

south african

# Jewish Report

■ March 25 2016 / 15 Adar II 5776  
■ Volume 20 – Number 11

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## Jewish and Greek youth celebrate Human Rights Day

The head boys and girls of King David Linksfield, Yeshiva College and Saheti were among the many who attended the Greek National Day celebration and #takeonracism event at Saheti school on Sunday. Standing together are left to right: Yeshiva College head boy David Kahn and head Girl Pnina Herring; Saheti head girl Eleni Thomadakis and head boy Markos Mavrikis; King David Linksfield head girl Jessa Marx and head boy Daniel Gewer.

Photo: Saheti Marketing Department



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# A series of fortunate events



Parshat Tzav  
Rabbi Eli Spinner  
Chabad of Glenhazel

Finally the day we’ve been waiting for arrives. I don’t think it’s a stretch to say that everyone has a warm place in their heart for Purim, be it dressing up, or giving gifts of shalach manos, to saying some l’chaim. We also listen to the Megillah, which relates the account of the Purim story. It is a colourful drama of Jewish survival, with many individual events coming together to a climactic ending with Haman’s downfall and the Jews’ victory. Despite there being no open miracle, with a sea splitting or the sun stopping, the series of fortunate events belie the hand of G-d saving His people. Who can say which event of the narrative is most crucial? Without any one of the scenes, the whole play would be a failure, with the Jewish people pay-

ing the ultimate price! Yet we are told that the Baal Koreh (reader of the Megillah) must raise his voice at the words “On that night, the king’s sleep was disturbed”, as this is the height of the miracle. Why is this moment more important than say Esther being crowned queen? Perhaps this sentence sheds light on the whole Purim story. The king whose sleep was disturbed, refers not only to the physical king Achashverosh, but additionally to the supernal King of the universe. Why would Hashem be sleeping? What does it even mean that Hashem could be sleeping? We are taught that G-d reciprocates our behaviour. If we are generous, so is He. If we are forgiving, so is He and so on. If we sleep, so does He. Sometimes we find ourselves in a dreamlike state, not in touch with reality. We lose sight of what’s important, instead focusing on the trivial. It can become our obsession, devoting all our life and energy to something that holds no

meaning or truth, like a fantasy that doesn’t really exist, but in a dream becomes the most vivid reality. This is what happened to the Jews collectively leading up to the time of Purim. They began to lose touch with their identity and what was important to them as Jews, instead, becoming fixated with blending in to a foreign culture, attending the king’s feast to proclaim their allegiance as true Persian citizens. Who can blame them? It had been almost 70 years since the destruction of the first Temple, and their future was uncertain, without G-d’s miracles to light the way as before. Yet G-d behaved in kind. He acted as if they were no longer His priority, His chosen nation, allowing a terrible decree to threaten their very existence. He too pretended to be dreaming, losing focus of reality. After all, He is only mimicking the Jews’ attitude. And here’s where the biggest miracle occurred: G-d “wakes up”. The Jews are back to being treated as the chosen nation, and there is no

power that can dare harm them. Automatically, the rest of the story falls into place, with Haman being killed and the Jews being saved. As we recount this beautiful story, let us wake up to the reality of who we are and what priorities we set for ourselves, and not get caught up with trivialities, and let Hashem respond in kind, bringing our redemption speedily. L’chaim!

Shabbat Times		
<b>Parshat Tzav</b> <b>March 25 / 15 Adar II</b> <b>March 26 / 16 Adar II</b>		
Starts	Ends	
17:55	18:43	Johannesburg
18:15	19:22	Cape Town
17:43	18:31	Durban
18:02	18:50	Bloemfontein
18:04	18:53	Port Elizabeth
17:54	18:44	East London
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# Everything, including the proverbial kitchen sink...

SUZANNE BELLING

From bee removals to bagels, from beds to BMWs – you will find them all on the Johannesburg Jewish Community Forum (JJCF) e-mail list which reaches 10 000 people in the Johannesburg area daily and has now branched out to include Cape Town. The brainchild of former Gautengers Saul and Andy Behr, they hit upon this idea before their aliyah to Ramat Beit Shemesh in 2002. “These services are all on offer in Israel and we found them very helpful,” said Saul, a former prefect and Maths Olympiad winner at King David Linksfield. He is a software architect, who put his talents to good use. The couple have five children. Andy attended Pretoria Girls’ High School and is a financial analyst. “We set up the list in Johannesburg before we left - as a service to people, a kind of brains trust.” They both handle JJCF in addition to their regular work and, although it doesn’t bring in much of an income, it is a satisfying occupation that keeps the Behrs’ fingers on the pulse of the Jewish community they know so well. They have a number of monitors (on a voluntary basis) who keep tabs on the postings and check for offensive or unsuitable requests. But the “funnies” as Andy calls them, slip through, as do some spellings - usual errors



like accommodation with one “m” or one “c”; mechanic spelled mekanik; programme (without the second “m” and “e” - not counting computers - and other American spellings); Alsatian dogs (spelled Alsation) and mix-ups between stationary (still) and stationery (pens etc). There are warnings of electricity outages, water cuts, “beware the potholes in Oaklands Road”, pleas for help with noisy neighbours, requests for information where noise is coming from in the middle of the night, where to report blaring music. There are requests for domestic workers,

gardeners, drivers and white collar job opportunities, as well as offers of free lifts to Cape Town in exchange for driving cars, urgent pleas for people travelling overseas to take medicines left behind in error and to transport gifts for weddings in Cape Town and abroad, always with the addendum “the package is small and light”. There are offers to stand in queues at passport offices, lifts to and from work, numerous requests for au pairs, holiday properties, permanent properties - homes to let, homes for rent (houses, flats and cottages). Parents require tutors for extra lessons, tutors looking to give extra lessons. There are those seeking doctors, lawyers, kosher restaurants, caterers, help with emigration, ancestral visas, pets to give away to good homes and people downsizing or emigrating, who sell up their entire households. Andy sent a couple of her “funnies”: • Looking for a reliable and trustworthy courier service to take passport renewal documents from Johannesburg to the Israeli consulate in Pretoria and back ASAP. Thanks in advance! Andy’s assumption was: “I guess she likes curry.” • Email 1: Looking for solid cardboard boxes to move houses. Contact (Name withheld)

• The reply was: I’ve never seen a cardboard box that can fit a house in! One JJCF subscriber told Jewish Report that she had hired her domestic staff from the postings; while another, a strict grammarian, said while the spellings, lack of punctuation and literacy drove her crazy, she nevertheless found JJCF very useful. “They helped me get rid of my ants,” said another. “Although there were so many solutions, I didn’t know where to start.” Then there are requests for davening and tehillim for the sick, postings which bring out the best in people. One subscriber regretted, however, that the people putting up the notice often forgot to inform JJCF when the patients recovered or, sadly, died. One JJCF member provided a bittere gel-echte: “I lost the name of the person who asked for the prayers for a gentleman, so I continued davening until I came across his tombstone in the cemetery. “Nevertheless the more people praying, the better,” she said. Between 100 and 150 e-mails go out every day - some as individual e-mails several times a day, some as a digest with a collection of emails per day and a shorter form sent to subscribers on mobile phones. • To find out more, contact moderators@jjf.info

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# Granny left to carry the can as Bobroff attorneys flee to Oz

ANT KATZ

Elaine Bobroff, 68, wife and mother of personal injury attorneys, Ronald (left) and son Darren (right), was arrested in the early hours of Tuesday morning and appeared in the Johannesburg Specialised Crimes Court the same afternoon, on charges of fraud of R26 million and money laundering.

