Yuli Edelstein, the chairperson of the Knesset foreign affairs and defence committee, the damning letter accuses the prime minister of “deceit of the defence establishment” and “significant harm to the security of the state of Israel”.

“These actions – led and promoted by Netanyahu – are transforming the state of Israel from a democracy based on the principles of our declaration of independence to an autocracy that harms Israel’s national strength through the dismantling of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], its defence establishment, economy, financial stability, and risks the social fabric of the people and

that the initial proposal for overhaul was a “mistake” that would “reject one imbalance by creating another”, but that the process for electing judges must change. He said that was his focus.

As the pressure mounts on the prime minister, Israelis are wondering if it will have any effect before it’s too late.

• Rolene Marks is a Middle East commentator often heard on radio and TV and is the co-founder of Lay of the Land and the SA-Israel Policy Forum.

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Tracey J., SA



## Academic freedom – no excuse for antisemitism

As we count down to Yom Kippur this weekend, I cannot help wondering why the University of Cape Town (UCT) doesn't just apologise to the South African Jewish community for allowing terrorists onto its campus, albeit online, to speak to students.

When the Hezbollah representative spoke last Friday, it surely didn't escape the university leadership's notice that this was the third time it had allowed people considered terrorists around the world to speak on campus.

It couldn't have missed this point, considering that each time it has allowed it, the South African Union of Jewish Students, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and the South African Zionist Federation have taken it up with the university. This newspaper has also written about it every time, and gone to UCT for a response. Surely it recognises how upsetting this is for the community?

Why would a university welcome people who are internationally known terrorists onto its campus – albeit online – and into its lecture halls? Why would a university's leadership allow such people to sprout their prejudice in its hallowed halls?

Surely leaders of universities realise that this can only be harmful and invites prejudice onto a campus that purports to fight racism of any kind?

The organisations they welcome are clear to the world that they want to eliminate the Jewish state and all its people. They are open about their hatred, believing they have a right to it. And why not, seeing as they are given a free platform in what is still considered one of the best universities in Africa?

Once upon a time, UCT was known for its extensive Jewish student body. So much so, students from Stellenbosch University nicknamed the UCT's rugby teams "Ikeys", which came from the word "kikes", an antisemitic epithet for Jews. Today, the teams are still known as Ikeys. But the university appears to be becoming less and less welcoming towards Jews because of its open-arms policy towards blatantly anti-Israel and antisemitic terrorist organisations.

Having a representative of Hezbollah on campus is outrageous.

Hezbollah is designated a terrorist organisation by the United States, United Kingdom, the Arab League, and several other countries. But this didn't make the university question the decision to allow its spokesperson to speak to students. I understand that South Africa hasn't designated it a terrorist organisation, but that doesn't mean that it isn't. And having Hezbollah speaking to students is hugely offensive to us.

The organisers of this week's event sent out an invitation that stated, "A video message will be recorded by the participants [at the event] that will be sent directly to the Palestinian resistance Hamas and [Palestinian] Islamic Jihad!"

So, the students are called on to send messages of support to terrorist organisations? Really, this is acceptable on campus?

Palestinian Islamic Jihad is a designated terrorist organisation by the European Union, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

As for Hamas, it's designated a terrorist organisation by Australia, Israel, the United States, the European Union, Britain, and Canada.

Surely, these countries know something about terrorism.

The fact that UCT allows this is offensive to the Jewish community in general. How can it not be? But, as in the past few occasions when the university has been called out on this same issue, it dismisses it as if it's irrelevant and not something it gets involved in.

Would it allow people who are racist to stand up and speak about how they hate black people? It wouldn't. I cannot believe that in that case, it would still say that as a university, it didn't get involved in such things. Nobody would accept that.

Would people be allowed to speak about hatred towards Muslim people? Not even for a moment. How can a university of this stature allow itself to be used like this? What other organisations would it allow to speak out on campus?

Why is it okay for people who want to destroy the Jewish state to be allowed to speak on campus?

It's the week of asking for forgiveness, and I believe we would certainly be open to UCT apologising and never doing it again. Perhaps it still will. It's high time for the university to consider what it's doing by giving terrorists an open platform on campus.

Some may argue that it's about academic freedom, and universities should allow for as many viewpoints as possible. However, academic freedom isn't an excuse for antisemitism. Also, an institution that purports to eradicate prejudice and racism cannot ignore prejudice and racism.

On a far more uplifting note, when you have a passing meeting with someone and they promise to do you a favour worth R270 000, you're unlikely to believe them. I certainly would be a bit sceptical about such promises. However, when architect Gary Meyers told Kerry-Lee Brandt Salamon that he would get her a new prosthetic arm, he not only meant it, but actually did it in record time.

Brandt Salamon has had her fair share of bad luck after an almost fatal accident. But this week, when she gave birth to her baby girl, she also had this recent incredible experience to inspire her and a new prosthetic arm to help her to deal with the joys of first-time parenting.

Meyers did the right thing, but it was something nobody could possibly ask him to do. It was a huge venture to offer to raise this kind of money, but he took it on willingly.

He is proof positive about how rewarding it is to do good for others. It's so evident that the reward for doing good is huge in terms of how you feel about yourself and the positivity it engenders in your life.

With the new year having come and gone and Yom Kippur on our horizon, let's take a leaf out of Meyers' book and get inspired by helping others.

**Shabbat Shalom and g'mar chatima tova!**  
**Peta Krost**

The *SA Jewish Report* won't publish next week due to the high holy days. We'll be back the following week, on 5 October.

## SA community still world envied

OPINION

SHAUN ZAGNOEV



We all know that South Africans face challenges. Yet, South African Jewry remains extraordinarily vibrant and resilient. It's often viewed with admiration and a tinge of envy by global Jewry. A few surprising facts, many of which come from a survey jointly conducted in 2019 by the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at the University of Cape Town and the Institute for Jewish Policy Research in the United Kingdom (UK), highlight the uniqueness of this community.

South Africa has among the highest proportion of Jewish children in Jewish schools than any other diaspora community. It's estimated that close to 80% of Jewish children attend Jewish schools. This ensures that Jewish knowledge, tradition, and connection to Israel are conveyed to subsequent generations. It also acts as a natural antidote to intermarriage, which stands at just less than 20% compared to levels in excess of 50% in the United States and in much of Europe.

About 90% of South African Jews have a strong or at least a moderate attachment to Israel. The Zionist youth movements are very active, with about 50% of South Africans having attended an end-of-year camp. There's also a high level of involvement in Israeli commemorative events such as Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Hazikaron. Though I don't have the statistics for other diaspora communities, I would believe that this is uncommon.

South African Jews, regardless of their levels of religious observance, are extremely tolerant of one another. It's a remarkably united community. Though the vast majority of community members belong to Orthodox shuls – albeit not all practicing – there's a co-operative relationship between Orthodox and Progressive Jewry. In fact, the umbrella body of South African Jewry, the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD), has representatives of all streams of Jewry and constructively deals with matters of common interest. Moreover, there's unity between the more religious communities irrespective of ideological differences.

Notwithstanding the government's well-known anti-Israel stance, South Africa boasts one of the lowest levels of antisemitism in the diaspora. The average number of annual antisemitic incidents over the past decade has been about 60, and these have rarely been physical in nature or acts of vandalism. This is dramatically lower than other diaspora communities such as France and Australia – about 500 each – and Canada and the UK – about 2 000 each. There are many factors contributing to this, including a society which shuns discrimination; the SAJBD, which deals head on with every antisemitic incident that occurs; and South Africa's Constitution, considered to be the world's most ground breaking and progressive and which was relied on recently to convict a leading member of the country's largest trade union of antisemitic hate speech. To date, we have bucked the global trend of ballooning antisemitism.

South Africa has an exceptionally effective kashrut system. For all intents and purposes, there's only one kosher standard. The ubiquitous South African Beth Din kosher sign is found on a vast, and continually increasing, range of products. Likewise, kosher establishments are prolific. South Africa has always been a drawcard for

international tourists looking for a combination safari, mountain, and sea holiday. Travel to South Africa for international observant Jews is now more popular than ever due to the ease of accessing kosher food and religious facilities. The relatively weak rand has no doubt contributed to this trend.

South Africa's primary Jewish welfare organisation, the Chevrah Kadisha, is in a league of its own. The Chev ensures that every single Jew in South Africa is cared for. It runs facilities for the elderly and the disabled; provides financial support to those in need; provides counselling services; assists in funding education; runs a facility for children in need; and much more. The Chev lives by its motto: "No Jew will be left behind" and raises hundreds of millions of rands to support its activities. Its work is supported by numerous other welfare organisations.

For observant Jews, South Africa offers a unique setting. There are multiple schools and synagogues – including a few new ones in the process of being built – catering for all religious streams. Through the efforts of the SAJBD, alternative arrangements are made for religious university students to write exams that have been set on Shabbat or Jewish festivals. Contrary to global trends, universities are safe spaces for Jews to express their views on all matters. South Africa is also regarded as having initiated one of the most successful *ba'al teshuva* (return to religious observance) movements.

At a global Hatzolah conference held in South Africa this year, South Africa's Hatzolah was recognised as the world's leading Hatzolah organisation due to its professionalism, infrastructure, people, innovation, and equipment. Most South Africans have observed firsthand how multiple ambulances and responders with sophisticated equipment converge within minutes of a medical emergency. South Africa also has a highly regarded private hospital network, which offers superb healthcare services by top medical specialists. As an aside, there are two organisations that provide funding to Jews unable to afford medical insurance to allow them to access the private healthcare system.

In spite of its relatively small size, our community has made and continues to make an outsized contribution to global Jewry. South African Jews have helped to create vibrant communities in many countries, including notably Australia and Canada. In relative terms, aliya from South Africa remains vibrant, with Israel being the primary emigration destination. And of course, one of our more recent exports is the global Shabbat Project, which was conceptualised and implemented by South Africa's own visionary and dynamic Chief Rabbi

Dr Warren Goldstein.

South Africa's Jews have always made an exceptional contribution to the broader society. As is well known, they were disproportionately represented in the struggle against apartheid, and prominently involved in opposition politics and economic development. It remains gratifying that Jews continue to be at the forefront of many humanitarian outreach programmes in South Africa, but this warrants an article of its own.

Finally, I must mention that South African Jews are best known for their warmth. Perhaps it's due to the community's largely homogenous Lithuanian roots, the temperate, or the friendly character of South Africans generally. Whatever the cause, South African generosity and hospitality is world renowned.

Given the above, it comes as no surprise that though South African Jews who emigrate may benefit in many ways, they often struggle to replicate what they have left behind. It behoves those of us who have chosen to remain to reflect periodically on the many positive aspects of our situation.

- *Shaun Zagnoev is the national president of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies.*





# Learning from Columbia sex abuse cover up

OPINION

Columbia University has recently been rocked by allegations of a cover up of sexual abuse by one of its obstetrician/gynaecologists. After a long and arduous process, Dr Robert Hadden (65), has been sentenced to 20 years in jail for sexually assaulting more than 200 of his patients.

As I write this article, hundreds more women are coming forward with reports of abuse. This would make Hadden one of the worst sexual predators in American history.

