

Reparable
future by
Coovadia
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• south african •
jewish report

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Yitzhak Shamir, former Israeli prime minister, dies at 96

Former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, left, shown with former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, gestures during a Likud party conference in 1987. Shamir died on June 30, 2012. (Moshe Shai/FLASH90)

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Shabbat Times

| | | |
|--------------------|-------|----------------|
| July 6 /16 Tammuz | | |
| July 7 / 17 Tammuz | | |
| Parshat Balak | | |
| 17:12 | 18:04 | Johannesburg |
| 17:33 | 18:28 | Cape Town |
| 16:52 | 17:45 | Durban |
| 17:13 | 18:06 | Bloemfontein |
| 17:04 | 17:59 | Port Elizabeth |
| 16:58 | 17:52 | East London |

Shivah Asar b’Tammuz
Fast of 17 Tammuz

| | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------|
| July 8/17 Tammuz | | |
| Starts | Ends | |
| 05:42 | 17:49 | Johannesburg |
| 06:32 | 18:10 | Cape Town |
| 05:36 | 17:29 | Durban |
| 05:53 | 17:50 | Bloemfontein |
| 06:03 | 17:41 | Port Elizabeth |
| 05:52 | 17:35 | East London |

Fast of Tammuz

This year, the fast of Shiva Asar B’Tammuz is commemorated on Sunday July 8 (see fasting times on this page), because 17 Tammuz falls on a Shabbat. It is rabbinic fast day which commemorates many tragedies that have befallen the Jews on this day. It also signifies the beginning of the Three Weeks, the annual period of mourning over the destruction of the First and Second Temples, which culminates in Tisha B’Av, which, this year, falls on July 29.

According to the Talmud, this fast commemorates the anniversary of Moses shattering the tablets on which the Ten Commandments were engraved; and the day a breach was made in the walls of the city of Jerusalem. In a post-biblical era, there are many other tragedies: including the day of the looting and burning of the Jewish Quarter of Prague in 1559; the death sentence of the entire Kovno ghetto community in 1944; and the Libyan confiscation of all Jewish property in 1970, to name a few.

Shivah Asar B’Tammuz is a 12-hour fast, beginning before day-break and ending after nightfall. Traditionally, observation of the Three Weeks is a period of semi-mourning in which entertainment, haircuts and buying new clothes are avoided. - OWN CORRESPONDENT

News in Brief

SENATE AFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO ISRAELI MILITARY’S QUALITATIVE EDGE
WASHINGTON - The US Senate overwhelmingly passed bipartisan legislation that reaffirms US security commitments to Israel.

More specifically, the measure says that the US will provide Israel with the capabilities to preserve its military’s qualitative edge, expand military and civilian cooperation, and encourage Israel’s neighbours to recognise Israel’s right to exist as the state of the Jewish people. The Senate passed the measure by unanimous consent last Friday. Senators Barbara Boxer (Democrat California) and Johnny Isakson (Republican Georgia) authored the legislation, which had 69 co-sponsors.

In a joint news release, the bill’s authors praised the bipartisanship of the Senate to expeditiously pass the legislation. Boxer said in the statement that the bill “re-affirms the important bond between the United States and Israel, and helps ensure that Israel has the necessary tools to defend itself in this time of dynamic change in the Middle East.”

In May, the US House of Representatives passed companion legislation that was sponsored by Majority Leader Representative Eric Cantor (Republican Virginia) and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (Democrat Maryland) by a bipartisan vote of 411 - 2.

The bill will now be reconciled by both houses of Congress in a conference committee before moving to President Obama for his signature. (JTA)

Balaam the sorcerer, not a fool

If you were to ask most people, Jewish or non-Jewish, what they know of the story of Jonah, they will probably reply that Jonah was swallowed by a great fish (often erroneously described as a whale).

The story of Balaam too, features a well-known scene involving a non-human character, in this case a donkey. The episode may be the only truly comic passage in the Torah. Balaam is a sorcerer, the greatest magician of his day, a man of international reputation regarding his powers, yet the Torah’s account of Balaam and his donkey depicts him as something of a fool.

Balaam is a “seer”, yet three times fails to see what his donkey plainly sees: the Angel standing before him with sword drawn. The comparison between the renowned seer who cannot see what a simple donkey clearly perceives is both unflattering to Balaam’s great reputation and a demonstration that Balaam can only see, or prophecy, that which G-d allows him to see.

Thus three times Balaam utters a positive oracle concerning Israel which angers his employer, Israel’s adversary, Balak king of Moab. Balaam can only plead that he must prophecy in the words which G-d has given him to speak.

Yet Balaam is not a fool. In response to Balak’s anger, Balaam prophecies against Balak’s own kingdom, Moab. This time the words are from Balaam, not from G-d:



Parshat Balak
Rabbi Dr Robert Ash
Beit Emanuel Progressive
Synagogue
Johannesburg

Word of Balaam son of Beor,
Word of the man whose eye is true,
Word of him who hears G-d’s speech,
Who obtains knowledge from the Most High,
And beholds visions from the Al-mighty,
Prostrate, but with eyes unveiled:
What I see for them is not yet,
What I behold will not be soon:
A star rises from Jacob,
A sceptre comes forth from Israel;
It smashes the brow of Moab...
Israel is triumphant.
A victor issues from Jacob...

James S Ackerman in The Literary Guide to the Bible sees “An extraordinary twist in the plot” of the story of Balaam which “assigns the most far-reaching and positive visions of Israel’s future... to a Near Eastern diviner rather than to Moses.

Madiba’s 94th commemorated at Wits

ROBYN SASSEN

Last week saw a culmination of curatorial work, and the coming together of glitterati of the art world, academia and the legal fraternity in the opening of “Mandela @ 94 _z_a”, an exhibition about Mandela’s life and iconic status, curated by Natalie Knight, at the art gallery of the Origins Centre, Wits University in Braamfontein.

Explaining the e-mail address-like title of the exhibition, Knight opened the evening remarking that the artists range are from South Africa – ‘za’ in e-mail parlance, but that they also draw from the alphabet: from ‘z’ to ‘a’; from Zapiro to the anonymous Xhosa beadworker. “This exhibition is democracy in action,” she said, commenting on how it features newcomers with well-established names. It’s an exhibition that doesn’t promise to be comprehensive, but offers mixed and lively insight into how Mandela is reflected in art, from photographs by Jurgen Schadeberg, to cartoons by Zapiro, jewellery by Beverley Price, beadwork by married couple Billie and Jane Makhubele and sculpture by father and son, Johannes and Collen Maswanganyi.

“Ninety four is significant,” continued Knight. “Not only is it Mandela’s age in



Curator Natalie Knight speaking at the opening of the exhibition.
(PHOTOGRAPH BY DEBBIE YAZBEK)

2012, but 1994 was also a highly significant year in Mandela’s life and that of the country.”

While some of the work is for sale, other pieces are on loan from public and private collections, but “one I consider priceless. “In 1993, Nelson Mandela walked into the Natalie Knight Gallery in Hyde Park Corner Shopping Centre. It was my first interaction with him. I showed him a pastel drawing that Tommy Motswai had made of that historic handshake between him and FW de Klerk, and my photographer Berna Jerisch took a picture of him shaking my hand in front of this work.”

This photograph was the source of a beaded artwork by the Makhubeles which is on show.

For the last several years, people have been observing 67 minutes of good deeds for the country in the name of Mandela, commemorating the 67 years, between 1942 and 2009 in which Mandela fought for human rights in South Africa. “But,” quipped Knight. “Wits has the edge! And I invite all of you to take part in ‘94 minutes of kindness for Mandela’ on his birthday, July 18.”

The event was further complemented by Wits’ Vice Chancellor Professor Loyiso Nongxo and Advocate George Bizos sharing Mandela anecdotes. Said head of law school at Wits, Prof Jonathan Klaaren, in declaring the exhibition open: “Storytelling shows everything, the good and the bad, but above all the richness of a situation.”

• *The exhibition, which ends in early August, features three walkabouts: on July 10, July 18 (Mandela’s birthday) followed by the 94 minutes of kindness, and July 28. Call (011)717-4700 for further details.*
• *Sandton Shul is doing 67 Minutes for Mandela on July 18 at the Phuthaditshaba Community Centre, in Alexandra. Call (011)883-4210 for details.*

• south african

jewish report

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Cosatu in scurrilous attack on Christian pro- Israel march

DAVID SAKS
PHOTOGRAPHS: ILAN OSSENDRYVER

Last week's Pretoria march in support of Israel by mainly black Christians, was condemned in remarkably inflammatory terms by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu), reviving memories of the Bongani Masuku hate speech case of three years ago.

Cosatu's opposition to the march was outlined in a lengthy letter, subsequently released to the general media, to the Rev Inkosi Phakama Shembe, spiritual leader of the Shembe Church and one of the organisers of the demonstration. It was sent on June 27 under the name of Cosatu's national spokesman, Patrick Craven.

The letter appeared under the heading: "Cosatu condemns South African Zionist Federation's abuse of blacks under religious guise to legitimise apartheid in Israel".

It described the SAZF and its associates as organisations "whose hands are dripping with the blood of our sisters and brothers in Palestine" and as "wolves in sheepskins" who wished to use well-meaning black Christians "to further their racist supremacist ideology of Zionism".

The Shembe Church, African Christian Democratic Party and other groupings, were urged not to act as its instruments, equating this to how black people were used by the apartheid white government to further its agenda.

Various overtly anti-Semitic tropes were rehashed in different guises, including allegations that Judaism and Zionism embody feelings of innate Jewish racial superiority, a denial of the Jewish historical and religious link to the Land of Israel and even of Jews as persecutors



of Christians.


Thus, Israel was characterised as "a legalisation of Jewish supremacy to further dehumanise everyone outside their scope of Zionist purity".

Zionism itself was said to refer "to those who believe in a state exclusively for the ruling supremacists at the expense of the indigenous Palestinian people because they view themselves as ordained by G-d to do all it takes to defend their privileged position".

Echoing contemporary attempts by the Palestinian leadership to appropriate for itself the pre-exile Jewish history of Israel, the letter described today's Palestinians as "descendants of Jesus" who were today being hounded by Jewish colonisers. It concludes: "Can we, as South African Christians, who suffered cruelly under apartheid, stand back and accept all of this? Surely not!"

The letter elicited a strenuous response from the Rev John Atkinson. He described the notion that the SAZF were manipulating blacks into doing their will as "a stunning insult to the intelligence of South African citizens and their ability to think for themselves" since Christians in South Africa did not need the SAZF to tell them that Israel was being unfairly singled out.

The "hands are dripping with blood" reference and the close associations this had with Nazi propaganda gave the lie to the claim by Craven to have written his letter in "a spirit of humanity and human solidarity."



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Ina Perlman – the woman who thought in puddles, not ponds

GEOFF SIFRIN
PHOTOGRAPH BY GISÈLE WULFSOHN

“I remember my father slapping the New Testament down in front of me and saying, ‘If you are going to live among these people, you must know what they believe’,” said Ina Perlman, renowned philanthropist and the founder of Operation Hunger, in an interview in 1994, published in Cutting Through the Mountain, edited by Immanuel Suttner (1997). She died last Thursday, in the Knysna Hospital, after a brief illness.

Born in Bloemfontein on March 24, 1926, the only child to middle-class German-Jewish parents, she grew up in Port Elizabeth, after the collapse of the wool trade. Her father, who was 50 at the time of her birth, had been a sheep farmer. He’d come to South Africa in 1898, rebelling against his family who had anticipated that he would run the family business in Germany.

Perlman was raised with values that were vehemently opposed to organised religion and apartheid and ones that advocated the learning of many languages to understand cultures – she was raised with English, German and Afri-

kaans. She was involved over many years in a range of social programmes aimed at combatting black poverty through organisations like the SA Institute of Race Relations and the African Self Help Association.

In 1981 she mooted Operation Hunger, whose feeding programmes reached two million; she ran the non-profit until her retirement in 1993. Her philosophy was firmly based on a grassroots approach in which assistance to impoverished communities was used to generate genuine community development to enable people to stand on their own feet.

Perlman did three years of medicine at Wits University, after matriculating at Collegiate Girls’ School, as one of the top matriculants in the country, but she dropped out of university, deciding she did not want to be a doctor.

“Those were the early days of the Afrikaanse Nasionale Studentebond; Wits was an open university. We had to specify in writing that we were willing to work at the same anatomy table as blacks.

“Once in my class there were four blacks in a class of ten at an anatomy table. These were all men with BScs - mature, educated men

who’d had to battle their guts out to get to where they were. And here was I, a silly 18-year-old flapper, learning with them.”

Some years later, she met Ellen Hellman of the Institute of Race Relations. “I once told her I was working with only about 20 women, and we’re affecting only about 200 kids, while there were 4 000 people in the squatter camp.

