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Pressure on Palestinians to abandon UN statehood bid

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TALKING ABOUT SINAI

'One person with one heart', the slogan of the Sinai Indaba, epitomised the tone of this vibrant "ingathering" in Sandton, imbued with Torah values, where Jews of many stripes used the opportunity to listen to top Jewish speakers and to participate in the stimulating discussions that followed. Pictured are Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, former Chief Rabbi of Israel and current Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, in discourse with Rabbi Yossi Jacobson, one of Sinai Indaba's keynote speakers. (PHOTOGRAPH: CAROLINE SUZMAN)

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16:52	17:47	East London



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EDITOR - Geoff Sifrin
geoff@sajewishreport.co.za

Sub-Editor - Paul Maree

Ed Co-ordinator - Barry Bilewitz
barry@sajewishreport.co.za

Senior Reporter - Rita Lewis
rita@sajewishreport.co.za

Sports Editor - Jack Milner
jackmilner@telkomsa.net

Books Editor - Gwen Podbrey

Arts Editor - Robyn Sassen
robyn@sajewishreport.co.za

Youth Editor - Alison Goldberg
alison@sajewishreport.co.za

Cape Town correspondent
Moirä Schneider: 021-794-4206

Pretoria correspondent
Diane Wolfson: 082-707-9471

Manager: Distribution
Britt Landsman
britt@sajewishreport.co.za

Sales Executives - (011) 023-8160
Britt Landsman: 082-292-9520
Manuela Bernstein: 082-951-3838
Murray Schoeman: 083-627-6670

Freelance Sales Executive
Marlene Bilewitz: 083-475-0288

Classified Sales
jrclassified@global.co.za

Design and layout
Frankie Matthysen
Nicole Cook

Website
www.sajewishreport.co.za
Ilan Ossendryver
IC-Creations
ilan@ic-creations.com

Subscription enquiries
Avusa Publishing (Pty) Ltd
Tel: 0860-13-2652

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Howard Feldman (Chairman), Issie Kirsh (Deputy Chairman), Stan Kaplan, Marlene Bethlehem, Russell Gaddin, Norman Lowenthal, Bertie Lubner, Benjy Porter, Herby Rosenberg, Howard Sackstein, Jason Valkin.

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PARSHA OF THE WEEK

For G-d or for me?



RABBI AHARON ROSE
Waverley Shul

WHENEVER someone says it’s not about the money... it is!

“Korach separated himself... with Datan and Aviram... and 250 men... and gathered together against Moshe and Aharon.” (Numbers 16:1-3)

Ethics of the Fathers (5:17) states: “Any dispute which is for the sake of heaven will have an everlasting result,” and cites the dispute between Hillel and Shammai as an example. But “any dispute which is not for the sake of heaven will not have an everlasting result”, such as the dispute of Korach and his followers.

The problem is obvious; most people are absolutely convinced that they only argue with pure intentions. Korach himself argued: “The entire community is holy and G-d is among them; why do you elevate yourselves over the People of G-d?”

Korach appears to be making the quite reasonable claim that a regular people needs leaders, but a holy nation, led by G-d, does not. Whereas in fact, Korach was upset that his cousin Elitzafan had been appointed leader of the family of Kehat, rather than himself.

So how does one know if a controversy is for the sake of heaven or not? How can I know what my own intentions really are?

Firstly, if you look at the words of the Mishna, you will see that in the dispute between Hillel and Shammai both sides are mentioned, whereas in connection with Korach, the Mishna only refers to the dispute “of Korach and his followers”, rather than that of Korach and Moshe.

Hillel and Shammai were interested in the truth, and, so, each was willing to listen to the other side. Whereas Korach and his followers were not interested in what the other side had to say, and therefore, Moshe’s side is not mentioned in the Mishna.

A dispute that is for the sake of heaven, takes into consideration all possible sides of an issue, in an effort to uncover the truth. While the other side is talking, if you are thinking of what you are going to say next, chances are you’re not interested in the truth.

Secondly, if you are able to wait a while before arguing, your dispute might be constructive and “for the sake of Heaven”. But if you are so excited that you can’t hold yourself back from expressing your point of view immediately, it is highly likely that your dispute is selfishly motivated.

Thirdly, a person who is selfishly-motivated tends to bring in all sorts of irrelevant issues which merely add heat, but no light, to the matter under dispute. If you find yourself bringing up the past when a dispute arises, you are probably involved because you are desperate to win the argument, rather than to find the truth.

Finally, if your argument stands up to the test of objective logic, it might be based on a desire to discover that which is true and right, but if not, then it is probably a personal battle of wills.

How can you know that? You probably can’t - ask someone you respect and trust to give you an impartial perspective.

Shabbat shalom!

SINAI INDABA

Problems are merely Divinely ordained opportunities





DAVID SAKS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RITA LEWIS

IF THERE was a common theme in the wide array of presentations by the speakers at the Sinai Indaba held at the Sandton Sun Hotel over the weekend, it was not that life’s difficulties and hardships should be denied or minimised; rather, it was that when seen in a correct, Torah, perspective, it would be understood that they were not problems at all, but rather Divinely ordained opportunities for further spiritual development and achievement.

In his lecture entitled “Happiness in a Sad World”, Rabbi Akiva Tatz explained that true simcha (happiness) came from doing the right thing in terms of what the specific circumstances demanded.

The purpose of life in the physical world, which itself was little more than a faint projection of an infinitely deeper and eternal reality, was to enable the neshamah (soul), using free will and the temporary physical tools with which it was endowed, to build its own unique place in Olam HaEmes - the World of Truth.

Once this was properly understood, then all life’s experiences, even those involving suffering, could be properly utilised to build on an eternal reality, and there was no greater happiness than that.

Depression, said Rabbi Tatz, was regarded as so harmful in Judaism because it was both caused by and the cause of stagnation, characterised by a failure to move forward towards higher goals. It was impossible to be depressed when engaged in building something worthwhile, hence the antidote to depression was to “get moving”, ideally in helping others.

However, even worse than depression was devoting one’s efforts to a trivial cause that had no intrinsic or lasting value.

Rabbi Tatz recounted the advice of his teacher and mentor, the late Rabbi Simcha Wasserman. This was to focus on doing whatever one could do to the best of one’s abilities and not to worry about what it was out of one’s power to do.

Rabbi Yonatan Rosenblum, speaking on “The Media Obsession with Israel - an Optimist’s View”, said that calling for “better hasbarah” to counter anti-Israel bias was to miss the point.

Even the best hasbarah would not be effective in a situation where facts and evidence were disregarded and self-evidently irrational conclusions assuming Israeli guilt adopted without question.

Again and again, without any evidence, hysterical accusations of Israeli war crimes were made, and the fact that these were continually exposed as falsehoods thereafter, did not prevent a new round of libellous claims being made the next time round. Nor did the fact that Israeli attacks were always in response to continual acts of provocation by the other side, make any difference.

The very irrationality of the world’s obsession with Israel, and the self-evidently

Rabbi Akiva Tatz **Sara Rigler**

absurdity and injustice of its conclusions about what was happening, was itself evidence that something out of the ordinary was happening, Rabbi Rosenblum believed.

The real reason for it was that Jews were a special people with a mission to bring the knowledge of G-d into the world, and this was why so much of the world hated them.

“The answer to anti-Semitism is to use it as a proof of who we are and through that be encouraged to take our mission seriously,” he said.

In his lecture “Facts and Faith: Prophecy Fulfilled?”, Rabbi Dovid Ordman likewise pointed to the obsessive, fundamentally irrational nature of anti-Semitism as a proof of the Jews’ special mission in the world.

The survival of the Jewish people, combined with their being continually singled out as the objects of hatred, fully bore out the predictions and teaching of the Jewish prophets and sages.

The story of the Jewish people went completely against normal historical patterns and the way it had unfolded was not something that could reasonably have been predicted thousands of years before.

“I have all that I need and I need all that I have,” is the approach Sara Rigler recommends to accepting perceived lacks and unwanted problems.

This meant understanding that whatever a person had in terms of money, talent, intelligence or the like, was what Hashem had determined was appropriate for that particular person to fulfil his/her life’s mission.

The second part of the formula referred to the difficulties one might have to face in life; these, too, were there for a constructive reason.

Rigler said that sadness in Judaism (as opposed to aveilus - mourning - which was a mitzvah) was not allowed. The exception was feeling sadness over any wrong, which was defined as anything the Torah prohibited, that one had done and even here, this regret had to be felt only within strictly observed limits.]

It was forbidden for a Jew to conclude that he/she was a bad person. Rather, the approach to teshuvah should be: “How can someone with so unique and special a mission as myself, have fallen short of what is expected of me?”

Trevor Stamelman: 082-608-0168
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SINAI INDABA

Why do bad things happen to good people?

ALISON GOLDBERG

THE PAIN of people’s lives is very real. Those who rationalise others’ pain are either cruel or stupid, said Rabbi Yossi Jacobson, in a discourse on “Why do bad things happen to good people?”

Rabbi Jacobson is an internationally renowned speaker, teacher and mentor to thousands across the globe. He was the first rabbi invited by the Pentagon to present the annual religious keynote address to 4 000 US military chaplains, and to the 34 000 employees of the National Security Agency.

He is editor of the Algemeiner Journal, the largest Yiddish-English newspaper in the world, the spiritual leader of congregation Bais Shmuel Chabad in New York, and the dean of TheYeshiva.net, where he presents weekly classes and lectures. He is also, inter alia, the author of the 150-lecture series “A Tale of Two Souls” on the Tanya.

In the place of pain, which is a holy place, Moses was commanded to take off his shoes on seeing in the burning of the bush the burning of his people, but not their being consumed, in future generations; so we are commanded to be humble and compassionate in the face of another’s pain, he said.

As with Yizkor, the prayer for the departed, people who have not lost loved ones have to leave the synagogue. For those who have lost loved ones, a piece of them has left this life; they don’t look at life the same way.

To the question of why good people suffer, which connotes a consciousness even by atheists of a G-d, that the world is supposed to be a good place, the answer is, we don’t know. The life of the soul is a mystery, for which we must have respect.

There is a reason G-d doesn’t tell us why, because if we knew why, we would be less pained by it. G-d wants us to be possessed with fighting it. He needs us as partners to be there for those who are suffering to eliminate their pain; to be there for people to have a shoulder to cry on.

Rosenblum: No halacha on Palestinian state

ALISON GOLDBERG
PHOTOGRAPHS BY RITA LEWIS

WHILE TORAH is clear on the matter of Jewish national survival and on our understanding of who we are and why our collective existence is so essential, there is no halachic point of view on the issue of a Palestinian state.

Columnist Jonathan Rosenblum and Rabbi Moshe Taragin, both haredi, at the SinaiIndaba, brought into sharp relief the dichotomy that faces us, of the commandment to settle the land and yet respect the rights of Palestinians on the land.

Rabbi Taragin, also a senior lecturer at Yeshivat Har Etzion and author of an Internet shiur entitled “Talmudic Methodology” with over 5 000 subscribers, made the point clearer in his talk: “Does Religion Stifle our Humanity?”

He says the Palestinians deserve our respect and understanding and that Jews have to strive for a delicate blend of nationalism and universalism.

Rosenblum, in a panel discussion with Rabbi Taragin on “Secularism, a Palestinian State and Iran. The Way Forward for Israel?” said for peace, if real peace could be achieved, not just the signing of an agreement, land could be traded. That was the haredi point of view and the theoretical halachic position.

But there would be no Palestinian state in the foreseeable future, given the constellation of Palestinian attitudes, he believed. And we should not delude ourselves that we had the power to bring one about if



Rabbi Moshe Taragin



Jonathan Rosenblum

only we were more forthcoming. If the Palestinians wanted a state instead of the destruction of the Jewish State, they could have had one long ago.

On the issue of army service, he said we needed both soldiers and scholars. Not every haredi Jew was a scholar. There was no halachic reason why being haredi served as a lifetime exemption from army service.

“I would not advocate it for young, unmarried haredi men because the army is an institution of socialisation to a particular set of values that are in many ways anathema to the Torah life.

“But there is room for some form of army service at 25 or 26, as is common for older students at Mercaz HaRav, the flagship of the national religious movement.”

While Rosenblum was prepared to live with the ambiguity of Israel’s statehood and the uncertainty of it being the flower of redemption, Rabbi Taragin believed Torah suffused the entire scope of Jewish experience and that statehood, thanks to secularism, was G-d’s will and a Divine footprint. Indeed the ingathering of its people, particularly over the past 150 years, has brought G-d’s people back to its redemptive role.

Rosenblum acknowledged that the state of Israel commanded our support and a clear understanding of its need for security. Rabbi Taragin pointed out that today more Torah is being studied in Israel than in the time of the first Temple, thanks to the motivation of the religious community.

AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

TEXAS ENACTS LAW UPHOLDING MEZUZAH RIGHTS

HOUSTON - Texas Governor Rick Perry, has signed a bill requiring homeowner associations to permit religious displays on residents’ doors, including mezuzahs. According to the law, the religious item must be under 25 inches and be in the doorway.

The law, signed on June 17, was introduced after a Conservative Jewish couple was ordered to remove a mezuzah from the door of their rental apartment, then fined when they refused.

The couple sued to be allowed to keep the mezuzah up and lost; they moved from the building when their lease was up. They then turned to Garnet Coleman, a state legislator from Houston, to help pass a bill to prevent this from happening to others, the Houston Chronicle reported.

In 2008, Florida passed a similar bill. (JTA)

ARGENTINE: CANDIDATE CAN'T BE 'RABBI' ON BALLOT

BUENOS AIRES - A Buenos Aires court ruled a rabbi running for the city’s legislature, cannot use the title “rabbi” on an election ballot. The court’s three judges acknowledged that Bergman may be better known as "Rabbi Sergio Bergman" than by his name alone. However, the court said the title of rabbi could suggest positive connotations not appropriate for an election ballot.