According to an article that appeared in *The Intelligencer* on 12 September 2023, Columbia University's medical department acting head was alerted to the problem in 1993, when a woman reported sexual abuse during a pelvic examination. After a cursory check with Hadden's assistant, who claimed she saw nothing, he let the matter drop. This was one of the first in a string of reports, some in writing, that were brought to their notice over the next three decades. Columbia was involved in consistently covering up reports, turning a blind eye to this doctor's criminal conduct, and denying accountability at every step. It continued to employ the doctor, putting endless patients at risk of abuse. At this stage, Columbia has agreed to pay \$236.5 million (R4.5 trillion) to resolve lawsuits brought by 226 of his victims, while admitting no fault and placing the blame squarely on Hadden.

It's natural to be shocked and horrified when reading this. We hold ourselves above this kind of behaviour, and would never imagine that we or any heads of our institutions could act in a similar manner. Though we all would want to do the right thing, we may find ourselves hampered by the complex issue of trust. In his book, *Talking to Strangers*, Malcolm Gladwell explores the question of trust within organisations, believing that they cannot function without trust. Employees need to feel trusted in order to fulfil their tasks. People need to be given the benefit of the doubt, and management cannot



Dr Robert Hadden

be second guessing their employees at every turn. In larger organisations, the need for trust becomes even greater. When an issue comes up, management needs to be able to trust the judgement of lower-level management in regards to issues concerning members of their team.

Let's hypothesise for a minute. What if you're the chief executive or head of a local school, shul, youth movement, or prominent communal organisation? You have given years of your life to building this organisation, which is extremely close to your heart. Now, an allegation of sexual abuse is made against one of your staff members, volunteers, or congregants. Without doubt, the foundation of your world would be shaken and you would find it immensely difficult to believe that it could be possible.

It may be someone who you know well, is integral to the functioning of your organisation, and who you trust implicitly. However, your natural inclination to trust, which is a necessary component of leadership, may unconsciously trip you up. You may find yourself giving the person the benefit of the doubt in spite of the seriousness of the allegation. You may even get caught up in protecting them and advocating for them and their

innocence. This may lead you down a dark tunnel, which can ultimately result in your involvement in a cover up and sometimes in cases of sexual abuse, victim blaming. Furthermore, if the individual is a wealthy and significant contributor to your institution, it would affect your objectivity, and you may be inclined to protect the perpetrator in order to guarantee their financial support. Other considerations which might come into play could be your institution's legal liability for these incidences, as well as the reputational damage your institution may suffer.

This may sound far-fetched but this is exactly the route followed by Columbia, a highly acclaimed university, over a 30-year period. When charges were pressed, it failed to hand over evidence in its possession in spite of a subpoena to do so, and waited months to inform its patients that Hadden was no longer working. It finally sent out a matter-of-fact letter without giving the real reason for his dismissal. This cover up meant that many other victims remained unaware of the allegations, and were thus prevented from coming forward and strengthening the case that the prosecutors were trying to build.

Let's bring this back home again. Now you as chief executive need to act. Your duty of care extends to all members of the organisation, but through the trust dynamic in which you are caught, you may end up being single-minded about protecting the alleged offender to the detriment of the other parties within your organisation. By doing this, the victim's complaints are dismissed.

If the case is one of sexual abuse, as with the Columbia

University scandal, you may decide to set up an internal panel of people from within your institution to hear the case and resolve it quietly. This may sound wise, but it has serious problems. The first is that this body would be wholly untrained and inexperienced in dealing with sexual abuse cases. Without extensive training on the issue of abuse, the nature of a sexual predator, grooming, and the high likelihood of reoffending, such a board would clearly be ill-equipped to manage such a case. Though the board members may believe that they have dealt with the problem effectively and that the organisation is now safe, they don't know that most sexual predators are masterful at covering their tracks and will generally find ways to continue to offend regardless of any measures they have put in place to stop them.

Here's what we all need to learn, particularly those of us with leadership positions in our community. When you get repeated messages about someone in your organisation that are troubling, you have to be willing to step in early. You need to set aside your trust for the moment, and set up a mechanism to investigate the matter. You have to raise your awareness about the issue of sexual abuse, and strengthen your willingness to explore the matter early on in the process. This is especially relevant when there are a number of similar reports being brought to your attention.

You need to be a trailblazer, and understand that your natural default position of trust may work to the detriment of all parties in your organisation, including yourself. G-d forbid you should end up in the position that Columbia University now finds itself in. Rather act swiftly with the intention of doing what's right and protecting those who deserve it most.

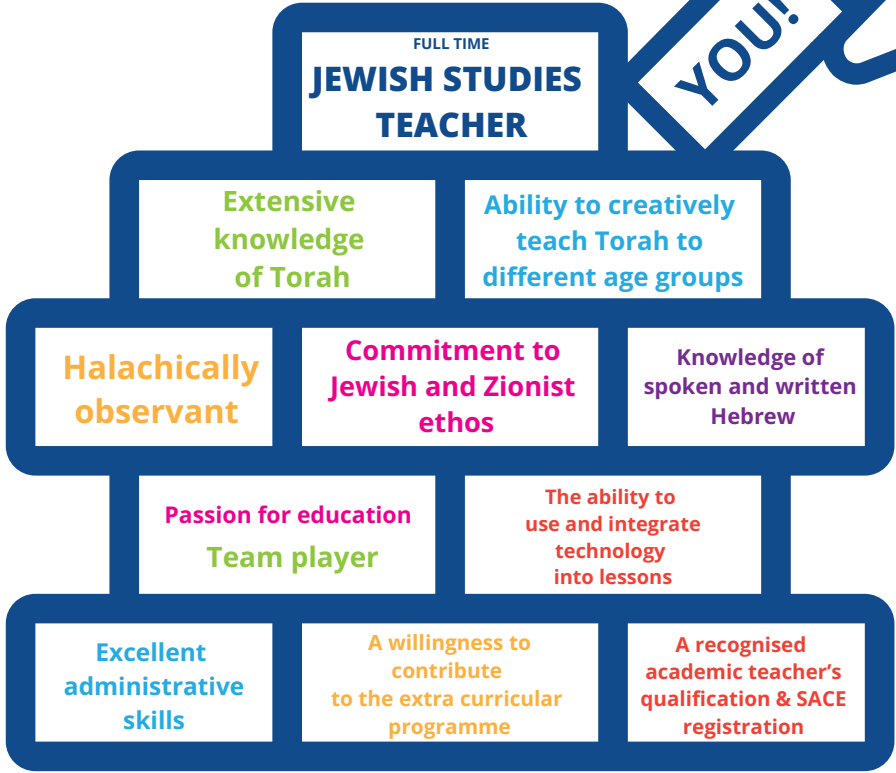
• Wendy Hendler is the co-founder and director of *Koleinu SA*, the helpline for victims of abuse in the South African Jewish community. The helpline number is 011 264 0341, operating Sunday to Thursday from 09:00 to 22:00 and after Shabbat until midnight.



WENDY HENDLER



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# Yom Kippur War haunts survivors 50 years on

TALI FEINBERG

A year after finishing matric, South African Barry Feldman found himself on Israel’s frontline, defending the Jewish state from Syrian forces, which were part of an Arab coalition that launched a surprise attack against Israel on Yom Kippur on 6 October 1973.

He was one of many young people who put their lives on the line 50 years ago.

“We were absolutely ‘green’, although fortunately, our commanders weren’t,” says Feldman. “At 10:00 on Yom Kippur, we were told that we may have to go into action at 18:00 and that there were 1 000 tanks opposite us and we had 110. A few minutes after 14:00, everything started exploding around us and about an hour later, we were on the frontline in the south section of the Golan. In the first 24 hours, my unit lost five of our 11 tanks. When we ran out of ammunition, we took it from damaged tanks.

“

WE WERE ABSOLUTELY ‘GREEN’,  
ALTHOUGH FORTUNATELY, OUR  
COMMANDERS WEREN’T.

“When we were completely surrounded, they organised a convoy of tanks from all the units in the area, and we pulled out through enemy controlled territory, getting back to our lines by morning,” he says. “We hit enemy tanks at a range of 50m during the night. We fought with the six remaining tanks until the sixth day of the war, by which time the Israeli army had retaken all the territory that the Syrian army had occupied.”

Feldman made aliya in January 1972 after finishing matric. Originally from Johannesburg, he now lives on Kibbutz Yizre’el in Israel’s north. “I joined the army in May 1972,” he says. “I was in the Nachal infantry unit. In July 1973, I went for advanced training in tanks. We had done the basics, and I was a tank driver in Centurion tanks. We started training as a tank unit only two weeks before the war.”

He says his parents back in Johannesburg had no idea he was fighting in the war. Even his brother, Jules, who was also fighting on the front, assumed that his brother was too inexperienced to fight and was still in training.



Photo: Israeli Government Press Office

That’s what he had told their parents back home.

Even those not on the frontline were affected by the war. Leon Singer, who now lives in Cape Town, says, “I didn’t fight in the Yom Kippur War but I was at Kibbutz Kfar Blum [in Israel’s north] on the day war broke out. It was scary. We heard tanks rumbling. I saw Israeli planes chasing after Syrian Migs, and one was shot down outside our kibbutz. The nights were eerie. Once I walked into the dining room and it was pitch black and somebody was playing the theme from *Exodus* on the piano.”

Dr Michael Morris was living in Durban but was called upon by Israel to treat war wounded in hospital emergency rooms. He didn’t hesitate. “At that time, emergency medicine hadn’t evolved yet in South Africa or many other places around the world,” he says from Cape Town, where he now lives. He was therefore one of the few doctors who knew how to provide emergency care for catastrophic injuries, and he saw many. “The wounds included terrible gunshot wounds, burns, and missing limbs,” he says.

Feldman says he knows many fellow soldiers who were wounded or killed, including in his own unit. “After five days of nonstop action, we were exhausted. After not enough hours of sleep, we were woken up and told that we were to have the honour of being among the first tanks to break through into Syria. About 10km into Syria, my tank was hit. We all got into a

second tank, which had also been damaged, but was still drivable. That tank was then hit again. We all got out and managed to get into the third tank – now 12 of us in the tank.

“There was no space, so the commander had half his body out of the tank and was hit by a bullet and killed. The tank was then hit by a shell in the turret. The flash of heat was unbelievable. The driver just kept driving because he hadn’t been given a different command.

“I had some burns, shrapnel in my legs, and a piece of shrapnel in my eye. I was taken to the hospital in Safed, and spent three days there. I was treated and sent to a recuperation centre in Nahariya. When we arrived at the hospital, each soldier was given a woman soldier to see him through the process. I was in shock and couldn’t stop talking. She’s still probably having nightmares to this day. I told her everything down to the last gory detail”

After a few days in the recuperation centre, he and two others decided it was time to go back to their unit. “We came back to the kibbutz for one night, and then hitchhiked back to the front, which was now about 40km from Damascus. I found my unit, and was there for the next six months. The winter was the coldest that the area had known for many years. The temperature went down to minus 13 degrees centigrade. If you touched the tank without a glove, your hand would stick to it.

“We spent two weeks on the frontline, and then two weeks further back in the villages. At some point [Prime Minister] Golda [Meir] and other members of government visited. On 22 April 1974, [after a prolonged war of attrition in the Syrian bulge], a ceasefire was declared. We pulled out, and a few days later, I was released from the army.”

However, others weren’t so lucky. Feldman knew South African *olim* David “Dudi” Silbowitz and Neil Freed, who died in the first few weeks of the war. Silbowitz was born in 1948 in Cape Town, and Freed in 1949 in Johannesburg. In 1971, the close friends made aliya. They settled on Kibbutz Yizre’el. Silbowitz was a founder of rugby and cricket in Israel.