“Ellen looked at me very coldly and said: ‘Aren’t you being a bit presumptuous? Not many people are given the ability to move mountains, but if at the end of your life your shovelling mole-hills has helped fifty people, that’s as much as most people have the right to expect.’ I agreed entirely.

“A lot of people wanted to be involved in political activism; far fewer in the hard grind of working with the community,” she explained how Operation Hunger came about.

In the late 1970s, John Rees took over Race Relations; Perlman argued that he enabled the non-profit to develop. She explains two basic philosophies: “You never went anywhere unless you were invited by the community. And, when you were invited, you listened to what the community said - you never took the lead.

“We insisted that the feeding



programme was crisis intervention only - the long-term solution had to be self-help. Our biggest support in SA never came from the corporate sector, or government - it came the man in the street.

“I’ve always believed in thinking small. I’ve always believed that the biggest excuse for doing nothing is the what-I-do-is-a-drop-in-the-ocean problem. We have to think in puddles, not ponds.”

Responding to the reality that her name had become a household word, she said: “I could never have lived in SA without doing what I did. I happened to be the right person at the right time. I was privileged to be part of a relevant process.”

Perlman’s husband, Dr Mike Perlman, passed away last year. She is survived by four children, Rosemary, David, Harriet and John, and six grandchildren.

News in Brief

IRAN PLANS MISSILE TESTS, THREATENS ISRAEL
TEHRAN - With tougher sanctions by the European Union taking effect, Iran has announced new missile tests and threatened to obliterate Israel.

Gen Amir Ali Hajizadeh told Reuters on Monday that the three days of missile tests this week aim to show Iran will be “resolute in standing up to... bullying, and will respond to any possible evil decisively and strongly.” Hajizadeh also said that if Israel attacked Iran’s nuclear sites, “they will hand us an excuse to wipe them off the face of the earth”.

Reuters reported that the tougher sanctions, which took effect on Sunday, ban European Union states from importing Iranian oil, among other measures. They were enacted earlier this year in a bid to pressure Iran to stop enriching uranium in its suspected nuclear weapons programme.

The EU initiated its much anticipated embargo on Iranian crude oil imports and its prohibition on insurance for tankers carrying Iranian oil. The sanctions come days before talks restart between Iran and the permanent five members of the UN Security Council and Germany. The meetings are intended to find a compromise to enable monitoring of Iran’s nuclear facilities, which the West believes masks an effort to make nuclear weapons.

Following the EU’s action, the White House released a statement in support of the EU oil embargo.

“This action is an essential part of our concerted diplomatic efforts to present Iran with a clear choice between isolation or meetings its obligations,” the White House said. “Iran has an opportunity to pursue substantive negotiations, beginning with expert level talks this week in Istanbul, and must take concrete steps toward a comprehensive resolution of the international community’s concerns with Iran’s nuclear activities.”

Also, the Obama administration has begun prohibiting business with companies that continue to conduct oil transactions with the Central Bank of Iran. The sanctions, which were passed by the US Senate in December by a vote of 100 - 0, went into force last week. (JTA)

BUILDING SOUTH AFRICA - PEOPLE DOING REMARKABLE THINGS

Andy Bolnick’s passion is to help the underdog

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

Like mother, like daughter, the saying goes. And Andy Bolnick is quick to give her mother, Ruth Feigenbaum, credit for developing her passion for helping the underdog.

Feigenbaum founded an organisation in Zimbabwe that assists those affected by Aids. In this country, she was very active in the Black Sash during the apartheid years.

Former Davidian Bolnick held leadership positions in Habonim, where she found it “encouraging” being in an environment that promoted similar progressive values to the ones her parents nurtured in her. But she insists that her sense of social justice was primarily honed in her home, recalling her mother taking her into the townships from a very early age.

A social science graduate from Wits, Bolnick set up iKhayalami (Xhosa for “my home”) in 2006, pioneering the upgrading of shacks in situ as a means of tackling the “massive” housing backlog, which sees one in 20 receiving an RDP house each year. “We look at shacks and informal settlements as part of the solution not part of the problem,” she explains, referring to the country’s (officially) 2,2 million shack-dwellers.

The intervention changes the way the government engages with

the poor, she maintains. It also involves reconfiguring the layout of the settlement – “blocking out” – which allows for service provision and upgrading of the shacks and sees community involvement through engagement, putting the poor at the forefront of the negotiations.

Shacks come down in the morning and are up again later the same day. The simple introduction of courtyards ensures that children for the first time have a place to play while their mothers work nearby.

The upgrading (together with fire-retardant materials) and reconfiguring mitigates fires and flooding, she adds. “Crime has definitely dropped because the shacks look on to each other.

“If people rob at night, they can be seen whereas before, (the layout) was disjointed. People never knew their neighbours, whereas now they’re a community,” she says with satisfaction.

“It changes the whole feel of the settlement, leaders gain a tremendous amount of confidence and there’s a sense of pride and dignity that comes through the process”, she says, adding that people are now motivated to paint and improve their homes.

The first time the plan was able to be implemented was after a fire at the Joe Slovo informal settlement in 2009. Through this success, Bolnick was able to raise funds for further upgrading.



Above: A rebuilt shack in Sheffield Road reserve.



Left: Andy Bolnick, who founded iKhayalami, an organisation that upgrades shacks.

The fire and its aftermath prompted the City of Cape Town to take note and led to a “very productive partnership” with iKhayalami. “They actually came on site to see who had succeeded in doing this realignment after a fire, because they hadn’t really succeeded in the past,” she remembers.

Initially, the City was not in favour of “blocking out”, but later saw its “immense value” at the Sheffield Road informal settlement in Philippi. There are now 22 informal settlements that the City wants to upgrade in this manner, in partnership with the Informal Settlement Network (ISN).

“iKhayalami has been instrumental in all these due to the Joe Slovo and Sheffield Road initiatives,” states Bolnick, who has received a Shawco Fellowship for her work.

Her influence extends to national policy through the ISN. “They have taken on this model lock, stock and barrel.

“It is far more sustainable for governments and far better for the poor,” she says.

In Johannesburg, Ruimsig settlement in Roodepoort has been identified for similar intervention in partnership with the University of Johannesburg. It is hoped that the net will be spread city-wide, Bolnick says.

The Jewish World

in seven seconds

The Canadian Jewish News, Toronto:
www.cjnews.com

“Toronto rabbis urge PM not to cut refugees’ health care”

The Toronto Board of Rabbis wrote to Prime Minister Stephen Harper imploring him to stop modifications to the country’s refugee health-care benefits programme, scheduled to take effect at the end of June.

The Jewish Chronicle, London:
www.thejc.com

“Teenagers arrested after gun attack by Manchester Yeshiva”

Two 17-year-olds from Broughton, Manchester, have been arrested on suspicion of possessing and discharging a firearm from a speeding car at the Broughton Yeshiva. The incident is not being treated as a hate crime.

Israel News, Tel Aviv:
www.haaretz.com

“Israel to begin recording settler land claims, deny Palestinians’ right of appeal”

After 45 years of running the West Bank, Israel plans to start compiling land registry records of assets. Bypassing regular land-listing processes; it seems designed to prevent Palestinians from appealing the validity of ownership listings.

Jerusalem Post, Jerusalem:
www.jpost.com

“Thieves break into home of Shamir’s daughter during funeral”

Burglars broke into the Tel Aviv home of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir’s daughter, Gilada Diamant, while she was at her father’s funeral on Monday night. They stole jewellery. Police have opened an investigation.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency, international:
www.jta.org

“Romney to visit Israel”

Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney will visit Israel, to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and other top officials during the presidential campaign.

Jewish Telegraph, Manchester:
www.jewishtelegraph.com

“BBC: We got it wrong on Israel”

BBC admitted a mistake in their coverage of the massacre of the Fogel family in Itamar, Israel, March 2011. The story wasn’t mentioned in BBC broadcast at the time.

Ynet news, Tel Aviv:
www.ynetnews.com

“Plesner Committee member: historic opportunity missed”

Prof Yedidia Stern, member of the Plesner Committee, tasked to draft an alternative to the Tal Law exempting ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students from army service, said Netanyahu’s decision to dissolve the committee ‘politicised an important social issue.’

News in Brief

PHILANTHROPIES REOPEN DONOR MATCHING PROGRAM FOR DAY SCHOOLS

A partnership of Jewish philanthropies will match \$6 million of new donations to Jewish day schools with an additional \$3 million.

Under the programme, called Match, the Avi Chai and Kohelet Foundations will match donations given between August 1, 2012 and May 15, 2013 at 50 cents to the dollar, according to a press release. In order to qualify for the matching funds, a school must identify a donor and apply to the programme. The donor then applies individually as well. Donations must be \$10,000 or more and an individual school can qualify for up to \$50,000 of matching funds.

This is the fourth round of the Match program since 2004, and it is being launched in partnership with the Jewish Funders Network and the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education.

“Since its inception, Match has sent a consistent message: day schools must strengthen their financial support by building and stewarding donor relationships,” said PEJE Executive Director Amy Katz in the press release. (JTA)

RELIEF FUNDS ASSISTING COLORADO FIRE VICTIMS

As residents of Colorado Springs return to their homes following widespread wild fires, US Jewish communities are raising money for relief funds.

The Allied Jewish Federation of Colorado, in conjunction with local synagogues, community organisations and national partners, has launched the Colorado Fire Relief Fund to help victims, firefighters, first responders and others affected by the fires. Jewish federations have been directing donors to the Colorado Fire Relief Fund online or to send cheques with the notation “Colorado Fire Relief Fund” to Allied Jewish Federation of Colorado, 300 S. Dahlia, Suite 300, Denver, CO 80246.

All the donations to the Colorado Fire Relief Fund will go to directly combat the fire and help victims. There will be no administrative fees taken out of these funds, according to a Jewish Federations of North America statement. Chabad-Lubavitch of Colorado Springs also has set up a relief fund. The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago is directing funds from its relief fund to the Colorado Fire Relief Fund. (JTA)

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Tough leadership decisions

The SA Jewish community has to make a difficult – and historic - decision on how to react to the growing success of the anti-Israel movement in this country. Future generations will analyse the wisdom of the route taken, and also how it fitted into international Jewry’s response to negative global developments vis-à-vis Jews and Israel.

Recent local events have given new confidence to the BDS movement and a new sense of urgency to Jewish leadership: Trade and Industry Minister Rob Davies’ attempt to implement the “relabelling” of Israeli goods produced in the West Bank; the Grahamstown National Arts Festival, Africa’s most lauded cultural event, including this year an official discussion on the cultural boycott of Israel by well-known people in arts, journalism and politics arranged by Artists Against Apartheid, and “inspired by the successful boycott of apartheid South Africa”; the 2012 ANC Policy Conference reaffirming its intention to “increase” support for the Palestinians and the boycott of Israel, with Lindiwe Zulu, presidential advisor on international relations, saying members believe “there must be an increase in the boycott of products that are imported from Israel to South Africa”; Cosatu – a trade union federation mandated to look after South African workers! – issuing such a vicious press release against Israel after the Pretoria march by the ACDP and SAZF against the relabelling issue (see story on page 3) that a Jewish leader commented: “The swords are almost unsheathed from Cosatu’s side”; the sudden cancelling of a talk by Israel’s deputy ambassador Yaacov Finkelstein, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal; and other actions.

These local activities come in the context of the Iranian First Vice President Mohammad-Reza Rahimi saying Jews are “the main elements of the international drugs trade”. It was immediately condemned by international officials, including European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton and United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, but millions worldwide have had a seed implanted that this might be true – particularly the Muslim world aligned with Iran.

How alarmed should Jews be? Particularly now that we have a strong, vibrant Israel - contrary to the vulnerable Jewish situation in prior eras – which is home to the world’s largest Jewish community.

Some historians, diplomats and politicians say this era is beginning to feel like the 1930s, with growing demonisation of Jews and now Israel. Or mediaeval times, when the infamous blood libel accused Jews of using the blood of murdered non-Jewish children in the making of matza? Or the early 1900s, when the falsified Protocols of the Meetings of the Learned Elders of Zion suggested there was a worldwide Jewish conspiracy to run global affairs for their own benefit?

What is the best response? To remain dignified and cogently argue the Israeli and Jewish case in diplomatic, academic and political forums, hoping things will calm down? Or noisily take to the streets with marches and banners, alongside Christians and others who support us, creating a more vehement public furore in which people with no previous opinion on the Israeli-Palestinian issue might sway towards one side? Given the legacy of the SA liberation movements’ closeness to the PLO during apartheid, most South Africans will more likely buy into the anti-Israel side.

SA Jewry is a small in numbers - only some 70 000 at this point – though we are publicly quite visible in business, the arts, the professions, etc. This in a country where the place of minority groups – especially white ones – is anyway fraught with sensitivities and fear in the face of the ANC juggernaut in national politics.