The arrest came in the wake of the father and son team (along with Darren’s wife Lisa and their children) skipping the country after they had been sued by road accident victims who had laid complaints against the personal injury specialists over a number of years. Allegations were made that the Bobroffs substantially overcharged contingency fees on the monies recovered by their firm, Ronald Bobroff & Sons, from the Road Accident Fund (RAF).

The matter eventually landed up in the High Court in Pretoria, where the Bobroffs admitted that a contingency fee agreement they got some of their clients to sign, was illegal and they were due to hand themselves over to the police in this regard this week. Instead, the two - plus the younger Bobroff’s family -



and Lisa for the remaining amount. He insisted the Bobroffs would be brought back to South Africa to stand trial.

Asked if the South African authorities were going to seek direct extradition or the return of the three fugitives through Interpol, Major Netshiunda would not disclose their strategy. “We are going to follow right procedures to get our suspects,” he said.

Elaine Bobroff was released on R50 000 bail, and her bail conditions were that she had to hand in her travel documents and report to a police station once a week until her return date of July 1. Any figures estimating the fraud other than those disclosed to Jewish Report on Tuesday, are incorrect, he added.

The Bobroffs sold their practice to attorneys Taitz and Skikne before leaving. CapeTalk’s Kieno Kammies speaking to Ronald Bobroff from Australia on Monday who confirmed his wife had been arrested. The Bobroffs have been in and out of court against clients, the Law Society (Ronald once chaired the local chapter) and have been fighting a whopping case with Discovery Health, South Africa’s largest medical aid, over the past several years.

Discovery Health has argued that Bobroff’s were claiming medical fees from the Road Accident Fund (RAF) on behalf of clients and then advising some clients not to refund Discovery. In fact, in 2014 Ronald Bobroff threatened to sue Discovery Health, claiming that Discovery

had a “vendetta” against him.

Bobroff’s created a 24-page document, “A shocking discovery for Discovery”, which the firm distributed to all attorneys and advocates in South Africa, alleging that Discovery did not cover members injured in vehicle accidents, an allegation Discovery Health CEO Dr Jonathan Broomberg strenuously denied. Broomberg said Discovery had paid out more than R2 billion for medical treatment of members injured in vehicle accidents between 2006 and 2014.

The Road Accident Fund had never refused to pay for treatment, he said, and did not force members to submit RAF claims after an accident. But, said Broomberg, if members did submit RAF claims and received pay-outs, Discovery expected them to refund the scheme expenses it had incurred.

This spat between Discovery and Bobroff’s followed a complaint which hinged on refunding medical expenses that Ronald Bobroff had lodged against Discovery regarding a 2006 accident. The client was a former Discovery employee who had signed an undertaking after his accident that he would submit a claim to the RAF and if successful, refund to Discovery the pay-out for medical expenses.

Bobroff’s also undertook to refund Discovery, but both reneged and Bobroff took Discovery to the Commission for Medical Schemes which, in October 2011, handed down a comprehensive ruling in favour of Discovery.

Read more on [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)



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## Israeli Embassy cuts its annual party to help SA

ANT KATZ

Israel’s smartest food and water experts will be coming to South Africa mid-year to hold conferences in Johannesburg and Cape Town to show the country how they have made deserts green and created food and water security for 10 million people on land that couldn’t feed and quench one million 60 years ago.

And altruistically, to pay for it, the Israeli embassy in Pretoria will forgo its annual Independence Day bash. The annual garden party, a highlight on the diplomatic calendar, usually includes diplomats, senior South African government and Jewish communal leaders and is lavishly catered.

As a world leader in agricultural and water technology, Israel has for quite some time been assisting South Africa in these fields. Several Israeli companies have even built factories here to both supply the local market and to export from here to other countries.

The Embassy will instead use the money to bring over Israel’s top experts in water- and food-security to hold free attendance conferences in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Among important stakeholders and decision-makers invited are SA Minister of Water and Sanitation Nomvula Mokonyane and members of her department.

Agricultural and water technology transfer is an ongoing relationship between South Africa and Israel - both in the emerging and commercial farming sectors - and in both the private and public sectors.

This was so much so, that on presenting his credentials to President Jacob Zuma two years ago, the then-newly appointed Ambassador Arthur Lenk gave Zuma a bowl containing fruit and vegetables that had been grown in South Africa with Israeli aid.

Ambassador Lenk made the decision that, given the prevailing drought conditions and expected food shortages and price rises, the money for the Yom Ha’atzmaut garden day celebrations would be better used to assist South Africa in this manner.

This was originally announced in a February 17 letter by Deputy Ambassador Michael Freeman to the Cape Times – which unfortunately was not printed. Also, a water conference hosted by the Mail&Guardian which was planned for earlier in the year was cancelled. Israel did however hold an Agricultural Expo in Cape Town in February.

“We showed Premier (Helen) Zille how Israeli businesses have created jobs in the Cape, assisted South Africa in its food security, and how Israeli expertise can help the country,” said Lenk.

See our website for further related reads on this subject.

**Elaine Bobroff was released on R50 000 bail, and her bail conditions were that she had to hand in her travel documents and report to a police station once a week until her return date of July 1.**

fled to Australia over the weekend. Despite much speculation being bandied about in the media on Wednesday, Hawks spokesman Major Robert Netshiunda told Jewish Report that the entire amount of fraud so far suspected is R79 million and that the Hawks intended charging Ronald, Darren



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# Her 21st Israel trip is formidable Reeva’s cherry on the top

ANT KATZ

Taking the initiated to see Israel for themselves has become quite passé - still a very valuable endeavour, but hundreds of people are taken on dozens of educational tours annually.

Reeva Forman is widely acknowledged as being the doyenne of this genre, having started introducing people to Israel back in 2002, slap bang in the middle of the second Intifada.

On her first trip she took 50 prominent Jews, 25 from Cape Town and 25 from Johannesburg, who wanted to know more about Israel. Over the years Forman has progressed from taking general groups, to taking political, financial and general media editors as well as financial and

economic strategists and the tour includes visits to Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian territories.

Forman is a humanitarian and while she loves Israel passionately, she loves the whole Middle East neighbourhood and likes her guests to see the good and the bad sides.

“I believe that understanding the amazing Israeli economy and that of neighbouring Palestine, is a fascinating exercise. Both are relatively young countries so this may also be of relevance to our own economic growth,” says Forman.

Her latest distinguished delegation, last month, was her 21st and included Waldimar Pelser, editor of Rapport; Ron Derby, editor of Sunday Times Business Times; Jana Marais, editor of Finweek; Dr James Myburgh, editor and



The group with Michael Oren, former ambassador to the US and current member of the Knesset, third from the back.

publisher of Politicsweb; Frans Cronje, CEO of the SA Institute of Race Relations; Temba Nolutshungu, director of the Free Market Foundation; Dr Rabelani Dagada, information systems manager at the Wits Business School; and Graham McIntosh, a retired politician and businessman.

The itinerary was superb and the delegation was exposed to speakers at the highest levels of the regional economy and politics. So, what did they have to say? Here is a smattering. (See much more on our website: [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za))

**Rapport editor Waldimar Pelser.** Writing on the Jewish State’s reputation as the Middle East’s only democracy, Pelser says one incident stands out in particular: “As with every case of conflict in this blood-soaked region of the world, there is a background to every story.”

He says that Jews and Palestinians, much like South Africans, have long sought ways of living together. But today there is more and more fervour to seek an amicable divorce than getting together. (See much more on our website: [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za))

**Frans Cronje, head of the SA Institute of Race Relations,** South Africa’s premier think-tank promoting political and economic freedom, wrote a lengthy piece for The Times of Israel after this trip.