Barry Feldman (centre, facing the camera) and his unit cleaning the cannon of their tank, Syrian bulge, January 1974



Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir visiting an injured soldier

Photo: Israeli Government Press Office

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# Liora Karps finds meaning in tragedy

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

When Shaun Karps (or Karpelowsky), who was deeply allergic to bees, was stung three times in July 2019, he fell into a state of unresponsive consciousness before he died in August 2022. Faced by this devastating “wrecking ball”, his loving wife, Liora, knew she had to find her way out of the rubble.

Speaking at Yeshiva College in the run-up to Rosh Hashanah, Karps delved into the devastation she experienced on facing her “worst-case scenario”. “Even if the worst thing that you can possibly imagine does actually happen to you, it’s possible to move forward,” she said. “It’s possible still to live a life of gratitude and growth, of happiness and joy, and even to make meaning from the most terrible thing that has happened.”

When Karps received a call that Shaun had been stung and was in a serious condition, she rushed to the Netcare Linksfield Hospital emergency room, where she was told that he would be taken straight to intensive care. Waiting with Shaun’s parents and sister, Karps was relieved when the doctor who eventually appeared was a close friend. “He told me, this is very, very serious, and Shaun may not be okay.” When she asked whether they needed to start a *tehillim* group, the doctor said yes.

“I’m told that the downstairs area of the Linksfield was so full as word got out, that they had to open up the boardroom to accommodate all the people,” Karps said. WhatsApp *tehillim* groups multiplied, and people would arrive, saying *tehillim* around the clock in Shaun’s room. “It was humbling, but it was also overwhelming,” Karps said. A private person, she considered telling people to give her and her family some space. Yet she soon realised they were comforted by being there for them.

This echoed her philosophy of the “law of more” – to

always try and do more when people are going through difficulties. This not only allows you to be there for others but also to receive the gift of knowing that you’re able to make a difference. “I decided to allow people to be there for us in whatever way they wanted. Who was I to take that away from them?”

After six weeks and no change in Shaun’s condition, Karps felt like her life was out of control. “I’m a very A-type personality and I thought to myself, ‘My life feels like a game of pickup sticks.’ The day before the accident, my life was like the beginning of the game, where you hold all those sticks and everything is tidy. But now they had been blasted from my hand, and I had a mess of sticks lying in front of me. I was busy trying to pick up every stick at the same time – to make huge medical decisions, financial decisions, parenting decisions.”

Karps knew that in keeping with the rules of the game, she needed to start lifting one stick at a time. “When you’re left with a mess in front of you, there will be some sticks that you’ll be able to move today, tomorrow, or in a month’s time, and there will be sticks that you’ll never be able to move – make your peace with it. That’s really helped me move forward.”

Five months in, Karps had put together a semblance of routine for herself and her children. “By then, the doctors said to us that the chance of Shaun regaining any kind of consciousness was next to nothing, and that even if he did, he would be so severely brain damaged that he certainly wouldn’t be the Shaun we knew. His body was there, but he wasn’t.”

One evening, while eating Neapolitan ice cream, Karps and her kids laughed at a funny story her son told. They immediately stopped, questioning how they could find even a moment of joy when Shaun would never wake up.

Realising in that moment that her children would follow her lead, Karps compared their hearts to the Neapolitan ice cream, a mix of strawberry, vanilla, and

chocolate. “I said, ‘We don’t have to just choose one flavour or feeling at a time. The fact that we were able to have a moment to laugh at something funny doesn’t mean that we’re any less devastated.’ Our hearts have the capacity to hold all of our feelings at the same time.”

Karps also learned the importance of not writing every emotion off to anger. “When you label whatever you’re feeling as anger, it consumes you. I started thinking about my feelings as a pile of clothes.” Instead of just grabbing whatever emotion was at the top of the pile, which is how Shaun chose his sometimes-mismatched outfits, she decided to interrogate her feelings. “I feel hopeless and helpless. I feel untethered. I feel that Shaun was an anchor for me, and now I’m just flapping in the wind. But that’s not anger.”

Initially, Karps simply felt numb. “I understood that this was a survival mechanism.” Yet, knowing that Shaun wouldn’t recover and would eventually develop a life-threatening complication, Karps kept playing a scenario over in her head. “One day, I’m going to be standing at West Park at Shaun’s funeral, and as that first thud of sand hits that wood, am I going to feel nothing? That really got to me. And I also realised that as much as I wasn’t



Shaun and Liora Karps with their children



Liora Karps

feeling the difficult stuff, I wasn’t feeling any of the good stuff either.” Over time, through therapy, she has started being able to feel and cry. “Painful feelings are like fire. If a piece of your clothing is caught alight, don’t run, it fuels the fire. Rather stop, drop to the ground, and roll around – it puts the fire out.” There’s relief in the release of crying, then wiping your tears and being able to carry on, she said. “So, don’t run from your feelings. The gift is that you start to be present in those beautiful moments as well.”

## Playing field not level when it comes to emigration

OPINION

DAN BROTMAN



In 2023, South Africans are among many worldwide considering their emigration options.

Gallup International’s 2022 study posed a hypothetical question, “If you were given all the necessary paperwork, would you like to live in another country, or would you prefer to remain where you are?”

The answer was revealing, with 36% of global respondents expressing a desire to migrate. Notably, this inclination was more pronounced among the youth and individuals from lower-income nations, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. However, for many, migration remains a distant dream due to the multifaceted barriers they face.

The American online remittance service, Remitly, highlighted Canada, Australia, the United States (US), and the United Kingdom as top international relocation preferences. What factors make these destinations so attractive in 2023? Or rather, what do these countries look for in prospective immigrants, and how do their immigration systems and policies differ?

In the North American context, the US is more conservative in its immigrant acceptance compared to Canada. Projections suggest that by 2025, the US will welcome only three immigrants per 1 000 residents, a stark contrast to Canada’s ambitious 12.5. This is underscored by Canada’s declaration last year to admit a staggering 1.45 million new permanent residents by 2025.

For perspective, Canada’s entire population is about 40 million. A fundamental difference between the two is their immigration focus: Canada leans heavily towards economic immigrants, whereas the US prioritises family reunification.

Breaking down the statistics: Canada recently reported that 60% of its new immigrants were economic immigrants, with family class immigrants making up 25% to 30%.

In the US, the scales tip differently. Almost two-thirds of the immigrants are family-based, while only 13% to 15% arrive under employment-related provisions. US immigration attorney David Garson provides a nuanced perspective. “An ideal immigrant would have at least a bachelor’s degree and experience in a STEM [science, technology, engineering, and mathematics] field.



However, as with other countries, there’s a shortage of qualified individuals for skilled labour. The government hasn’t done much to open immigration avenues for these types of people.”

Garson further cautions about changes to the US immigration system, “I don’t foresee immigration becoming more lenient, as most are aware it’s a politically charged topic. Making it more lenient can create a perception of ‘weakness’ that’s exploited in the media.”

Canada’s immigration strategy emphasises economic factors. It pioneered a points-based system in 1967. This system allows individuals to attain permanent residency without previous Canadian visits or job commitments. Those with strong English and French language skills, in their 20s or early 30s, and with higher educational qualifications and professional skills are favoured. Every two weeks, an Express Entry draw is held. Those assigned the announced minimum score receive an Invitation to Apply for permanent residency.

Daniel Mandelbaum, a Toronto-based Canadian immigration attorney, categorises prospective economic immigrants as either “fortunate” or “economically enabled risk-takers”. Mandelbaum elaborates, “By ‘fortunate’, I mean circumstances align such that a prospective immigrant meets the criteria of an immigration programme. For example, finding a life partner who’s Canadian; securing a job offer from an employer willing to support immigration; or qualifying as a skilled immigrant with in-demand skills.

Those with significant savings and a risk appetite might “take a significant risk to move to Canada as a temporary resident, spending a lot to make permanent immigration a reality, such as an international student or entrepreneur who hopes their investment in education or business will lead to permanent immigration in the future”, he says.

The OECD’s (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s) March 2023 report named Canada the most desirable country for start-up founders within the OECD. The US also ranks highly, with a robust start-up ecosystem. However, spouses of start-up founders in the US don’t have full access to the labour market, and there’s no direct route from a start-up visa to permanent residency.

Though New Zealand is a sought-after country for immigration, it’s not particularly friendly to those wanting to start a business. “A common misconception is that if you plan to start a business in New Zealand, there’s a clear immigration pathway,” says Christchurch-based immigration attorney Nicola Tiffen. “For most, this isn’t the case. New Zealand does have a visa category for business setup, but it’s challenging to secure, with many applications being declined.”

New Zealand’s immigration system favours highly skilled foreigners with local job offers, preferably in occupations on its green list. Alternatively, it’s highly beneficial to receive a job offer with a salary at least twice the median wage. Tiffen notes the advantage of New Zealand’s immigration system is its faster processing times due to the country’s smaller size.

Sydney-based immigration attorney Phillip Yip says, “Australia’s immigration system is designed for an annual intake of about 190 000 migrants. The numbers break down to about 70% skilled migrants and 30% family-related migrants.” He describes the ideal immigrant to Australia in 2023 as someone with recognised post-high school qualifications, under 45, with at least two years of relevant full-time work experience, acceptable English proficiency, and no health or character issues.

This year, there was a comprehensive review of Australia’s migration system, recommending significant

reforms. “The government has recognised the failings and promises structural change to attract and retain the best talent. I predict more lenient immigration processes in the future,” says Yip.

Michel Soler, the director of private clients for Latin America at Henley & Partners, a firm specialising in residence and citizenship by investment (RCBI), says, “Investment migration is now more attractive than ever for wealthy individuals, successful entrepreneurs, and business owners aiming to expand their personal rights, mitigate risk, and maximise optionality.”

He outlines some advantages of RCBI: flexibility, with minimal physical presence requirements to maintain status, inclusion of qualifying dependants beyond core family members, and attractive tax regimes. “For residency by investment, contrary to popular belief, options may start at about €50 000 [R1.014 million]. For citizenship by investment, options start at \$100 000 [R1.9 million] minimum. Investment for a single applicant and can rise to more than \$1 million [R19 million].” However, such programmes are frequently changing, so getting in while they are open is critical, as they may not be in the future.

“While some programmes have closed this year, such as Ireland, others are raising investment thresholds, such as Greece, or restricting investment routes, like Portugal.”

As someone who assists individuals worldwide wanting to migrate but uncertain about their options, I offer three primary pieces of advice: first, set aside savings – immigration and start-up expenses can easily run into tens of thousands of dollars; second, acquire a high-demand skill that isn’t tightly bound by regional regulations; and third, pursue any citizenships you may qualify for because of ancestry. Such ancestral citizenships can sometimes simplify migration to a third country, leveraging free-trade agreements associated with your citizenship by descent.

• Dan Brotman is the founder of Rootless Mobility, a migration consultancy that assists clients uncertain about their emigration options. Dan holds citizenship of South Africa, the US, Israel, and will soon add Canada to the list.



# Famous friendship between Sobukwe and Pogrund goes on screen

TALI FEINBERG

Veteran South African journalist Benjamin Pogrund, who now lives in Israel, initially never wanted his own life story to be part of the narrative of the upcoming series based on his biography of struggle activist Robert Sobukwe titled *How Can Man Die Better*.

“However, the filmmakers, who are from America, explained that the friendship between Bob [his nickname for Sobukwe] and I was so extraordinary, especially at that time, that they felt it needed to be included,” says Pogrund, speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* from Jerusalem. “They also felt that highlighting this friendship between a white Jew and a black Pan-Africanist would go a long way towards combating the antisemitism and racism that is rife in America today.”