We must be cautious not to be too alarmist. But our Jewish “antennae”, fine-tuned over many centuries to recognise danger, are starting to vibrate. There is no doubt significant parts of the Jewish community are beginning to feel embattled on the Israeli issue and a nervousness among individuals to be too openly Jewish or pro-Israel in some parts of the public domain has begun setting in.

There is no easy answer. Jewish leadership today faces a huge challenge in determining the right path.

Betrayal of Jewish people by intelligentsia

Leaving university, which in my case also meant leaving the gentle-paced, quiet haven of historic Grahamstown for the jostling, bustling chaos of Johannesburg (surely one of the world’s most unloved major cities?), was a traumatic experience. It took years before the intense yearning to return subsided. Until then, my idea of earthly paradise was to have a permanent academic position at Rhodes University, while devoting my free time to exploring 1820 Settler hamlets and homesteads and writing about them. Indeed, back then the life of the university academic was in my view one of the very highest callings. Employed at the time at MuseumAfrica, I would trawl wretchedly through the extensive Grahamstown image files, bewailing a lost paradise.

In time, I realised that even if it was physically possible to return to those old haunts, it would never be possible to recapture the spirit of those times. Those intense, exciting, sometimes overwrought years of early adulthood were really what made the whole experience so memorable. Once such early illusions are dispelled, there is no going back. Sometimes it happened during my time there that former students would return for a spell, hang around wistfully on the fringes for a while trying to find a place for themselves and finally return to the big city rat race. They longed to recapture the old sense of community and stability within the new student body, but no longer spoke the same language.

Post-apartheid Grahamstown is also no doubt a far less welcome haven for reclusive white scholars than it once was. The Eastern Cape in general has essentially reverted to the control of the indigenous black majority, who have taken over most of the institutions that the mainly British white settlers established over the last couple of centuries in the erroneous belief that what they were building would be inherited and built-upon by their own



BARBARIC YAWP
David Saks

progeny. At Rhodes itself, white academics (at least in the humanities) know very well that they must acquiesce in a definite anti-Western, anti-colonialist and de facto largely anti-white line if they wish to fit in.

The dawning realisation that far from being the arbiters of clear, objective critical thinking, university academics are in practice if anything even more culpable than laymen when it comes to being influenced by and in their turn propagating ideological biases eventually cured me of any lingering desire to join the academic community. Of course, academics are only human, and can hardly be expected to act with pristine, dispassionate objectivity every time they pronounce on controversial issues. That being conceded, it is ultimately towards its academics that society should be able to look to receive some measure of balanced analysis in those areas. If full-time professional thinkers cannot transcend their own biases to provide such an understanding, and how much more so if they misuse their intellectual authority to further muddy the waters, what possible use are they?

One of academia’s greatest failings today must surely be how the question of Israel and its neighbours is now being played out on campuses worldwide. Here, surely, one would hope to see trained scholars contributing to a deeper, more balanced understanding of this ever-fraught and baffling issue, yet the opposite has been the case. Overwhelmingly, the most vocal academics working in the field adopt an ideologically-driven, overtly anti-Israel approach that leaves

no room for critical engagement. Increasingly, isolated voices seeking to challenge the dominant consensus are not merely being sidelined but silenced altogether.

Certainly, it is happening in South Africa to an increasing degree. The fact that the University of KwaZulu-Natal denied Deputy Israel Ambassador Yaakov Finkelstein the opportunity of speaking on campus is just the most recent example of this. As Jewish students have found, such overt acts of partiality from the top level down on the part of the establishment are regularly sabotaging their efforts to counter the waves of vitriol emanating from the other side. Even so, the experiences of other Diaspora communities suggests that the worst is still to come. Canadian, British and even many major US universities are reporting rising levels of intimidation, intolerance and victimisation. On the European continent, particularly in Scandinavian countries, the situation is as bad, if not worse. Pro-Israel speakers are increasingly being denied even a hearing. Meanwhile, radical anti-Israel intellectuals are having a field day, disseminating ever more distorted theories and interpretations that, being unchallenged, rapidly morph into orthodoxies.

Not all academics are either pro- or anti-Israel, of course. Actually, it can probably be safely assumed that those in the middle constitute a de facto majority. However, the professional price of taking on – even in a mild and avowedly neutral way - the dominant hard-leftist consensus, including being labelled as apologists for the two great heresies of racism and colonialism and isolated accordingly, has become too high. Consequently, they avoid what has been turned into an ideological minefield and thereby concede the field to the radicals. It all represents an ongoing betrayal of the Jewish people by the intelligentsia, and not by any means the first one.

Promoting Jewish innovation in South Africa

DAN BROTMAN

In February, one of the world’s wealthiest Jewish philanthropists, American oil magnate and Birthright Israel co-founder Lynn Schusterman, launched the first SA Young Jewish Innovators Gathering.

She convened this group of 50 to create a network of intelligent and forward-thinking young Jewish adults who are changing Jewish and non-Jewish SA. Some are unaffiliated with the organised Jewish community, while others (like me) are “entrepreneurs”, launching new projects from within the Jewish establishment.

I was one of three selected to represent SA at this year’s ROI Summit in Jerusalem. Founded in 2005, ROI is Schusterman’s community of young Jewish innovators from over 50 countries, who meet once a year to connect and create.

Every year, Schusterman flies the vast majority of the participants to Israel for a four-day summit, with roughly one-third hailing from North America, one-third from Israel, and one-third from the rest of the Jewish world. By 2015, ROI aims to have built a network of 1 000 young social entrepreneurs reaching a million Jews.

What became clear to me during the ROI Summit is that the SA Jewish community offers few options for young Jewish adults, as well as social entrepreneurs. In many Diaspora communities, donors heavily invest in grooming young leaders by funding new and innovative projects initiated by the under-35s.

For example, the Washington DC-based Slingshot Fund was established in 2003 to bring together children of top



South African delegation at 2012 ROI Summit: Gur Geva, Ephraim Moss, and Dan Brotmann.

Jewish philanthropists to create a network of next generation funders.

These well-heeled individuals pool their money and decide as a group to fund certain Jewish projects. The Slingshot Fund also publishes “A Resource Guide to Jewish Innovation”, a guide to the latest innovative projects in the Jewish world.

This model engages next generation donors with the Jewish community, and allows them early on to make the type of funding decisions their parents and grandparents make on a much larger scale.

As a young person who works within the Jewish establishment, I believe we are facing a crisis of Jewish leadership continuity. Although we have a strong Jewish day school network, youth movements

and SAUJS, there exist very few structures to engage young Jewish adults after they graduate from university.

We often assume here that young adults will “drop out” of the Jewish community after university and return to take up leadership positions once they have children. While the SA Jewish community is truly unique for providing services to its members from “cradle to grave”, the focus in our community has been on preservation rather than innovation – a mentality which may not sustain this community in the long term.

Instead of asking young people to donate money to the Jewish community, can you imagine if we asked them how they would like the community’s money to be spent?

Continued on page 7

Promoting Jewish innovation in South Africa

Continued from page 6

Schusterman taught me to think big, and thus my vision for the SA Jewish community is that we one day spend as many resources on promoting innovation and young leadership as we do on maintaining our welfare organisations.

I want to see our Jewish organisations programming more with the community rather than at the community, which will ultimately engage the growing number of affiliated members. I would like to see one comprehensive weekly e-newsletter sent to every member of the Jewish community, which is more likely to be read than the dozens of e-mails we receive from individual organisations.

I envision a community where we have a number of local facilitators trained by organisations like Encounter which transforms conflict through face-to-face understanding. These facilitators would create safe spaces for us to talk about schisms within our community, such as Israel/Palestine and Orthodox/Reform.

Most importantly, I would like to see our community empower young Jews to lobby government and become more involved in the political process. One such organisation that does this on a global scale is the Jewish Diplomatic Corps. While we need official bodies like the SAJBD and SAZF to lobby on behalf of the community, we must foster a new generation of young Jews who can become an additional link between the organised Jewish community and the government.

Empowering young Jewish adults with the tools to engage with their elected leaders, will not only serve the interests of the Jewish community, but will also make our young adult members more invested in building a democratic SA.

The greatest challenge facing the Jewish world today is continuity. While the existence of Jewish schools and welfare organisations are important, their existence alone will not generate innovation within the Cape Town Jewish community.

In a globalised era, young people are presented with a plethora of choices, such as whether or not to be communally involved, or whether to remain in Cape Town or leave for greener pastures.

I want to see the Cape Town Jewish community become a place where new ideas are funded, supported and realised, and where young people are encouraged to take up leadership positions within our existing organisations, as well as to create new ones.

Dan Brotman is the Media & Diplomatic Liaison at the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies (www.capebod.org.za), and a new member of Lynn Schusterman's ROI Community (www.roicomunity.org). You can follow him on Twitter at @DGBrotman.



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REMOVE PALESTINIANS BY FORCE FROM JEWISH HOLY SITES

Michael Freund’s opinion in his column of the SA Jewish Report of June 15, touched a nerve in me.

I agree with his views in the sense that the “original sin” lies in Israel’s policy-makers who have consistently retreated and withdrawn whenever the Palestinians have trampled on some of Israel’s most

important national and holy symbols. What should occur, is that Israel should forcibly remove the Palestinians from those holy sites that they occupy and safeguard these sites from re occupation. If Israel has to use its iron fist, then so be it. **Nathan Cheiman, Northcliff, Jhb**

‘FAIR EXPECTATIONS’ TO THINK ABOUT

I would like to respond to the letter, written by Olga Zabludoff from Washington, DC, which was published in the Jewish Report of June 29, regarding the attitude of the Lithuanian government to what some Lithuanians did during the Nazi occupation in the Second World War; I know that, unfortunately, many Lithuanians collaborated with Nazi Germany and did horrible things to the Jews. I also agree that survivors from Lithuania, whose belongings had been confiscated, should have the right to have their belongings returned to them

(because here we are talking about the same people wanting whatever was forcefully taken away from them to be given back to them). But I also think that the US, instead of spending huge amounts of money on unnecessary wars of aggression, try to boost Lithuania’s economy and help Lithuania give back whatever was confiscated at the time, from Jewish survivors who are still alive today. That is only a fair expectation worth thinking about. **Avner Eliyahu Romm, Cape Town**

THIS IS TERRORIST RHETORIC

In response to article by Rabbi Shmuel Bloch of PE Hebrew Congregation on Parshat Chukat titled “ The Secret of Success,“if we really wish to be successful... we must die over it “ Firstly... with respect to Rabbi Bloch, that is exactly what terrorists (Muslims mainly) are doing by blowing themselves up, killing young and old citizens. The Rabbi’s statement is coming across as endorsing such terrorists who are sacrificing their lives by becoming human bombs and dying in the action. It would probably be better

to refrain from such statements that can be used against us. Secondly for Rabbi Bloch, to say “everybody wants to be successful and everybody will invest enormous resources...” Rather he should say, some of us or the majority of us, surely not everybody! The Hafetz Chaim writes; “Who is a rich person? One who is happy with what he/she has.” After all “peace of mind is better than money in the bank!” **Roni Lea, Johannesburg**

WITHOUT ISRAEL, NO DIASPORA JEW WOULD BE SAFE

I’m referring to the continued assault on Israel and its population by leftwing Jews in South Africa and elsewhere in the Diaspora. How can comfortable wealthy liberal Diaspora Jews dare to point fingers at Israel when they are not living with the dangers Israelis and their children face? If, G-d forbid, Israel were to go under no Jew anywhere in the world would be safe. The fact that Jews live in relative tranquility anywhere in the world is due, at least indirectly, to the fact that the world sees Jews in the Jewish state as being tough, and defending themselves successfully, which, tragically was not the case up until 60 some years ago. And yes, Israel is perceived by much of the world as being the national embodiment of world Jewry. Anti-Zionism is opposing the right of the Jews to live peacefully in their homeland.