The rival Victory Front, the party of Argentina’s president, had objected to Bergman using the title "rabbi" on the ballot. (JTA)

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SINAI INDABA

Enduring Torah values run like golden thread through Sinai Indaba

ALISON GOLDBERG

WHAT IS an indaba, former Chief Rabbi of Israel – and presently Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv - Yisrael Meir Lau, asked on being invited to deliver the keynote address to the Sinai Indaba last weekend at the Sandton Sun Hotel.

He was told “indaba” was a Zulu word for the gathering of the different peoples of South Africa to discuss important matters and to hear everyone’s view.

One of those matters was the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein explained to the audience as he opened the conference on Saturday night. The aim was to shed light on matters of the day in an often troubled and turbulent world filled with complexities and to learn what Torah had to say about them.

Hence its name, Sinai Indaba, to which 1 500 people came on Saturday night in Johannesburg and a further 2 500 on the Sunday, where by mid-Sunday, a further conference room had to be found at the Sandton Convention Centre to accommodate them all.

The conference was also held in Cape Town on Saturday night, drawing a crowd of 300, and a further 500 on Monday. In Durban, the indaba was held at a lunch last Thursday for 200.

This same Torah, given at Mount Sinai 3 323 years ago, Chief Rabbi Goldstein said, guided us in every generation, in all aspects of our lives, for all time and in all places. It was made to live through discussion and debate on the issues of the day.

Such a gathering of the community for the first time to hear from nine Torah luminaries from around the world, and to learn, as we did at Sinai as “one person with one heart” – the theme of the Indaba - was conceived and led by Chief Rabbi Goldstein in partnership with different shuls and community rabbonim, namely Rabbi Dovid Masinter (Chabad), Rabbi Shmuel Moffson (Ohr Somayach), Rabbi Laurence Perez (Mizrachi) and many others.

The event was dedicated to those in our community who are in need of refuah, a recovery from their illnesses, the Chief Rabbi said, and was sponsored anonymously as a mark of gratitude to G-d, by a family who had experienced such a recovery.

Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom Lord Jonathan Sacks, in a video message, interpreted “indaba” as the time to sit down and study together to sort our problems.

One of the most mistranslated verses in the Torah was when “Cain said to Abel, when they were in the field, and Cain rose up and killed his brother”.

Cain does not say what he said. It is not a syntactically well-formed sentence. Why does Torah use it? It is to teach us that when conversation breaks down, violence follows. Torah explains it in the most beautiful way: conversation is crucial to explore conflict and move on.

We see the same teaching in the determination of whether a man is guilty of murder or (accidental) manslaughter, and which, in the latter case deserves protection in a city of refuge. Maimonides says he is a murderer if he has hatred in his heart. The indicator of that hatred is if he has not spoken to his victim in three days.

Again, when Joseph’s brothers “could not speak to him to peace”, Torah is exact. Had they told him why they did not like him, he could have had a chance to say sorry, or work out the issues, or explain himself.

The only way to break through hatred is to talk and be honest. If you talk, you can resolve the conflict. When you realise that speech can lead to conversation, conciliation is possible.

Today we are living with all kinds of revolutions, political and technical. We see the fragmentation of people who are like-minded talking to their own; of opposites not listening to each other, leading to extremes.

The failure of this conversation is very dangerous. The Babylonian Talmud teaches us that prayer with G-d leads to spiritual peace; with a human, to social peace. That is an indaba.

Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv Yisrael Meir Lau, a child survivor of the Holocaust who rose to become the Chief Rabbi of Israel, has been involved in Israel’s most eventful moments and is the embodiment of Klal Yisroel, the community of Israel.

He is the rav, the teacher of the whole of Israel, as was Moses, our first teacher. Thus was he introduced by Chief Rabbi Goldstein.

The Torah itself spoke of its own relevance today, said Chief Rabbi Lau. Three months after the exodus from Egypt, Israel gathered to receive the Torah on “this day”, meaning it had bearing on us today and for eternity, neither limited by time nor place.

Fifty-two years ago to the day, when Rabbi Lau became engaged to his wife, her father, then Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv himself, posed a question, for which the possible answer may lie in the parsha of that week, as it was this past Shabbat: Parshat Shelach.

The word “heritage” appears only twice in the Torah, each time with a different meaning.

The first time it appears is in Exodus chapter six: “I will bring you to the land. I give you that heritage I promised to your fathers.”

The second time it appears is in Deuteronomy 40 years later: the Torah itself.

What bothered him, said Rabbi Lau, was that it was like a prophecy: every Jew everywhere in the world had some connection with the Torah, some recited Kaddish, others went to a seder or performed other mitzvot.

When it comes to the history of our nation and homeland, the majority of our people have not received the heritage of the land to the extent that 85 per cent of American Jews have never been to Israel, though its gates are open. Most Jews cannot speak Hebrew.

It depends on how you receive a gift. When Israel gathered to receive the Torah, they promised to perform its commandments even before they heard what those commandments were.

Before the heritage of the land of Israel, we were more resistant. In the book of Numbers, everyone descended on Moshe, there was confusion; we had to send in spies. We were afraid to go, despite Moshe’s reassurance. A whole generation had to die out before we entered the land.

A pasuk in Devarim speaks of a king in Yeshurun (Jewry) when the heads of the people gathered and all the tribes came together. That verse foreshadowed all three types of government: monarchy, Sandhedrin and democracy, the latter when the tribes of Israel ruled.

Governments may change, for example, you couldn’t change the borders unless a Sanhedrin of 71 said so. But the Torah remains unchanged. You cannot change what was given.

Beyond all the different languages, mentalities and destinies of Jews, what makes us a nation, scattered though we are in almost 190



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein; Rabbi Dovid Masinter of Chabad; and Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE SUZMAN)

countries around the world is Sinai: 613 mitzvot, 10 commandments, one eretz Yisrael, “for which you are prepared to sacrifice your life”. And above us all is an all-knowing judge.

How Torah Talks to Me? Five international speakers were asked to give their definitions, in five minutes.

Jonathan Rosenblum, a graduate of Yale Law School, a prolific writer and columnist, discovered on a bus on the morning of July 4, 1976, when the news of the Entebbe rescue broke, when Jews were hugging and kissing each other, that we are all part of an unbroken chain.

He found on becoming observant, that as a lawyer, that judges often erred and their judgments could be dismissed, but in the Talmud that was not an option. Here he found truth that you had to pursue and find to unravel its layers; it speaks to every part of human existence.

Torah gives us a purpose in life; shows us how to relate to others and to ourselves. The miracle of Entebbe gave him that perspective and the hope of what is possible when Jews join together, and their observance is what has made us survive to this day.

Sara Rigler, world-renowned author, whose work has been acclaimed as “life-changing”, learnt how Torah could temper her reactions and made her stretch herself.

On receiving a “letter bomb” from a cousin who “annihilated her character” because of an “indelicate” passage in an article she wrote, she was compelled by Torah not to take revenge, but to seek a compassionate approach.

Further, though she still burned over the attack on her character and life, silent treatment was not an answer. As Maimonides taught, you cannot go for three days without greeting your fellow man.

She wrote and apologised for the offense given. The reply? Her cousin was having a bad day. She observed wryly that it was better to have a bad day than a lifelong family feud. That’s Torah. It teaches you that you can be a better person tomorrow than you are today.

Bronya Shaffer, counsellor, mentor and speaker on Jewish women’s issues, who grew up with her grandmother, was taught that it was her duty to make a world in which G-d could dwell.

From Sinai came Hashem’s mission statement that the women had to be taught the Torah first, and then all of Israel. During the turbulent feminist era in 1975, she was still struggling with the kind of role Jewish women could play.

The answer came from the Rebbe: a woman’s mitzvah was to light the Shabbat candles. The Rebbe’s campaign to ensure young girls and women lit the candles, implied the role of women to spread light and divinity. That was the answer to the challenge of reconciling feminist values and the role of Jewish women in the universe.

Rabbi Moshe Taragin, who taught Talmud at Columbia University and who is inter alia a senior lecturer at Yeshivat Har Etzion in Gush Etzion, said the Torah was a gift to us, for all kinds of noble aspirations; one we would not exchange for a life without it.

There are so many mitzvot, which cover all aspects of our lives. What do we have in this world? We have parents, a Rebbe, wife and children. He sees religion as the greatest gift: to live life on a higher and more noble plane; to live life at its most dignified; to have a life of happiness and meaning.

It is not a system of don’ts but dos.

Henry Drummond, an English poet said to get to heaven we had to take heaven with us. “I thank Hashem for everything. This gift of life is what we received at Har Sinai.”

Rabbi Dr Akiva Tatz, a graduate of Wits Medical School, an acclaimed author and lecturer in Jewish philosophy and thought and on medical ethics, teaches at the Jewish Learning Exchange in London and internationally.

Pointing out that the gematria of indaba is truth, he said for him Torah was a process that enabled one to develop a conception of truth; that enabled one to see through the illusion of sin, which though external, was like a spider’s web that entrapped like steel cables.

Adam’s partaking of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, boiled down to Adam eating the fruits of confusion between good and evil. Torah delineates clearly between good and evil and that is why it is called the Tree of Life.

As a former South African, he said what he treasured most about South Africans, was a certain wholesome approach to the truth.

“It is a place where a community has been revolutionised by Torah that is unparalleled in the world.”

Charles Mendelow contributed to this report.

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Journalist trainee suspended

OWN CORRESPONDENT

THE MAIL&Guardian last week suspended an intern for posting an anti-Semitic comment on facebook.

Ngoako Matsha, who has been a trainee at the newspaper since February this year, was suspended last week Thursday, according to Mail&Guardian Online, for stating in a facebook response that “all Jews” are racists and that it was “no wonder Hitler killed all Jews”.

News24 reported that these comments had been in response to a facebook user, Benji Shulman, who asked people to suggest “a basic decent history of apartheid”.

Matsha replied to the request: “Petty apartheid is building tall walls to separate Israel from Palestines (sic)”

Shulman replied: “Thanks for that piece of pseudo-politics but I need something that will stand up to logical argument.”

Matsha’s response: “You racists! No wonder Hitler killed all the Jews, because you’re all a bunch of racists.”

Mail & Guardian editor Nic Dawes was informed of Matsha’s comments by a Twitter user. He investigated and said Matsha had confirmed that he had made the statements.

In an e-mail to staff members Dawes

said: “The remarks made on facebook... are fundamentally at odds with the most fundamental values of the Mail & Guardian, the Constitution, and basic human decency. Justifying the Holocaust in this fashion is hate speech and is completely unacceptable in any forum.”

He added, in a telephone interview with the SAJR: “If it had happened with a full-time staff member, we would have dismissed him. What brings a young person to make comments like this, however, draws from a lack of adequate education. Matsha is in his early 20s. We take responsibility for his training and development. We do not want to take action that is more destructive than the original remarks.

“I do not want to send him out into the world angrier and more prone to making comments of this nature.”

Commenting on the News24 story, bloggers in general seemed to have agreed with the suspension, citing the fact that although Matsha may claim that he acted in his personal capacity, it was clear that he was still a Mail&Guardian employee.

“Ntlutluko” wanted to know whether M&G employees were “prohibited from voicing their opinion outside of work.” It elicited a host of negative clicks.

“Brenton” responded: “I don’t think

anyone is prohibited from expressing their personal views outside of work, but when you realise that one of your employees has a stance that contradicts the values of your company, then you have the right to disassociate you and your company from that person.” “GetReal” pointed out that “voicing an opinion” and “breaking the law” were different things.

“Alinet” elicited more than twice the number of negative clicks to positive ones when he stated: “Stalin, Lenin and Marx were Jews and they killed over 65 million Christians. Telling the truth while working for Zionist (sic) doesn’t pay. So much for freedom and democracy.” “Ivym” quickly took him/her to task: “Stalin was not a Jew, neither was Lenin and Marx (his parents converted to Christianity). Learn your history before making comments...”

Said Dawes, “These reactions reflect a lack of understanding about issues relating to genocide in general, and the Holocaust in particular. We have tried to be completely fair and open about this. We will use this incident as a teaching opportunity, rather than to destroy a young person’s career. Hopefully what he learns from this will demonstrate his capacity to grow.”

On June 17, Matsha updated his facebook status: “I apologise and withdraw my comment as it does not reflect my true opinion on the issue.”

Strong delegation from Africa at WJC meeting

AFRICAN DELEGATES are pictured with the World Jewish Congress leadership at the WJC governing board meeting taking place in Jerusalem: Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft (CEO African Jewish Congress); David Jacobson (SAJBD Cape director); Li Boiskin (SAJBD Cape and national vice-chairman); Ronald Lauder (president World Jewish Congress); Mervyn Smith (president African Jewish Congress); Mary Kluk (SAJBD national vice-chairman); Wendy Kahn (SAJBD national director); Owen Griffith (chairman Island Hebrew Congregation, Mauritius); and Dan Diker (incoming secretary-general WJC) .



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SOCIAL SCENE

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Two rabbis fond of the colour red - Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and Rabbi Ari Kievman.



Sharing a joke are Rabbis Mendel Liberow and Yossy Baumgarten.



Rabbi Dovid Masinter of Chabad, business tycoon and philanthropist Solly Krok, Rabbi Ari Kievman (behind) and former Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau of Israel.