Developed by Inyani Corporation, a global filmed entertainment production company, and its filmed entertainment production subsidiaries in South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany, “The subject of this political thriller drama series is unique,” says supervising producer Pulane Shomang. “The project, which has the working title of *An Extraordinary Friendship*, has all the elements required for suspenseful, thrilling entertainment.”

Michael Fisher, the chief executive of Inyani Corporation, describes the story as “a gripping tale of courage, friendship, and resistance, which brings to life the true story of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, an immensely popular South African black Pan-Africanist leader, and Benjamin Pogrund, a Jewish South African journalist. Set against the backdrop of apartheid-era South Africa, this captivating historical political thriller follows the two men as they embark on a relentless 20-year battle against the violently racist white apartheid minority regime.”

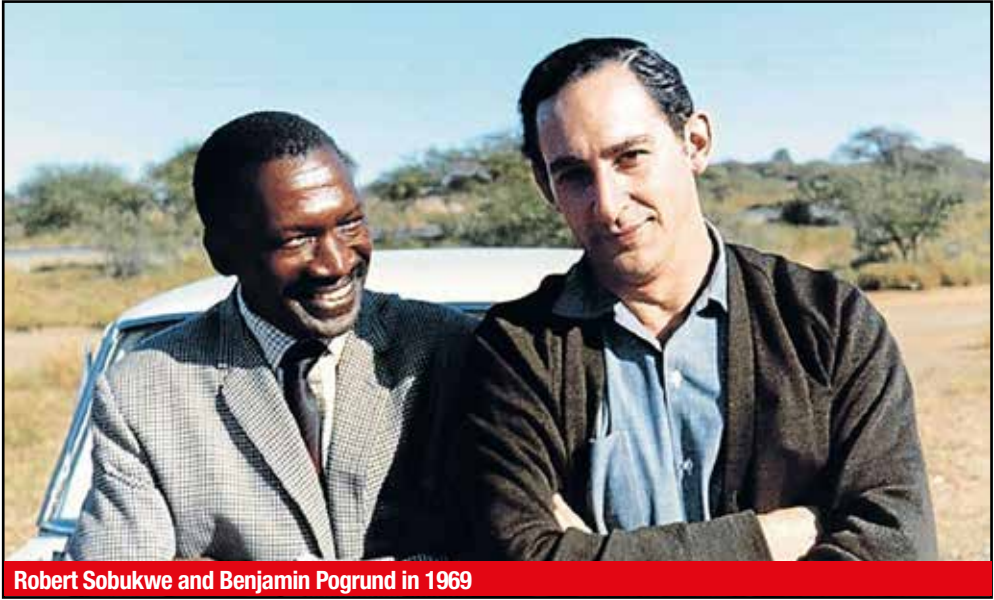
The film “delves deep into the lives of Sobukwe and Pogrund,” says Fisher. “As Sobukwe emerges as a symbol of hope, the apartheid government sees his unwavering determination and influence as a threat. Unjustly imprisoned for incitement for organising a civil disobedience campaign in 1960 and subjected to the infamous ‘Sobukwe clause’, which allows the apartheid regime to keep him detained after the completion of his prison sentence, Sobukwe endures the harsh conditions of solitary confinement on Robben Island.” Meanwhile, “Pogrund, an anti-authoritarian journalist, rises through the ranks, determined to report on the injustices inflicted on Africans.”

Pogrund has become deeply involved in the project over the past two years, which he says has been a fascinating, meaningful, and enjoyable experience. However, it’s still very much a work in progress, and Pogrund is unsure at what point in his and Sobukwe’s life stories it will end its narrative.

He reflects on being introduced to Sobukwe by chance, when, “In 1957, I was greatly interested in black politics. The African National Congress [ANC] was in turmoil. It was one of those instant friendships. We disagreed a lot but also had a lot in common. I discovered I had a natural empathy for his thinking. I later discovered auto-emancipation: the idea that if you respect yourself, the world respects you. There was a lot in common between Zionism and African nationalism.”

Over the years, their friendship grew into what Pogrund describes as being as close as brothers. Pogrund emphasises that Sobukwe was the apartheid regime’s “most feared” prisoner, which was clear from the way they treated him, isolating him from other prisoners on Robben Island, essentially placing him in solitary confinement for six years in an isolated hut.

“They effectively threw away the key,” says



Robert Sobukwe and Benjamin Pogrund in 1969

Pogrund. “Apartheid was evil, but the craziest things happened,” one example being was that only he was allowed to visit Sobukwe. Pogrund was doing his PhD, and he applied to visit Sobukwe as part of his research, which was granted.

“They didn’t allow it for research, they allowed it because they wanted to hear what he was thinking,” says Pogrund. The pair knew they were being listened to, yet Sobukwe looked Pogrund in the eye, and said something along the lines of, “If they release me, I will go back to my activism.” “He doomed himself. It was the most courageous act,” Pogrund says.

The friends were also allowed to write to one another, which they did very carefully, hoping to avoid being censored. “We discussed many things – even Israel and Judaism,” says Pogrund. “He even reflected that he would have liked to be Jewish.”

After Sobukwe was released but put under house arrest in Kimberley, Pogrund and his family continued to be his main source of support. It was Pogrund who ensured that Sobukwe saw the best doctors as his health began to fail, but by then it was too late. Sobukwe died at the age of 53.

Co-producer and Sobukwe’s grandchild, Mangaliso Tsepo Sobukwe, says, “Since my youth, I have dreamt of being part of a project that acknowledges the extraordinary relationship between my grandfather and Benjamin Pogrund and its impact, not only on the course of the lives of the two friends, but on those around them. I’m humbled and honoured, as a member of this distinguished team, to continue the mission which my late father, Dinilesizwe Sobukwe, began and tasked me to

continue: to tell the story.”

Pogrund says Sobukwe has mostly been forgotten by history for two reasons: first, he died young, and second, the ANC was the “victor” as the leader of the struggle after Sobukwe split to form the Pan-African Congress, “and it’s the victors who write history”. He hopes the film will return Sobukwe to his rightful place in history and be an enduring inspiration.

He says his book on Sobukwe continues to be re-printed. “The growing interest in him flows from the terrible state that South Africa is in. He’s a shining example of what could have been. He had integrity, honesty, and a total

## What Ramaphosa didn’t say at UN speaks volumes >>Continued from page 2

changes of government in some parts of Africa.” He listed a litany of African conflicts where the world should support the African Union’s peace efforts.

Then we had the usual list of other issues that South Africa raises: self-determination for Western Sahara (occupied by Morocco); and the lifting of sanctions against Cuba and Zimbabwe, without any comment about human rights abuses, the rule of law, and poor governance in these countries.

He also urged developed countries to honour their pledge to provide \$100 billion (R1.9 trillion) annually to developing countries to adapt to climate change and tackle debt and debt distress.

The president called for UN reform. “We require institutions that are inclusive, representative, democratic, and which advance the interests of all nations. We require a renewed commitment to multilateralism based on clear rules and supported by effective institutions. This is the moment to proceed with the reform of the United Nations Security Council, to give meaning to the principle of the sovereign equality of nations, and to

commitment to the people. He would never have allowed the corruption that has taken place.”

Along the same lines, Pogrund says that his recent article on the situation in Israel in which he stated that Israel was, in fact, heading towards being an apartheid state, was “pulled out of me” after many hours of reading, debating, and thinking. He has been deeply concerned since Israel passed its nation state law in 2018. “I’ve become more fearful in recent months, and felt I had to say something.” He emphasises the article was initially written for an Israeli audience.

He knows it has caused distress, particularly in the South African Jewish community, and says, “I didn’t want to write it, but I knew I had something only I can say, and I needed to say it. The reality is I’m just a messenger. Jewish morality is at stake.”

He’s aware that the enemies of Israel and the Jewish people have twisted his piece for their own gains, but he says such “lies” and “cynicism” aren’t new from that camp. What’s more important is that the Jewish community wrestles with Israel’s current reality, and doesn’t shy away from such discussions because of how they may be twisted.

Returning to the film, Fisher says, “It’s an incredible honour that Benjamin has entrusted us to tell this story. In the face of contemporary struggles, this historical narrative becomes even more impactful, inspiring audiences to seek common ground and solidarity in the pursuit of a more just and compassionate world.”

enable the council to respond more effectively to current geopolitical realities. We are pleased that the Common African Position on the reform of the Security Council is increasingly enjoying wide support.”

Known as the “Ezulwini Consensus” from 2005, the Common African Position calls for “at least two permanent seats, including veto power, and five non-permanent seats on the Security Council”. Did he miss an opportunity to push for South Africa to have one of those seats? Maybe, but this would have been seen in Africa as breaking ranks. It would be a game of musical chairs between Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa – three candidates for two seats. The five permanent members have shown little appetite for reform though.

“As the nations gathered here in this General Assembly, let us demonstrate that we have both the will and the resolve to secure a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable future for our world and for the generations that will follow,” Ramaphosa said. I can’t argue with that.

• Steven Grudz is an analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs in Johannesburg. He writes in his personal capacity.

## EMPOWERING CLIENTS: LITHUANIAN CITIZENSHIP REINSTATEMENT WITH ALL INCLUSIVE SUCCESS FEE

As an advocate and someone deeply committed to ensuring a peace of mind for my clients, I am proud to share the merits of the All Inclusive Success Fee policy, which has become a cornerstone of our practice at IN JURE Law Firm (Vilnius, Lithuania). This approach not only provides financial security (as there are absolutely no upfront payments, including refundable ones) but also instills confidence and trust in our clients throughout the process. One particular case comes to mind, where a client endured an arduous litigation process spanning more than 32 months - nearly three years of uncertainty and legal battles, finalized ultimately and successfully by the Supreme Court of Lithuania. Our lawyer team invested 148 working hours in diligently representing the client, navigating the intricacies of the legal system to achieve a successful outcome. Understandably, such an extended legal journey, if performed under the hourly rate of legal assistance, would typically entail huge legal expenses. However, our All-Inclusive Success Fee policy played a pivotal role for this client. Without this agreement, the legal expenses would have been substantial – a notable burden, especially if the decision turned out unfavorably.

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# Not having a ball: matric dance takes its toll

LEE TANKLE

Matric dance season is supposed to be a time when students and their parents celebrate their school careers, but for some, it's filled with dread.

The psychological and financial pressure of the matric dance can take away from the enjoyment of this special day spoken about for the entire matric year, if not longer.

The dance is expensive. Over and above the tickets for the dance itself, parents often need to buy tickets to the after party – which can almost be as expensive as the dance – as well as the clothing and transportation for the dance.

Scrolling through the Facebook group The Village, one sees mothers sharing their woes about their children's upcoming matric dances. One mother posed the question, "Why don't we start normalising hosting the dance at the school like we always did in the day?"

An anonymous member of The Village says her daughter has found a dress and car for her matric dance that they describe as a "completely over-the-top number that is expensive and impractical". "I know I'll need to get a dress made, but this will be an over-the-top custom wedding dress type budget," she says. "I just cannot bring myself to pay these types of prices for a matric dance. The tickets alone were nearly R2 000 for her and her boyfriend."

Above the dance itself, another anonymous member of The Village says, "I'm struggling to understand the concept. The cost of the matric dance itself is R800 plus. Then the dress and the extras. Why has the plan to leave the dance early to change into casual clothes to go to another event become the norm?"