Anti-Zionism is the conviction that Israel, of all the world’s countries, does not have the right to exist. It is the conviction that the determination of what constitutes Israel’s ‘secure and defensible borders’ should not be made by the Israeli people, either directly or via representation. Israel constitutes today the world’s largest Jewish community, with the numbers of Jews living in Israel approaching nearly half of the world’s Jewish population. Any destruction of Israel would mean a second Holocaust of Jews. The anti-Zionists claim that they are not anti-Semitic as they only hate and want to harm Jews who live in Israel, is as absurd as claiming one is not a racist as one only hates and wants to harm blacks

who live in Africa, not blacks elsewhere. The enemies of Israel want the physical elimination of the Jewish people from the Land of Israel. This constitutes anti-Semitism. The point is that they want a Judenrein “Palestine” the same way that Hitler wanted a Judenrein Europe. Jews in Israel are targeted for one thing: being Jews. The anti-Zionist believes that the only children, who it is justified to murder are Jewish children (in the Land of Israel). Someone who is prejudiced against Israel or Israelis is just as much a bigot as someone who is prejudiced against Jews per se. The point is that anti-Zionism should be treated the same as anti-Semitism because the aim is to destroy the Jews of Israel the same way the Nazis destroyed the Jews of Israel. I just find it interesting that if somebody is against British Jews they are anti-Semitic, if they are against American Jews they are anti-Semitic, if they are against European Jews they are anti-Semitic, but if they hate Israeli Jews they are merely “anti-Zionist” but not anti-Semitic. As Judea Pearl puts it: “As a form of racism, anti-Zionism is worse than anti-Semitism. It targets the most vulnerable part of the Jewish people, namely, the people of Israel, who rely on the sovereignty of their state for physical safety, national identity and personal dignity. To put it more bluntly, anti-Zionism condemns five million human beings, mostly refugees or children of refugees, to eternal statelessness, traumatised by historical images of persecution and genocide.” **Gary Selikow, Johanesburg**

Candidly speaking: Concerning ‘self-hating Jews’

ISI LEIBLER
JERUSALEM



In a column appearing in The Independent, the fiercely anti-Israel UK daily, Avram Burg, former Knesset speaker, chairman of the Jewish Agency and scion of one of Israel’s renowned religious Zionist families, commended the UK government for measures designed to boycott Israeli goods produced beyond the Green Line and urged the EU to do likewise “in Israel’s interest”. Burg, who had the chutzpah to state that he was writing as a Zionist, described Israel “as the last colonial occupier in the Western world” and proclaimed that “the Israeli people’s eyes are blind and their ears are deaf” and the “real enemy of Israel’s future is Bibi Netanyahu, the prime minister of Israel”. In the past, Burg has called for the abrogation of the Law of Return, which he defined as “a mirror image of Hitler”. He has described the Jewish State as “a ghetto of belligerent colonialism” and urged Israelis to obtain foreign passports. He also recommended the dismantlement of Yad Vashem and its substitution by new headquarters for the International Criminal Court. Yet few would dare to describe this man, whose mother’s family was butchered in 1929 during the pogroms in Hebron, as a “self-hating Jew”. That is because one of the most effective accomplishments chalked up by political far-left activists was their success in eliminating the term “self-hating Jew” from the Jewish political lexicon. They are abetted by those from the extreme Right who

indiscriminately label every Jewish critic of Israeli policy a self-hating Jew. By cynically employing inverse McCarthyist tactics to silence their critics, the far Left succeeded in intimidating politicians and writers into adopting a form of political correctness which suppresses mention of one of the primary factors motivating the bizarre Jewish involvement in the campaign to demonise and delegitimise Israel. Today, anyone employing the term “self-hating” in relation to Jews is summarily condemned and accused of being chauvinistic. Yet any objective review of Jewish history demonstrates that self-hatred was always an important element motivating Jews who turned against their own people and far pre-dates the existence of Israel. The current situation was accurately summarised in a recent interview with Howard Jacobson, recipient of the highly coveted Man Booker Prize for his novel The Finkler Question, which satirised British anti-Semitism and self-hating Jews. Ironically, his interview with Maya Sela appeared in the English Internet edition of the Israeli daily Haaretz, which is probably the most important global media platform promoting the rantings of Jews demonising Israel. Jacobson nonchalantly abandons political correctness by ignoring the taboo on the term “self-hating Jews” when referring to Jews who demonise and delegitimise Israel. He relates to “the need for Jews to be, one way or another, anti-Jewish. The need for so many Jews, particularly intellectual Jews, to express

their hatred with embarrassment with Jewishness, and hating Israel is just the latest version of it. “Jews were doing that long before there was a modern State of Israel... I suppose that if you belong to a minority that has been hated for so long, then you begin to sort of absorb some of that. It would be very surprising if you didn’t. “In psychology they would tell you that an abused child will in the end come to take the view of himself that the abuser has. I don’t doubt that some Jews do that.” Over the ages, anti-Semitism has inflicted such devastating suffering on the Jewish people that it inevitably spawned a small but highly vocal number of Jews obsessed with dissociating themselves. If one analyses the behaviour of Jewish apostates during the Middle Ages, notorious for accusing their kinsmen of satanic rites and churning out the vilest anti-Semitic tracts, there is little doubt that they were motivated by self-hatred and opportunism. The era of emancipation also witnessed Jewish universalists engaged in campaigns defaming their fellow Jews. In the 19th century socialist revolutionary arena, self-hatred led to justifying pogroms as a lubricant to generate revolutions. Karl Marx was a prime example of this. Although converted to Christianity, he was a descendant of a long line of rabbis. His noxious self-hatred was the basis for his vile anti-Semitic tract Zur Judenfrage, in which he stated that “money is a jealous G-d of Israel... The social emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of society from Judaism.” The tradition of self-hatred was

sustained by Jewish communists. In the Soviet Union, the members of the Yevsektzia, the Jewish section of the Bolsheviks, were notorious for behaving more harshly and displaying a greater determination to destroy synagogues and Jewish cultural institutions than their non-Jewish counterparts. Western Jewish communists applauded Stalin’s murder of Jews and crimes against the Jewish people and were among the staunchest defenders of the Evil Empire. In Israel, the fellow-travelling members of Mapam, the forerunner of Meretz, behaved as schizophrenics, seeking to combine their Zionism with love and allegiance to the Soviet Union, even when one of their leaders, Mordechai Oren, was arrested and tried on trumped-up espionage charges in Czechoslovakia. Yet, it was only after the Oslo Accords, when Labour (Mapai) was desperately trying to convince Israelis that peace with the fork-tongued (Yasser) Arafat was feasible, that the self-haters emerged en masse from the closet. They assumed prominent roles at universities and attained political respectability by infiltrating the Labour Party and obtaining excessive media coverage in Haaretz and its English-language website, which prior to becoming dominated by post-Zionists, was considered the leading intellectual newspaper of the land. Today it vigorously promotes journalists who demonise the state with the same vigour as their communist antecedents. The Israeli self-haters range from outright political psychopaths like former Israeli musician Gilad Atzmon who justifies the Nazi murder of the Jews, to failed politician Avram

Burg who delegitimises his country. They include journalists who paved the way for the Goldstone Report and charges of war crimes against Israel by demonising the IDF, while defending the intransigent and duplicitous Palestinians. In addition, there are some Diaspora Jews, ugly blemishes on the fringes of Jewish communities throughout the world, who stand at the vanguard of the anti-Israeli pack. Most of those engaged in these activities, unlike Avram Burg, stem from assimilated or delusional leftist backgrounds and have no genuine involvement in Jewish life. But occasional despicable behaviour by groups on the extreme Right may also qualify as a manifestation of self-hatred. Ironically, I clearly recollect the late National Religious Party leader Dr Josef Burg, father of Avram, confessing to me that he was having sleepless nights out of concern that some Jews residing in isolated settlements would absorb and transform the fierce animosity radiated by Palestinians surrounding them into a form of self-hatred which could manifest itself by anti-social behaviour. In summary, “self-hating Jews” is unquestionably a term which should be employed to identify those small pockets of Jews who demonise their own people. But it should be employed in a highly selective manner and not utilised indiscriminately against naïve, well-meaning “bleeding hearts” or legitimate critics of Israeli policies with whom we may disagree.

The writer’s website can be viewed at www.wordfromjerusalem.com. He may be contacted at ileibler@netvision.net.il

Future as seen by Coovadia, is reparable

The Institute for Taxi Poetry
by Imraan Coovadia (Umuzi, R190)

REVIEWED BY
GWEN PODDBREY

When it comes to working-class heroes, the character of Adam Ravens is a strange – even bizarre – mutation of the species. But, then, the city in which this experimental novel is set is no less bizarre.

An employee of the Jose da Silva Perreira Institute for Taxi Poetry, run by the University of Cape Town, Ravens is a man whose aspirations to lyricism never originally included dabbling in gangsterism and sleuthing. However, when his mentor, Solly Greenfields, is found murdered in his home in Woodstock, he is devastated.

To be sure, Greenfields had his share of critics – fellow poets who resented him for starting the Road Safety Council, for instance – but these were old grievances which had long lost their impetus. Greenfields himself had become a marginalised figure who no longer posed a serious threat to the new, young bloods on the taxi poetry scene. So who on earth would want to kill this inoffensive, if eccentric old man?

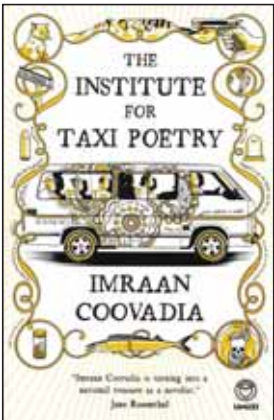
Ravens’ determination to track down the assassin, however, is complicated by various factors. For one thing, he has an enduring affection for Greenfields’ son Zebulon, a sleazy, “sliding-door man” in the taxi business with distasteful habits and a dubious social circle, any one of whom might well have been involved in the crime.

For another, he has unexpected developments to contend with. Greenfields’ erstwhile rival, Gerome Geromian, living in self-imposed exile in Brazil, returns to Cape Town to receive an award from the Institute for Taxi Poetry and must be hosted in the very week that Ravens identifies who committed the murder. These are diversions which force Ravens to shift roles continuously.

It is all very messy and exhausting – but very South African. Then, as now, Mzansi seems to be bigger than the sum of its parts. And Cape Town, with its glorious landscapes, rat-infested slums and uneasy mixture of peoples jostling for ascendancy, is an ideal incubator for the politicians, posturers, fugitives, mobsters and madmen vying for power.

“I happen to be a taxi poet – a former taxi poet, according to some – in a city run by Croatian disco men from Zagreb and Malay gangsters from Pinelands, by publicity girls wearing long earrings, by dollar millionaires with business connections to the ruling Congress Party, by old Trotskyites and Bukharinites, and by cabinet ministers and dictators from elsewhere who reside along the Atlantic seaboard or on the wine estates inland,” Ravens tells us.

This is South Africa fast-forwarded to a time when its present malignancies have metastasised into fully-fledged cancers: a haven for corrupt officials, international fugitives from justice, wanna-be politicians and a single,



putrescent ruling party still as indifferent to its citizens as its present-day forerunner. Amidst this, new art forms have sprouted up on the convergence lines between chaotic, everyday life and the patriotic ideals of the nation. One such form is taxi poetry, in which minibuses bearing loads of harried, hardworking people are daubed with the lines of dreamers. It is an idea Coovadia has adapted from the tube station poets of London and other European capitals, but the elevation of South African taxis to the status of vehicles for visionaries has a bizarre – indeed, grotesque – dimension unrivalled anywhere else in the world.

These poets, inscribing their lines on the sides of dented, frenzied Toyota, are the new prophets of a country which, despite its authoritarian government, is unable to repress its unresolved histories and uncertain future. There is something ominously Biblical about its raw, relentless power struggles, its barely restrained energy and its grotesquely discordant ethnicities.

Coovadia’s replication of South Africa’s apartheid Struggle, and its icons, into a surreal satire of supremacy and survival is audacious, brilliantly imaginative and written in lucid and easily accessible language. His many references to Africa’s confused, colonial history (particularly the influence of the Portuguese) adds a perspective which reminds us that the travesty unfolding on the pages is a reflux of the bitter brew swallowed by the continent in past centuries.

Yet the author’s scope is too vast and multi-layered to be managed well. His transitions from the fantastical to the factual, from allegory to parody, from internal dialogue to external interaction and from crime fiction to magical realism are not always seamless. While the work is ambitious, witty and well intentioned, it has rather more material than it can manage. Moreover, there are humorous, but self-indulgent asides which tend to disrupt, rather than enhance the text. Coovadia seems to have succumbed to the temptation to throw every literary ingredient he could lay his hands on into this indeterminate stew.

The result is overkill. One enters the novel intrigued, but leaves it dazed, wondering where one lost the plot. Or was it the author who lost it?

One leaves it with respect too, though. Its components might be jumbled and its genre difficult to pin down, but the frightening glimpses it affords of where we have come from, and where we are headed, are sobering. Its characters, too, are uncomfortably familiar, if still embryonic. These are the selves towards whom today’s young South Africans are hurtling.

And, somewhere in all this, there is hope. Coovadia’s love for his country, with all its contradictions, excesses, greed and grief, is unmistakable. He has seen the future – and, while it doesn’t actually work, it is reparable.



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Arts in Brief

GAVIN YOUNG TO OPEN POINTURE

On August 8, an exhibition curated by Ann-Marie Tully and Jennifer Kopping, entitled Pointure, will be opened by Prof Gavin Younge from the University of Cape Town, at the University of Johannesburg Art Gallery, which is situated on UJ’s Auckland Park Campus. This exhibition draws together the work of established and emerging contemporary South African artists, including Stephan Erasmus, Leora Farber, Sue Pam-Grant, Kim Lieberman, Richard Penn, Musha Nehuleni and others. The curators undertake to create visibility for an under-explored area of art practice in South Africa which includes stitching, suturing, puncturing, printing and weaving. Until August 29 (011) 559-2556.