Sinai Indaba – nourishing food for the soul

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY RITA LEWIS

THE ATTENDANCE at the Sinai Indaba of some 2 500 Jews thirsting for knowledge, was indeed a revelation, not this time at Mount Sinai but at the Sandton Sun’s Maroela Room on Saturday night and in four ballrooms the following day. The first of its kind to be held in South Africa, the Indaba was a resounding success, with many Jews packed into the various public rooms of the Sandton Sun Hotel in Sandton on Sunday, while another 1 500 attended the Indaba in Cape Town and Durban. Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein’s idea to bring “Torah Talking to a Modern World” in the guise of an indaba, was a rousing success. Whether or not the audience took note of one of the main themes of the Indaba which was “One People with One Heart”, the

attendees comprised Jews from all denominations. Rabbonim from the different shuls, secular Jews, Lubavitch Jews, those wearing kippot srugot, mainstream Jews, black Jews – you name them, they were there, sitting side by side, talking and interacting without any finger-pointing. In Johannesburg, on Saturday evening every single seat of the Maroela Room was taken to hear a chief rabbi and a former chief rabbi speak, while another spoke via video link: South Africa’s Rabbi Warren Goldstein and former Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, who is presently Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv. Rabbi Lau delivered the keynote address. With the use of modern technology, the UK’s Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks addressed the Indaba via a video link. After the Chief Rabbis had spoken, six of the speakers, Rabbi

David Ordman, Jonathan Rosenblum, Sara Rigler, Bronya Shaffer, Rabbi Moshe Taragin and Rabbi Dr Akiva Tatz, each gave a five minute message on “How the Torah Speaks to Me”. In total, nine international guest speakers had been invited, as well as various local rabbonim and speakers. As well as those previously mentioned, also participating were Rabbis Yechezkal Auerbach, Avigdor Blumenau and Yossi Jacobson, Rabbi Mendel and Rebbetzen Mashi Lipskar, Rabbi Laurence Perez, Rabbi Levi Wineberg, Joanne Zagnoev, as well as local experts who had been invited to share their knowledge, interpretation and insights on various “important issues we face in our daily lives” - through presentations, panel discussions, debates and dialogue. On the Sunday, the massive crowds necessitated the use of

four ballrooms to simultaneously accommodate the speakers whose sessions during the day lasted 50 minutes each with a lunch break and 10-minute breaks in between sessions - for some refreshments and to find the next venue where your choice of subject and speaker would be. Some subjects on Sunday were: Happiness in a sad world; Modern ills – Torah cures; Jewish identity in a multi cultural society; Journey of the soul- what happens in the after-life; From India to Israel – A bumpy journey; Jewish Intimacy; Facts and Faith – Prophecy fulfilled?; Does religion stifle our humanity?; Sinai Revelation – Historical Proof; Israel’s Way Forward?; Employer/Employee relationships; Interactive workshop - A child – gift and responsibility; The media’s obsession with Israel; Vanquishing negativity and guilt; Risk and danger in medicine and

surgery; Why do bad things happen to good people? There were also three Beit Midrash sessions on: What are the limitations of honouring parents?; Confidentiality – when is there an obligation to reveal sensitive information? And, Can you turn people away? Understanding the mitzvah of tzedakah. The three films to be shown over the lunch break were regrettably not aired as some discussions had run overtime. The closing address was given by Rabbi Lau. During the Indaba, Rabbi Goldstein thanked the family who had sponsored the event anonymously in thanks to Hashem for a refuah. He thanked all those who had assisted him in so many ways and had gone the extra mile to make the event the huge success that it was – for “One People with One Heart”.



A meeting of two great minds - former Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau of Israel and Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein of South Africa.



Rabbi Danni Sackstein with Rabbi Laurence Perez and his son Levi, with Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and his son Mordi.



Guest speaker Bronya Shaffer with her daughter Batya and son-in-law Rabbi Ari Kievman.



Rebbetzen Chaya Ita Lau, Devorah Nates and Clarissa Goldfein.



Yisroel Rigler with his mother, guest speaker, Sara Rigler.



Rebbetzen Gina Goldstein with her son Levi and Deanne and Rabbi Danni Sackstein.



David Nossel with SAUJS' Rabbi Yitz Lerner and Gideon and Tzipora Pogrund.

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CAPE TOWN

Before 1914 the vast majority of European Jews lived in the area known as “the Pale of Settlement” which stretched from Lithuania in the north to the borders of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire in the south. It was estimated that over four million Jews lived there.

During the First World War, the Pale was the battleground where the massive armies of Germany and Austria fought against the Russians. It was here that three great empires destroyed themselves. Millions of soldiers and civilians lost their lives.

Caught up in this conflict were the Jewish communities who actually had little interest in the war, yet thousands were dispersed and died as the battles raged on for four years.

Ironically the Jews welcomed the Germans when the Russians were forced to retreat from the Jewish areas. They spoke almost the same language as the Germans and there was neither inherent anti-Semitism nor the persecution and pogroms as there had been under Russian rule.

There was no way of knowing how many Jews lost their lives during the warfare. Many Jews who had survived the war on the Eastern front died in the famine in 1919 and even more perished in the murderous ‘flu epidemic which swept through the area at that time.

The Jews in South Africa looked on, aghast and in trauma. Most of them came from the areas where the fighting was at its heaviest. They had left behind them parents, brothers, sisters, families and friends. They had no way of knowing their fate.

A few received messages from Eastern Europe telling of the death and devastation and also stories of orphaned children, verminous, abandoned, sick and dying. (The American Joint Distribution Board estimated between 300 000 and 400 000 children were orphaned.)

The local Jewish community asked themselves whether something could be

done. A spontaneous plan evolved and the leader of the Cape Town Orangia Jewish Orphanage, Isaac Ochberg, was approached to contact Dr Jochelson at the offices of the Federation of Ukrainian Jews in London.

The Prime Minister of South Africa at that time was General J C Smuts and he and the Minister of the Interior, Patrick Duncan were approached with a plan and also to seek permission to bring some children, at least, to South Africa.

The government agreed, but laid down conditions. The children were to be brought and kept at the responsibility of the SA Jewish community. Only genuine orphans were to be brought out.

If there was a living parent, that child must not be considered; no families were broken up: no sick children were to be taken, nor any with mental or physical defects.

It was reckoned that 200 children could be brought out to this country.

Isaac Ochberg offered to go to Europe.

He was a great philanthropist. Besides, he had been born in The Ukraine and came to South Africa in 1894 as a 15-year-old, so he knew the area and naturally the language.

He left on his mission in March 1921.

BOTHAVILLE

From M Lewin:

“This town is situated 80 kilometres north-west of Kroonstad in the Free State. It was named after Theunis Botha who had a farm, where the town now stands.

“In August 2001 the last Jew in the town, Isaac Cohen, died at the age of 90, ending an 80 year era of the Cohen family there.

“Harry and Bessie Cohen originally from Lithuania, arrived in Bothaville in 1920 with four sons and three daughters. Isaac, one of their sons, married and went to live in Durban.

“Their middle daughter, Annie-Ray, married Mike Balkind from Wepener in the Free State. Mike opened a hardware shop in Bothaville, called M Balkind (Pty) Ltd. Harry and Bessie lived with them.

“In 1964 Mike was killed when he was run over by a car outside his shop. Annie-Ray moved to Johannesburg to be with her family who had relocated there. Isaac moved back to Bothaville to take over the shop.

“Mike’s son, Les, was born and grew up

in the town. Les did his matric at Bothaville Hoërskool and went on to study at Wits University.

“Les’s father died when he was young and he needed all the Jewish men living in Bothaville to come to the local shul to form a minyan so that he could recite Kaddish. There were then about 10 Jewish families living there.

“Les recalled: ‘It was wonderful, a small town, it was totally free in terms of restrictions and crime, the things that children grow up with today. Our lives revolved around fishing and swimming in the Vaal River.’

“When the shul closed down as they could no longer sustain a minyan, the Sefer Torah was taken to Israel, to Moshav Timorim.

“Isaac Cohen and his wife, Jinks, stayed on in Bothaville after their sons had left, because ‘they felt at home among the Afrikaner families’.

“At the age of 85, Isaac sold his shop to Dave Serfontein, but he remained on as an employee. Serfontein gave Isaac a 90th birthday party but Isaac died soon after.

“At a memorial service for him, the dominee was among the locals who attended. The Jewish community was always well respected in Bothaville.

“What has really changed now in Bothaville is the absence of Jews.”

• There is the story (possibly/probably apocryphal) that a Jewish traveler called at Isaac Cohen’s shop and asked him to direct him to the area where there were Jews. Isaac pointed out the way and off went the traveller.

However he was soon back and said that there had been some mistake because he had ended up at the Jewish cemetery. “Yes,” said Cohen, “that is where the Jews are now.”

KIMBERLEY

It seems that every other day we hear about another earthquake somewhere in the world. Are we safe here in South Africa?

In 1912, at 15:05 on Tuesday February 20, a severe earthquake occurred, lasting about 30 seconds, followed by a lesser tremor. This was the most severe earthquake on record in the Kimberley district.

No damage was done to the De Beers works, either on the surface or underground, but considerable damage was sustained at Kenilworth, a model village which housed the company’s employees.

• *From De Beers’ Centenary Supplement 1888-1988.*

Durban hors d’oeuvre to Limmud main meal

COOKY ISAACS
DURBAN

LIMMUD Family Fest at the Durban Jewish Centre on June 12, treated the local community to a diverse and interesting programme that featured presenters from Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg.

Attendance was good with 140 -150 dele-

gates taking part in the high-quality discourse. There was a great buzz and much discussion on the sessions, around the coffee station and during the lunch break.

Some of the best attended sessions were Prof Anton Harber on his book Diepsloot: Listen for the Call of the Bullfrog; Johnny Copelyn’s “Has the Zionist Dream Hit its Sell-by Date?”; Dora Wynchank’s Ritual or

Shackle: Obsessive Behaviour Among Religious Jews; and Charles Maisels on Profit with Purpose: Jewish Social Entrepreneurs.

This event was a build up to the Limmud International Conference to be held in Durban on Monday August 22. Email durban@limmud.org.za or visit www.limmud.org.za to register.

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A gathering good for the soul

THE WORD “indaba” means “a gathering of South Africans to discuss important matters”. The Sinai Indaba (covered on pages 1-4 and 6) held during the past week in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, lived up to that definition abundantly - a discussion about the essence of the Jewish soul and Jewish peoplehood.

It was a breath of fresh air which will be long remembered. The organisers are to be congratulated. The anonymous donors who funded it can be satisfied their money was well spent, its spiritual value measuring far beyond its nominal worth. The Jewish community owes them a debt of gratitude.

The eminent speakers coming together in this forum - the likes of which has not been seen here before - addressed a myriad aspects of Torah and its meaning, attracting such enthusiastic crowds that people had to be turned away. The spacious Maroela Room at the Sandton Sun was bursting at the seams. It shows the hunger in South African Jews for stimulating, high-level discourse.

Last Saturday night’s keynote speaker, Israel’s former Chief Rabbi, Yisrael Meir Lau - now Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv - is an inspiring symbol of strength and determination. He was a child Holocaust survivor who went on to attain the country’s highest rabbinical position.

Jews are a divided people - they are not “one”. They contain myriad variants of religious observance and cultures - different streams of ultra-Orthodox, modern Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, etc. “What is it that keeps this scattered, diverse people together?” asked one speaker. What links Jews in Finland to those in Argentina, India, the United States and South Africa? Torah, he said, and proceeded to unpack what this 3 323 year-old tradition - some 150 generations - means.

Rabbi Yossi Jacobson from New York said many divisions between the Jewish streams derive from a profound debate between “universalist” and “particularist” approaches to Jewishness.

The former stresses the universal applicability of Jewish principles, encouraging Jews to seek their place in broader society and sometimes leading to widespread assimilation, such as in the United States. The latter focuses on Jewish “peoplehood”, clearly distinct from others; when we grapple with who we are specifically as Jews, we are strongest and are respected by others, allowing the Jewish message to the world to radiate.

Being different is not easy. One speaker referred to “the courage to be different”. Jews have often suffered for this in their host societies throughout history.

It is a tribute to different factions in South African Jewry that they pulled together to create the Sinai Indaba - Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein’s office, Chabad, Ohr Somayach, Mizrachi and others.

In our small community, this co-operation is precious. Praise also goes to specific people who put in the hard work, including the Chief Rabbi, Rabbi David Masinter of Chabad and others.

Many of us live comfortable lives in this country, with its opportunities for meaningful, fruitful engagement. As always, Jews are involved in a wide array of aspects of the society. But there is also insecurity.

We are located at the bottom of Africa, far from major centres of Jewish life; the country’s high crime rate, corruption and political uncertainty bring anxiety - for example, ANC Youth League President Julius Malema’s hot-headed rhetoric about nationalisation, land expropriation and labelling whites as “criminals”. Consequently, this small Jewish community has seen some of its best and brightest leave for elsewhere.

But our history is special. We come from a context - decades of apartheid - where strong group ethnic identity was a type of survival kit. We feel a pronounced sense of separate “Jewishness” - more than many Jews elsewhere.

The Sinai Indaba celebrated this - not “solidarity” in facing a common enemy, but rather an affirmation of the best in Jewish values, beliefs and identity.

The convening of an exceptional gathering like the Sinai Indaba - “to discuss important matters” - is a measure of South African Jewry’s vibrancy. The benchmark has been set high. We are looking forward to Sinai Indaba 2012.

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

To Miriam Margolyes

NOT MANY performers can claim to have successfully upstaged Rowan Atkinson. For good reason, the star of such classic comedy shows as Not the Nine o’Clock News and the Black Adder series is ranked high on the list of the top British actor-comedians, that includes John Cleese, Peter Sellers and Kenneth Williams.

One who undoubtedly did manage it is Miriam Margolyes. In an early Black Adder episode (wittily - for those who know their Elizabethan history - entitled “The Queen of Spain’s Beard”), she played, with memorable, lip-smacking relish, a dumpy, sexually predatory Spanish princess who is lined up to marry the wretched anti-hero.

Another superb cameo of Margolyes, is as the comic-pathetic Flora Fincham in the BBC adaptation of Dickens’ Little Dorrit. She has since become a respected member of the British acting fraternity.

My good opinion of her, unfortunately, is now tempered by the fact that she has emerged as what the novelist Howard Jacobson would term an “ASHamed Jew”. This means that she has joined with other UK Jews in publicly expressing - as Jews - their moral outrage over what Israel is doing to the Palestinians and dissociating themselves - as Jews - from those acts.

It was Margolyes who, in proclaiming herself on Desert Island Discs to be “a proud Jew” but also “an ashamed Jew”, apparently provided the inspiration for Howard Jacobson’s Sam Finkler in his award-winning novel The Finkler Question.