In terms of clothing, a member of The Village posted, "What kind of madness is this to spend a fortune on a matric ball? How did we allow this expectation from our kids that we'll be spending so much money on this event?"

With all the pressure on children and parents, it begs the question whether it's all worth it. For an event that's supposed to be the culmination of a school career, are we all focusing on the right things to make it as special as possible?

King David High School Victory Park social worker Gita Lipschitz says, "We're aware of the pressure on students in terms of choosing a partner, paying for the tickets, and of course, the outfit!"

Says Meryl Malkin, social worker at King David High School Linksfield, "We feel that the matric dance is a transitional ceremony that signifies the formal end of schooling and the entry into the adult world. To this end, it's a wonderful affair for pupils and staff to celebrate this milestone. We're aware that this comes with a financial cost, and we do our utmost to keep the costs down each year and in line with other schools.

"We offer material assistance to those in need, and encourage pupils not to be over the top in terms of their budget for their outfit and transport," Malkin says. "If we're offering material assistance [tickets, after party tickets, clothes, hair, and makeup], this is handled sensitively and confidentially. The pupils are given the same opportunities as everyone else and are made to feel special. We offer this to allay the strain on parents, and we have specific donors who hold this cause

close to their hearts and want their donations to be used for the matric dance."

Says Lipschitz, "The price tag can be hefty, so our school, in conjunction with the King David Schools Foundation provides financial assistance to those in need."

"What's wonderful about this assistance," Malkin says, "is that the boys then have a suit that they can wear for *yomtov*, job interviews, and weddings, and girls have a formal dress that they can use for other occasions."

On the topic of possibly changing the way that the matric dance is held, Malkin says, "Every year, we relook at the matric dance and in a changing world, it seems that the tradition and predictability of the way it has always been is welcomed by the children. They seem to want to hold on to what they know. We do have some pupils that don't bring a date. Once the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were lifted slightly, we held a casual braai on the school

campus instead of a matric dance as we still wanted to honour this tradition in some way, but the pupils couldn't wait to return to the formal dinner-dance structure of the event."

"We've noticed a growing trend among students to take friends in the grade group, and share a table among themselves," Lipschitz says. "We



that comes with the other dances." Furthermore, "There isn't the same formal attire as at other matric dances. Many girls wear something borrowed or a Shabbat outfit. The focus is on good, clean fun as it's more of a lovely party than a 'dance'.

It shouldn't be anxiety-provoking or stressful for the students at all."

Ultimately, those involved say it's important to remember that the dance is supposed to be a time of excitement and celebration of 12 long years of school. And once the day comes, the pressures often melt away at the fun and pride of all involved.

## Temple Israel congregant gives back with 'prayer poems'

LEE TANKLE

Every Saturday morning after the prayers for the sick, for Israel, and South Africa, the congregation of Temple Israel in Hillbrow listens to septuagenarian Berea resident Louis Ellenbogen reciting the poetry he has written for the occasion.

"The Torah must be our workshop manual; To govern, command, and reprimand all our; Aspirations and expectations; Help us to learn, discern, and earn; A destiny towards eternity," is an excerpt from his poetry.

Reeva Forman, the chairperson of Temple Israel, said she enjoyed Ellenbogen's "prayer poems", not least because they often dovetailed into what she was going to say in her sermon for the week.

For more than 20 years, this shul has held Shabbat services for Jews living in Hillbrow and surrounding areas, including the 52 people who live in Vistaero Hotel with Ellenbogen.

Ellenbogen has been writing his poetry on and off for about five years. "I had read a lot of prayers throughout my life, and I thought that I could write something that could give it a little extra flair," he said. "People seem to love my poetry every time I read it at various services. I asked Reeva if I could read a prayer poem at the service one week, and have been doing so every week since.

"I've lost count of how many poems I've written, so it's a challenge to find a poem suitable for the particular week," he said.

"Sometimes I get an idea for a prayer poem and start writing. Sometimes I take inspiration from happenings in the world around me."

Each poem is handwritten, and he would "love to have them published in a book one day".

Ellenbogen's story began in Bulawayo in what was then Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where he was born and grew up. He was forced to leave school at 16 after shoving a school bully's head through the window of the headmaster's office. At the same time, he got his national service call-up papers and joined the Rhodesian Army.

"I was very young, but there wasn't much else I could do at that time as I wasn't an academic," Ellenbogen said.

In 1973, Ellenbogen went to Israel to join the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) after a friend forged an application for indefinite leave from the Rhodesian Army to serve in the IDF.

"After some scolding, I was told by my general that he thought that there should be more men like me in service," Ellenbogen said. He was happy to go to Israel because "I had a cousin in the IDF [Rebecca Gross], and I wanted to meet her."

Little did Ellenbogen know, his former general contacted the leadership of the IDF to commend him. This led to Ellenbogen being given first-class treatment on his arrival in Israel.



Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

"They made all the passengers wait for me to disembark before they could leave the plane. There was even an officer waiting for me with a car to take me to a hotel," he recalled. Ellenbogen said his general's message to Israel led to him rubbing shoulders with the crème de la crème of Israeli politics, including then Prime Minister Golda Meir, whom he dined next to at a breakfast on his third day in the country.

"I was taken to a private residence, where there was a long table full of food and people." I turned to my side, and there, next to me was Meir."

Ellenbogen subsequently returned to Zimbabwe from Israel to complete his contract with the Zimbabwean army. He returned with his then second wife, whom he had married while in Israel. But, he said, "The time in the Rhodesian Army put a lot of strain on the marriage as I was away a lot. Upon arriving back home from a three-month stint, I found a letter on the dressing table saying that my wife had gone back to Israel and had taken our two boys with her."

In 2001, Ellenbogen married his fifth wife. "One day, I came home from my shift at GrandWest Casino, and my wife was lying comatose on our bed," he said. "She had two strokes as a result of untreated meningitis which left her in that state. She passed away. While I was dealing with this dreadful news, I received a phone call from my ex-wife [in Israel] saying, 'The boys are gone, and it's my fault'."

"I didn't understand what was going on," Ellenbogen said. His ex-wife explained that their sons were on their way to a New Year's party on the border, and were caught and killed in a raid.

"This was a very difficult time for me," he said. "That year, I had to bury my wife, my two boys, and a few others. I still find it hard to talk about."

After this tough experience, he found his way to South Africa and much later, in 2022, Hillbrow community member Allan Friedman encouraged him to come with him to Temple Israel in Hillbrow.

"I believe Hashem stepped in. I hadn't stepped into a shul since I was in Israel," Ellenbogen said. "I have had to relearn Judaism to a large extent, and the customs. Rabbi Jonathan Fox has played a big part in this. I've been able to connect with my Judaism through him and Temple Israel."

His visits to the synagogue have helped him find out more about his family history as well. And for all that he gets from this congregation, he gives back in his weekly poetry.

## Lithuanian president honours those who saved Jewish artifacts

ANDREW SILOW-CARROLL – JTA

The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research welcomed Lithuania's president to its Manhattan headquarters on 18 September to honour the Jews who rescued rare books and documents from the Vilna Ghetto and the non-Jewish Lithuanian librarian who protected the same material from destruction by the Soviets.

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda was the guest of honour at a small ceremony unveiling two plaques in YIVO's Strashun Rare Book Room.

The first plaque recalls the Jewish slave labourers, led by Avrom Sutzkever and Shmerke Kaczerginski, who in 1942 and 1943 defied the Nazis' orders and protected a trove of Jewish documents and artifacts that the Germans had intended to house in a museum dedicated to the "exterminated race".

The second honours Antanas Ulpis, then director of the Lithuanian National Book Chamber, who in 1948 hid the material from the Soviets, who also intended to seize and probably destroy it.

The materials saved by the Jewish "paper brigade" and Ulpis form the heart of YIVO's collection of about 25 million rare books, diaries, maps, photographs, and films documenting the extent of Yiddish civilisation prior to and during the Holocaust.

"These acts [of rescue] are unique examples of universal human principles to fight the evil, to fight the darkness with every bit of light," Nausėda said. "We must remember, we must never forget."

Monday's ceremony also marked a decade or more of co-operation between YIVO and Lithuania, who in the years after the war argued over the fate of the Jewish materials that remained in Lithuanian hands after YIVO was relocated to New York. Current YIVO executive director and Chief Executive Jonathan Brent helped broker a deal in 2011 that re-established YIVO's presence in Vilna (now Vilnius), and in 2015, YIVO and the Lithuanian Central State Archives began a joint project to digitise the documents stored an ocean apart for what's now called the Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Online Collections. Completed in 2022, it unites YIVO's pre-war collections online.

Blank, a telemarketing pioneer and philanthropist, attended the ceremony along with YIVO board Chairperson Ruth Levine and other YIVO staff and supporters and Lithuanian officials.

YIVO also announced an award to be given in Ulpis' honour to a Lithuanian who has worked to protect Jewish culture, and that the institute is working with the National Library of Lithuania and other institutions to commemorate YIVO's 100th anniversary in 2025.

This month marks the 80th anniversary of the liquidation of the Vilna Ghetto.



# Israeli flag finds home at Cape retirement hotel

TALI FEINBERG

Anyone driving or walking along the Southern Cape Peninsula may do a double take when they notice that the St James Retirement Hotel now proudly flies the Israeli flag outside its entrance door.

Though the home isn't Jewish, it has five Jewish residents, and this is what motivated the chairperson of the establishment's board of directors, Thomas Knemeyer, to ensure that the flag of the Jewish state is now part of its display.

"In 2014, I was looking for a nice retirement place for my mom and found the St James Retirement Hotel, which is between Muizenberg and Kalk Bay," he says. "She was there until November last year, when she passed away aged 95. Two years ago, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a crisis and the residents asked me and others to intervene and join the board."

Knemeyer did so, and the crisis was averted. The hotel is now full and has a waiting list. "There have always been six flags outside, starting with the Stars and Stripes, because the man who turned the regular hotel in the 1990s into a retirement place was Ronald Getty, the eldest son of the late J. Paul Getty, the US oil magnate," says Knemeyer. "As long as my mom was there, there was also a German flag. When we recently replaced all the old ones I thought, 'Hang on, we have a number of Jewish residents who have the right to be Israeli citizens, so let's put that flag up as well.'"

Though he isn't Jewish, he has been a fan of Israel for many years. "The turning point for me came in 1972, when as a 15-year-old in Munich, I witnessed the attack from the Black

September terrorists on the Israeli Olympic team on TV. Israel also recently celebrated its 75th birthday, so that was also on my mind."

would have been no armed struggle without Jews. Annmarie Wolpe's book *The Long Way Home* was an eye-opener for me. When, in



Given the anti-Israel sentiment of the South African government and of some local extremists, Knemeyer risked a backlash, but "as far as I know, there has been no response from the public, positive or negative", he says. "If Cape Town Muslims objected, I'd tell them that as soon as anyone from Lebanon moves in, we'll put up that flag as well! In fact, I'd love to see the Cedar next to the Star of David!"

He thinks that "what the present South African government does vis-à-vis Israel, especially our minister of international relations [Dr Naledi Pandor] is shameful. The ANC [African National Congress] of today has forgotten that in the 1950s, there

1988, I came to South Africa as a foreign correspondent for Axel Springer newspapers, I was astounded to see how so few made such a difference to the economy – not just the Oppenheimer's Anglo and the Menell's Anglovaal, but also Pam Golding, Raymond Ackerman, Sol Kerzner, Ina Perlman's Operation Hunger. It's a long list.