RUSIAN BALLET RETURNS TO MANDELA

The Imperial Russian Ballet returns to the Mandela at the Joburg Theatre, July 11-15. The Company was founded in 1994 on the initiative of Russian ballerina Maija Plisetzkaya. It was named in honour of the former “emperors” of the Russian ballet stage as well as the Imperial family for their contribution to the Russian ballet culture.

The Joburg programme features Carl Orff’s Carmina Burana in the first act with extracts from classical masterpieces in the second, including Walpurgis Night, the Adagio from Scheherezade, the Grand Pas de Deux from Don Quixote and Jacques Offenbach’s Can-Can Surprise.

Visit www.joburgtheatre.com.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

March for Israel and the labelling issue

Last Thursday, members of the African Christian Christian Democratic Party, Shembe Church and Inkatha Freedom Party were amongst nearly 2000 participants in a march in support of Israel that took place in Pretoria. I congratulate the SA Zionist Federation for all their excellent work in helping to make this event so rousing a success. With all the negative publicity that confronts us, we often forget how many good friends we have out there who will stand alongside us in calling for fairness and balance in the way Israel is depicted and treated. Those of our community who participated in the march will have been given a heartening demonstration of that.



Above Board
Mary Kluk

National Chairman

The primary reason for the march was to protest against the proposed new policy by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to relabel products from Jewish West Bank enclaves as coming from the “Occupied Palestinian Territories”. For a variety of reasons, the Board has joined with various other Jewish organisations, including the SAZF, in opposing this initiative. Our objection in the manner in which it is being proceeded with, the numerous technical and legal flaws that have become apparent in its conception and the evidently politicised agenda that would seem to lie behind it.

In terms of the relevant Government Gazette notice, the public was invited to make formal submissions to the DTI on the proposed new policy. The Board, drawing on a wide range of local and international expertise in the legal, political and trade relations fields, has since finalised and lodged its submission. A number of other organisations have done likewise. We trust that all of these will be given due and thorough attention, and hope for a positive outcome.

Even in the most difficult times, one is always able to find a silver lining. In this case, it has been the incredible degree to which the various Jewish organisations have collaborated in mounting an effective response to the challenge. It has shown how what unites us is so much stronger than the usually trivial issues that are sometimes allowed to keep us apart. Whatever course events take, we will have emerged from it all stronger and more united.

Anti-Semitism

Last week saw a flurry of anti-Semitic incidents being reported to the Board, amongst them an offensive radio advertisement and a comment on an Internet radio station that clearly crossed the line between good-humoured banter and the unacceptable propagation of a negative anti-Jewish stereotype. Several of these have since been satisfactorily resolved while the remainder are still in the process of being dealt with. I would like to thank those members of our community for bringing the incidents to our attention. This enabled us to respond timeously and take up the matters at hand with those responsible. Once again, I remind you all that the SAJBD is the address when it comes to dealing with all forms of anti-Jewish behaviour, no matter how minor it may seem. Should you become aware of any such incident, please do not hesitate to contact the Board’s offices, while providing as much detail as you can. It is by maintaining a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of anti-Semitism that we will be most effective in preventing this scourge from spreading in our society.

As London's Jews prepare for Olympics, the 1972 Munich massacre is on their minds. The Tower Bridge in London, is decorated with the five Olympic rings in preparation for the 2012 Summer Games. (PHOTOGRAPH: IAIN FARRELL VIA CC)



London Olympics bring back sad memories of Munich ’72

For the British Jewish community, the most memorable moment of the London Olympics may be a sombre one.

Miriam Shaviv

On August. 6, several hundred people are expected to attend a commemoration for the 11 Israeli athletes and coaches murdered by Palestinian terrorists during the 1972 Munich Olympics.

“From conversations across the community, the key thing people are engaged in around the Olympics is that they want to see a commemoration of Munich,” said Peter Mason, director of the London Jewish Forum.

While a ceremony organised by the Israelis and the local community takes place during every Olympic Games, this one marks the 40th anniversary of the massacre. The International Olympics Committee continues to reject international calls for a minute of silence during the opening ceremony on July 27.

But the community also has made a point of joining the general air of celebration sweeping London in the run-up to the Games. In the past year, nearly every Jewish school, youth group and charity has run Olympics-related activities. And during the Olympics, London’s Jews will welcome thousands of Jewish visitors with social events, synagogue services, guides to Jewish London and, in the Olympic Village, pastoral care.

The welcoming efforts are being coordinated by the Jewish Committee for the London Games, which was established by the London Jewish Forum and several other community organisations. For one of the organisations, Maccabi GB, which runs sports programming for the Jewish community, the Olympics has been “a springboard to get people involved. At every opportunity we’ve linked to the Olympics,” said project manager Jessica Overlander-Kaye.

Maccabi GB worked with more than 15 Jewish organisations on more than 30 events, ranging from talks about the roles of Jews in sport to Olympics-themed sports days in Jewish schools, and liaising with students who want to write good luck cards to the Israeli delegation. An annual community Fun Run was expanded this year to reach 2 000 people, including British Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

For Overlander-Kaye, becoming involved in Olympics-themed activities through Jewish groups is “about being part of something smaller and bigger at the same time. It’s an opportunity to be part of the Olympics while connecting to the Jewish community. Viewed

backwards, it reflects very well on our community, on our mentality about working from the grass roots, that we encourage people to get active and engaged. We make it easy for people.”

She is particularly proud of the work that Maccabi did this year in encouraging people with disabilities to become involved in sports. In June, the group held an event that saw the able-bodied and non-able-bodied play sports together.

“We linked it to the Paralympics,” she said of the international games held for disabled athletes after each summer Olympics. “The Israeli delegation will have a strong Paralympic team, and this makes sports accessible” to disabled people.

Other groups have focused on educational events. For example, the London Jewish School of Jewish Studies, which runs adult education classes, is offering sessions on whether the Olympian ideal is Jewish and “Who really won on Chanukah?,” while the United Jewish Israel Appeal has developed six workshops, including ones on the Munich massacre and Jewish ideas on strength that have been taken up by youth groups and schools.

The closest many community members will get to the Games will be on July 25, when the Olympic torch, which has been touring across the United Kingdom, will be carried through the heavily Jewish North-West London.

“Hopefully the community will have a good showing,” Mason said. “There is a genuine building of excitement.”

During the Games themselves, the community will open its doors to tourists, from abroad and from elsewhere in the UK, who wish to experience Jewish London. A website was set up by the Jewish Volunteering Network under the auspices of the Jewish Committee for the London Games that lists all major attractions, including kosher restaurants, synagogues and Jewish landmarks. It also has a section on the history of London’s Jews and a calendar of Jewish events connected to the Games.

Some 10 000 people already have visited the website since its launch in January, according to Es Rosen, the website manager and JVN regional development manager.

“We have no idea how many people we can expect, but when people go to an international city they often seek out Jewish tourist sites,” Rosen said. “The Olympics have tremendous potential for Jewish London.”

As the Olympic Village is situated in East London, the relatively small community there has taken on the role of catering to the Jewish needs of the Olympic teams.

Four local rabbis from across the denominational spectrum will join 186 other chaplains serving the athletes, delegation members, staff and volunteers. Rabbi Richard Jacobi of the Woodford Liberal Synagogue says he will be available for those looking “for a sympathetic ear from their own faith, or from faith in general,” in case of stress, a personal emergency or any other need. The pastoral team also is part of the contingency plans in case of a large-scale incident.

“Personally this is a once-in-a-life opportunity to be involved in something that presents London and British Jewry in the best possible light,” Jacobi said. “Many people think that London is dominated by anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, and that is not the case. There is a degree of background radiation, but it certainly does not influence people’s lives on a daily basis. People enjoy being Jewish in London.”

Nevertheless, he adds, “The 40th anniversary of the Munich tragedy is also at the back of my mind. If anything were to happen, being part of the response feels very important to me rabbinically and personally.”

Many of his congregants are volunteering in the Olympic Village or as “hosts” posted at strategic points in London to help tourists. Like many other local synagogues, his shul will host two Shabbat services particularly aimed at visitors, and in the Olympic Village Orthodox and non-Orthodox services aim to alternate.

Finally, the East London communities plan to hold their own events commemorating the Munich massacre. One ceremony will be on the afternoon of Tisha B’Av, on July 28, and a religious service at Waltham Forest Hebrew Congregation will be in September. Jacobi says these events would have taken place even had the IOC agreed to hold a minute of silence.

“In the midst of everything else, a minute isn’t particularly long to appreciate what these events meant,” he said. “It is important that everyone had the opportunity to come together as a group, learn more about it and associate more with it.

“We think people – mainly Jewish but also others – feel it should be remembered. It’s part of Jewish and Olympic history.” (JTA)

KDL Primary wins prestigious artists competition

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY YONIT WEIL

King David Linksfield Primary won the National Geographic Kids young artists competition 2011 - 2012.



We entered in all categories which was a drawing, a painting or a sculpture. We won R5 000 worth of Bostik art supplies, three art bags filled with art supplies, a WI console, a tablet, a Pictionary game and a year's subscription to National Geographic.

Pictured are grade 5 children with art teacher Tracy Enslin and Deputy Headmaster Darryl Frankel, being presented with the prizes.

TAPS girls show their worth

OWN CORRESPONDENT PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED

Torah Academy Primary School took part in a two-part exhibition depicting their Kodesh and secular studies in honour of the Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson, obm, depicting the campaigns of good deeds he encouraged and integrating these with their teachings in science, maths, history and geography.

The grade 5 girls created a "Proudly South African" display, which included a project on Nelson Mandela to mark his upcoming birthday. With their exhibit are Yakira Shalpid (front) and (from left) Danit Krawitz, Shevi and Elki Sarchi and Ché Sackstein.



Disney's Aladdin wows the young

Show: Disney's Aladdin, National Children's Theatre, Parktown (011) 484-1584
Until: August 21

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

She howled as narrator Reynard Slabbert appeared. Maybe it was his funny turban, or the fact that he was bringing live theatre before her three- or four-year-old eyes, for the first time. Either way, she ran to mummy's lap, loudly pleading to go home, now.

The mum in question wisely cajoled her to sit her fears out. Within minutes this child was swept away by the crisp choreography and tightly woven tale of the boy from Agrabah, who wins the heart of the sultan's daughter and proves that honesty is the best policy, setting a great big genie free, as part of the deal. Lightly resonant with the original Arabian Nights story, this Aladdin has more polish than last year's; witty lyrics illustrate why Disney recipes work.

The cast works beautifully in collaboration: from Keaton Ditchfield as Razoul the dense servant to the Sultan's sly right-hand man,



The lad (Marco Spaumer) and his lamp. (PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED)

Jafar (Clint Lesch), and his right-hand parrot Iago (Dionne Song), to ensemble members Lebo Toko, Natasha van der Merwe and Marike Smith.

While the role meted to Jasmine (Dolly Louw) alternates between simpering and petulant, you'll love eponymous hero, Marco Spaumer, as an urchin with heart he's not afraid to use. By the time Slabbert reappears as the genie, the

child I was watching watch the play, was smitten; she chuckled when Jafar gets magicked into a lamp to share with Iago, with red feathers drifting nonchalantly in their wake.

Stage smoke is one trick that could have been curbed, however. Magic is achieved in so many other ways in this play, leaving you understanding the importance of being yourself in a world ruled by injustice and very large egos.

Being on Mini Council a life-changing experience

JORDAN HEYES AND ALEXA NOVICK, GRADE 7, KDVPS PHOTOGRAPH: STACY FLEISHMAN

The Johannesburg Mini Council is made up of 80 grade 7 representatives from 40 different schools and it has been an honour and a privilege to be a part of this organisation.

Being on Mini Council has been a life-changing experience for us from the King David Primary School Victory Park. We have spent the year developing leadership potential, our self-confidence and a positive self-image other youths can look up to. We have also spent time helping less-privileged people within our community.

We've learnt how to work as a team, with people from different cultures. An important life lesson was that nothing is handed to you on a silver platter - it all takes effort and hard work to achieve.

King David parents and pupils pride themselves on their charitable nature and this was evident in our collection of over 14 000 Easter eggs distributed to various charities at Easter time.

Some other valuable experiences we've had, have been hosting a Christmas party for CHOC (children living with cancer) and filling the tummies of over 300 children with the SA Feeding Scheme.

We are currently collecting



blankets to help keep our poorer people warm during the winter months. It makes us so proud to be part of such a giving community.

Jordan and I have been at King David Victory Park since grade 1 and it has been an enjoyable, challenging and exciting experience. We are blessed with a staff of kind, nurturing and knowledgeable teachers, led by two very experienced and respected men.

Our principal, Johannes Mouton and our deputy principal, Jannie le Roux. They have introduced a leadership programme which has given us the skills and confidence to excel even further than our own expectations.

KDVPS prides itself on our small, intimate learning environment and it is so comforting to know every pupil in the school by name. This allows the juniors to look up to the senior pupils and we in turn can help guide and support them.