Perhaps most damning of all, she appeared in Caryl Churchill’s play Seven Jewish Children, a vile concoction brought out at the time of the 2008-’9 Gaza incursion in which Jews are depicted gleefully celebrating the slaughter of Palestinian children. She continues to insist that there is nothing wrong with this warmed-up version of the Mediaeval Blood Libel.

Because I admire her work, Margolyes’ self-indulgent acts of public disloyalty - I regard as nothing less - has bothered me more than that of such UK fellow travellers as, say, the loony leftist historian Eric Hobsbaum or the veteran Israel-baiting parliamentarian Gerald Kaufman.

I sometimes flirt with the idea of publishing an “open letter” to her. Were I to do so, it might go something like this:



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

Dear Ms Margolyes

Why, as a Jew, am I proud of Israel?

I am proud because while her enemies carry out sneak attacks aimed at killing and maiming as many civilians as possible, Israel goes out of its way to warn civilians when it is about to carry out military operations in their vicinity. This is consistently done, even though it means warning enemy combatants in advance that an attack is coming, thereby significantly undermining the effectiveness of those operations.

I am proud because whereas Israel’s enemies dance and sing in the streets and throw sweets to their children after a successful massacre of Israeli civilians, Israel scrupulously investigates instances where civilians on the other side have, even inadvertently, been killed, and punishes those responsible.

I am proud because Israel has been willing to release hundreds of enemy prisoners in order to bring home the remains of a small number of its own soldiers.

I am proud because hundreds of those guilty of carrying out terrorist attacks against the people of Israel, are being humanely treated in Israeli prisons and allowed regular access to the Red Cross, while Gilad Shalit has been denied even a single communication from the outside world since his capture five years ago.

I am proud because during the years when thousands of missiles were being launched across the border at Israel’s cities, thousands were allowed to cross that same border to receive medical attention in Israel’s hospitals.

I am proud because when it was proposed that Israel cease providing electricity to the territory from where missiles were being fired in order to bring such attacks to a halt, Israel’s courts ruled against it on the grounds that it would



Miriam Margolyes as Professor Sprout in the Harry Potter films. (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY HARRYPOTTER.WIKIA.COM)

result in excessive hardship for that territory’s population.

I am proud because Israel’s courts take action against those who discriminate against non-Jews when it comes to buying or renting property, whereas across the border those who sell land to Jews are sentenced to death.

I am proud because while “intellectuals” across the border brazenly deny the land’s Jewish past, Israel continues to acknowledge, respect and protect the historical and religious heritage of all its citizens.

I am proud because in Israel, the world’s only Jewish majority state, members of other religions can not only freely practise their faiths, but can even proselytise to Jews, whereas across the border minority religious groups are discriminated against and converting out of the majority faith carries the death penalty.

I am proud because Israel strives to imbue its children with the values of peace and tolerance, while across the border children are taught that hatred and terrorist violence are the noblest things they can aspire to.

All this and more, Ms Margolyes, is why, as a Jew, I am proud of Israel.

Moreover, I believe that if you had any genuine Jewish pride, you would be too.

Pressure on Palestinians to abandon statehood gambit

LESLIE SUSSER
JERUSALEM

THE PRESSURE on Mahmoud Abbas to back down from plans to seek recognition of Palestinian statehood at the United Nations in September is intensifying.

Squeezed by a combination of concerted American pressure and intense Israeli diplomacy, some top Palestinian leaders are urging the Palestinian Authority’s president to drop his September plan.

Abbas, however, says he still intends to go ahead with the UN move, unless key international players can get serious peace talks going before then.

“If the Americans, the Europeans and Israel don’t want us to go to the UN, they must show me an alternative,” he said in an interview on Lebanese TV on Monday.

The PA president repeatedly has declared that he prefers negotiations with Israel to the UN gambit, but he insists on a negotiating framework with clear terms of reference. So far, the United States and others have been unable to produce a formula acceptable to both sides.

But the pressure is growing.

By far the strongest source has been President Barack Obama’s firm opposition to any Palestinian UN move. Obama’s promise to veto any bid in the Security Council for Palestinian UN membership means that the best the Palestinians can hope for is symbolic recognition by the UN General Assembly, not full membership in the world body. And Obama has been exerting heavy pressure on the Europeans to oppose the Palestinians’ recognition push.

Obama’s position has been reinforced by

several congressional initiatives. In December, Congress passed a resolution “condemning unilateral measures to declare or recognise a Palestinian state”.

Last week, Representative Steve Chabot, the Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee’s Middle East subcommittee, urged the administration to withhold US contributions to the United Nations if it recognises a Palestinian state.

There is also a looming Congressional threat to cut off \$513 million in US funding for the Palestinian Authority if it goes ahead with plans to bring Hamas, a designated terrorist group, into the Palestinian government.

The spectre of US economic pressure backed by widespread Western diplomatic opposition has been having a sobering effect on the Palestinians.

A pro-Western wing of the Palestinian leadership, led by PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and including former Palestinian envoy to the UN Nasser al-Kidwa, is advising Abbas to drop the UN initiative mainly for the sake of good relations with the United States.

They also fear that a UN resolution which fails to change anything on the ground could spark a new cycle of violence and retaliation, destroying years of state-building achievements, especially in the Palestinian economy and security forces.

To soften US opposition, Palestinian supporters of the UN gambit, like Abbas and his chief negotiators Saeb Erakat and Nabil Shaath, are proposing sending an accompanying letter to the UN, recognising Israel in the 1967 borders and commit-

ting to resume negotiations immediately on a state-to-state basis. That, however, is unlikely to cut much ice.

Meanwhile, the Israeli Foreign Ministry has launched a worldwide campaign against UN recognition of a Palestinian state, instructing Israeli embassies across the globe to leave no stone unturned. Even in countries considered lost causes, diplomats have been ordered to do all they can to turn things around.

The aim of the intense Israeli diplomatic activity is twofold: First, to prevent the Palestinians from winning a two-thirds majority in the 192-member General Assembly. Then, if that fails, at least to win what Israeli officials are calling a “moral minority” - in which most Western countries, with their moral authority as democracies, vote against recognition of a Palestinian state.

Israel’s legal and diplomatic arguments have apparently struck a chord in some European capitals. Germany, Italy and the European Parliament have all made their opposition to a unilateral Palestinian UN move clear.

Clearly, Abbas is trying to use the spectre of September as a stick to get a resumption of peace talks on his terms. But as long as Hamas is part of the Palestinian government, the chances of talks being renewed are slim.

And unless Abbas is persuaded to back down at the 11th hour, the diplomatic battle is more likely to shape up over what comes next: Does UN recognition of Palestine isolate Israel, or does it backfire and leave the Palestinians worse off than before? (JTA)

Barbarossa and barbarism

PROF MILTON SHAIN

EXACTLY 70 years ago, the Nazis launched “Operation Barbarossa”, a savage assault on the Soviet Union. Named after the Holy Roman Emperor and German crusader of the 12th century, it was the largest invading force that had ever been assembled.

Preparations were well underway by early 1941. On June 6, the infamous “Commissar Order” was issued: civilian and Communist Party functionaries were to be identified during the operation and murdered.

Six days later troops were issued guidelines demanding “ruthless and energetic action against Bolshevik agitators, irregulars, saboteurs and Jews, and total eradication of any active or passive resistance”.

Just after 03:00 on June 22, a massive artillery barrage on three fronts shattered the silence, followed by a spectacular Nazi advance. By late morning the Luftwaffe had destroyed 890 Soviet aircraft, mostly caught by surprise on the ground.

Within three weeks German forces had advanced hundreds of kilometres: nearly 500 from the north, 600 from the centre and 300 from the south. Barbarism ensued. Soviet political commissars were shot on sight and tens of thousands of prisoners were killed by firing squad in concentration camps in Germany.

For Jews “Operation Barbarossa” turned into a war of racial extermination. Deportation plans - still on the table in early June - rapidly gave way to a “Final Solution”. The notorious Einsatzgruppen slaughtered thousands in the Baltic region.

“What the Führer prophesied is now tak-



An Einsatzgruppe D member about to shoot a Jew kneeling at a filled mass grave in Vinnitsa, Ukrainian SSR, Soviet Union, in 1942. The photograph is inscribed: The last Jew in Vinnitsa. Photograph courtesy www.websters-online-dictionary.org

ing place,” wrote propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels on August 11, 1941. The “lice of civilised mankind”, he noted nearly three months later, “had to be somehow eradicated”.

Sometime in the autumn of 1941, Hitler’s plans to deport Europe’s Jews to “the East” after a victorious war against Russia were changed: deportation could begin before victory.

That decision, writes Hitler’s most definitive biographer, Ian Kershaw, “was a fateful one”, bringing “the ‘final solution of the Jewish question’ throughout the whole of Europe a massive step closer”.

For the immense number of Jews targeted, new and more efficient killing techniques were needed. The use of poison gas was now considered a viable option. In the first week of December 1941 the first extermination unit began operations in the Polish village of Chelmno through the use of exhaust fumes in mobile gas vans.

Only days before Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Reich Main Security Office, sent out invitations to several state secretaries and selected SS representatives to attend a conference at Wannsee outside Berlin.

At the meeting, the invited delegates heard Heydrich explain that Hermann Göring had given him the responsibility of preparing “the final solution of the European Jewish question”. The process would be centralised with the help of the Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler. Eleven million Jews were targeted across Europe.

According to Eichmann’s testimony at his subsequent trial, although “killing”, “elimination” and “extermination” were mentioned during the meeting, these terms were excluded in the formal minutes taken by Eichmann. Instead the emphasis was to be on what was euphemistically termed the “evacuation” of Jews to the East as forced labour.

Evacuation, however, would only be of a temporary nature in preparation for what Heydrich referred to as the “imminent Final Solution of the Jewish question”. In less than one and a half hours, the participants at Wannsee had agreed on plans to expedite the annihilation of European Jewry.

While the deliberations were taking place, another death camp at Belzec was under construction and the first gas chamber at Birkenau was being prepared for its odious use. Over the next three and a half years, five million more Jews, including a million children, would be killed in an orgy of mass murder and industrialised killing.

The precise relationship between “Operation Barbarossa” and the Holocaust has generated decades of debate. Some scholars argue that Hitler wanted initially only to deport Jews from German-controlled territory, but that the advance into the Soviet Union - and for some the failure of that advance - presented new challenges and options.

It was, in the words of Karl Schleunes, a “Twisted road to Auschwitz”. For some scholars, however, the war was a mere cover for long-planned murder: war and the annihilation of the Jews were intimately connected.

These debates have now largely subsided. It is impossible to know, explains Omer Bartov, “whether the Third Reich would have sooner or later pursued a similar genocidal policy had it not invaded the Soviet Union; but the actual timing of the Final Solution, as well as the logistical, geographical and psychological context within which the war in Russia was conducted, leave little doubt as to the close ties between Barbarossa and the regime’s extermination policies”.

Professor Shain teaches in the Department of Historical Studies and is Director of the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies at UCT. He serves as a Trustee of the South African Holocaust Foundation.



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**Goodman Gallery,
Rosebank, Johannesburg:** “Battiss and Company,” curated by Neil Dundas, celebrating Walter Battiss, opens June 30, (011) 788-1113.

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National Museum, Cape
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**Joburg Theatre Complex,
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**National Children’s
Theatre, Parktown:** “A Pocket Oliver Twist”, directed by Joyce Levinsohn and Francois Theron, until July 23, (011) 484-1584.

**Old Mutual Theatre on
the Square, Sandton:** A potted version of Gilbert and Sullivan’s “Pirates of Penzance” directed by Greg Homann, until July 9; Friday lunchtime concerts: Kristel Birkholtz (violin) and Ashlea Martin (piano) on June 24 and Ventura Rosenthal (harp) and Susan Mouton (‘cello) on July 1, (011) 883-8606.

**Standard Bank Gallery,
Johannesburg:** “Listening to Distant Thunder”, a Peter Clarke retrospective, until July 2, (011) 631-1889.

**Wits University Campus,
Braamfontein:** In the Origins Centre, “A Stone Carpet Reflected: Fragments from a Glacial Pavement”, by Chonat Getz and Collin Cole, until June 30, (011) 717-4700.

TAPESTRY

ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

Grahamstown again offers something for every taste

ROBYN SASSEN

IF YOU’VE been hemming and hawing about attending the National Festival of the Arts in Grahamstown this year, bookings are filling fast, in this otherwise sleepy Eastern Cape city, which, for the past 37 years comes alive culturally for a heady period of 10 days.

This year, according to festival director Ismail Mohamed and festival CEO Tony Lankester, it will be “Eleven days of Amazing” - the final Sunday of the festival has traditionally been the day on which many pack up, but this year, the final Sunday will

be a legitimate festival day too.

Some 2 500 performances are scheduled for between June 30 and July 10. In the programme, weighing in at 230 pages, each production, in the Main festival, which comprises sponsored and invited work; the Fringe, comprising work without the critical nod of festival leadership; and the Arena, which straddles the two, is detailed.

The Standard Bank Young Artists, Mamela Nyamza (dance); Nandipha Mntambo (visual art); Ben Schoeman (classical music); Bokani Dyer (jazz) and Neil Coppen (drama), will present new work; festival highlights are mind-blowing, one of



Complicated nachas. Brian Webber and Annabel Linder in a scene from The Table, by Sylvaine Strike (one of the Grahamstown Festival picks this year). (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUPHIN COUDYZER)

This exhibition will leave your head spinning

Exhibition: “A Stone Carpet Reflected: Fragments from a Glacial Pavement”, Origins Centre, (011) 717-4700
Artists: Collin Cole, Chonat Getz
Until: June 30

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

OCCASIONALLY AN art show has the power to push you beyond just looking; it might make you think differently; read in an unanticipated direction; touch the world with your body in a new way. This exhibition does all this; it also prevents you from leaving the Origins Centre gallery without walking through the downstairs exhibit, on which it is based.