"I sometimes get the feeling these days that they [the government] want to brush all that out of South Africa's history, like their beloved Soviets once did," he says.

One of the Jewish residents is Professor Neville Rubin, a lawyer and apartheid struggle activist. His activism began as a student when he was a member and later president of the

National Union of South African Students. He was a founder member of the underground African Resistance Movement. He left South Africa in 1963 to pursue his academic career. He was arrested while on a research trip to Mozambique in 1964, but released shortly thereafter and allowed to return to England.

Rubin became a regular broadcaster in BBC programmes dealing with Africa, and wrote and edited extensively on matters of African law and custom. He was a leading figure in the International Defence and Aid Fund, and, as legal adviser, was responsible for devising many of the methods by which funds were secretly transferred to South Africa to support and defend victims of apartheid. In 1976, he joined the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and in the years until his retirement from it in 1995, greatly expanded its involvement in southern Africa. After leaving the ILO, Rubin completed editing the 3 500-page Code of International Labour Law. In 1996, he was appointed an honorary professor of law at the University of Cape Town.

Rubin says he doesn't have strong feelings about the Israeli flag, but his family has a long connection to the hotel. His father, Leslie, who was also involved in the anti-apartheid struggle, got married there to an heir of the hotel, and also died there. "It wasn't a retirement home back then," says Knemeyer. "Former Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith also spent the last years of his life at the St James."

Another resident, Dr Michael Morris, is a retired medical doctor who fought in the Yom Kippur War in 1973, exactly 50 years ago. "I'm a proud Jew although I'm not terribly religious," he says. "I'm very proud to see that flag there every day."



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# Addicted, imprisoned, inspired – Munitz memoir reveals all

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Nikki Munitz has always known that her sometimes-harrowing story is one worth telling. Yet, with the recent release of her memoir, *Fraud: How Prison Set Me Free*, what was once a tale mired in darkness is now one about finding the light.

Written by Elka Schaimberg in collaboration with author and publisher Melinda Ferguson, the memoir, released this month, details Munitz’s drug addiction, hellish rehabilitation experience, abusive marriage, and ultimate journey to freedom through being imprisoned for fraud. Today an expert in self-esteem development and addiction and happily remarried, Munitz confronts her shocking past to show others how by simply learning to love oneself, one can overcome the most traumatic circumstances.

“I’d first asked Elka to write my story 18 years ago when I was pregnant with my daughter,” Munitz says. “The story was still so dark back then. It wasn’t the right time, but I knew Elka was the only one who could truly harness the emotional



Nikki Munitz and Elka Schaimberg at the launch of *Fraud* at Exclusive Books Rosebank

truth of my story and capture the power of my transformation to share with the rest of the world.”

Though they had a strong friendship, Schaimberg was initially hesitant. “I knew that to fully immerse myself in the writing process I had to become her, which wasn’t exactly easy,” she says. Both enrolled

in an online writing course conducted by Ferguson through which the book eventually came to fruition.

“Melinda and the other course writers were riveted by Nikki’s story,” Schaimberg says. Munitz openly shared her experiences and Ferguson encouraged her friend to write it, and so the two signed a contract with

Melinda Ferguson Books, an imprint of NB Publishers.

Knowing Munitz so well made the intense, five-month writing process a little less daunting, says Schaimberg. “When we sat down to get into the real meat of the story, like what it was like in prison, it was easier to develop the emotions around it.”

Munitz handed over her prison diary, which was a treasure for Schaimberg. “It was like a relic of the past, so to bring it into the now was magical. I could touch, I could feel, I could smell, I was her. Because Nikki trusted me so completely, I was able to metabolise her story as my own.”

When Munitz finally read the completed book, she had to relive the traumatic events of her dark past. “I had a really difficult time during the editing process,” she says. “I didn’t realise it, but I was bingeing on junk food. Normally I record videos for social media, but I couldn’t do it. I realised that I was back in that space, but at least this time, I had the tools I needed to get through it.”

In fact, says Munitz, she’s largely desensitised to the difficult times she’s experienced. “I’m so removed from it because my life is completely

the opposite now. It’s all about light and bringing other people into the light. That was the message that I wanted to get across in the book, that no-one has to live in that darkness.”

Ultimately, changing your life and developing your self-esteem is much simpler than you’d think, she says. “You don’t have to be in prison to be imprisoned,” she says. “Yes, I had the physical imprisonment, but I was freer in prison than I was in my life because my head was the most toxic prison in the world.”

It was through a self-esteem course in prison that Munitz was first exposed to the work of her mentor, Celia Coburn, the founder of Building Self-Esteem, which offers a simple self-esteem toolkit.

Coburn ultimately helped Munitz to find her purpose, and she and Schaimberg hope to reveal the path she took to readers. “The intention of this book is to enable you to look at yourself, to love yourself, and to stand in a place of empowerment where your fears dissipate and you’re able to live a life of meaning and purpose,” Schaimberg says. “Amid all the fluff around you – the cars, the houses, all the things that society elevates, the most important thing is to be able to look in the mirror and go, ‘I like you enough to want to get to know you better.’”

Though Munitz feels like her life thus far has been an open book mostly because of the public nature of her court case, she disclosed long-held secrets in her memoir. “During the memoir writing course, Melinda encouraged us to write as if everyone you know is dead, which was really helpful. I’m no longer beholden to other peoples’ opinions of me, which ruled my life for so long.”

Munitz’s children, now 16 and 18, are immensely proud of their mom. “They know the majority of the story, but haven’t read the book yet. It details my ‘mask of motherhood’ when they were younger, which may be hurtful for them to read. At the time, I used them to try and feel better, and it did the opposite – it made me feel more inadequate and useless. I think a lot of moms could probably relate to that even though they would never say it out loud. My relationship with my children today and our evolution as a family is something I’m proud of. My husband has also been an incredible support and anchor throughout my journey.”

In prison, stripped of her identity and reduced to a number, Munitz found that Judaism kept her grounded. Lighting Shabbat candles each Friday night, having a seder for one, and regularly meeting with prison chaplain Rabbi Michael Katz, who was allowed to see her outside of the five visits she was allocated each month, became important lifelines.

Munitz also references Rabbi Mordechai Rodal in the book, who played a significant role in her life by never judging her but rather supporting her and her family and welcoming them into the community.

“My journey in Judaism was completely anti, then completely immersed, and now I’ve found a middle ground that works for me. It’s about roots, about being spiritual and mindful of the kind of humans we want to be,” she says.

## Actress brings performer’s ‘dramedy’ to life

HANNA RESNICK

Actress, teacher, writer, singer, dancer, and choreographer Talia Kodesh has performed in many acclaimed musicals, but she’s now about to launch her first “musical dramedy”, which she co-wrote.

The show, *Actress*, that Kodesh and musician and renowned arts journalist, Bruce Dennill, wrote is hitting the stage on 27 September.

*Actress*, which is directed by Daniel Geddes, is described as “a funny, moving story of a woman trying to define [and succeed] in her different roles – actress, wife, mother, daughter, teacher, and more – while juggling the complexities of all of those responsibilities”.

Kodesh matriculated from King David Linksfield, and studied a Diploma in Musical Theatre at Tshwane University of Technology in Pretoria. “I timed it perfectly, because as I graduated, there was an influx of international musicals. I hit a really good wave, and got into lots of shows and toured a lot,” said Kodesh, whose stage credits include *The Sound of Music*, *Cats*, *We Will Rock You*, *Rent*, *Chicago*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *High School Musical*, and *The Last Five Years*.

In 2010, she moved to New York with her boyfriend – now her husband – and rediscovered her passion for dancing. When she came back to South Africa, she started teaching dance classes and choreographing various projects. During that time, she had two children, now 10 and eight years old.

“I started to miss the sensation of singing, dancing, and acting all at the same time,” she said. “It coincided perfectly with wanting to do a one-woman show. The seed was planted many, many years ago in New York.”

Two years ago, she and her co-writer began developing the script. “When I asked Bruce if he would be prepared to write with me, he said yes, but he would keep me accountable. ‘We’re not starting a project that’s going to land up in the bottom drawer,’

he said. So, we would meet at a coffee shop once a week, and write until we had a solid structure.”

They showed the work-in-progress to some close theatre colleagues such as Gina Shmukler and Bryan Schimmel, who gave feedback and ideas. “We redrafted and redrafted until we got to a point where we thought we better just hold hands, close our eyes, and jump off the cliff,” she said. They sent the script to Collett Dawson of the CoLab Network, who agreed to produce the show.

Kodesh said that they started with a “write-what-you-know” approach and, in the beginning, the show was quite autobiographical. “I thought, well, New York is a good place. Let’s start plotting from there. But with every draft that we rewrote, we realised

effacing. She’s passionate about theatre. And she’s well-meaning.

“She fails a lot, whether it’s her own failure or just the failure of the system or that she’s just juggling too much and not managing to keep anything together. She has a very positive aspect to her nature. And I love how by the end of the show, she’s been through a lot of ups and downs to get to the very centre of who she is,” Kodesh said.

“The main theme is that she’s trying to be so many things for so many other people, always with a smile on her face, and eventually, she realises that she needs to do what she wants to do her way. She does kind of blossom towards the end of the show, which is lovely.”

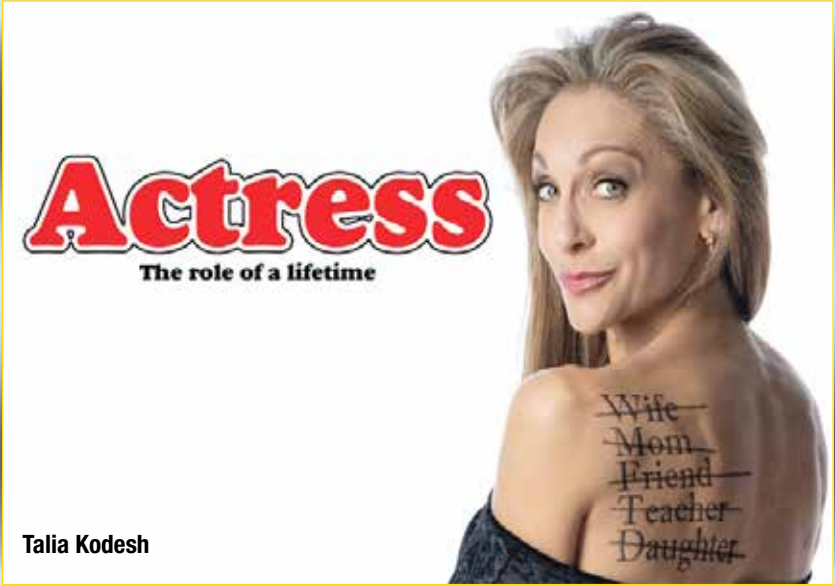
Kodesh said the storyline was merely a platform to portray different life themes, and should appeal to all viewers. “As much as this woman is an actress who becomes a mom, our hope is that the greater themes of the show resonate with the viewer no matter their gender or age bracket, where they come from, whether they have children or not, whether they are professionals or not. The main themes are success and failure; loss and discovery; heartache and triumph, which I think everyone can relate to in some way.

“We’re constantly hiding ourselves because we’re too scared to show failure,” she said. “I hope that the honesty of the piece will make people realise that we’re not actually alone and that everybody is falling apart, everybody is floundering, everybody is tripping up all the time, and that it’s OK because we’ll be OK in the end.”