“South Africa is ground-zero for the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS),” wrote Cronje. “The prominence of this movement is reflected in the SA media, aca-

demia, most civil society groups, and in the SA government and ruling party - all having taken vociferously anti-Israel lines. The apartheid analogy is regularly drawn - which coming from South Africa, further quashes Israel’s global standing.”

“Yet South Africa’s own reputation is also in need of attention,” he reminds his readers of today’s reality that is SA. “Once Mandela’s ‘rainbow nation’, the country’s standing has been battered by a series of corruption scandals, human rights abuses, threats to democratic institutions, increasingly weak economic performance, strained foreign relations, and an unfortunate voting record in the United Nations.” (Read Cronje’s full piece on [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za))

**Finweek editor Jana Marais,** who has very deep roots as a financial journalist and editor, is still trying to make sense of it all. “It’s easy to sit outside of the region and judge. It is much harder not to take a more balanced view once you have seen a bit of the situation on the ground and heard people’s fears and concerns on both sides,” says Marais.

She says she came home with an understanding of how much more there is to learn about the history and political complexities of the region. She found her visit to Israel “fascinating” and “a lot more complex than I expected it to be”.

• Read her full statement and see the 4-page spread she did on Israel in Finweek. [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

## SA Jews remember Sharpeville on Human Rights Day



DAVID SAKS

South African Jewry played a substantive role in the various anti-racism and human rights-focused events taking place countrywide over the past 10 days. The SA Jewish Board of Deputies was also one of the main stakeholders in the organisation of a national anti-racism week, along with, among others, the Nelson Mandela Foundation.

The week kicked off with a high-powered anti-racism conference under the auspices of the SA Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) in Midrand and culminated on Human Rights Day with a moving memorial gathering at Sharpeville, site of one of the most notorious apartheid-era atrocities.

In between, Jewish youth leaders joined in building bridges with the Greek community at this year’s Greek National Day, while learners at

King David Linksfield and Yeshiva College were addressed by one of the heroes of the anti-apartheid struggle, Leon Levy.

SAJBD Diplomatic Liaison Chaya Singer was upbeat in the wake of a week she described as “hectic, but deeply fulfilling”. It had been inspiring, she said, to join with other communities in reaffirming South Africa’s commitment to fundamental human rights values, and to see how much the role of the Jewish community in combating racism was recognised and valued in the broader society.

Regarding the SAHRC conference, she commented on how impressed she was by how much the Commission did, and how gratifying it was that it saw the SAJBD as being integral partners in this regard.

Representatives of the SAJBD, SAUJS and the head boys and girls of King David Linksfield and

Continued on page 7 >>

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# The South African Friends of Israel (SAFI) Conference 2016

In its five years of existence the South African Friends of Israel (SAFI) has become the cornerstone of communicating with the broader South African community and a flagship project for the South African Zionist Federation.

SAFI's primary mission is to maintain and build relationships with different cultural, religious and ethnic communities within South Africa in order to educate and advocate for Israel.

SAFI has not only reached out to Christian communities, but has established relationships and received tremendous support from various cultures and faiths, including the Hindu Maha Sabha, Italian, Hellenic and Portuguese, to mention a few.

In an effort to build bridges and fortify support for Israel in Africa, SAFI has embarked on a number of projects that uplift our surrounding communities and educate the broader community about Israel and the local Jewish population.

On Sunday, the 13th March 2016 over 500 people gathered

from all across the continent at the Killarney Country Club in Johannesburg for the fourth annual Israel Advocacy Conference hosted by SAFI. The event was a massive success with keynote addresses given by international guest speakers, Shahar Azani - Executive Director, StandWithUs, Ze'ev Ben Shachar - Director of Israel Education, Jerusalem U. and Winton Steward - International Pro-Israel Campus Outreach Director, who kept the audience enthralled. The delegates were given practical and effective ways to advocate for Israel using various channels including social media.

Afternoon break-away sessions hosted by an array of speakers were well attended with delegates thirsty to learn as much as possible about the Holy Land. Notable political figures were in attendance including senior members of various faith groups, political parties and embassies.



Mark Hyman (Co-Chairman, SAFI) and Ambassador Arthur Lenk (Embassy of Israel)



Panelists: Gladys Modise (DEISI); Olga Meshoe (CEO DEISI); Nicholas Selamolela (Religious leader, Lemba Tribe); Shahar Azani (Executive Director, StandWithUs); Dr Benjani Chauke (Political Strategist); Michael Freeman (Deputy Head of Mission; Israel)



Delegates giving the thumbs up and standing with Israel



Ben Swartz (Chairman SAZF, Co-Chairman SAFI) with COPE delegates



Cecilia Eden (Bridges for Peace); Ruth Challens (Beit Emmanuel); Virgil Challens (Beit Emmanuel); Reeva Forman (Honorary Life Vice President, SAZF), and Rabbi Adrian Schell (Bet David)



Yudi Cohen and Diversity entertaining the audience



Conference attendees waving Israeli flags and showing their love for Israel



Ben Swartz (Chairman SAZF, Co-Chairman SAFI) and the Shembe delegation

SAFI would like to thank all our generous corporate sponsors and private donors for contributing to the event. For more information visit [www.safisa.co.za](http://www.safisa.co.za) email: [gavi@sazf.org](mailto:gavi@sazf.org) | 011 645 2512



# Guptas’ brief Purim visit

Last week, in our Purim issue, we published - near the front of the newspaper among our more serious news items - a Purim shpiel, historically a comic dramatisation of the Book of Esther, but more recently, also a humorous or satirical, fake newspaper article written during the month of Adar. It was a completely outrageous story about the Gupta family who capture headlines daily for alleged corruption and inappropriate influence over President Jacob Zuma buying the South African Jewish Report.

Apart from the improbability of a sale of a Jewish community newspaper to the Gupta clan, the idea of Hindu, Muslim and Catholic supplements and a new Chazonis Institute founded with the proceeds of the deal, were so preposterous that we thought people would soon realise it



was a monstrous, over-the-top joke.

Much to our surprise, however, many did not catch on, even when our Chairman Howard Sackstein wished everyone a “chag Purim sameyach” at the end of the article.

We got panicked e-mails from as far afield as Khartoum, Melbourne, and New York City, and a major revolt was threatened at Sandringham Gardens Jewish aged home in Johannesburg.

The Jewish Report office received a number of anonymous calls too. One man said we had done a good job with the paper but that we should be careful not to put Jews in danger or

make people hate us more than they already do. Another woman called, saying that it was “sick, sick, sick and disgusting” and suggested that the leadership should “do the right thing” and resign.

Wow! Firstly, we offer humble apologies to those who were shocked and disturbed. And for the person who commented that we are endangering our community with this, are we as Jews never allowed social satire?

Secondly, thank you to all our readers who care so deeply and were truly alarmed by the sale. As publishers and content producers, we don’t always know how we are perceived by our readers and whether our work is valued. Based on the reactions to our Purim shpiel, it is evident that we are quite precious to our readers and that our content is considered

completely reliable - so frankly we are thrilled.

When our advertising team go out to try to sell ads, they are not always so warmly received and often requests for sponsorship are pushed off by business owners and larger corporate clients. Sometimes we are discouraged by the lack of response and question whether we should be publishing this newspaper at all.

Our publication is not funded by community coffers. Each week, our sales staff “hit the pavement” to sell space. We are also reliant on the proceeds from our annual Achiever Awards dinner where some of you do generously sponsor awards and tables.

And so, for the rest of you who do think we have an important role to play in our community and would be perturbed if we sold out for financial



## South African Jewish Report

purposes, we ask that now and then, you show your appreciation with your financial support (advertise your business, services or products).