The exhibit in question deals with the engraved symbols possibly made by the Khoekhoen people in Drieskopseliland, near Kimberley, some 2 500 years ago. It’s a display animated and tossed around by the opinion of experts of the ilk of archaeologists Sven Ouzman, Carmel Schrire and Ben Smith. This revisit is non-negotiable.

In perusing the work on show, you will get drawn into the vortex of games Collin Cole and Chonat Getz play, or more accurately, think about. A delightful piece by Cole is about the children’s board game Snakes and Ladders. It tosses into the morass of ideas how games grow - and why.

Rubik’s Cube, invented in 1974, slips under Getz’s



Chonat Getz’s Red male (Relief print, etching and chine collé) (PHOTOGRAPH BY DINA NEL)

loop; she uses it, as well as her glass constructions to examine the nature of puzzles in humanity’s intellectual toolkit. Banking on collaborative gives and takes, the work of Cole and Getz dialogues and plays with language, questioning and stretching how mysterious symbols splinter off one another to create written communication in its rawest possibilities.

As she has done previously, Getz works with cast glass. Her work is bold and funky, fun and serious. Key to the oeuvre is a series of glass books, inflexible by virtue of their delicate medium, but potent in how transparency layers transparency.

her best friend from childhood, Lillian (Maya Rudolph), announces her engagement and asks Annie to serve as her Maid of Honour. But there is some prime competition for this position from Lillian’s new friend, Helen (Rose Byrne), a wealthy and officious individual.

Though forlorn and broke, Annie is forced to bluff her way through the expensive and bizarre rituals that follow, holding her head high throughout and desperately attempting to make the best of some pretty bad situations.

Director Paul Feig has fashioned a comic gem, employing free-form conversations, some preposterous gross-out moments, striking set-pieces and a flawless performances from his energetic cast. And audiences will certainly feel a strong empathy with Annie, thanks to Wiig’s brilliant portrayal.

Annie comes across as an “Everywoman” in whom one can believe, a character firmly shaped through deft comedy turns and strong, feminine passion, aspects highlighted in her dodgy relationship with the local traffic cop (played by Irish actor Chris O’Dowd) who cannot keep his beady eyes off her. O’Dowd reminds

which is the debut of a play workshopped by Sylvaine Strike and Craig Higginson and cast, including theatre veteran Annabel Linder.

The work, “The Table,” with a magnificent sense of magic realism and surrealism, conveys a blend of Holocaust narrative with contemporary South African Jewish realities.

Also up there is Alan Bennett’s “The History Boys”, directed by Alan Swerdlow, featuring the cream of local talent. Ariel Dorfman’s “Purgatorio” with Dawid Minnaar opposite Terry Norton, has been acclaimed as has Greg Latter’s “Death of a Colonialist”, with design by Nadya Cohen, which bagged several awards last year.

Israeli director Roy Horowitz - who comes to SA after directing Victor Gordon’s play “Pollard” in Tel Aviv - brings his “My First Sony”. “London Road” with Robyn Scott and Ntombi Makhutsi, will again be igniting festival stages.

Part of the Alan Crump retrospective exhibition which blew Johannesburg Art Gallery patrons away, will be travelling to the festival, as will “Twenty-five Years at Caversham” curated by the founder of the KwaZulu-Natal-based studio, Malcolm Christian and an exhibition of comic art, featuring work by Zapiro and others.

Musically, the festival hosts everything from traditional Xhosa singers, to Samson Diamond (violin), Anna Wilshire Jones (piano), Allan Thompson (clarinet) and Wessel Beukes (‘cello) playing Oliver Messiaen’s “Quartet for the End of Time”, not to forget the glorious a capello and big band groups. And this is only on the main festival - there’s still the fringe and a whole exciting array of spontaneous buskers out there.

If a trip to Grahamstown still cannot be factored into your diary, don’t despair. Many shows will travel nationally after the festival. Watch these pages for details. Full festival details are www.nationalartsfestival.co.za for the full programme.

In another installation, there’s a set of almost three-dimensional stick figures, standing diagrammatically and not without child-likeness. Getz’s work is fuelled by a “what-if?” curiosity; the monoprints on rice paper as well as the relief prints made on a press creating embossed and beautifully bruised paper, attest to this.

Cole works with clean brisk lines and texture he pushes out of his paper with his intaglio press. He uses blind embossing in demonstrating his obvious pleasure in the polemic of contrast.

The finest works on show are his hard-ground etchings, where lines interface the unsullied whiteness of the paper with a crispness evoking childish cartoons, but containing a complexity that makes you shift in your personal equilibrium. The more you look, the more you seem ensnared in the images and layers his “Milky Way” comprises.

But this printmaking acumen does not flow into curatorial upkeep: Sadly, some weeks after the exhibition’s opening, some had fallen to the floor.

Cole and Getz don’t offer new archaeological answers to the questions posed by these ancient engravings. But they do splice wide the questions provoked by the work, and leave your head spinning.

• Getz conducts a walkabout on June 25.

me of a more refined version of John C Reilly.

Another star turn comes in the plump form of Megan (Melissa McCarthy), a tough, no-nonsense fighter who senses Annie’s vulnerability, and who is given to spout some of the film’s most ribald lines.

One startling sequences has the bridesmaids reacting to bad restaurant food during a fitting which will live long in the memory for its disgusting nature.

“Bridesmaids” (co-written by Wiig and Annie Mumolo) is a relentless, fun ride with surprises and shock revelations around every corner, ensuring that there is no complacency where the audience is concerned.

It scores handsomely because the characters are well developed entities and not the usual type of overblown characters shoehorned into outrageous comic set-pieces.

Its more serious side shows the competition that exists between women who are jockeying for best-friend supremacy and who capitalise on rifts between friends at a time when relationships enter fragile territory.

As a fun, comical exercise, “Bridesmaids” is one of the best seen this year.



**FELDMAN
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PICK OF THE WEEK

Bridesmaids

Cast: Kristen Wiig; Maya Rudolph; Rose Byrne
Director: Paul Feig

“Bridesmaids” is a chick flick with a raunchy attitude; a gloriously funny escapade that left me laughing outrageously.

It navigates a tricky journey of hilarity, sincerity and humanity as a group of idiosyncratic females prepare for a friend’s wedding.

The central character is Annie (Kristen Wiig) whose life is a hopeless mess. Mired in debt after losing the cake shop she owned with a boyfriend who subsequently abandoned her, Annie is in a terrible place emotionally.

Her circumstances grow even worse when

TAPESTRY - ART, BOOKS, DANCE, FILM, THEATRE

Horrifying story of police indifference and bungling

Betrayed by Carol Thompson with Roxanne Reid (Tafelberg, R180)

REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBREY

ON FRIDAY, March 11, 2005, Benoni-based Carol Thompson received the news that is every parent's worst nightmare: her 24-year-old daughter Tracey's car had been found abandoned at the side of a road in a remote area. The girl herself - who had been sharing a house on a smallholding with three friends - was missing.

Distraught, Thompson immediately notified the police, then began searching, starting with a visit to her daughter's home, where she received a hostile and evasive response from the three youngsters.

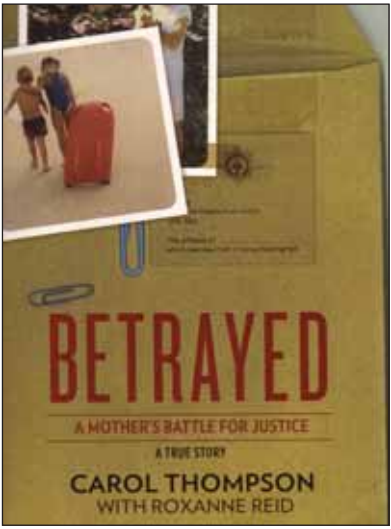
On the Saturday and Sunday, Thompson waited in vain for news from the police. Unbelievably, it turned out that the missing person docket had not even been assigned an investigator because "the detectives only worked office hours and not over weekends".

Dismayed by the delays and sheer inefficiency of the police, Thompson then recruited the search team of her daughter's 4x4 Club to join the police's K9 sniffer dog unit in scouring the area where the car had been found.

However, the police, deeming the area to be "too dangerous" for this auxiliary team, ordered them to abandon the search - and promptly left the scene themselves. Thus the hunt for Tracey Thompson, who might be alive, injured and terrified, during the crucial first 48 hours of her disappearance, was halted.

When Thompson went to the police pound to retrieve her daughter's car, she endured a five-hour wait while indolent staff took their time over the paperwork. Once they had the vehicle, Thompson and her husband found in it various articles which might have provided vital clues to the girl's whereabouts.

It had not even been searched by the police, nor properly dusted for fingerprints, while the area in which it was found had not been investigated to find possible witnesses to the abduction. Nobody had questioned Tracey's housemates - the last people to see her. In fact, hardly anything a competent investigation unit



should do had been done.

When Thompson made a desperate after-hours call to the cellphone of a senior police officer (who was not assigned to the case, but whom she hoped could help rouse the investigators into action), she was bluntly rebuffed for disturbing him. This incompetence and insensitivity were to become a pattern.

Nine days after her disappearance, Tracy's body was found (bound, with a noose around her neck - suggesting strangulation - and her clothing removed). Her mother, now dealing with investigating officer Captain Kotze (tipped as "the best on the East Rand"), battled repeatedly for news of any progress on the case.

"Days passed and there was still no phone call about the investigation... I tried phoning Captain Kotze to no avail. It was the same old story: his message box was full, his phone was turned off or he wasn't available on the network.

"I tried the police station landline, only to be told he wasn't available, he was on leave, he was ill or he had been sent to Namibia on a theft case. I battled to understand why the theft of a few computers was more important than the investigation of my daughter's murder."

As days turned into months, Thompson was lied to, avoided, or simply fobbed off by the police. She learnt that only two useless photographs of the body were taken. No autopsy had ever been performed, nor had the clothing from her daughter's body been tested for DNA.

The rape samples from the corpse were sent to a laboratory, which informed Thompson it could take up to 18 months for the results. The rope around Tracey's neck had been "lost". Every aspect of the case had been spectacularly bungled.

A desperate Thompson eventually hired a private pathologist, as well as an efficient private investigator, who eventually gave the police the name of a suspect. This was never pursued. She lodged official complaints about the mishandling of the case and met with several senior officials, who promised to rectify it, but to date nothing more has been done.

The book makes harrowing reading. It is simplistically told, leaving huge gaps in Tracey's story, yet this is only to be expected in a traumatised mother's reminiscences. Much of it recounts Thompson's battle to overcome the strange disembodiment that grief and horror can produce.

It is possible that Tracey's disappearance might initially have been treated by the investigators with some scepticism, since she was not a minor, nor was this the first time she had gone missing.

Her history of drug abuse and other problems may also have led them to assume that she herself had "invited trouble". Still, there is no justification for their abysmal neglect of the case.

What is more, the South African Police have, in certain instances, demonstrated that they can indeed work professionally and quickly (for example, in the 2004 murder case of Leigh Matthews and, more recently, that of Anni Dewani). It seems that only high-profile cases receive priority.

In a country where 50 people are murdered daily, but only 10 - 12 per cent of the killers ever convicted, and where the sheer volume of serious crime has overwhelmed our police force (itself plagued with corruption, inadequate training and residual political grievances), Thompson's tale is horribly easy to identify with - as many other victims' families can surely attest.

However, her book is unlikely to elicit more than yet another defensive, belligerent response from a spokesman - and then lie, forgotten, on a dusty docket shelf.

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Italy, birthplace of opera; home of roving lotharios apt to prey lasciviously on women; heart of the mafia; has a schizophrenic relationship with Jews. Italian Jewry has yo-yoed between the Jewish opinions of emperors and popes.

ROBYN SASSEN

JEW'S FIRST made their presence known there in about 161 BCE, at the time of Judah the Maccabee. Roman Jewry was Greek-speaking and indigent. Jews had come as merchants, or were brought in as slaves. At that point, anti-Semitism did not exist; Jews were considered odd in their customs, and ignorance was commonplace.

By the time of the destruction of the Second Temple in 70CE, Jews were partially expelled under Imperial instruction and were restricted by laws, the most serious of which was the Fiscus Judaicus, a tax payable by all Jews in the Roman Empire.

By 313, Christianity was established as the religion of the empire. Up until the Middle Ages while there were expulsions, there was also a wealth of Italian Jewish scholars.

In Salerno, the first Hebrew diction-

ary in Italy was compiled by Solomon ben Abraham ibn Parhon. It fostered the study of biblical exegesis for Italian Jews. Not all Italian Jews were focused only on the rabbinate. Many are known for their writings in Arabic philosophy, astronomy and medicine, including Maimonides, who practised medicine in Rome and translated medical works into Hebrew.

Under Pope Innocent III, Jews were not allowed to hold public jobs; an injunction to wear an identifying yellow badge was ratified. This rule is repeated throughout Jewish history, in different forms, but with no less distinctive humiliating intent.

By 1492, six per cent of the Sicilian population was Jewish. But 1492 was a grim year with the eruption of the Spanish Inquisition, from which many Jews fled into Italy. Spanish Jews were well received in Ferrara and Tuscany. But in Rome and Genoa they were ostracised. Many accepted baptism to escape starvation. By the fol-

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Business or leisure, The Travel Company's the one

Lynne Backos, CEO of a 36-year-old family-run business, The Travel Company, is a softly spoken fun-loving workaholic who is passionate about travel. She says if she didn't have a family to anchor her down, she surely would have been the epitome of your "wandering Jew".



MARLENE BILEWITZ

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She speaks from experience and experience she has oodles of; she has been travelling on a very regular basis since the age of 17 and she plans to carry on "until... forever".

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lowing century, conditions worsened: many migrated to Poland and Lithuania.

In 1516, the Venice ghetto was established. Thirty seven years later, on Rosh Hashanah, all copies of the Talmud in Italy were burned. In 1555 ritual murder accusations were incited under Pope Marcellus II, the Roman ghetto was established and the law requiring all Jews to wear badges, brought back.