Her greatest hope is that the play can tour and that the essence of the character will resonate with performers and audiences anywhere in the world. “Most of all, Bruce Dennill’s song writing is so powerful, it would be an absolute travesty if it didn’t play again on other stages and if other singers didn’t get to experience singing it, because he’s a master storyteller.”

The production team features some of South Africa’s best, with multiple Naledi, Fleur Du Cap, and Vita awards and nominations.

- *Actress opens at Pieter Toerien’s Studio Theatre at Montecasino on 27 September, and runs until 8 October.*



Talia Kodesh

that the character’s emotional development and the movement of the piece needed to have a little bit more nuance. The stakes needed to be higher, the ups needed to be more up, the downs needed to be more down, so as we were redrafting, we were adding more and more fiction. Now, most of the storyline is fiction.”

The story is set in New York and South Africa, and follows an actress “on her journey through stress and success, anger and auditions, triumph and tears, dance and delirium, and perhaps the possibility of peace”.

“The character is an ambitious person,” said Kodesh. “She’s hardworking, a bit of a perfectionist, but she’s also quite quirky. She can be a little bit highly strung at times because she really wants to do well. She’s got a great sense of humour, quite self-



# Fabulous food to feast on after the fast

Breaking the Yom Kippur fast is a big deal in South Africa. The SA Jewish Report asked **Lauren Boolkin** and **Romi Rabinowitz** to give us recipes to ensure that we're able to end our fast with pure deliciousness.

## LAUREN BOOLKIN

### DOUBLE GREEN GNOCCHI SALAD

I recently entered a competition using food scraps that we normally discard to create a dish. The fennel frond pesto was so delicious, I've used it as a dressing for this salad. It would also be wonderful tossed with pasta. If you're serving a milk meal, a quarter cup of Parmesan cheese could be added to the pesto.

#### Ingredients

- 1 packet baby spinach
- 1 packet watercress
- 1 packet fresh asparagus blanched
- 1 small packet sugar snap peas
- 2 packets baby fennel, sliced thinly on the diagonal
- 1 avocado
- 1 packet store-bought gnocchi
- 1 packet walnuts toasted in the oven

#### Method

- Put a handful of gnocchi into a pot of boiling water.
- When they rise to the top, transfer them onto a paper towel-lined rack to dry. Continue until you have boiled all the gnocchi. When the gnocchi has dried, fry them in a little olive oil until they are brown and crispy. This can be done in the morning and left uncovered in a single layer.
- Line a platter with the spinach leaves and watercress. Top with the remaining ingredients, adding the avocado, gnocchi, and toasted walnuts just before serving. Dress with the fennel pesto.

#### Fennel pesto

##### Ingredients

- 2 cups of fennel fronds (leaves)
- 2 cloves of garlic

- ½ cup of toasted sunflower seeds
- 1 tsp salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup of olive oil

#### Method

- Blend all the ingredients in your food processor until smooth. Taste for seasoning. If the dressing feels thick, add an extra tablespoon of cold water.

### PEPPERMINT CRISP MILLE-FEUILLE



The phyllo layers freeze beautifully. The chocolate can be mixed into the ice cream, and it can be shaped to match the phyllo rectangles using a baking paper cut out, and frozen ready to assemble on the day. Custard works beautifully instead of ice cream.

#### Ingredients for pastry

- 1 packet phyllo pastry
- ¼ cup of sunflower oil
- 2 Tbsp castor sugar
- 1½ tsp of cinnamon

#### Ingredients for ice cream

- 2 litres store-bought vanilla ice cream
- 3 Peppermint Crisps crumbled
- 3 Peppermint Aero crumbled
- 1 packet Chuckles to garnish
- A few mint leaves for garnish
- 1/8th of a cup of icing sugar to decorate

### Peppermint Crisp chocolate sauce

#### Method

- Preheat your oven to 180 degrees centigrade, and line two baking sheets with baking paper.
- Without unrolling the phyllo, cut it into slices 1.5cm thick (it will look like ribbons). Some boxes of phyllo have two separate packets. If not, divide the ribbons in two, and place the one half on the first baking sheet and the other half on the second baking sheet in a rectangular pattern. Brush roughly with the sunflower oil and sprinkle with the castor sugar and cinnamon.
- Bake for 10 to 15 minutes until golden.
- When cool, spread on the softened ice cream, and top with the second phyllo rectangle. Dust with a little icing sugar and drizzle on some Peppermint Crisp chocolate sauce. Decorate with mint leaves and gold-dusted Chuckles.

#### Custard

##### Ingredients

- 2 egg yolks
- 4 tbsp flour
- 2 Tbsp custard powder
- 1 cup of sugar
- 4 cups of milk (or almond milk for parev)
- 2 tsp vanilla essence
- ¼ tsp salt

#### Method

- Mix all the ingredients together except the milk. Slowly add one cup of milk, and whisk until all the lumps are gone. Heat the remaining three cups of milk until warm but not boiling. Slowly add the warmed milk to the egg mixture. Whisk continuously on a high heat until the custard thickens. Refrigerate when cool.

## ROMI RABINOWITZ

### MY FAVOURITE BULKAS

#### Ingredients

- 1 x 10g sachet dried yeast (I use the purple sachet Anchor yeast)
- ½ cup warm water
- 3 tsp castor sugar (to add to yeast)
- 665g cake flour (4½ cups)
- 115g (½ cup) castor sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 100ml fresh cream
- 50ml milk
- 2 eggs
- 85g unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp oil

#### Filling

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp cinnamon
- 125g unsalted butter

#### Streusel

- 3 Tbsp cake flour
- 3 Tbsp sugar
- 2 Tbsp melted butter

#### Method

- For the dough, mix together the yeast, warm water, and three teaspoons castor sugar in a small bowl. Cover and set aside for 20 minutes until the yeast is frothy.
- In a large bowl, mix the flour, half a cup castor sugar, and salt. In a separate bowl, beat together the cream, milk, and eggs. Melt the butter in a small pot and then stir in the oil.
- Make a well in the flour, and add the yeast mixture, and then the other two liquid mixtures. Mix everything



- together with a wooden spoon until combined, then knead together to make a dough. Cover well with plastic wrap and two cloths, and let it rise in a warm spot for two hours. Place on a lightly floured surface, and knead the dough.
- Combine the cup of sugar with the cinnamon in a small bowl.
  - Divide the dough into three equal portions. Roll each portion into a large rectangle, and brush with the melted butter. Sprinkle with the cinnamon sugar mixture. Roll up each rectangle, starting from the long side to form a long roll.
  - Cut the roll into equal pieces, and place each piece into a greased muffin tin.
  - Brush each bulka with more melted butter, and then sprinkle over the streusel mixture.
  - Allow to rise again for a further half an hour.
  - Bake at 180 degrees centigrade for about 20 minutes until golden.
  - Best served warm and fresh with butter.
- Chag sameach and well over the fast.

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# Living their passion: Dorfman karatekas celebrate 70 years

SAUL KAMIONSKY

Father-son karate combo Malcolm and Shane Dorfman have trained thousands of karatekas for a combined total of 70 years at their respective Dorfman Karate dojos in Johannesburg.

This year, Malcolm’s Parktown dojo celebrates its 50th anniversary, and Shane’s Melrose dojo marks its 20th anniversary.

Though Shane, a radiologist, has been doing karate for about 43 years, Malcolm has been a full-time karateka for the past 50 years.

Su Dal Col, whose sensei and mentor is Malcolm, says, “Dorfman Karate creates a family, and it’s our home away from home.”

Malcolm says his passion for karate and his karate knowledge have kept his dojo alive for 50 years and he’ll never retire. “When you teach as a passion and not as a job, your students feel this,” Malcolm says. “They feel the sincerity. I also have knowledge which I’ve accumulated from having trained with the greatest masters in the world. Whenever I saw a great Japanese master somewhere in the world, I would make sure that I went there to train.”

In South Africa as well as abroad, he estimates that he has taught 100 000 karatekas, including world champions such as Shane, who won the World Karate Championships eight times.

Malcolm’s karate highlights over 50 years aren’t his own achievements, but rather “watching my son, Shane, develop from the age of five, when he had his first class, to becoming the best student I ever had, and watching him win the world championships.

“I have a younger son, who was also Junior World Champion. That was also a highlight, but karate wasn’t his path. Shane, in spite of being a radiologist, still finds time for the same passion I have.”

Shane says running Dorfman Karate with his dad “has given me an opportunity to work and spend so much time with him. I’ve got two children [aged two

and one], and what I want for them is to do karate and be able to spend such dedicated quality time with me as I’ve had the privilege of spending with my father.”

In the early 1970s, Malcolm told his boss, Manny Simkowitz, of his desire to be a full-time karateka like Stan Schmidt, a late South African master of Shotokan karate, so he “left what would have been a very lucrative future to pursue my passion. In July 1973, I opened my dojo in Greenside, and I’ve been a full-time karateka since then.”

About a decade later, he decided to move the dojo to Parktown North, where it has been operating since 1984. His home is on the same property. “I changed the original house into the dojo and the cottage on the property into my house. Here I am, 50 years later. The dojo evolved and evolved, and became a landmark in the Parktown North area.”

Dal Col says, “Malcolm Shihan is a legend. His knowledge and understanding of the art is truly inspiring to all his students. He continues to study each move and its efficacy to great depths. He has guided me through my journey and has instilled life-saving skills.

“He shares a lifetime of knowledge and experience with all his students. He instils the principles of karate in his students, who learn not only karate but also discipline, strength of character, loyalty, humbleness, and a multitude of other life skills.”

When Shane was five years old in 1981, he told Malcolm that he wanted to start karate.

Malcolm responded, “You can do it like everybody else and you’ll be like everybody else, or you can do it my way, which will be incredibly hard, but you’ll



Shane and Malcolm Dorfman

become world champion.”

Shane chose the latter. “It came with a lot of tears over the years when I was a kid. Literal blood, sweat, and tears. Off the karate floor, my dad and I had a very different relationship – warm, caring, loving. On it, he pursued what he felt was the best approach, and it worked with me.”

Besides winning eight world championships, Shane also captained the Proteas and was the youngest Dan in almost every category in a mainstream Japanese organisation.

Shane started his dojo in Norwood. “The owner and my landlord, who are physios, were two of my first students. By word of mouth, it started growing to a reasonable size. My dojo is like my baby. I’ve grown it, and it lives and dies by my decisions. It has an entrepreneurial element beyond just karate.”

His students were mainly Jewish in the early days, but now consist of the whole rainbow nation and more senior individuals. “Since I stopped competing in 2007, my focus has been more on my students, so though I still train with them, my primary focus is them, not me.”

He says a highlight was when “Farrel Cohen, the head of the recent Maccabi delegation, became the first student I took from white belt to black belt. Seeing Dorfman Karate win a staggering 29 out of 54 sections at a recent championship was also quite something.”

Shane has helped individuals with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) or low muscle tone through karate, and finds it “rewarding when youngsters get so excited as they improve their karate, or my black belt karatekas compete for the national team”.

In addition to teaching karate and spending time with his grandchildren, Malcolm runs Karatenomichi South Africa and is the deputy grandmaster of the Karatenomichi World Federation (KWF). He also presents seminars overseas and takes the black belt class at the KWF’s headquarters in Japan.

Though well-known South African father-son sporting combos such as cricketers Peter and Shaun Pollock played in different eras, the Dorfmans competed together at the 1993 Maccabi Games. “Just once in my life, I wanted to walk out together with Shane in the same team. He took the gold medal in his division, I took the silver medal in mine,” Malcolm says.