Happy Purim and a long weekend, and may the South African Jewish Report be around, independently, for many more Purim shpiels.

– Vanessa Valkin, editor

# AIPAC’s plans to ‘come together’ undone by Trump

**RON KAMPEAS**  
**WASHINGTON**

Hear out Donald Trump. Ignore Donald Trump.

There were two distinct approaches to the Trump moment this week at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee’s (AIPAC) annual conference here, and there were mutual warnings that one or the other side would get burned.

The burn came fast and it came to those who said listening to the front-runner in the race for the Republican presidential nod was the right thing to do.

After days of repeated warnings to its activists not to disrupt Trump and to treat speakers with respect, the AIPAC leadership issued an extraordinary apology on Tuesday morning - but not to Trump.

Instead, AIPAC said it was sorry for its members who had applauded his insulting remarks about President Barack Obama during Trump’s Monday night speech at the Verizon Centre. Many members roared and leapt to their feet when Trump suggested Obama was “the worst thing to ever happen to Israel”.

“While we may have policy differences, we deeply respect the office of the president of the United States and our President Barack Obama,” Lillian Pinkus, the lobby’s newly-installed president, said from the AIPAC stage, joined by other AIPAC lay and professional leaders.

“There are people in our AIPAC family who were deeply hurt last night and for that we are deeply sorry,” Pinkus said, her voice choking. “We are deeply disappointed that so many people applauded a sentiment that we neither agree with or condone.”

The evident anguish in the aftermath of Trump’s remarks undid the hopes that his speech would not undo the prominent Israel lobby’s careful claims to bipartisanship, even as its Iran policy is more or less aligned wholly with Republicans. The Trump moment came during a conference with a slogan, “Come Together”, that AIPAC had hoped would signal a new day of bipartisanship.

Complaints that the lobby had given Trump a platform at its largest annual assembly without expressing official displeasure at his most controversial remarks about immigrants and Muslims, led many to wonder how AIPAC would function in an election in which the likely GOP nominee has alienated much of the organised Jewish community.

AIPAC officials said before the conference that the event would be an opportunity for Trump, derided by his rivals for speaking

mostly in vagaries, to finally attach substance to his ideas. Trump’s prepared remarks included substantive and critical assessments of Obama’s Middle East policies, which AIPAC expected and indeed would have welcomed.

He also softened two positions that have created unease among pro-Israel activists - insisting he would remain neutral in brokering peace between Israel and the Palestinians, saying his negotiating skills as a businessman would be key to reaching a deal, and refusing to commit to recognising Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

On Jerusalem, Trump vowed to move the American embassy to the city, “the eternal capital of the Jewish people”. And he said the Palestinians must accept as a given the close-

our deep concerns about his campaign,” Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union of Reform Judaism, said in a statement on Monday. “It still seems that he does not share our values of equality, pluralism, and humility.”

Trump’s laceration of Obama is the last thing AIPAC needed at a time when the lobby is endeavouring to show it remains a bipartisan enterprise.

Howard Kohr, the one-time Republican operative who has led the organisation for decades, alluded in his opening remarks on Sunday to pressure from the right to simply give up on Democrats in the wake of the party’s almost wholesale embrace of an Iran nuclear deal that AIPAC continues to insist



Donald Trump addressing the annual policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in Washington, DC on Monday.

ness of the US-Israel relationship.

His extemporised flourishes, however, typified the red meat he likes to throw out at his rallies, and many in the massive Verizon Centre hall, chosen to accommodate a record-breaking 18 000 activists this year, gobbled it up.

Launching a critique of Obama’s UN policy, Trump started a sentence Monday evening by saying: “With President Obama in his final year” - then stopped himself and said: “Yay!”

Cheers, laughter and applause arose from the crowd, and not just from isolated pockets. “He may be the worst thing to ever happen to Israel, believe me, believe me,” said Trump, a billionaire real estate magnate. “And you know it and you know it better than anybody.”

The largest group advocating some form of protest ahead of Trump’s appearance, the Reform movement, sounded a note of vindication the day after his speech.

“We were disappointed but not surprised that Mr Trump did nothing tonight to allay

endangers Israel.

“There are those who question our bipartisan approach to political advocacy,” Kohr said. “Unless one party controls all branches of government forever, bipartisanship remains the only way.”

Trump spoke on a night that also included live addresses from his Republican presidential rivals, Governor John Kasich of Ohio and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas. House Speaker Paul Ryan, Republican Wisconsin, also addressed the throng.

There were warm welcomes for Democrats at the conference, particularly Vice President Joe Biden, the closest administration member to AIPAC, who spoke of his decades of attachment to Israel in emotional terms.

Hillary Clinton, the Democratic front-runner, also spoke - earlier in the day than Trump - pitching herself to his right on Israel.

“American can’t ever be neutral when it comes to Israel’s security and survival,” Clinton said to repeated cheers and applause. “Some

things aren’t negotiable and anyone who doesn’t understand that has no business in being our president.”

Yet it was clear the lobby still had difficulties in reconciling with Democrats, especially progressives among them. Only one Democrat from the vast majority in Congress who voted last year in favour of the Iran deal - Maryland Representative Steny Hoyer, the minority whip - addressed the conference.

Hoyer’s appearance together with Representative Kevin McCarthy, Republican California, the majority leader, was designed to show bipartisan support for Israel, yet tension crept into the buddy show. When McCarthy suggested that the Obama administration had sowed “doubt” about the US-Israel relationship, Hoyer countered that the two nations’ security establishments “are co-operating as closely today as they have in the past”.

AIPAC’s activists, lobbying on Tuesday, were unable to recommend any specific legislation on Iran; there is none suitable that is backed by both parties.

Bernie Sanders, the Independent from Vermont challenging Clinton for the Democratic nod, did not attend because he was in the West ahead of three primaries in the region on Tuesday. He offered to deliver remarks via video link but was rejected by AIPAC. Sanders did deliver the remarks - at a Utah rally - with his consistent message of support for Israel tempered by criticism of its actions on settlements and in waging war.

Aiming to appeal to Progressives, the lobby screened a video presentation on Tuesday morning on Menachem Creditor, a rabbi from Berkeley, California, who is a Progressive leader and supporter of AIPAC.

Such profiles of AIPAC members are usually followed by short live appearances by the subjects, who usually deliver a few inspiring words of thanks.

Creditor presented his prepared remarks and added an indirect swipe at Trump, telling JTA after his address that he was prompted to the changes not just by Trump’s speech but by the applause it earned.

“We must not embrace the politics of hate,” he told the AIPAC crowd, appearing immediately after Pinkus’ apology.

“AIPAC’s commitment to bipartisanship isn’t just about being mensches in the world. The only way to keep Israel strong and to build a beloved community here in the United States is to regard the multiplicity of voices here and in our nation as sacred.” (JTA)



# SA Jews remember Sharpeville *continued*

>> Continued from page 5

Yeshiva College were among those attending the Greek National Day celebration and #takeonracism event at Saheti school on Sunday. SAUJS Chairman Dani Hovsha, in her enthusiastically received message, pointed out how over the centuries, the Greek and Jewish cultures had informed and enriched one another, while retaining their own distinctiveness.

Likewise South Africans, rather than seeing those whose beliefs and cultures differed from their own as being inferior or threatening, should instead appreciate and learn from them. The SAJBD took the opportunity of meeting with Minister of Arts and Culture Nathi Mthethwa, who was also at the event.

For Human Rights Day, the SAJBD partnered with the Hellenic Italian Portuguese (HIP) Alliance in sending a delegation to Sharpeville for the memorial ceremony. There are 69 pillars at the memorial site representing those killed during an anti-pass law demonstration on March 21, 1960. Each delegate took his or her place before a pillar, together with a family member of one of the victims who spoke about their memories of those who had died.