Under Napoleon I, the Italian Jewry was emancipated. The supreme power of the popes was broken. By 1829, the first Italian rabbinical college opened in Padua.

The turn of the 20th century saw the first Jewish prime minister in Italy, Luigi Luzzatti - one of the world's first Jewish heads of government, taking office.

After Italy entered the war in 1940 Jewish refugees in Italy were interned. In 1942 the Italian military commander in Croatia refused to hand over Jews to the Nazis. In January 1943 the Italians refused to co-operate with the Nazis in rounding up Jews in occupied France; in March, they prevented the Nazis from deporting Jews in their zone. German Foreign Minister Von Ribbentrop told Mussolini "Italian military circles lack a proper understanding of the Jewish question."

Deportations of Italian Jews to Nazi death camps began after September 1943. An estimated 7 500 Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

Today, Italy's Jewry numbers 45 000; Chabad plays a key role in the community which boasts over 90 active synagogues. Chabad in Venice, for instance, has a yeshiva and a restaurant which caters on Shabbat. A large menorah tours the city on a barge during Chanukah, and there is traditionally a boat-based succah that tours the city, during Succot.

Not only is contemporary Italian Jewry endowed with a respect for cultural values, it is respected for social proactiveness too. In January, Tullia Zevi died at age 91. She was among those who greeted Pope John Paul II when he visited the Rome Synagogue in 1986, the first by a modern pope. Zevi, an outspoken critic of intolerance, was one of the few women to cover the Nuremberg trials. She believed Jews should stand in solidarity with Muslims against xenophobia.

Here and now, Jewish existence in Rome is not uncomplicated by Muslim presence, Joel Schalit writes in the Souciant. He lives near the Great Synagogue of Turin, on the Piazzetta Primo Levi, dedicated to Italy's Turin-born Auschwitz survivor. Schalit comments on the classically Moorish features in this edifice, built in 1884. "The fact that it is smack in the middle of a largely Muslim immigrant neighbourhood does little to depress such associations. Nearby are a Moroccan restaurant and three halaal grocery stores. Our neighbour wears a hijab.

"What's most eye-catching about Piazzetta Levi is the military presence. Twenty-four hours a day a camouflaged Italian armoured vehicle sits in the square. They're next to a cement barrier, pistol at the ready, while young Jewish children walk by on their way to day school. I feel protected.

"Well, somewhat. The graffiti on the cement



barrier is a dead give away. For those Jews who monitor racism in Europe, the security provided to the synagogue appears necessary. Danger could come from fascist anti-Semites, or, jihadis. To activists who monitor European anti-immigrant politics, such graffiti facing a synagogue is a reminder that Jews are still considered different.

"In most European cities today," he continues, "It is not uncommon to encounter swastikas scrawled on buildings. In Italy, the Nazi symbol is as common as, the anarchist A and Communist sickle and hammer. Its familiarity makes sense; it coincides with a rise in right-wing sentiment, and racist attitudes toward Europeans of Middle Eastern and Muslim descent.

"Hence my lack of surprise, when, around the corner from the synagogue, I encountered the slogan 'Juden raus' on the wall. Jews are being incited again not from an Islamist perspective, but a fascist one. In German. Whoever wrote it, the continuity is still there." The pendulum in Italy continues to swing.

Thumbnail knowledge on Italy

Ten facts about Italy:

- Italy covers over 300 000 square kilometres, including the boot-shaped Italian peninsula and the islands of Sicily and Sardinia.
- According to its most recent census, more than 60 million people live in the country. It is considered the fourth-largest population in the European Union.
- The capital is Rome.
- According to the most recent census, some 88 per cent of people living in Italy describe themselves as adhering to the Roman Catholic faith. The Jewish community represents 0,1 per cent of the population.
- Surrounded by the Lirgurian, Mediterranean, Ionian and Adriatic seas to the south, Italy's land neighbours are Monaco, France, Austria and Slovenia, to the north.
- The highest point in Italy is Mont Blanc on the Alps between Italy and France, at 4 807m above sea level.
- Italy's economy is the 11th largest in the world.

English is common parlance. Be aware, however, of the diversity of accents throughout the country; it's always useful to know a couple of common phrases in Italian.

- The euro is currency in Italy. At the time of going to press, one euro will cost you R9,70.
- There is no limit on the amount of money one can bring in to Italy, though it is advised that you use your credit card when visiting. Travellers' cheques are expensive to change, and it is costly to draw cash electronically.
- Having purchased items in shops, you cannot change them, so make your decisions to spend euros in Italy with care.
- Traffic in Italy is on the right hand side.
- Electricity in Italy is 220 volts. The prongs on Italian plugs are round - and while adaptors are easily available, it is important to remember that your appliances will need a voltage converter before they will work in Italy.
- While tap water is safe to drink in Italy, it has a lot of calcium in it, is harder and tastes very different from local water.
- Italy is situated in the Central European Time zone, which is the same as the time zone in South Africa; Italy does, however, apply daylight saving at the end of March, which is shifted back to CET at the end of October.
- There are strict terrorist laws and if you use an internet café, you will be expected to hand in your passport.

MDA brings winter cheer to the less fortunate

RITA LEWIS

LAST WEEK a group of Jews went to Dunottar to visit the "temporary" residents there and distribute warm clothing and goods collected by the community in response to a "Blanket Drive" organised through the auspices of MDA Medics SA.

Gemilut Chesed is one of the main tenets of Judaism and extensively practised.

Exhibiting this, the South African Jewish community once again came to the party with regard to MDA's Blanket Drive, during which many blankets and jerseys, etc were donated, to bring some winter comfort..

In an effort to help the less privileged, the group took a load of these blankets and warm clothing for the residents of the Struisbult Care Centre, which had recently burnt down.

News of a devastating fire at the care centre became headline news recently when articles were written about the terrible loss of 15 members of their community.

A majority of these tragic deaths - as well as the devastation and injuries that had been caused by the fire - affected those who were bedridden and unable to move quickly enough to reach safety to escape the flames.

Many of the survivors had lost all their belongings and had been left with absolutely nothing - no clothes or bedding - nothing at all to keep them warm, but the clothes they were wearing at the time of the fire.

Dr Nathaniel Cohen, head of MDA Medics SA, together with Lisa Cohen one of their volunteers and Mark Hyman, chairman of Magen David Adom in South Africa, visited the survivors who have since been moved and are presently being housed at the Zanele

Mbeki Care Centre in Dunottar.

Many of them were still traumatised by the event but were extremely grateful for the warm gifts.

Hyman said the response by the Jewish community to the appeal "had been absolutely phenomenal".

In excess of 150 blankets and 50 winter jerseys which had been donated, were distributed among the residents.

Cohen said that while the "Blanket Drive" was generally aimed primarily at providing winter warmth to the needy in the broader community, MDA Medics felt that the cause of the Struisbult residents took priority in humanitarian terms.

However both stressed that although the main focus of Magen David Adom (which is a non-political, not for profit organisation) is to support Israel and Israeli medical projects it will continue, together with the community at large, to provide humanitarian assistance where and when it is required.

• Anyone interested in making a contribution or donation, should contact Dr Nathaniel Cohen on 082-963-4390.



Lisa Cohen, one of the MDA volunteers, with Dr Nathaniel Cohen, head of MDA Medics SA, with Mark Hyman, chairman of Magen David Adom in South Africa.

Ten essential tips

Ten tips for when you go to Italy:

- You need a Schengen visa to visit. The Italian Embassy is in Pretoria: (012) 430-5541 and there are Consulates for Italy in Cape Town: (021) 424-1256; Port Elizabeth: (041) 373-6443; East London: (043) 726-0738; and Johannesburg: (011) 728-1392. A Schengen visa currently costs R577.
- There are no special medical precautions to be taken for travel to Italy, but measles outbreaks have occurred there fairly regularly in recent years. It is recommended that if you are born after 1956, you should ensure that you have had two documented MMR immunisations or a blood test showing measles immunity.
- Because of its position on the Mediterranean coastline and its mountainous terrain, Italy has a diverse climate, with the higher altitudes tending toward cold, wet and snowy and the coastal regions toward warm and dry. Summer in Italy is between June and July, but it can be warm up until September; winter is at the end of the calendar year, with the first snowfalls generally being anticipated in mid-November. The best time to visit Italy is, however, between April and June - before the weather becomes extreme.
- Although Italian is spoken throughout Italy, the country boasts linguistic residues of many other cultures and dialects and because it is a popular tourist destination,

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LETTERS

The Editor, Suite 175, Postnet X10039, Randburg, 2125 email: carro@global.co.za

Guidelines for letters: Letters up to 400 words will get preference. Please provide your full first name and surname, place of residence, and a daytime contact telephone or cell number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.	Disclaimer: The letters page is intended to provide opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report
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MERITS OF ARGUMENTS AND NOT BOGUS ANALOGIES SHOULD BE CRITERIA

RICHARD GOLD (SAJR, June 17) asks what is the point of noting that the UK is involved in numerous international sanctions and boycott campaigns. The answer is simple: It shows that among the many countries that violate human rights on a massive scale, and commit war crimes, Israel is not being singled out.

In fact, it is treated far more leniently than most, by the world community, and receives regular financial, military and diplomatic support from the US, UK, and members of the EU.

As for the University of Johannesburg, it has not been asked by opposition groups and human rights organisations in other countries (say Zimbabwe or Sudan) to boycott academic institutions located there in order to fight oppression, nor has

anyone established that universities in those countries play a role in violating rights or in facilitating regime legitimacy, or in providing members of the oppressive military apparatus with privileges.

In addition, no one has argued that imposing sanctions on such institutions would advance the cause of freedom and democracy in those countries. Such arguments have been raised in the case of the relations between UJ and BGU in Israel.

It is perfectly legitimate to dispute their applicability to that case, but this must be done on the basis of the merits of the arguments themselves rather than by using bogus analogies.

Ran Greenstein
University of the Witwatersrand

THUMBS UP FOR MICHAEL FREUND’S COLUMN

YASHER KOACH for the inclusion of Michael Freund’s articles. His first, printed in the last edition, made great

reading!

Fay Flood
Johannesburg

SA CAUGHT BETWEEN HI-TECH AND LOW-TECH

IN YOUR editorial (SAJR May 13) you write: “As the regional geopolitics change, no one knows where it is heading, to democracy, radical Islamist states or what?” You are, of course, referring to the instability in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Syria.

It appears to me that the frustration is from the lack of economic progress in general and the lack of jobs for the people in the 20- to 30-year age group, in particular.

Blame it on the Far East. The world production facilities are presently divided into two camps. Hi-tech manufacture (for instance computers, aircraft, luxury cars, etc) takes place in the USA, Europe and Japan. Low-tech manufacture (clothing, shoes, houseware etc) takes place in the Far East. The Arab countries (and South Africa for that matter) don’t have the skills

to compete with the hi-tech manufacturers and for various reasons are unable to compete with the Far East’s low-tech manufacturers.

In the experience of the late Victor Frankl unemployment leads to a sense of helplessness which in turn leads to depression and/or aggression. We are witnessing this aggression (frustration) in the “Arab Spring”.

South Africa has a similar problem with unemployment, but we have a safety valve by way of elections. Whether the capacity of the safety valve is sufficient to cope with the pressure being created by (ANC Youth League President Julius) Malema and company, only time will tell.

John Brenner
Cyrildene
Johannesburg

ISAACS AND GEFFEN DON'T PRACTISE HUMAN RIGHTS

I REFER to Doron Isaac’s and Nathan Geffen’s “Open Shuhada Street” website and sadly note that there is no opportunity to post comments on any of the published articles.

The ominous “comments off” is now automatically appended to all of their anti-Israel offerings.

In such circumstances, I ask our South African “human rights” activists, if freedom of expression is

not a “human right”. Is their propaganda so weak that it cannot for one moment survive the oxygen of an alternative view?

Moreover, if they are so reluctant to afford a right of reply on their blog, should they really be given such freedom to regularly express their views on the pages of the SAJR.

Anthony Posner
Johannesburg

MANAGEMENT AT METZUYAN NEEDS TO LEARN ABOUT MANNERS

IT ISN’T very often that I have found myself having a bad meal or leaving Metzuyan disappointed. But last week Thursday night my views about the restaurant changed completely.

My brother and I had arrived earlier than the rest of my family and so we sat around and waited. There was only one other family there, at the time in the middle of their meal. The waitress had made some sort of mistake and one of the two managers at the restaurant began to shout at the waitress as if she wasn’t worth the dust she was standing on.

The customer then asked the manager to please stop shouting at the waitress and that he should talk to his staff with respect. The manager told the customer to “mind your own (inappropriate phrase) business”.

He stormed off from the customer’s table, turning to the other manager in the dining hall as he passed my table, calling the customer “a (once again, colourful language)

idiot”, causing the other manager to just laugh it off.

I guess Metzuyan is one of those places that believes the customer is always wrong. Never have I seen such childish and disgusting behaviour by management in any other establishment - this would never happen in a non-kosher restaurant!

As I walked out, I bumped into friends of mine on their way in, who after I told them the story, cancelled their table and left.

I would strongly recommend that the owners of Metzuyan have a word or two with their management, because this incident definitely did not enhance their reputation. And even though it might not make a huge impact on their profits, they are forever down, at least, eight customers - my family of five and the “idiot” and his wife and son.

Joshua Brook
Sandton

ADHD: CRITICISM OF PARENTS IS UNFAIR

THE ARTICLE on the very serious situation of bullying among children by Robyn Sassen, “Bullying – so many faces, so many guises...” needs to be very carefully evaluated.

Even though I do not know her qualifications, it still makes my task difficult. Some of her points are well taken; others, are from a medical point of view, totally unacceptable. I speak from a medical point of view with 35 years’ experience in treating ADHD with Ritalin.

ADHD is a proven genetically inherited neurological condition causing major problems for all if severe enough and not diagnosed and treated. Worldwide, it is accepted that this condition is under-diagnosed and under treated.