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Claremont Wynberg Synagogue, Cape Town

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Donations will be distributed to Afrika Tikkun Community Centres in Alexandra, Diepsloot, Orange Farm and Hillbrow in Gauteng; and Delft and Mfuleni in the Western Cape.

For more information please contact: Afrika Tikkun (011 325 5914 JHB or 021 551 7129 CT or info@afrikatikkun.org) • Office of the Chief Rabbi (010 214 2603 or office@chiefrabbi.co.za)

Scat must nod towards its Yiddish midwife

The silent generation was dancing to swing before baby boomers were born; but not a lot of popular awareness exists of scat, a sibling to swing, and one that boasts powerful Jewish links.

ROBYN SASSEN

Scat, described by ragtime and jazz pianist Jelly Roll Morton as “something which doesn’t mean anything but gives a song flavour”, is the nonsense syllables in vocal swing and jazz improvisations, understood to have started in 1926, in Louis Armstrong’s song “Heebie Jeebies”.

The legend around this song is that in the recording studio, Armstrong dropped the sheet music of the song he was recording, and spontaneously invented gibberish to fill time, expecting the take to be thrown out. It wasn’t; scat was born.

Jonathan Pollack, in the US popular culture magazine Guilt and Pleasure, writes that “scat derived from the sound Armstrong called ‘the Jews’ rockin’ he’d heard growing up in the black-Jewish neighbourhood of New Orleans.”

Pollack has two explanations for this - he may have heard davening at a shul, or Hasidic lullabies. A Mrs Karnofsky - whose family befriended Armstrong, and to whom he attributed his admiration of Jews and Jewish life - used to sing him thus to sleep, as a child.

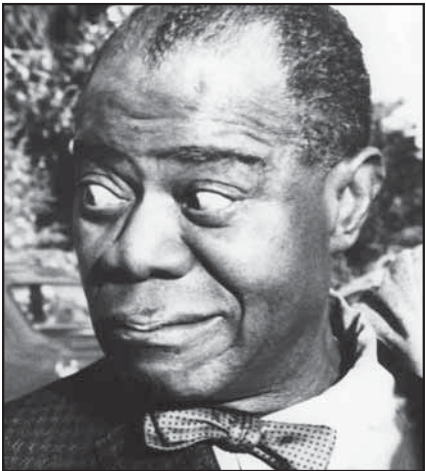
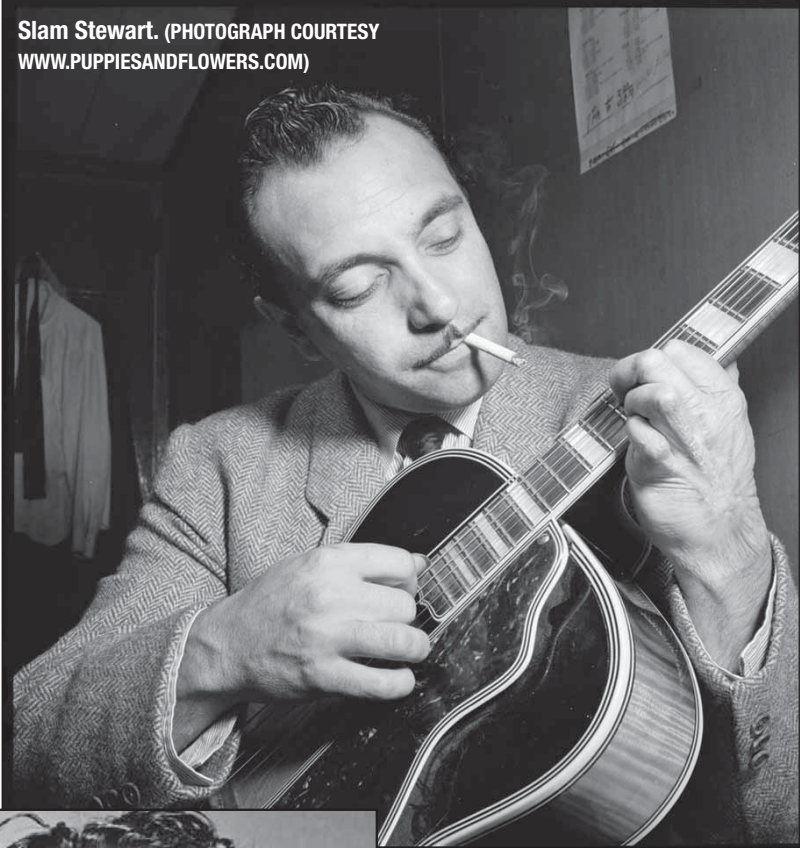
Another black performer of the 1930s, Cab Calloway, a friend of Armstrong’s and a band leader associated with Harlem’s Cotton Club, slipped into scat history with “Minnie the Moocher” in 1931, which Danny Kaye made his own later that decade. It mixes gospel aesthetics with cantorial recitation. The soloist sings out scat phrases and his band (or the audience) echoes the made-up words.

Calloway’s manager was Irving Mills. “The language of me-shugas and mamzers resonated with Calloway,” says National Yiddish Book Centre’s Hankus Netsky, who explains how Calloway “retooled Yiddish folksongs... creating hilarious, ironic parodies of Jewish black-face performance and mock cantorial melismas incorporating his own brand of pidgin Hebrew.”

But speculation abounds around scat’s birth date: records exist of people, including Al Jolson - whose name slipped into common music parlance with his black-face film The Jazz Singer of 1927 - in 1911, scatting in “That Haunting Melody”, a song focused on the life of a tailor.

The Andrews Sisters hit, “Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen” - the top hit of 1938 - drew from an obscure Yiddish musical and effectively put non-Jewish sisters Maxene, LaVerne and Patty on the map, but it also drew response, according to Pollack, from a primarily black audience.

“Perhaps, their use of Yiddish functioned as a kind of ‘love and theft’, contradiction mirroring inner-city black-Jewish tensions,” suggests Pollack. Calloway comments on these tensions in his biography. Like other black American performers, including



Slim Gaillard, he describes his relationship with “Jewish employers as ranging from close and respectful to disdainful and exploitative”.

Pollack details Yiddish roots of black American slang, mentioning a song by Calloway called “Utt-Da-Zay”, and several by Gaillard, including “Me-shugana Mambo”, blending Yiddish and Cuban references and “Vol Vist du Gaily Star”, which “sounds like it ought to be Yiddish, but isn’t”.

Gaillard and Slam Stewart (known as Slim and Slam) recorded their own version of Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen; it contained lavish references to Jewish food.

Playful, humorous, sexy, even bizarre, scat has never enjoyed a serious reputation; it was banned from broadcast on BBC radio in the 1930s; a decade later pointed to anti-Semitic doublespeak in songs like “Who’s Yehoodi”, written by Bill Seckler and Matt Dennis.

A thread of scat takes it through the 1950s bop era and its revival in the 1970s, when it gave way to the free-jazz movement which allowed scat singers to include sounds formerly considered non-musical, like screams, cries and laughter. And of course, there’s a resonance between scat and rap, hip-hop, and informal vocal percussion techniques associated with beatbox.

You might think it easy to approximate the sound of a musical instrument, or sing in made-up words but to do it well and in a sustained manner is another story.

“For every first-rate scat singer in the world, there must be 500 talented jazz saxophonists,” says Jeff Pressing, a jazz researcher.

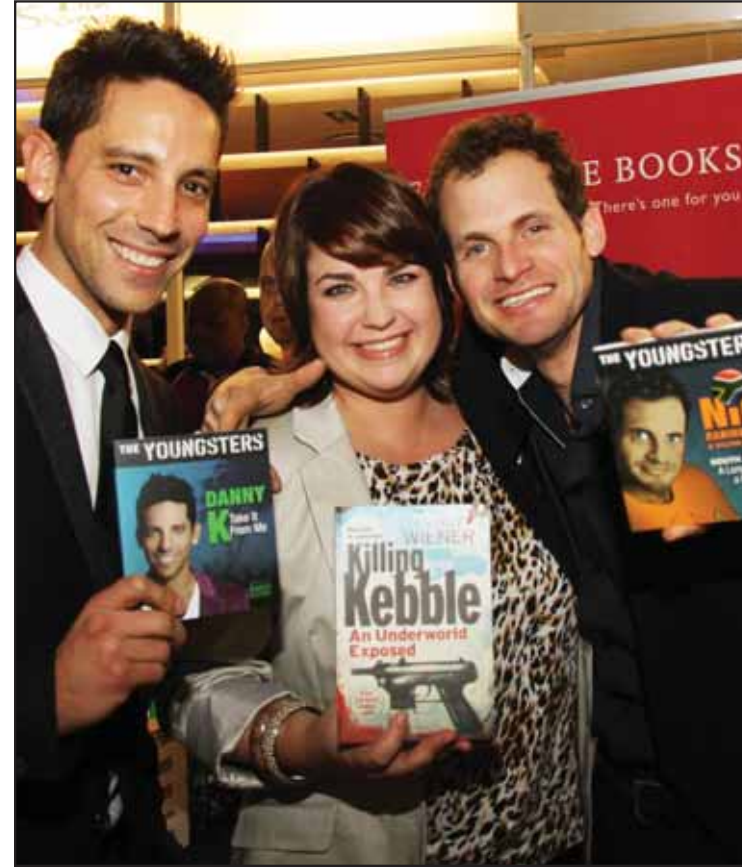
Scatting does not taint music with denotation. It’s said the emotions it releases are so deep, so real they are unspeakable; they bypass our ears and brains and go directly to our hearts and souls. Scatting has been used to inject audience participation into tunes, to bring humour to otherwise pallid lyrics, to imitate instruments, but above all to give songs spice.

Community Briefs

AIMING TO ENHANCE TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY
Recently, ORT SA/SABJE hosted a seminar for teachers on digital technology in the classroom. Speakers included Daniel Tysman and Peretz Tabor from ORT UK and Rabbi Tzvi Pittinsky from New York.
Said SABJE’s director, Rabbi Craig Kacev: “We are amidst a revolution - revolutionising how we teach. We must take risks.” ORT SA’s CEO Yehuda Kay, spoke of the international debate as to how far to allow technology into schools.
“World ORT expertise is acknowledged globally as a leader in cutting-edge classroom technology,” Kay said. Tysman added that the idea was not to replace teachers but to enhance teaching with technology.



NIK RABINOWITZ AND DANNY K AMONG ‘THE YOUNGSTERS’ WRITERS
Pan Macmillan and Exclusive Books recently launched The Youngsters, a collection of five pocket-sized books written by six young South Africans and edited by award-winning journalist, Mandy Wiener. The series aims to provide insight into what it means to be young in SA. The six authors are Anele Mdoda, Shaka Sisulu, Nik Rabinowitz, Gillian Breslin, Danny K and Khaya Dlanga.



SANDRINGHAM GARDENS KEEPS UP WITH TRENDS
Sandringham Gardens is dedicated to keeping up with new clinical trends in the care of the elderly. Medical and nursing staff from aged homes throughout the city were recently invited to join with staff from all Chevrah Kadisha-allied medical facilities, including Sandringham Gardens, Our Parents Home and Selwyn Segal, to benefit from an educational seminar entitled “Nutrition and Swallowing Disorders in the Elderly”. The well-attended morning, featuring speakers from the allied medical professionals, including speech and occupational therapists, a dentist, a dietician and a member of Hatzolah, spoke on feeding the Dementia patient, nutrition and oral problems with the elderly. CELESTE EVERITT

Yitzhak Shamir, former Israeli PM, dies at 96

STAFF REPORTER

JERUSALEM - Yitzhak Shamir, Israel's prime minister from 1986 to 1992, died last Saturday at the age of 96.

Shamir had been living in a nursing home in Tel Aviv and had Alzheimer's disease for several years.

"Yitzhak Shamir belonged to the generation of giants that established the State of Israel and fought for the freedom of the Jewish people in its land," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement. "Shamir personified loyalty to the Land of Israel and the eternal values of the Jewish people."

Shamir was born Yizhak Yzernitzky in Ruzinoy, Poland, in 1915. In 1935 he left Warsaw, where he was studying law, moved to Palestine and enrolled at the Hebrew University.

He joined Etzel, the Revisionist underground organisation, in 1937, and in 1940 became a member of Avraham Stern's Lehi, a more militant organisation, where he became part of the leadership troika.

Shamir was arrested twice by the British during and immediately after the Second World War. Granted political asylum in France in 1947 after escaping from a British prison camp, he returned to Palestine in 1948 and resumed command of the Lehi until it was disbanded following the establishment of the State of Israel.

Shamir joined Israel's security services in the mid-1950s and held senior positions in the Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency. He joined Menachem Begin's opposition Herut party in 1970 and became a member of its executive. In 1973 he was elected a member of Knesset from the Likud party -

a position he held for 23 years.