In his message delivered at the cemetery afterwards, SAJBD Gauteng Council chairman Shaun Zagnoev stressed that remembering the victims of apartheid had to go hand in hand with applying the lessons of the past to our own times.



King David Linksfield learners took part in Sharpeville commemorations.

“The central lesson is that never again will we allow people in South Africa to be oppressed, exploited and deprived of their fundamental human rights. Never again will we permit South Africa to become a society where people are killed, imprisoned, banned or otherwise silenced merely for exercising their right to protest” he said.

Zagnoev concluded that if the lessons from the tragedies of the past could be applied in creating a just, compassionate society, then the victims of Sharpeville would not have died in vain.

## Around the Jewish World

### Israel ranked 11th happiest country

JERUSALEM - The annual World Happiness Report published last week Tuesday by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), ranked Israel as the 11th happiest country in the world for a third year in a row. South Africa came in 96th place.

The report, prepared by the SDSN and the Earth Institute at Columbia University, was released in Rome in advance of UN World Happiness Day on March 20.

When the publication first launched in 2012, Israel was ranked at number 14 out of 156 countries surveyed.

The top 10 this year were Denmark, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, Finland, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia, and Sweden. Denmark was in third place last year, behind Switzerland and Iceland.

The bottom 10 were Madagascar, Tanzania, Liberia, Guinea, Rwanda, Benin, Afghanistan, Togo, Syria and Burundi.

The United States came in at 13, the United Kingdom at 23, France at 32, and Italy at 50.

- Jerusalem Post

### Call to move Australian embassy to Jerusalem

CANBERRA - In his maiden speech to parliament, Australia’s newest senator called for the Australian Embassy in Israel to be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

At 28, James Paterson is the youngest ever Liberal Party senator.

He was sworn in last week. Addressing parliament, he shared his thoughts on a number of issues - a key one being his firm support for Israel and his belief in the need to display Australia’s solidarity with the Jewish State by relocating the Australian Embassy to Jerusalem.

“Tel Aviv is not Israel’s capital city - Jerusalem is,” he stated, adding: “Every

nation deserves the right to choose its own capital city... I do not believe that the international community can continue to refuse to recognise their capital city of choice and the clear reality on the ground.” - Australian Jewish News

### Second Oxford University Labour Club officer resigns

OXFORD - The Oxford University Labour Club has been dealt another blow after a second officer quit, accusing the club of being discriminatory.

OULC disabilities officer Brahma Mohanty has resigned, claiming the club forced members to “subscribe to a radical ideology of division and isolation”.

This move follows the resignation of its vice-chairman, Alex Chalmer last month, who said the club had a “problem with Jews”.

The club passed a motion earlier this month which limited voting privileges to members who solely support the Labour Party or its aims.

According to a report in the Daily Telegraph, in his resignation letter, Mohanty, as part of the club’s executive committee, wrote that as disabilities officer he was “passionate about advocating issues concerning access and diversity and as a lifelong Labour supporter, wanted to ensure that the OULC was at the forefront of that.

“However, I have personally experienced in recent weeks and meetings that this does not appear to be the ethos shared among the OULC body in light of the passing of the Israeli Apartheid Week motion and the more recent motion which essentially ‘purges’ the OULC membership and forces members to subscribe to a radical ideology of division and isolation.

“Simply put, I cannot in good faith carry out my duties in promoting access and engagement with a club that I feel is projecting itself in the complete opposite manner.” - Jewish Chronicle, London



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# When Brussels meant freedom from fear for an Israeli

CNAAN LIPSHIZ  
BRUSSELS

Growing up, trips to stay with my Jewish family in Brussels were a taste of freedom.

In my native Israel, waves of Palestinian terrorist attacks kept me under constant maternal surveillance. Fear of regular bus bombings limited my excursions to biking distance.

On the tranquil streets of the Belgian capital, by contrast, I could wander at will amid the mix of Medieval

architecture and glass-and-steel skyscrapers. Even riding the tram with my cousin Eli was exhilarating. The rails seemed to stretch out endlessly, and there was the added thrill of potentially getting caught without tickets, which we never bothered to buy.

On Tuesday, a series of explosions killed 34 people - 14 of them at Zaventem Airport and another 20 at one of the metro stations that Eli and I used to exploit.

“The anxiety is terrible,” Eli’s father, my uncle, told me, recalling quickly



When Brussels meant freedom from fear for an Israeli. A man walking in an empty tunnel of the closed subway central station in Brussels, on November 21, last year.

doing a family headcount after learning of the attacks. “But equally horrible is that these attacks reduce you to feeling happy that strangers whom you’ve never met died in them, and not your own friends and family.”

On a visit to Brussels earlier this month, I had sensed a change. The city no longer felt so free.

At a book signing by a Jewish philosopher, Alain Finkelkraut, I was shocked to see that he was accompanied by a body guard. Outside the building, a dozen police officers stood guard.

Wasn’t this an official overreaction to the May 2015 slaying of four people at Brussels’ Jewish Museum? I asked Joel Rubinfeld, head of the Belgian League Against Anti-Semitism.

“We are all targets now - philosophers, anti-racism activists, journalists, police officers, the people in this restaurant,” Rubinfeld said.

In a southern district of Brussels

on Tuesday afternoon, Rabbi Shalom Benizri was still waiting for word from his loved ones when I called his home. A communications overload had disabled cell service by several providers, leaving many thousands unable to communicate with worried loved ones. Benizri, who used to head a large Sephardic community in downtown Brussels before its members moved because of the rampant criminality in the heavily-Muslim area, recalled the museum shooting.

“We were the targets then, but now everyone is a target,” said Benizri, echoing Rubinfeld.

During the attack, Benizri was at the airport about to board a flight to Israel, where several of his children live. As chaos broke out and hundreds fled the smoking building, he returned to his car and drove back home.

In lockdown at home - a precaution which probably applies especially to Orthodox rabbis like him - Benizri

told me he is among the local Jews who see no future for their families in Belgium.

“There is enormous concern not only among people like me, but also non-observant Jews,” he said. “As for me, my suitcases are packed to go.”

Wishing him a happy Purim, I hung up with a sinking feeling about what was happening to the city I love - which is situated only 210 kilometres from Amsterdam, where I now live with my wife and four-month-old son.

Trying to put my finger on when things got out of control in Belgium and Western Europe in general, I remembered a conversation that I had had with Eli 20 years ago in a Brussels metro station.

Attuned to an inchoate rise in anti-Semitic violence to which I was oblivious as a foreigner, Eli had asked me to address him as “Ile”, an anagram of his name, when on the street. Maybe I should have known then. (JTA)

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# Young Rowan Polovin proudly waves the Zionist flag

SUZANNE BELLING

A refreshing new face among the lay leadership of South Africa is Rowan Polovin (pictured), acting chairman of the SA Zionist Federation, Cape Council, succeeding Daniel Levitt, who is executive director of the Cape Council of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies.

The council holds its conference in August this year and following precedent, Polovin’s election will be formalised then, after which he will serve for two terms. At 32, he is believed to be the youngest-ever chairman of the Zionist Federation in the Western Cape.

Originally from Johannesburg, Polovin told SA Jewish Report: “I did not go to a Jewish day school and was not involved in Zionism or Jewish affairs until I went on the Birthright programme in 2007.

“I saw for the first time what our land was all about and developed an intrinsic connection and interaction with our democratic state.”

He now visits Israel twice a year and is a “passionate Zionist”, having worked on Israeli-related causes for many years and delivers regular lectures on Israeli innovation.