One of the reasons for this is journalistic sensationalism... Recently, 81 fully-fledged professors worldwide, all signed an official protest objecting to false, unscientific and misleading information about ADHD in the media. They also suggested, the misinformation might cause thousands not to seek help.

Your article quotes:“The fault often lies with the parent’s failure to communicate with the child.”. If ADHD is inherited - and communication is one of the classical problems of ADHD - then it is not surprising!

“Parents allow their kids to lie” is quoted in the article. However, the truth is the unsuspecting parent inadvertently teaches the child to lie!

Children with untreated ADHD have a built-in inherited troublemaker. They have a talent for uninhibited doing or saying without thinking. This would certainly account for the tendency to bully

and telling fibs.

Having done wrong and when challenged about their unacceptable deed, they will hastily and impulsively deny that they have done it. They learn to tell fibs to protect themselves, because if they admit guilt to the parent, they might be punished.

“If we “get” our kids and connect to them, the need for psychologists and Ritalin would diminish.” Blaming parents for an inherited undiagnosed and untreated serious neurological condition is to say the least, totally unacceptable and shameful.

Moreover, as ADHD .is a medical neurological condition, psychologists do not play an important roll in diagnosing or treating the condition.

World research clearly suggests that the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD must be very carefully evaluated. It is diagnosed and treated far too infrequently, resulting in major and very serious complications. Misinformation can only make it worse.

“Dysfunctional children have become an industry: parents are not parenting.” No! This is an insulting comment made about innocent and caring parents in need of help about their children’s problem.

Research has clearly stated that to blame parents is totally unacceptable; And ADHD is certainly nor an “industry”.

If I have been too harsh, forgive me, but the truth is more important than my emotions. There has to be a better way than blaming and misleading parents.

Dr Billy Levin
Benoni

Robyn Sassen replies: I wish to point out that the article did not address ADHD or ADD in terms of Ritalin as a prescribed drug. The article was about bullying. In the comments which Dr Levin finds most contestable, I was quoting both a clinical psychologist and the principal of one of the com-

munity’s day schools, and they were reflecting not on the correct use of Ritalin, but on the predominant use of this drug as a catch-all solution for any type of aberrant behaviour, which has been reflected in many sources to be deeply controversial.

IT’S TIME TO BE TESTED FOR GENETIC DISEASE DATABASE

ONE IN four South African Jews is a carrier of a genetic disease. Tay Sachs and cystic fibrosis are the best known and most common. Others include Fanconi’s Anaemia, Canavan’s disease, Niemann-Pick etc. There is no implication whatsoever to being a carrier of such a disease. These genes can be passed on from generation to generation without a sick child ever being born.

However, if one carrier marries someone who is a carrier of the same disease as him/her, there is a one in four chance (for each pregnancy) that the children will be affected by this disease. These are devastating diseases. Affected children die within a few years of birth, or live with pain, suffering and with decreased quality of life forever.

Halachic authorities throughout the world have ruled that young people should be tested prior to marriage so that occurrences of these diseases can be eradicated.

Dor Yeshorim (Committee for Prevention of Genetic Diseases), an organisation based in Brooklyn, New York, provides the option of anonymous testing. Through a simple blood test they can determine if one is a carrier of any of nine diseases prevalent among Ashkenazi Jews.

Results are not disclosed, sparing the anguish

associated with the knowledge of being a carrier. This also obviates the need to disclose this status to a prospective match. Instead, one is registered in the Dor Yeshorim database and given a number.

When a prospective match comes up, this Dor Yeshorim number, as well as that of the prospective partner, are phoned in to the Dor Yeshorim hotline. They can confirm within minutes that both are not carriers of the same disease.

In the unlikely event that both parties are carriers of the same disease, advice is given on how to proceed and a referral is made to medical professionals and rabbis for guidance.

Dor Yeshorim tests will be available in Johannesburg on this Sunday (June 26) from 14:00 to 17:00 at the Oxford Shul, 20 North Avenue, Riviera. The cost for these tests is R1 250, which may be recovered from your Medical Savings Account (or Above Threshold Benefits) if you are on Discovery Health.

I may be contacted on (011) 646-6020 or rabbi@oxfordshul.com for further details.

Rabbi Yossi Chaikin
Dor Yeshorim South Africa
Johannesburg

BEWARE OF BARACK OBAMA’S ROYAL ‘WE’

NOT TRUE to say that President Barack Obama is not milking the death of his near-namesake Osama bin Laden for its propaganda value, as claimed by noted Time magazine columnist Joe Klein, not when Klein’s pet, Obama is, in fact, creaming the event as a victory - a victory with which to cow Israel into submission and surrender.

(This is) submission at the hands of terrorists, and surrender of its territorial viability that comprises its ability to defend itself against precisely that threat to its existence posed by Osama and his ever-present, rampant surrogates.

Almost as though such submission would somehow compensate those surrogate terrorists for their loss of Osama with a counter-loss inflicted on the prime fighters of terrorism, Israel, which submission and surrender would go a long way towards making the defeat and death of top terrorist and suicide-bomber-in-chief, Osama, almost bearable, and possibly even worthwhile, for his supporters.

Battling for decades now, without success, to defeat Israel into surrendering its statehood, these Osama-surrogates - and lately proxies of militant Islam’s Iran, dedicated to reviving Hitler’s’ promise to exterminate Jews as a nation - must be secretly congratulating themselves on the extinction of their leader who achieved in death what he had been unable to accomplish in life, namely to force Israel

out of existence. This only a major power would ever be able to do.

Flushed with his success over Osama, this must be the opportunity that Obama has been seeking.

So, this is to strong-arm Israel to bow to his will and accommodate his aspiration to go from success-to-success and for Israel to surrender to terrorism, in order to accord him a second term as US president. Time magazine is already priming itself for this campaign with its chronic pictures of Obama always striding alone, (whether on the Great Wall of China or on the red carpet of the White House, in tribute to the ego, that is really his credo).

(This is accompanied) by the reinvention of his first election credo with its successor, along the lines of “I am the one I have been walking for” and its follow-up in “I am the one whose feet I seek”.

Just to show that not everybody has been fooled by his initial credos of “We are the ones we have been waiting for” and “We are the ones we seek”, that are simply inversions (if not actual perversions) of the more common personal singular pronoun “I” with the assumption of the more royal plural “we”.

Julius Levin
Killarney, Johannesburg

The letter has been shortened. - Editor

LETTERS

VERACITY OF TRIBUNAL FOR FORMER YUGOSLAVIA QUESTIONED

YOUR EDITORIAL of June 2, refers: As far as I know, a good judge is an objective judge, who doesn't call defendants by names until they are proven guilty beyond any doubt, in an objective and professional court.

A good journalist too, is one who refrains from calling people names, until they are proven to be guilty, beyond doubt by an objective and professional court.

But for some reason, when it comes to Serbs (and others, such as, maybe, Afrikaners), it is common for unprofessional and unethical jurists and journalists to be promoted according to the amount of insults they level against Serbian leaders and military officers.

I am aware of two main sources of detailed information regarding the question how trials proceed in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. They are: www.slobodan-milosevic.org/ and www.tenc.net/.

Other sources just confirm the picture that emerges regarding this "tribunal" and it doesn't hint at any professionalism or ethics practised there by the "judges"

and "chief prosecutors". So, it is more than logical not to believe stories "established" in, or suspected by, that "tribunal".

Suppose Serbia, or any Serbian state, suspected somebody of committing war crimes, why couldn't it try the suspect in his/her own country? Why does a trial of that kind has to happen in a country whose descendents are not given the right to return there from South Africa?

Trials of Serbian "suspected war criminals" are similar to the trial of French leaders in the Vichy part of France in 1942, and to General Mihailovich's "trial" by the Tito regime after the Second World War - not the Nuremberg trials, and certainly not Eichmann's trial - when every mainstream newspaper and news channel provided the public with every bit of information regarding the trial.

And just in case anyone didn't understand, I firmly believe Gen Ratko Mladic and others are absolutely innocent.

Avner Eliyahu Romm
Sea Point, Cape Town



ABOVE BOARD
Zev Krengel,
National Chairman

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

THIS WEEK an SAJBD delegation, including National Director Wendy Kahn, two of our national vice-chairpersons Mary Kluk and Li Boiskin and African Jewish Congress President Mervyn Smith, were in Israel to participate in the World Jewish Congress conference and in the President's Conference afterwards.

The Board is very much committed to maintaining close working links with global Jewry and to ensuring that the community it represents plays its part in international Jewish affairs.

The relationships we have built up have proven to be mutually extremely beneficial, enabling us to pool our respective expertise and resources in dealing with issues affecting Jewish communities everywhere.

In attending this important gathering, our representatives had the opportunity of forging valuable new contacts as well as building on previ-

COMMUNITY COLUMNS

SAJBD represents SA Jewry at WJC

ously established relationships. Among the latter was with outgoing World Jewish Congress CEO Michael Schneider, of the most illustrious products of South African Jewry.

Michael will be the keynote speaker at our forthcoming National Conference on August 27 and will be one of the speakers in the main conference the following day.

The WJC and Presidents' Conference and what was discussed and decided upon, will be dealt with in a later column, once our delegates have returned and reported back.

Sinai-Indaba reveals continued strength of SA Jewry

The resounding success of last weekend's Sinai-Indaba in Johannesburg and Cape Town and in Durban on Monday, showed once again the remarkable vibrancy of our Jewish community.

To say that in Johannesburg there was standing room only, would be incorrect. If fact, the organisers were eventually compelled to close the doors to the venue, little as they wished to turn people away.

Those who were able to attend, were conducted on an enthralling spiritual and intellectual journey by some of the most dynamic and pop-

ular speakers on Judaism in the world today. They learned how the eternal values and wisdom of the Torah provide a fail-safe guidebook for daily living, providing us with confidence, direction and trust in the future.

An especially encouraging aspect of the seminar was how participants were drawn from so wide a range of constituencies, encompassing not just all streams of Orthodoxy but individuals not affiliated to any particular religious congregation.

This spirit of unity and broad acceptance of all Jews, has long been one of the outstanding strengths of our community and is something overseas Jewish visitors have frequently commented on.

This can only have been further strengthened by this latest coming together to celebrate our common Jewish heritage. Kol Hakavod to Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and all the organisations and individuals responsible for bringing off this outstandingly event, and to the many members of our community whose enthusiastic presence helped make it such a memorable success.

This column is paid for by the SAJBD

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As one of the leading Jewish schools in Europe operating the TaL Am project (Ivrit b'Ivrit), almost all our pupils speak fluent Hebrew by the end of grade 6. For more about Noam, see www.noam.ch

We are looking for a dynamic Principal to start in August 2012, or earlier if possible, to take us to the next level in our quest for educational excellence.

The successful candidate will

- Lead both primary and junior high schools in educational, personnel and administration matters, guiding the school according to modern-orthodox principles and Zionist values.
- Further develop the school syllabus and the school in co-operation with the Board.
- Act as the primary contact for pupils, teachers, parents and the education authorities.
- Work closely on strategy with a highly committed and engaged school Board.
- Contribute practically to the education of pupils on a regular basis.

We are looking for someone who is

- Observant (modern-orthodox), and shares our belief that Jewish education is essential to our community.
- Convinced that high ethical standards as well as social and moral responsibility are an essential part of Jewish development.
- Ready to take the initiative, with good communication skills; also solutions-driven, flexible and a team player.
- A good speaker of German, English and Hebrew, or be prepared to improve these skills to an acceptable level.
- Experienced in Jewish education, with teaching qualifications and experience or training in senior management of a school or other senior educational experience.
- Prepared to work closely with the Board to realise our high religious and secular pedagogic standards and expectations.

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For further information, please contact Prof Dr Ulla Kleinberger (ulla.kleinberger@bluewin.ch)

Applications, including references and indicating your nationality, should be sent to Prof. Dr Ulla Kleinberger by e-mail or by post to Sternenstrasse 21, CH-8002 Zürich, Switzerland.

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SA JEWISH REPORT

24 June – 01 July 2011

YOUTH TALK

Alison Goldberg
youthsajr@global.co.za

Habonim's 2011 machaneh theme is 'Building a Future'

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH: GEMMA COWAN

THE NAME for this year's machaneh is Machaneh Bonim Atid – "Building a Future". It encapsulates the values of our movement as a whole and also relates to the society and world in which we live.

Building a future is all about setting the foundations that will spark change in society. Involvement in Habonim can make a significant change to people's lives, but what really counts is the differences that people make in the world after their time in the movement.

If those who leave Habonim fail to strive towards change in society, the movement has not fulfilled its goals.

Habonim aims to build critical thinkers, activists, caring, humane and thoughtful people. But the movement is nothing if these people do not use their knowledge as a positive influence in society.

There are many challenges in our world. We cannot build *the* future, it is too vast and incomprehensible. But we can build *a* future - a future for ourselves based on the values that have been entrenched in us by our families, friends and the movement.

The word "build" is one that demands action. It is not "dream" or "inspire" - these are intangible concepts.

We will not affect change merely by talking and dreaming about things, but by doing them. The importance of dreaming is not to be underestimated, but it is futile if it is all that we do.

The concept of "building" harks back to Habonim's Labour Zionist roots, too. It is reminiscent of getting our hands dirty to create that which we love, that which is just and that which stands tall as the epitome of our values.

Madrichim and channichim stand to sing the anthems at the opening ceremony of Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot 2010.

Often our value system is based on the injustices of the world. We see what is wrong in the world and look for ways to make it right. Machaneh Bonim Atid is about the actions we take on as individuals in this pursuit of justice, peace and freedom. This means active involvement in South African civil society.

It means standing up for that which we know to be true. It means constantly and actively working towards a just Israel. It means being proud and confident of our left-wing opinions and refusing to be silent - or silenced - in an increasingly conservative environment.

Last year's machaneh was Machaneh Koach Le'Shanot – "Power to Change". This year we acknowledge that this change can only come through educated, meaningful and positive action.

Our three-week machaneh aims to instil in every channich, the values and foundations on which this type of action can be pursued. We'll see you at Machaneh Bonim Atid – Building a Future.