In 1977 he became speaker of the Knesset. In this capacity he presided over the historic appearance of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in the Knesset and the debate over ratifying the Camp David Accords with Egypt two years later.

Shamir served as foreign minister between 1980 and 1983. Among his achievements were closer ties with Washington.

Following Begin's resignation in October 1983, Shamir became prime minister until the general elections in the autumn of 1984. The elections led to the formation of a national unity government based on a rotation agreement between Shamir and Labour leader Shimon Peres. Shamir served for six years as prime minister - from 1986 to 1992 - first heading a national unity government, and then as head of a narrow coalition government.

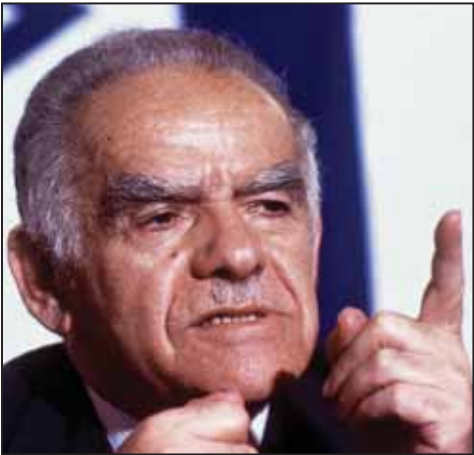
Shamir's second term as prime minister was marked by the 1991 Gulf War, in which Shamir - despite Iraqi missile attacks on Israel's civilian population - chose a policy of restraint. The October 1991 Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid inaugurated direct talks between Israel and the neighbouring Arab states as well as multilateral regional talks.

After his party lost the 1992 elections, Shamir stepped down from the party leadership and in 1996 retired from the Knesset.

"Yitzhak Shamir was a brave warrior before and after the founding of the State of Israel," Israeli President Shimon Peres said in a statement. "He fought with courage against the British Mandate in the days of the underground, and his incredible contribution to the

State of Israel during his time in the Mossad will remain forever enshrined in the tales of bravery of our nation. He was loyal to his views, a great patriot and a true lover of Israel who served his country with integrity and unending commitment."

The White House in a statement said that "Yitzhak Shamir dedicated his life to the State of Israel. From his days working for Israel's independence to his service as Prime Minister, he strengthened Israel's security and advanced the partnership between the United States and Israel. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and the people of Israel." (JTA)



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News in Brief

NETANYAHU DISBANDS HAREDI DRAFT COMMITTEE

TEL AVIV - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has disbanded the committee charged with formulating a new law on haredi Orthodox military service. The dissolution of the Plesner Committee comes after the resignation of several of its members, including from the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu Party.

"Unfortunately, the Plesner Committee did not succeed in reaching an agreed-upon outline and it cannot formulate recommendations that would achieve a majority in the Knesset," he said, according to Israeli reports.

In February, the Israeli Supreme Court declared that the Tal Law, which allowed haredim to defer service indefinitely, to be unconstitutional, and set August 1 as the deadline for a new law to be passed.

Netanyahu said that if the Knesset did not pass a new law by the deadline, the military would formulate its own solution. The largest party in the Knesset, Kadima, joined Netanyahu's governing coalition in May with the stated objective of formulating a new military service law. (JTA)

IRANIANS IN KENYA PLANNED ATTACK ON ISRAELIS, US

TEL AVIV - Kenyan security forces have arrested two Iranian nationals who, they say, may have planned to attack US or Israeli targets in the country. Security forces found 33 pounds of a powerful explosive after they arrested the Iranians in June, according to the Associated Press. The explosives were in Mombasa, a coastal city. The AP reported that several hotels on the coast are owned by Israelis.

"There are no limits to Iranian terrorism," said a statement from the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "The international community needs to fight the greatest exporter of terrorism in the world." (JTA)

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NOTE: Deadline for all entries is 12:00 on the Friday prior to publication.

Sunday (July 8)
• RCHCC, Oaklands, hosts the critically acclaimed Holocaust documentary “Steal a Pencil for Me”, by Michele Ohayon, at 19:30. Cost R60. Call Hazel or René on (011) 728-8088 or (011)728-8378 or e-mail rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net

Tuesday (July 10)
• Second Innings Mens Group hosts Martin Behr speaking on “The World of ORT”, at Our Parents Home, Orchards. Time: 14:00 for 14:30. Contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718. Cost: R20 members, R40 non-members.

Wednesday (July 11)
• UJW CT adult education division hosts Gina Flash who will relate her adventures in “Burma Revealed”. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Entrance: R20 (incl refreshments). Enquiries: (021) 434-9555 (mornings only).

Thursday (July 12)
• UJW, 1 Oak Street Houghton: Histadrut Ivrit, for Hebrew speakers, is hosting a lecture by Professor J Lubbe: “Dead Sea Scrolls cont’d”. Call Shulamit Kagan: (011) 882-9221.

• In support of Yad Aharon & Michael, Chana Rivka from Torah Academy is running a holiday camp, today, at Chabad Gallo Manor Nursery School, in order to collect money for fresh vegetables. The days will be filled with fun activities for the kids including jumping castles, hot dogs and lots more. Call (011) 485-2076.

Sunday (July 15)
• Second Innings is hosting Gerard and Bets Grobler, Gauteng representatives for the SA Association for Retired Persons (SAARP), talking on the Association. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718. Cost: R20 members, R40 non-members.

• The Pretoria Hebrew Congregation in Groenkloof hosts WIZO Pretoria’s 111th Annual General Meeting at 10:00, featuring guest speaker Wendy Kahn. Tea and refreshments will be served. Contact: Diane (012) 346-8712.

Tuesday (July 17)
• The Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre in association with The French Institute of South Africa and Liliesleaf Trust commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Vel d’Hiv round-up of the Jews of Paris in 1942. Screening of documentary “La Ralfe/ The Round Up” (2010) directed by Rose Bosch, at Liliesleaf Auditorium, 7 George Avenue, Rivonia. Time 18:00 for 19:00. RSVP Thuli 011 640 3100 or thuli@jhbholocaust.co.za.

Wednesday (July 18)
• UJW CT adult education division hosts Sheryl Ozinsky who will talk on “a topic of interest”. Venue: Stonehaven. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Entrance:R20 (incl refreshments). Enquiries: (021) 434-9555 (mornings only).

• Sandton Shul is doing their 67 minutes in honour of Nelson Mandela’s 94th birthday on July 18 at the Phuthaditshaba Community Centre in Alexandra township. Call Harelle (011) 883-4210.

• The Origins Centre Art Gallery at Wits University, is

doing 94 minutes of mitzvahs for Mandela in honour of his 94th birthday, hosted by Natalie Knight, (011) 485-3606.

Sunday (July 22)
• Second Innings is hosting Professor-Emerita Rosalie Finlayson on “Intercultural Understanding”. Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres. Contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718. Cost: R20 members, R40 non-members.

Monday (July 23)
• Chevrah Kadisha Community Services is offering an 8-week “Divorce Support Group” for people who have been through, or are going through a divorce. It starts today. Reconnect. Rebuild. Renew. Gain support and need to know practical and legal information. Bookings or more information, call Sheila on (011) 532-9653.

Tuesday (July 24)
• The Helen Suzman Branch of the UJW, at 1 Oak Street, Upper Houghton, presents three well-known authors: Anton Harber (author of ‘Diepsloot’); Joy Davidson (author of ‘Another Mountain Another View’) and Lauren Segal (author of ‘One Law, One Nation’) for an account of their backgrounds and their books. Time: 09:45 for 10:00. Cost R75. Books will be on sale. Booking essential: (011)648-1053.

Wednesday (July 25)
• Chevrah Kadisha Community Services is offering an 8-week “Parenting Skills Group” for parents of teenagers. Gain practical parenting skills, understand your teen’s world, learn to connect to and assist your teen on their journey into adulthood. Starts today. Bookings or more information call Lara on (011) 532-9793.

Tuesday (July 31)
• Morris Rutstein - SAZF Hebrew Ulpan Course starts today and terminates on Tuesday, November 27. Times: Every Tuesday night from 19:00 - 21:15. Venue: Yeshiva College (in the classrooms). Registration will take place on Monday July 30, at 18:30. Secure parking. Enquiries: SAZF, tel (011) 645-2531 (office hours).

• WIZO Women Inspired hosts a talk by Kate Emmerson: “Spring Clean Your Life”. Time: 09:30 for 10.00 at Beyachad, Raedene. Cost R100 Contact: Lorraine 083-268-8016, Leslie 083-456-3911, Maureen 082-445-1515 or Ilana 082-601-2519. Or e-mail: isarae@seeff.org

Wednesday (August 1)
• Chevrah Kadisha Community Social Services is offering a five-week life skills course for young adults on self awareness, relationships, career counselling, creating a CV, job interview skills and much more! For ages: 18-28. Starts today 2012. For more information, call Caryn: (011) 532-9716.

Friday (August 3)
• Limmud Johannesburg Conference 2012, starts today. Tsogo Sun Lifestyle Resort on the Vaal. Visit www.limmud.org.za or call 076-324-0888 to register.

Sunday (August 5)
• WoW Annual National Women’s Day Brunch will explore “Brain and Nutrition” by educationist Gavin Keller, psychologist Dr Sandy Gluckman and applied nutritional scientist Mary-Anne Lindenberg. Venue: Sandton Sun Hotel. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Cost: R500. Bookings close end of June. Call Mandy 083-380-5268 or www.womenoftheworld.org.za

• Israeli folkdance - health and fun, every Wednesday at 20:00 at King David Sandton. Beginners at 18:30. Contact Anat 083-326-7095, Miri 082-773-8248 or Ora 083-288-7202.

• Join WIZO every Thursday for a “Lunch & Learn” shiur with Rabbi Michael Katz, 13:00 - 14:00 at Beyachad. Information: Joyce, (011) 640-2416.

• Stellenbosch Hebrew Congregation has a Friday evening service every week in shul, starting at 18:45. Contact (021) 886-5257.

• The Yiddish Academy offers weekly basic, intermediate and advanced classes on Monday evenings at 19:30, Tuesday mornings at 10:30 and Thursday evenings at 19:30 at the RCHCC, Glenhove Road, Houghton. Conversational groups. Details: e-mail yiddishacademy@gmail.com or call Hazel Cohen on (011) 728-8088.

• Supervised bridge with Jeff Sapiro Tuesday morning 10:00 - 12:00 (intermediary) and Wednesday morning 10:00 - 12:00 (advanced), at the Clive M Beck Auditorium. Booking: Hazel or René, (011) 728-8088/8378. E-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.co.za

• Beis Midrash Chofetz Chaim is offering a second ma’ariv minyan every weekday evening (Monday - Friday) at 21:00, cnr Elray and Michel Streets, Raedene. Open to broader community. Don’t fret if you need a later minyan. Secure parking provided.

• Sunday Scrabble Club meets every Sunday at 10:00 at Zahava’s, Grant Avenue, Norwood, off 9th Street. Cost R5. Players of all strengths welcome. Larry 082-888-5355.

• Orchid Florist, a project of WIZO Johannesburg, offers beautiful arrangements of flowers and fruit for every occasion. No occasion too large or too small. Contact Annette (011) 728-4513.

• JWBS Johannesburg, urgently requires secondhand clothing, kitchenware, household goods, books and bric-a-brac for its secondhand shop. Contact (011) 485-5232.
• Celebrating a bar-/batmitzvah? Why not give a donation to

WIZO’s bar-/batmitzvah project in Israel? You get a beautiful certificate to give to the bar-/batmitzvah child here. Certificates are available from WIZO tel (011) 645-2548.

• Second Innings runs a series courses and activities including Scrabble, bridge, discussion groups, play reading groups, women’s and men’s reading groups, symphony concert rehearsals, bowls, pilates, Yogic Pranayama, walking and aerobics, Golden Oldies Cine Club, weekly workshops (by arrangement) on “falls education for the elder adult”, and organises regular activities. Contact Grecia Gabriel (011) 532-9718.

• Don’t miss the opportunity to do a mitzvah. Visit the Selwyn Segal Shop. Gifts priced from R45. Glassware, pewter, silver, white ceramics and Selwyn Segal products. Phone: (011) 485-1344 or (011) 640-5171.

• Benarc Gift Shop - Gift presentations for all occasions, made to order. Call (011) 485-5232, JWBS. All kosher under the Beth Din. Proceeds to support the less fortunate in our community.

• Elise WIZO Gift Shop has an exciting range of gifts now available for the Jewish New Year. Contact (011) 620-2760 or call in at Genesis, Bradfield Drive, Fairmount. Open Sundays.