Polovin has the distinction of having started his first software company at the age of 10 (“for which I earned pocket money”). He later developed computer software for educational purposes and has since founded numerous technology start-ups and “loves to connect Israeli start-ups to the African continent”.

His interest in computers was fuelled when his parents, David and Yvette, bought him a computer. “I taught myself how to programme and now run a tech company.”

He sold software to friends, using computers as a tool for his business.

Matriculating from Crawford College (Sandton), where he excelled in the Science Olympiad, he began his university studies in Johannesburg and then moved to the University of Cape Town, when his family relocated.

He holds degrees in English, philosophy and entrepreneurship from UCT and was also the UCT

class medallist and top achiever for the post-graduate diploma in enterprise management.

A man of many talents, Polovin is also an accomplished pianist, with a grade 8 certificate from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and a classical music composer of piano sonatas, choral works and a symphony for string orchestra.

“When I think of what Israel has achieved in 68 years, I am filled with pride. From a desert, the country is filled with forests. It has become a mighty nation with incredible achievements.

“The world benefits in incalculable ways from Israel’s products and technology. With every visit my connection to Israel strengthens and I become more Zionist.”



Regarding the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement (BDS) and other anti-Israel elements, Polovin says: “In essence, anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism for all intents and purposes. We should try not to be too reactive and rather be proactive.

“My philosophy is that we must be completely vocal in our support of Israel; we must stand up to the BDS and never allow ourselves to be bullied.”

Polovin feels South African Jews have a right to be proudly Zionist and should not be afraid to wave the Israeli flag.

“We should be proud of our identity, which allows us to build bridges with others,” he said.



# Guptagate: Beware the ethnic slippery slope



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Wily politicians are adept at turning popular frustration about poverty and social ills against convenient targets to suit their aims. What might happen if rage against the Gupta family for their “state capture” were to take on a broad anti-Indian tone?

There have already been negative public references to the Guptas’ origins, demands that they “go back to India”, and politicians like EFF leader Julius Malema saying decisions about the country should not be made over a “bowl of curry”. One even hears ordinary South Africans of Indian descent being crassly described as “Guptas”.

Jews know the dangers of this from their own history - how a few Jews’ actions were exploited in different places by anti-Semites to condemn entire Jewish communities, regardless of their contributions and integration into society.

Hitler’s blaming of Jews for Germany’s troubles to serve his sinister political ends, are one example among many - with catastrophic consequences.

Ethnic tensions simmer in this country among all groups. It doesn’t take much, for example, to ignite xenophobic violence by local Africans against Somalis, Malawians and other “foreign nationals” running businesses in townships who are perceived to be succeeding where they have failed.

The iconic image of 35-year-old Mozambican Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave’s gruesome death in 2008 in Ramaphosa township on the East Rand after he was set alight by a mob, provides an example of what happens when you go down that road.

The Guptas are the symptoms of our sick political culture, not the cause. In every country, business tries to influence politicians. Successful nations like the United States flourish through the interaction of government and the businesses which create wealth and jobs and pay taxes.

Businesses invest money where government policies are to their liking, and naturally try to influence things in this

direction. There is nothing wrong with that, as long as the political system prevents corruption.

Sadly, South Africa’s political system, despite our fine Constitution and institutions tasked with protecting democracy, have failed spectacularly in protecting society. Bribery and corruption have become the norm. What a terrible disappointment, after the idealism to which Nelson Mandela’s generation inspired us not that long ago.

Making money through business should dovetail, however, with a concern for the national good. Business leaders - Jewish businessmen among them - should be outspoken about the betterment of society being the ultimate goal, and follow it up with concrete actions.

We are indebted to those who already do - and there are many who give huge energy and funds to social causes.

South Africans’ outrage should be directed at the ANC and its leaders who succumbed to the Guptas’ temptations and demands and used their positions to accumulate personal wealth and power.

The Gupta family’s crass power-mongering for the sake of their own pockets, with no guiding vision for making a better country, evokes disgust. But the mafia they have created contains an entire network of government operatives, including the country’s president, Jacob Zuma, who has abrogated any sense of civic duty.

Sadly, even after Zuma is hounded out of office - which hopefully will happen as soon as possible - the system of patronage he created will take far longer to dismantle.

Talk at Jewish dinner tables about Guptagate these days often includes the comment: “Thank G-d they are not Jewish”, showing Jews’ inherent insecurity. If the Gupta affair were to turn into a racial thing, Jews might not be far behind as a convenient target for politicians to camouflage their own failures.

No particular ethnic group is responsible for South Africa’s ills, nor for its achievements. South Africans of Indian descent have long since paid their dues in the struggle against apartheid and other areas. Their South Africanness is as solid as anyone else’s; the Guptas’ shenanigans cannot sully this.

• Read Geoff Sifrin’s regular columns on his blog [sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com](http://sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com)

# What will it take for Zuma to quit?

HOWARD FELDMAN (writes in his blog)

With hardly a threshold of impropriety left uncrossed, one has to wonder what it will take, if anything, for President Jacob Zuma to resign or to be recalled by his party.

It is patently clear that the ANC lacks the moral courage to pull the plug on the President, and that the President himself has no intention of doing the honourable thing. Given both their behaviour to date, one can hardly afford to be shocked. Actually, given what they have done to the country and to the economy, one can hardly afford anything.

Hope glimmered during the State of the Nation Address, albeit weakly. Because for those brief moments, South Africans dared to believe that the penny had dropped (and this time not into the President’s wallet) and that he finally, with the help of the country’s leading CEOs, had understood the critical need for a strong economy. SONA was followed by the Finance Minister’s Budget. It was not pretty, but it was real. And to name it meant that we could tame it.

Only we didn’t. Fast forward a little and the picture is much worse than it was then. South Africa’s Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, desperate to keep foreign investors in the country, embarked on a gruelling road show where he no doubt did whatever it took to keep them interested.

I suspect (this is pure speculation) that he might even have engaged in a karaoke night or two in downtown Europe, where he pelted out his best rendition of his host’s Eurovision 2015 song entry, along with complementary props (whatever those were). All in the interest of South Africa. And whereas the people of the country were supportive of him and were behind him, because they understand just how important this is, the administration it would seem, were not. And does not.

Instead of being allowed to focus on saving the country from a down-grade, Gordhan appears to be deliberately distracted by demands from the Hawks, who claim to be pursuing justice. No political agenda, they assert. No working at the behest of anyone. Just pure and wholesome justice.



And whereas, far be it for us to question their bone fides, given that the SARS head is a “Zuma man”, and that the Finance Minister is hardly the President’s first choice, it wouldn’t be unreasonable, if one were to wonder (out loud, or even to oneself) if this whole investigation might possibly have waited for a month or two.

Add to that the horrible revelation by Vytjie Mentor. Recent reports claim that while President Zuma was in another room at the Saxonwold home of the Guptas, she was offered the ministerial position of head of Public Enterprises, so long as she dropped the SAA flight route to India. Oh, and that she gave it to the Guptas as a quid pro quo. She turned down the offer and was never made a minister. And so the picture gets uglier and uglier and more and more dirty. So that no amount of showering will wash off the stench of corruption.

The fact that other reports claim that President Zuma’s son, Duduzane, was involved with the Guptas as the family interviewed potential finance ministers for South Africa, the fact that it has become accepted that they control the President and that he seems to have no recollection of the above, is not only cause for alarm, but should have us running screaming from the building.

The fact that the Supreme Court of Appeal last week confirmed that the ANC had an obligation to work with the International Criminal Court (as a signatory to the Rome Statutes) and to arrest Sudan President Omar al-Bashir when he visited South Africa last year and that in its arrogance they not only flouted the ruling of the High Court but took it on appeal, is indication as to just how untouchable the ANC and the President consider themselves to be. A grave mistake made by many a politician.