Youth Day at Yeshiva College a dignified commemoration

OWN CORRESPONDENT PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

ON WEDNESDAY June 15, the learners of Yeshiva College Primary School, commemorated Youth Day - June 16 - in a very proud and dignified manner. The assembly began with a special Dvar Torah from CEO Rabbi Laurence Perez, expressing the importance of youth according to the Torah.

Primary School Principal Joseph Beer, conducted the assembly and explained to the parents present that in honour of Youth Day the learners of the primary school learnt the words of the South African national anthem as well as the history as to how the anthem developed.

A very special guest speaker, John Biyase, addressed the children and the parents. Biyase was born and raised in Soweto and in addition to giving the children the background to June 16, his message was one of hope, positivity and love for the youth of our country.

The grade six class then presented a short play on the history of June 16, highlighting the will of our

John Biyase addressing the parents and learners of Yeshiva College, pictured with Principal Joseph Beer.

youth to be educated.

The assembly concluded with the singing of the South African national anthem and of course, as a Jewish day school we acknowledged Eretz Yisrael by singing Hatikvah.

All those present at the assembly felt proud to be South African Jews living in this country and proud of our heritage.

Betar's winter camp - bigger and better than ever before

ROBYN UNTERSLOK

WE CANNOT believe how quickly this year has flown by, with last year's Soccer World Cup now just a distant memory. Following our hugely successful leadership seminar in December 2010, we are thrilled to introduce Betar Winter Camp 2011 - Machaneh Ha'atid Matchil - bigger and better than ever before!

Machaneh Ha'atid Matchil - The Future Begins - unravels our vision for the future of Betar, as we move forward into an exciting new era. We aim to

provide knowledge and education on Israel and Zionist ideas, as well as Israeli culture and the Betar ideology to the youth of our movement.

Winter camp promises to be tremendous fun, with a full programme for each shichvah (group) from grade 2 all the way to grade 11. Our madrichim are all fully trained and ready to ensure your child has the best winter vacation ever.

Looking forward to seeing you all there,
For more information, phone (011) 645-2589 or 082-851-3963.

Guest speaker Bronya Shaffer

RABBI ARI KIEVMAN
DIRECTOR, CHAI SENIORS

THE SOFT glow of Shabbat candles, the piquant taste of Kiddush wine, the aroma of chicken soup, the warmth of sharing time with family and friends... Most people would agree that as much knowledge and inspiration that teachers and textbooks can impart to students in a classroom, nothing can replace an authentic Shabbat experience.

Chabad House is offering an exciting opportunity to experience a “Taste of Shabbat”. Celebrate Shabbat evening with family and friends, a delight for the body and soul. Be part of an unforgettable event with camaraderie, spirit, songs and stories.

It takes place on Shabbat, June 24 and 25, at the Garden Court, Sandton City. It starts at 17:00 with candle-lighting and an inspirational workshop with international guest speaker Bronya Shaffer.

At 18:00 all will join together for an electrifying Kabbalat Shabbat Service sprinkled with insights into the prayers to transition into Shabbat. At 19:00 a Shabbat dinner will be served accompanied by songs, stories, and camaraderie.

Chabad House has also arranged for special discounted hotel rates for anyone wishing to stay over. To reserve for this Shabbat experience, e-mail me at rak@chabad.org.za or call (011) 440-6600. Join us for an uplifting experience.

Good music, good cause

RONEL ZEFF

THE KING David Schools’ Foundation and the Brest family this Sunday, June 26, host former Davidians Mark Samowitz (KDHSVP 1996) and Kevin Greenberg (KDHSL 2006), where the two will warm hearts on a winter’s morning by performing melodies from musicals.

“Warm Your Heart on a Winter’s Morning with Musical Wonders” takes place at 10:00 for 10:30 at 38B Adrienne Street, Sandown Ext 24. There is an entry fee donation of R150 per person, which includes brunch, entertainment and prizes. To book, please contact Felicité Brest +27 82 333 7961.

This concert is in aid of the Samantha Amy Brest Endowment Fund, which perpetuates the memory of Samantha Amy Brest, a former Davidian who passed away from meningitis at the age of 19.

Samantha’s mother, Felicité, started this fund to help King David matriculants who need financial assistance for the requirements of their matric dance. The fund is now in its seventh year and has helped dozens of learners celebrate the culmination of their high school career.

Samowitz is a well-known chazzan, singer and composer who has performed throughout America, Australia, England, Israel and South Africa.

Greenberg is a talented pianist who has performed in Tshwane University of Technology’s Rent and Janice Honeyman’s pantomine Robinson Crusoe & the Caribbean Pirates.

There are many prizes up for grabs, plus the chance to win a two night stay at the Melrose Arch Protea Hotel Fire&Ice!



Mark Samowitz



Kevin Greenberg

Huge happy smiles at Orange Farm

RABBI DAVID HAZDAN
GREAT PARK SHUL

LAST WEEK, just in time for the cold of winter, hundreds of blankets and warm jackets were handed out to needy children at the Early Childhood Centre - Arekopaneng - in Orange Farm, south of Johannesburg.

One of the highlights at the community-wide Lag B'Omer celebration at the Great-Park forest, is the collection of blankets to be distributed to the less fortunate. The response was heartwarming as hundreds of blankets were bought and

donated during the course of the Lag B'Omer event.

In addition, the headline sponsor of the evening - Norwood Mall - donated R5 000 of blankets to the cause. A further donation of hundreds of jackets was made available by Benjy Duchon of the Great-Park Synagogue.

With the assistance of Afrika Tikkun who opened the Arekopaneng Centre last year, hundreds of children waited in line to receive their answer to the cold of winter.

It was a great nachas to see the joy that our Jewish community brought to so many little faces.

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Locum Social worker – Chevrah Kadisha Community Social Services

Chevrah Kadisha Community Social Services has a vacancy for a locum Social Worker. This full-time position, which commences as soon as possible, ends mid-November. The successful candidate requires skills in counselling and case management and will have an opportunity to contribute to a dynamic organisation, and work with a very committed and supportive team.

Registration with the SACSSP and knowledge of Jewish culture and religion, are essential requirements of this position. It is also necessary for applicants to have their own transport.

Only short-listed applicants will be responded to.

Please submit applications in writing to:
The Human Resources Department
email hr@jhbchev.co.za or fax 0866 327774

Nursing manager

A vacancy exists at Our Parents Home, home for the aged, for a Nursing Manager. The incumbent must be registered nurse, registered with the nursing council and must have atleast 5 years management experience. The successful candidate will join a dynamic Multi Disciplinary Team.

Only short-listed applicants will be responded to.

Interested candidates please forward a current c.v. to hr@jhbchev.co.za, fax, 0866327774 or Private Bag X1, Sandringham, 2131.

Group Therapeutic Worker – Sandringham Gardens

Sandringham Gardens is seeking a healthcare professional with a 3 or 4 years health qualification who has experience and skills in the facilitation of therapeutic group work to join a dynamic team. Ability to run psycho-social groups including support groups, personal growth and life-skills groups and good interpersonal and communication skills are key requirements. Previous experience in working with older persons and mental health will be an added advantage. The incumbent must be registered with their relevant health board.

Only short-listed applicants will be responded to.

Interested candidates please forward a current c.v. to hr@jhbchev.co.za, fax, 0866327774 or Private Bag X1, Sandringham, 2131.

Occupational Therapist

A vacancy exists at Selwyn Segal Centre for people with intellectual disabilities, for an occupational therapist. The therapist must be registered with the HPCSA and have experience in the field. The Centre employs an Enabling and Empowering model. The successful candidate will join a dynamic team and should add further value to an organisation committed to development of human potential.

Only short-listed applicants will be responded to.

Interested candidates please forward a current c.v. to hr@jhbchev.co.za, fax, 0866327774 or Private Bag X1, Sandringham, 2131.

NOTICES BIRTHS

MAZEL TOV!
Benjy and Amanda Porter on the birth of your new baby boy.
SA Jewish Report

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AROUND
THE WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

LITHUANIAN HAREDI LEADER,
101, UNDERGOES SUCCESSFUL
SURGERY

JERUSALEM - Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, leader of the Lithuanian haredi Orthodox community, has undergone successful surgery in Jerusalem.

Elyashiv, 101, underwent carotid artery surgery last Sunday night.

Dr Daniel Clair, head of the Department of Vascular Surgery at the Cleveland Clinic, who performed a similar operation seven years ago, was flown to Israel to perform the surgery.

Prayers for Elyashiv were recited at the Western Wall and around the world.

No successor has been named for Elyashiv. (JTA)

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Winner, winner, (kosher) chicken for dinner!

JACK MILNER

RUGBY FINALS can often be boring affairs where teams play not to lose, rather than to win. That was not the case in the Gauteng Schools Kudu League where King David Linksfield managed a one-point victory over CBC Boksburg in the final, played at King David last week Wednesday.

It could not have been more exciting as the two schools played their hearts out. Sadly, there had to be a loser but fortunately, it was not King David, who won it 24-23.

It was one of the biggest rugby days ever seen at the school, with King David earning the honour of hosting the finals after their 1st XV topped the log. A large crowd came to the school to support the various teams who played in their respective age-group finals.

Also in the crowd were two great exponents of the sport - former Springbok wing Syd Nomis and current Lions centre Waylon Murray.

King David has never been regarded in rugby echelons as a leading exponent of the game, but anyone present would have questioned the truth of that belief. The stands were full and the excitement high as captain David Feinberg led his team on to the field.

When it comes to size, there are probably a few junior schools who have tighthead props bigger than David, but there are very few on a rugby field who play with more spirit, heart and commitment, than this bunch of “diminutive” youngsters.

One can use all the clichés in the book to describe David, from “dynamite comes in small packages” to “what he lacks in size he

makes up for in heart”. While they are all true, they are, in a way, an insult. David has a rare gift. His enthusiasm is infectious and his team feed off it.

He does not know how to quit and even when lying on the field cramping in agony as he did at one point, he refused to leave his team in the lurch.

Most importantly when all looked lost and they needed that flash of inspiration, David was there to provide it, scoring the converted try in the dying moments that gave his team that one-point lead.

But David would be the first to admit that it is all about the team and while he may be the cohesive element, this victory was a great team effort.

CBC struck first with a penalty, but King David responded quickly when the bounce of the ball fell well for fullback Jason Sostack who went over for the first try of the match, which was converted by Ryan Gordon.

Jason is another player who can turn a game on its head. When he got the ball he made things happen and it is interesting to note that for many years he preferred to play soccer. Fortunately he changed his mind and his speed, agility and quick thinking, is an asset to the team.

The same combination struck again 10 minutes before half time and it looked as if King David would go into the break with a 17-3 lead.

However, a poor period of play saw the home team concede a series of penalties which led to their opponents scoring a converted try to make it 17-10.



King David Linksfield rugby captain David Feinberg holds the trophy he received from former Springbok great Syd Nomis, with principal Marc Falconer in attendance.

To make matters worse, the impetus stayed with CBC early in the second half and when they went over for their second try, again converted by their flyhalf, the teams were placed at 17-17.

The situation worsened further when King David conceded two kickable penalties and once again the opposition flyhalf made no mistake as CBC moved into a 23-17 lead.

The home side earned a penalty but kicker Ryan Gordon had sustained a leg injury. He still took the kick, but missed and then left the field. A second penalty, in front of the posts, was missed and time was quickly running out for King David.

But David and his boys refused to be denied and with just a couple of minutes left on the clock, David went over to score and the conversion was made. With a one-point

lead, all King David had left to do was see out the remaining minute of the game and a little injury time.

However, the drama was not over and the impossible happened - King David conceded a penalty with the last kick of the game. The CBC flyhalf had been in devastating form, but kicking at the beginning of a match is one thing, kicking to win a match has its own distinct pressure.

Some of the King David boys could not even look as he lined up the penalty, but the anxiety turned to elation as the ball drifted wide of the upright.

King David had it won and Syd Nomis presented the teams with their medals and the trophy. This team has been together since their under-14 days and could well rival the so-called “great” team of 1987.

Santoro World Cup has successful launch

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LAST WEEK Sunday saw the launch of the Jorge Santoro Action Soccer World Cup. Some 80 participants, making up 10 countries, featured in a competitive and exciting day of soccer at the Italian Club in Bedfordview.

The tournament is named after the Brazilian-born soccer legend Jorge Santoro who inspired generations of football followers and players in South Africa.

After the gruelling round robin games, the semifinals saw favourites Holland up against a defiant and determined Israel side. The Dutch, however, were too strong and Israel bowed out of the tournament.

The other semifinal was between the day’s most skilful team, Brazil, and a fired-up Portugal. A tense encounter ensued but the Brazilians eventually cruised through 4-1.

After going ahead 2-1 in the final, Brazil was caught napping and Holland punished them. As the game progressed both teams attacked with the Dutch proving to be the better side and ended up winning 7-4.



Brazilian-born soccer great Jorge Santoro (right) when he played for Highlands Park.

Organiser Yonatan Herrmann, son of the late Santoro, said that the day was an overwhelming success and would be repeated annually. “We hope to expand the event on a much broader and wider scale next year”, he said. “The name Santoro also means a great deal to many supporters and followers of football in the country who want to participate and be involved in a tribute to a truly remarkable soccer legend.”

Rugby journalist Dan Retief at Maccabi Stag


AS MENTIONED previously, ruby journalist Dan Retief will be the guest speaker at this month’s Maccabi Stag, which will take place on Tuesday June 28.

Retief will discuss his new book, “The Springboks And The Holy Grail”, and will also talk about South Africa’s chances at this year’s Rugby World Cup, which kicks off

in September.

The talk will be held at Beyachad, 2 Elray Street, Raedene at 17:30 for 18:00, where a light meal and drinks will be included in the cost of R100 per person

• RSVP to confirm to Max Klass on (011) 485-1485 or the Maccabi office: (011) 645-2557, e-mail: maccabisa@beyachad.co.za



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