• Chabad House hosts a series of events throughout the year. Chai Seniors - Holistic & Kabbalistic Nourishment”. Daily programmes: Men’s Kolel Mon-Fri at Chabad House Library, 09:00 -11:00, followed by lunch. Ladies Kolel Tuesdays & Thursdays. Special programmes: Mondays: Brain Worx with occupational therapist, Cynthia Liptz for brain exercises, 09:00 – 13:00. Both men and women welcome. Tuesdays: Guest lectures. For more info contact Rabbi Ari Kievman (011) 440-6600 or e-mail rak@chabad.org.za

• WIZO Elise Gift Shop in the Genesis Shopping Centre, Fairmount, entrance from Bradfield Drive opposite Shula’s Bakery. Exciting range of baby gifts and gifts for all occasions available at reasonable prices. Hours: Mon - Thurs 09:00 - 17:00, Friday 09:00 - 13:30, Sunday 10:00 - 13:00. (011) 640-2760.

News in Brief

ROMNEY TO VISIT ISRAEL

WASHINGTON - Mitt Romney will visit Israel during the presidential campaign. A campaign official on Monday confirmed a New York Times report that the all-but-certain Republican presidential candidate will meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and other top officials later this summer. The Times quoted Ron Dermer, a top adviser to Netanyahu, as saying that Romney was a “strong friend of Israel and we’ll be happy to meet with him.” Romney has said that his first foreign visit as president would be to Israel. Barack Obama visited Israel as a candidate in 2008, but has not visited as president. The former Massachusetts governor has faulted Obama for not making more clear to Iran that it could face military consequences if it does not stand down from its suspected nuclear program and for calling on Israel to negotiate based on the 1967 lines. Obama’s support among Jewish voters remains in the low 60s, about 15 percentage points ahead of the general population, but below the sky-high approval ratings at the outset of his presidency. Pollsters attribute the drop mostly to the economy, which dogs Obama among the general population as well. Obama’s campaign has been emphasising the closeness of the US-Israel military relationship, noting that in October, Israel and the United States will stage the largest-ever joint anti-missile exercise. (JTA)

AT FUNERAL, ISRAEL’S LEADERS PRAISE SHAMIR’S DEDICATION AND SERVICE

TEL AVIV - Israel’s leaders paid tribute to former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir at his funeral at Jerusalem’s Mount Herzl cemetery on Monday. An intimate but distinguished crowd sat opposite a military honour guard at the outdoor ceremony on Monday evening. Joining Shamir’s children and grandchildren in attendance were Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu; President Shimon Peres; the head of the Israeli Defence Forces, Benny Gantz; the Sephardic chief rabbi, Shlomo Amar; and other political, religious and military leaders. Shamir died last Saturday at the age of 96. He served as Israel’s prime minister from 1983 to 1984, and from 1986 to 1992. Peres, who was both Shamir’s coalition partner and main political opponent in the 1980s, praised Shamir’s strong beliefs and called him “a leader who followed his path until he departed this world” and “one of the best leaders of Israeli democracy”. Peres alluded to his and Shamir’s ideological differences several times throughout his eulogy, but emphasised that “we were sons of the same nation”. In his eulogy, Netanyahu stressed Shamir’s lifetime of service to the state, noting that Shamir fought in an underground militia before Israel’s founding, and then as a secret Mossad agent afterwards, until he reached positions of leadership. “He was a known man, but even then it seemed that in his heart and his actions he kept looking at himself as that anonymous soldier for his people and land,” Netanyahu said. (JTA)

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Community Briefs



Our Parents Home in Oaklands, Johannes- burg always likes to keep residents feeling special. Each month they host a birthday celebration in honour of all those who have birthdays in that month. This month it was held on June 20. Pictured is Mary Abel who turned 93, with her daughter Harriet Kirstein.

ANTHOLOGY EDITED BY JOSEPH SHERMAN

August 12, 1952 saw the execution of the cream of Yiddish intelligentsia, on Stalin's orders. Thirteen writers and poets, all members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, were shot in Moscow's Lubyanka Prison, including Peretz Markish, Chaim Grade, David Bergelson. A commemorative event is being hosted in London by Five Leaves Publications in association with London's Jewish Music Institute, on this auspicious yartzeit. The event features the launch of an anthology edited by renowned SA Yiddish champion, the late Joseph Sherman: "From Revolution to Repression: Soviet Yiddish Writing 1917-1952", published by Five Leaves. For information: myra@fiveleaves.co.uk or www.fiveleaves.co.uk.

A PRISTINE CEMETERY ALL THAT REMAINS OF MAKHADO JEWISH COMMUNITY

Former residents of Louis Trichardt (Makhado), Maish, Arnold and Stanley Brenner and Julian Serman, go at least twice a year to visit the graves of their late parents and attend to the tombstones. They have put palisade fencing around the Jewish cemetery and have engaged a gardener who twice a month takes care of the graves. In its heyday, the Louis Trichardt Jewish community comprised 34 families; people would come from as far afield as Welkom in the Free State, Warmbaths (Bela Bela) and Bula-wayo for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. The community stopped hosting Shabbat minyanim in 1974.

WIZO'S MENUHIN SA VISIT A RIP-ROARING SUCCESS

WIZO SA recently hosted Linda Menuhin, an Iraqi Israeli commentator on Middle East affairs, as guest speaker for their biennial fundraising campaign.

Menuhin's account of her journey from Baghdad to Jerusalem drew large crowds countrywide. In a statement, WIZO expressed extreme gratitude to those who understand the importance and relevance of their work and donate generously. These acts of chesed go toward supporting significant projects undertaken by WIZO. If you were unable to attend the Campaign Launch, and would like to make a pledge, please contact Sandy: (011)645-2515 or email her: sandy@beyachad.co.za

COME TO AID OF ARISE AND SHINE

Port Elizabeth's Union of Jewish Women was recently approached by a group of young people, from Jeffreys Bay, collectively known as Arise and Shine Youth Development. They requested blankets and food; many of them live in unbearable conditions. The UJW arranged 40 parcels of food and blankets, and met with the group.

Elaine Racussen, the branch's Chairman, appeals to the public for donations of any kind to continue assisting Arise and Shine, or to help other groups or individuals in the area in similar predicaments. "We at the UJW try to assist whenever and however we can." Call them: (041) 374-3460.

Welcome to the fold, ‘Meyer’ Balotelli

In an intentionally racist and anti-Semitic remark, somebody on a right-wing blog commented that Italian soccer player Mario Balotelli is “black and he’s Jewish. He should play for Israel, not Italy.”

JACK MILNER

Of course, Balotelli is not Jewish, but the son of Ghanaian parents was fostered by a Jewish couple who the soccer player regards as his real parents. He is very sympathetic to the Jewish cause and was the player most emotionally affected by the trip to Auschwitz concentration camp during the Euro 2012 in Poland and Ukraine.

Well, news for the idiot blogger is that Israel would only be too happy to have Balotelli play for them. Because to everybody’s surprise, he is Israel’s newest, freshest sweetheart.

“He is one of us,” intoned veteran TV commentator Motti Kirschenbaum. “He won’t be Mario any more. From now all, we’ll all call him Meyer.”

Like any other Jewish boy, Mario is Jewish via the maternal line. After a spectacular semifinal match against Germany last week, Balotelli, who was responsible for both winning goals, ran across the pitch and kissed his weeping mother, Silvia Balotelli, who was in the stands in Warsaw.

“These goals are dedicated to you, mamma,” he told her that day, and exuberantly repeated in media interviews. “I waited a long time for this moment, especially as my mother is not young anymore and can’t travel far, so I had to make her happy when she came all the way here.”

The image of the sweaty, exultant, mohawk-topped player, who is black and 1,88m tall, kissing his mom, who is a petite, demure, traditional Italian grandma, and was weeping with emotion, was seen all over YouTube.



Italian soccer player Mario Balotelli hugs his foster mother, Silvia Balotelli, after scoring two goals against Germany in the semifinals of Euro 2012. (PHOTOGRAPH SUPPLIED)

According to Global Post, in Israel, as it became clear that Balotelli was the son of a Jewish mother, the story took on pandemic proportions. On the day of the final match against Spain he graced the front pages of all national newspapers. Yedioth Acharonoth, a tabloid, had “ONE OF OURS!” and Ma’ariv, its competitor, went with “Super-Mario’s Yiddische Mameh”

The more conservative Haaretz chose “Italian son of Jewish foster mom leads team into Euro 2012 final”.

Israel is no soccer powerhouse, but when it comes to mom-obsessed headlines, they may hold the world cup. Balotelli is known to

be close to his mother. She held his hand every night to help him fall asleep. “That kiss was not easy for him,” she told the Italian media at the time, “because like any 21-year old, he is embarrassed to kiss his mamma.”

Balotelli’s original family is known to him, but they are not close. They reached out, via the media, only when he became an international superstar. “If I hadn’t become the football star Mario Balotelli, they wouldn’t have cared what happened to me,” Balotelli posted on his Facebook wall after the Barwahs, his birth parents, gave an interview that implied bad intentions on the part of his adoptive parents.

Following a team visit to Auschwitz, Balotelli told his teammates that his mother - the daughter of Holocaust survivors, with relatives in Israel - keeps a box of letters under her bed, and doesn’t talk about it with anyone.

Opposing team’s fans have been known to scream “yid” or “monkey” at him while he plays, and the team manager, Cesare Prandelli, responded by saying that racism was “a social problem”.

Israeli media seems to have discovered the Disney-worthy story of Balotelli’s life only this week, but for those in the know, and Italian Jewish soccer fans are definitely in the know, it is a tale long in the making.

Noa Segre, a hi-tech worker in Jerusalem, has been following Balotelli since he was a teen.

“Of course, I knew,” she says, with light impatience. “I’m Italian. It has been known for a long time. He has always been attacked by racists for being black and for being a Jew, even when he played in Milan as a kid. We all

know about his Jewish mother, who wouldn’t let him play if he didn’t study.”

Lior Shabo, 35, another Jerusalem fan (though not an Italian, except through his “love of Rome and Italy”) found the media circus distasteful. “What’s the deal here? Suddenly, we’re acting like he’s ours and before that no one followed him. Now that we know he’s Jewish we act like he’s ours? Last week he was nothing for us. I don’t like it.”

The reality is that we so often tend to berate sports people based on their looks and behaviour. However, once we know more about what makes them tick, and we like what we hear, our views towards them change.



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Evan Speechly to speak at Maccabi Stag

JACK MILNER

Evan Speechly, who is the current physiotherapist of the Indian cricket team, will be the guest speaker at Maccabi stag on Tuesday evening, July 10. Speechly had earlier been associated with the Royal Challengers Bangalore as physiotherapist but late last year was given a two-year contract to the national team.

He came to that job with lots of experience in handling the South African national football and rugby teams, along with the Gauteng cricket team. The talk will take place at Beyachad at 17:50. For catering purposes please confirm your attendance. The office can be contacted on tel: (011) 645-2557; fax: 011-458-1011; e-mail:maccabisa@beyachad.co.za

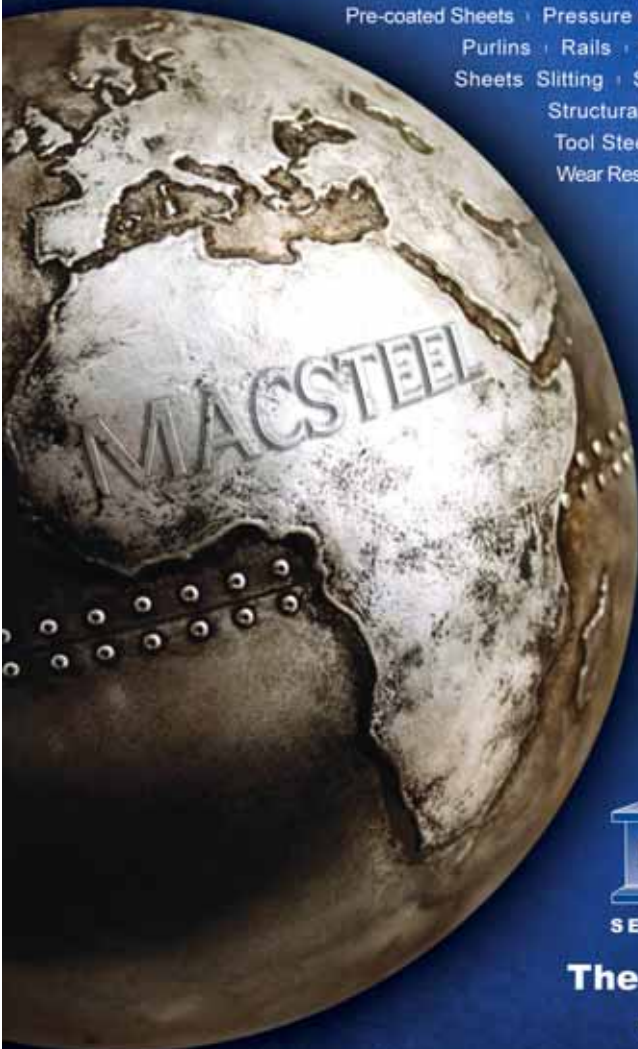



Physiotherapist Evan Speechly (right) with Indian cricketers Mohammed Kaif (right) and Anil Kumble.

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