History will not be kind to this government and to the President. As they have not been kind to the people they were elected to serve. They have failed their country and its people. Along with their leader, they should waste little time in packing up their spoils into neat cardboard boxes and should exit the building before the whole place implodes.

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ENFORCED MULTICULTURALISM OFTEN MAKES ANTI-SEMITES OUT OF GOOD PEOPLE

As a proud Zionist Jew I want to refer to the disgusting and disturbing phenomenon of some Jews in Europe and the UK of supporting the Muslim invasion of Europe, maybe because of misguided “humanitarianism”.

I know parts of Europe have a history of anti-Semitism and Europe is where the Nazis carried out the Holocaust.

But is this a way to repay Denmark which saved thousands of Jews during the Second World War or the United Kingdom which took in, welcomed and housed 10 000 Jewish children during the Kinder Transport and took the lead in defeating Hitler, or Sweden which also took in thousands of Jews from Hitler’s machine of death?

Jewish liberal academic Barbara Lerner Specter, who runs a government-funded Jewish study group in Sweden, shamelessly spouts the following: “I think there’s a resurgence of anti-Semitism because at this point in time Europe has not yet learned how to be multicultural, and I think we’re going to be part of the throes of that transformation, which must take place...

“They are now going into multicultural mode and Jews will be resented because of our leading role. But without that leading role and without that transformation, Europe will not survive.”

The people of Europe were not consulted on this or on importing millions of Muslim so-called “refugees”.

Hundreds of British rabbis, backed by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, signed a petition demanding the UK

accept thousands more refugees.

The people of Britain do not want these Muslim migrants enforcing sharia and taking the place of indigenous people for housing, healthcare, education and jobs.

Swedish rape figures have increased from around 450 a year to around 6 500 a year since their open door immigration policy. Importing thousands of men from countries where the culture and religion is totally at odds with that of the West, is always going to cause problems at the very least and chaos in reality.

In Britain entire areas have been declared sharia zones and young people and women walking through these areas, dog walkers in parks (because radical Muslims view dogs as unclean) and pensioners in the areas under their control, are being attacked.

There are regular reports of Muslim immigrants attacking Jewish communities in Europe, such as in the Toulouse school killings of 2012 in France and the attacks on a Jewish delicatessen after the attack on Charlie Hebdo magazine last year.

I know there are many Jews in Europe who are against mass immigration. Why do Jewish elites aim to dump anti-Semitism on the rest of us in Europe and make anti-Semites of good people by supporting the multiculturalism and mass migration that is destroying the free West?

Gary Selikow  
Johannesburg

NO PEACE POSSIBLE IN ISRAEL WITHOUT TORAH SOLUTION

A little more than two years ago, the editor of on-line Jewish Report Ant Katz, wrote a blog which included these profound words: “I was brought up to believe that nobody should question our Torah...” What a pity that this apparently did not resonate with the then print editor Geoff Sifrin and other leaders of the Jewish community.

Time after time, Sifrin and others present their opinions and proposals for peace between Israel and Palestinians. Not one of them mentions the word of G-d. In fact, all of them ignore the Torah altogether. Once again in last week’s edition an article by Sifrin is in complete contradiction of the Torah solution to the conflict in Israel.

I want to suggest to Sifrin and all those who have opinions on the issue of peace in Eretz Yisrael - “But there is a G-d in Israel.”

Only the Torah has a foolproof solution to eternal peace in the Jewish state. The removal of all Arabs who refuse to accept the exclusive, unquestioned Jewish sovereignty over all of Israel is not only logical and normal for any Jew with a modicum of self-preservation, it is also the Jewish halachic obligation. The transfer of Arabs from Israel is not a political or personal view. It is a Jewish outlook based on halacha.

The Torah (which nobody should question) clearly commanded: “And you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the Land from before you... But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the Land, then it will come to pass that those you let remain, shall be pins in your eyes and thorns in your

sides, and shall torment you in the land wherein you dwell. (Num.33, 52-55).

The biblical commentators are explicit. “And you shall drive out the inhabitants and then you shall inherit it, you will be able to exist in it. And if you do not, you will not be able to exist in it in peace.” (Rashi).”

There will be no peace or tranquillity in Eretz Yisrael, no matter what “peace” agreements are reached with any Arab government as long as Arabs remain within Israel. The Arabs in Israel represent Chilul Hashem in its starkest form. Their rejection of Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel constitutes a rejection of the sovereignty and kingship of the Lord G-d of Israel. Their transfer from the Land of Israel becomes much more than a political issue. It is a religious obligation.

Far from fearing what the “world” will say if we do such a thing (transfer), let the Jew tremble as he considers the anger of the A-mighty if we do not. This is Jewishness; this is Torah.

In a poll taken recently in Israel, almost half the population is in favour of transfer of all hostile Arabs. In “biblical’ terms if more than half of the population favours an issue, it is akin to all of the people favouring transfer.

Is the Torah policy of bringing eternal peace to our Holy Land becoming a reality? No question!

Choni Davidowitz  
Golden Acres, Johannesburg

JVJP WILL CONTINUE ADVOCATING FOR A ‘JUST PEACE’

It’s encouraging to see the South African Jewish Report’s letter pages recently filled with some who argue that Jews of different persuasions within the Orthodox and Reform communities should all be respected.

Sadly, however, not everyone agrees and some profess a feeling of superiority and believe they are more Jewish, based on the customs they follow. This intolerance for difference in custom and forms of observance, extends to the question of Israel/Palestine. There is little room for debate on this and any questioning of the community’s unconditional support for Israel, is strictly prohibited.

Alan Wolman in his letter “Selective morality in these ‘Jewish’ groups astounds” (March 4) is typical of this attitude. The fact that he places the word Jewish in quotation marks demonstrates the policing of Jewish identity.

Other than Amnesty International who speaks for people whose human rights have been violated in any part of the world, organisations such as ours choose the area in which they want to operate. As Jewish South Africans we have chosen to speak up about human rights abuses which are being perpetrated in our name, in the hope that other Jewish South Africans will do the same or at least be informed.

JVJP is a group of South African Jews who wish to add our

voices to the growing number of Jews who dare to disagree with the blind support for Israeli violence against civilians. We are committed to universal human rights and non-violence.

We advocate for a just solution in which Palestinians will not have to live as refugees. Jews - like many other ethnic groups and religions - have had the experience of being refugees. We know all too well what it feels like to be unwanted by a host country while desperately needing a place of safety.

JVJP will be holding its second “Liberation Seder” on second night Pesach (April 23). The first event, held last year was a great success as we unpacked the story of Pesach through the context of universal human rights and justice. We invite Alan Wolman and anyone else who is confused about JVJP’s background and aims, to attend.

Finally, children are being taught to hate and fear on both sides. We refer to hundreds of incidents where Israeli computer games or actual shooting ranges have people dressed as Palestinians as targets. We will continue advocating for a “Just Peace” where innocent children aren’t taught violence and hatred, but tolerance and understanding of each other.

Rina King and Jessica Sherman  
Jewish Voices for a Just Peace

ZUMA ET AL MANAGES TO MAKE SOUTH AFRICA INCONSEQUENTIAL

I am referring to Geoff Sifrin’s column in the Jewish Report of March 18, “Can we make sense of SA’s mixed messages?”

It makes excellent reading despite the fact that he probably wrote the piece prior to the Zuma/Gupta breaking story.

The meeting with Ambassador Dore Gold and members of the Department of International Relations and Co-operation recently is of no consequence whatsoever. The reasons are inter alia that the ANC and government prefer Sudan’s Omar al-Bashir as a friend. Bashir is a war criminal wanted by the International Criminal Court.