## Finding Rosetta – a heartwarming way of finding yourself

REVIEW

HANNA RESNICK



**F**inding Rosetta, a new one-woman play by Paul Slabolepszy, paints a picture of a midlife crisis turned self-discovery journey with an alien twist. The play, directed by William Le Cordeur and presented by Daphne Kuhn & Starstruck, opened at the Theatre On The Square on 14 September.

This quirky one-woman production navigates themes of family, friendship, spirituality, art, eco-consciousness, and our cosmic insignificance.

Rose, played by the captivating Annie Robinson-Grealy, is an artist who begins the play painting her beloved mountains – uKhahlamba – as her carer, Mama Nellie, taught her. She tells the story of her childhood in Rosetta with her father, who believed in signs and fate, and her mother, who wouldn’t hear of that nonsense.

Fast forward 50 odd years, after a fight with her husband, Rose hits the road, blasting Joni Mitchell, until her car breaks down in the middle of the KwaZulu-Natal midlands. In a serendipitous turn of events, she reunites with a childhood friend, Felicity, who offers her a place to stay while her car is being fixed. While staying in the small village of Rosetta where she and Felicity grew up, she discovers not only her old diary but also the autobiography of Elizabeth Klarer, a woman who claimed to have encountered aliens, titled *Beyond the Light Barrier*. Rose is immediately drawn to the woman’s story, and is certain she has seen her before. Over the following days, she spends her time in Rosetta looking for connections, discovering herself along the way. She also learns important lessons about our place on this earth and the need to care for our planet.

Robinson-Grealy effortlessly delivers what is essentially a 70-minute monologue, with more than five different characters. It’s hard to picture that there’s only one person on stage as the characters feel so real. The accents, voices, and mannerisms are distinct to each character and make even moments of dialogue feel authentic. The storytelling is logical and easy to follow, which is often difficult to achieve in a one-person show. The writing also shares and creates an appreciation of different cultures and beliefs without appropriation.

The set is realistic and immersive, but also serves

as more than one location, the main elements being a canvas, a desk, and a bench, with important props such as art supplies, a cellphone, and a kettle. Props are used effectively, most having multiple purposes, for example, a simple blanket becomes the outfit that her nanny wore; the head covering of the mysterious old man; her shoulder wrap; and a picnic blanket. The projected images are the star of the show, however, in Van Gogh-esque style, with large, dramatic brush strokes that move and swirl to follow the story. Painting becomes a central motif of the story as Rose’s creative outlet and means of storytelling.

The lighting is subtle but potent, with slight changes in brightness and colour temperature to denote whether we are indoors or outdoors. Moments of tension use slightly more dramatic lighting, adding in some colour, such as her meeting with the mysterious man near the woods, where a green light is used. Moments of soliloquy and introspection use a warmer spotlight, which feels intimate.

The music and sound ranges from traditional African, to Bollywood, to Joni Mitchell, to alien whirs and supernatural sound effects. Dance is also an important motif, particularly between Rose and Felicity, who once dreamed of joining the Martha Graham Dance Company.

*Finding Rosetta* is funny and heartwarming, and leaves audiences pondering their existence and role on this earth. Slabolepszy’s writing gives new meaning to the story of Elizabeth Klarer, the “Daughter of Rosetta”, and Robinson-Grealy’s acting brings the story to life in a compelling manner. Overall, the play felt very real and human, perhaps barring the aliens.

*Finding Rosetta* is at the Theatre on the Square until 30 September.

• *Hanna Resnick is an intern at the SA Jewish Report.*



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# Sorry for offending you – whoever you are

I'm envious of people who know who they have offended. And who can make a phone call, have coffee, or even send a WhatsApp to apologise for something that they might have done or said. Likely said.

I, on the other hand, genuinely would have no idea where to begin. I have been awarded multiple platforms on which to offend people each day. Between radio, articles, presentations, and work interactions, there's unlikely to be a sunset that hasn't witnessed me offending someone in the past day.

Not too long ago, I was approached by a bloke who said the following, "I want you to know that my mother hated you until the day she died!" He didn't mean it unkindly, and intended to cause no harm. But facts are facts. And the fact that they had only recently buried her meant that the little bit of truth was still fresh in his mind. "Umm..." was my rather non-eloquent reply. "Thanks?"

It turned out that they had begged her not to listen to me or read what I wrote, but she would have none of it. There was someone out there who she disagreed with, hated, and who continued to annoy her. She might have been a lot of things, but a coward wasn't one of them.

I never got to learn her name.

A few years ago, I interviewed a Muslim cleric on my show. I wanted to understand the similarities between Islam and Judaism. Before he began, he asked if he could say a short prayer, to which I consented. I'm not sure exactly what it was, but it invoked the story of Moses who is about to go before Pharoah and asks G-d to assist him with his mission. If my guest was Moses, it left little imagination who Pharoah was in this little interaction.

If that wasn't bad enough, over the past weekend, a rabbi compared me to Adolf Eichmann. Not, he claimed, because I'm an evil, bloodthirsty murderer, but because when "you march up to me with such clear intent, I get nervous. And I'm sure that I see your German

## INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman



roots coming through when you do. Like Eichmann." It shouldn't have to be said, but for the record, we weren't those types of Germans. Even if the rabbi sometimes thinks otherwise.

With all my good intentions, clearly I'm a lot to handle.

In truth, there are articles that I have written and not published, and there are articles that I published that I shouldn't have written. I'm critical of my work, and whereas I love some of what I have penned, there are many pieces and many conversations that I don't like at all.

I try to be responsible, and I try to consider what the reaction to my words will be. But I also take my role – whatever it is – seriously, which sometimes means addressing things that are uncomfortable. Subjects that would be easier – and smarter for me – to leave the hell alone.

I also often get it wrong. Articles that I considered harmless and fun often cause greater outrage than the ones that I thought would do so, and subjects that are safe and insipid become social media flurries.

Which is the reason that I would like to use this column on erev Yom Kippur to explain that whatever I've written or said has never been meant in a malicious way. My pen might be sharp, my words might bite, but the intention is pure.

I'll probably have no recollection of the words that offended you most, but I'm sorry if they did. One thing I'm certain of is that it's not worth hating me. It's a genuine waste of an extremely valuable emotion. Especially not until the day you die.

*Gmar chatima tova!*

## A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

# Hitting the ground running in 5784

The first week of the Jewish new year – 5784 on the Jewish calendar – has been an exceptionally busy one for the Board, with high-level engagements taking place in three different provinces on Tuesday, 19 September, alone. A delegation comprising national and regional representatives travelled to Ulundi to pay a condolence visit to the family of the late Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, while our political and social justice liaison, Alana Baranov, was in Cape Town presenting our oral submission on the Prevention and Combatting of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill in Parliament. For my part, I was required to travel only as far as Boksburg, where I represented the Jewish community at a stakeholder engagement with faith-based organisations convened by the Gauteng provincial government's ethics and anti-corruption council. In addition, we provided a prayer to be read on behalf of our community at the South African Women in Dialogue conference in Pretoria. Normally, our tireless interfaith liaison Reeva Forman would have delivered it in person, but on this occasion, she was in Ulundi with the rest of our delegation.

At the Boksburg event, I spoke on a panel together with representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Rastafarian communities as well as traditional healers and traditional leaders. I stressed, with appropriate illustrations from the Torah, how in our tradition, liberation and nation building go hand in hand with the rule of law and responsibility. Corruption is the worst form of theft, I said, since those committing it steal not only our money but our trust and our future. We put our faith in our elected leaders to have the country's best interests at heart, not their own, and when they enriched themselves at the expense of those who chose them, they destroy that faith.

## ABOVE BOARD

Karen Milner

The oral submissions on the Hate Crimes Bill were presented by various stakeholders to the National Council of Provinces in Parliament. As I have previously stressed, anti-hate crime legislation is of crucial importance to the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) in terms of fulfilling its mandate of protecting the Jewish community and upholding its civil rights. We have therefore been involved with this issue from the outset. In her presentation, Baranov highlighted the history of antisemitism in South Africa and raised key points from the Board's written submission. These included some of our practical recommendations regarding the need for official bodies that fight hate to be properly resourced, for citizen education and empowerment, and restorative justice. Baranov was also involved in the creation of the oral submission presentation for the Hate Crimes Working Group in her role as deputy chairperson of this civil society network.

To conclude with the Ulundi visit, our delegation, comprising Reeva Forman, Wendy Kahn, and Charisse Zeifert from the SAJBD, and Grant Mazerow and Benji Shulman from the KwaZulu-Natal Zionist Council and South African Zionist Federation respectively, met with Prince Zuzi Buthelezi and his family at his home. All were much moved by the warmth and obvious appreciation with which they were welcomed. The visit was spent sharing memories of the late Buthelezi and the innumerable positive interactions he had with the Jewish community throughout his long life.

• 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*

# KD JAM reveals accomplishment of school musicians

King David Linksfield (KDL) showcased the talents of its Jewish Academy of Music (KD JAM) on 12 September, with outstanding performances by students and teachers. The KD JAM showcase is an annual event which displays the exceptional musicianship nurtured through the academy. This year's ensembles included the KD JAM rock and pop bands; jazz band; guitar trio; vocal ensembles; sax duets; and the lively KDL Primary School Drumline.

Talented teachers performed in various items, highlighting how privileged KD JAM is to have them on its staff. The opening item had the audience clapping along, and this energy was maintained throughout the show. The evening ended on a high note, with matric students giving one of their final performances as members of the academy. Adiv Blumenthal, Talya Rome, and Jordan Jacobson added value to KD JAM with their

commitment and outstanding musicianship, inspiring many after them.

Jessica Currin, the head of KD JAM, expressed her delight, saying, "The success



of this phenomenal concert is due to the high calibre of our teachers and the commitment of the students at KD JAM. The transformative power of music lessons cannot be underestimated."

# Yeshiva College holds fashion show with a difference

Yeshiva College Girls High School's fashion show on 6 September celebrated the legacy of Jewish women, the school, and the community which has supported the school's arts and culture programme.

With the sponsorship of magnificent clothing to a pre-yomtov market, to a show that took women on a journey of beauty that's internal, deep, and meaningful, pupils had the opportunity to partake in a process that develops resilience, team building, and displays each young woman's unique sense of self.



**Wednesday 27 September**

- ORT SA hosts a talk by Robert Greenstein live at ORT SA. Time: 08:30. Contact: 011 728 7154 or admin@ortjet.org.za

**Friday 20 to Saturday 21 October**

- Stellenbosch Shul invites guests to join its centenary celebrations. For more information, please contact gzetler@gmail.com or https://qkt.io/6VFhDe. RSVP by Friday 29 September.

Read the SA Jewish Report online and sign up to our weekly newsletter

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Mon - Thurs 18-21 September		07h00 - 22h00
Friday 22 September		07h00 - 16h00
Saturday 23 September		18h40 - 22h00
Sunday 24 September	Erev Yom Kippur	08h00 - 15h00
Monday 25 September		CLOSED
Tues - Thurs 26-28 September		17h00 - 22h00
Friday 29 September	Erev Sukkot	07h00 - 16h00
Saturday 30 September	Sukkot 1st Day	CLOSED
Sunday 1 October	Sukkot 2nd Day	18h50 - 22h00
Mon - Thurs 2-5 October	Chol Hamoed	07h00 - 22h00
Friday 6 October	Chol Hamoed	07h00 - 16h00
Saturday 7 October	Shemini Atzeret	CLOSED
Sunday 8 October	Simchat Torah	18h55 - 22h00

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