Government has turned a blind eye to the fact that there are no churches, synagogues or Christians or Jews allowed in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Yemen and other Muslim countries. This is expediently not deemed as “apartheid”.

Furthermore, under President Jacob Zuma, South Africa has become the laughing stock of the Western world because of fallacious policies, monetary and otherwise.

The Gupta saga has only served to rub salt in the wounds.

(Parliamentary Speaker) Baleka Mbete’s statement that “the Israeli regime, just like the apartheid regime before it, is obstinate and uncompromising”, is brainless and inane, given the fact that Arabs make up 20 per cent of Israeli citizenship and university attendance. More so, because she has never visited Israel.

With Zuma, now referred to in the media as “the wrecking ball” and (ANC Deputy General Secretary) Jessie Duarte, Zuma’s close ally and anti-Israel proponent, both embroiled in the Gupta saga, the ANC is in a struggle with its own members. Zuma seems intent on bringing the country down and along with it, his party, the ANC.

Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions is also an irrelevancy because its wings have been clipped by most Western governments. The movement has also failed dismally with Israel Apartheid Week and various other anti-Israel campaigns.

South Africa, on its downward spiral, is inconsequential in Africa, and global affairs. The ANC has also become extraneous and if another political party is voted into government, the Israeli question may become significantly different.

Until then, government and ANC will continue to spew out its empty-headed rhetoric about Israel’s policies, while no one takes notice.

Nathan Cheiman  
Northcliff, Johannesburg

SALE OF JEWISH REPORT OPENS MYRIAD OPPORTUNITIES!

The “sale” of the SA Jewish Report to the Guptas as stated in last week’s paper, is such a brilliant idea that it should have featured on the front page.

What a fantastic move! A few improvements, if you had consulted us before you concluded the deal, could be: As well as Muslim Mondays you should have Wicked Wednesdays for non-believers and you should have the launch party at Nkandla, with Jacob Zuma dressed as the King and one of the Guptas as Haman.

But who will be Esther? Maybe Wendy Kahn!

Natalie Knight  
Johannesburg

*In the spirit of Purim levity I suppose anything is possible... - Editor*

A CHAZONIS SCHOOL IS A REAL WASTE OF MONEY

I am sceptical of the Guptas buying the Jewish Report, as you stated in last week’s paper; is it an early April Fool’s joke?

It is ridiculous to move the SA Zionist Federation to Wits! Many shuls are battling to break even. A chazonis school is a real waste of money in South Africa. There are men who are shomer who can do the davening.

Men start singing early in their life and learn chazonis on an ongoing basis. My father, Rev Moses David Klaff, taught chazonis to chazonim who wanted to pursue this as a career. Chazonim often wear two hats, davening in shul and pursuing other work during the week.

Sheila Meyerowitz  
Johannesburg

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# Pesach bookings in sharp decline

**BEN SALES  
TEL AVIV**

By now, Gil Azoulay would have expected his hotels would be 80 per cent booked for Pesach. Instead, Azoulay - who runs a chain of boutique hotels - has roughly half his rooms still available.

Azoulay opened Smart Hotels - a mini-chain of three small, midrange hotels that focus on providing personal attention to guests - in May 2014. Two months later, war broke out in Gaza, stunting Israel's tourism industry. The months that followed saw a string of terror attacks in Jerusalem. Then, after a lull, a wave of stabbing and shooting attacks began last September and has yet to ease.

The conflict has taken a toll on Azoulay's business, driving down Passover reservations 30 per cent. Within the tourism industry, he's not alone.

"The whole city is experiencing this decline," he said of Jerusalem. "If once it was sold out for Passover and 'chol hamoed' [the holiday's intermediate days], that's happening less now."

The Passover season is a significant income source for Jerusalem hotels. Bookings in April 2014 and 2015, the months of Passover, accounted for nearly 10 per cent of the total hotel income for western Jerusalem in those years, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics.

Hotels across Jerusalem have seen a fall in Pesach bookings this year, according to Arie Sommer, director of the Israel Hotel Association. While he estimated that hotels would have about 85 per cent of their rooms booked ahead of Passover in a normal year, this year he says the average could be as low as 70 per cent. It's a drop that began with the July 2014 Gaza war, known in Israel as Operation Protective Edge. Prior to the conflict, in April 2014 - the month of Passover - Jerusalem hotels took in about \$40 million. April 2015 saw a 10 per cent decline, to approximately \$36



million.

"Since Protective Edge, there have been problems in incoming tourism to Israel," Sommer said. "We saw that after Protective Edge, tourism rose again. But because of [recent] difficulties in Jerusalem, there is a slowdown in tourists coming to Israel."

Violence isn't the only factor hurting Jerusalem's hotels. Apartment rentals, booked through companies like Airbnb, have cut into hotels' market share since long before the Gaza war. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, Jerusalem hotels peaked at 10 million foreign guests in 2010. Since then, there's been a steady decline.

"There was an assumption that the city was collapsing," said Ilanit Melchior, director of tourism for the Jerusalem Development Authority. "The bottom line is that there was a decline, but it was not dramatic. During the intifada of the 2000s, the city proved it knows how to recover fast. There's terror all over the world, not just in Jerusalem."

And not all Jerusalem hotels are suffering. The Waldorf Astoria Jerusalem, which opened in 2014, has reported a 200 per cent increase in bookings over last year. General Manager Guy Kleiman attributes the rise to the hotel's brand name and the praise in reviews. The Inbal, another five-star hotel, expects bookings to remain relatively stable this year. Alex Herman, Inbal's vice president of sales and marketing,

told JTA that many of its Passover guests are repeat visitors to Israel who remain relatively unfazed by the unrest.

"This is a population that comes," Herman said. "A lot of people have family here. Life goes on, life is OK."

None of the hotels contacted by JTA have advised guests to avoid certain areas, nor changed their security protocols in any way. Kleiman echoed Herman, saying the Pesach tourists in Jerusalem are often repeat visitors, and they know to avoid more dangerous areas.

"People are mature enough to know where to go, where not to go," Kleiman said. "People who come to Jerusalem in these times know the city."

Azoulay expects his hotels to withstand the decline, though he hopes calm will return soon and tourists will again feel comfortable walking the streets.

Like other hoteliers, he's also counting on Israelis to support the Jerusalem hotels by choosing to spend Passover in the capital. While overall hotel bookings have declined in Israel in recent years, domestic Israeli tourism is on a steady upswing. Internal Israeli hotel bookings increased 9 per cent between 2014 and 2015.

"We want the Israeli tourist to come, to reassure him that there's nothing to worry about," he said. "We need them. They should come to Jerusalem." (JTA)

# What's to be found on our website

**ANT KATZ**

**THE REAL BOBROFF**

**STORY** is even more interesting than the speculation some of the local media are serving up. SA Jewish Report Online managed to get the true facts from an official source.

Read how the family ran off to Australia on the weekend, leaving Bobba Elaine holding the R26 million can; how she got charged for fraud and money laundering and how the Hawks plan to bring the other three accused and at least R53 million, back to SA. Also, hear a radio interview with Ronald Bobroff. When CapeTalk called his cell phone on Tuesday morning, it is difficult to fathom whether they or he were more surprised when he answered - from Australia!

**The REAL STORY OF ISRAEL'S EXPO:** The Embassy is bringing Israel's top experts in the fields of water and agricultural science to South Africa and will hold public and private sector expos in Cape Town and Johannesburg to assist South Africa in its time of water crisis.

**21st TRIP IS REEVA'S CHERRY ON THE TOP:** Taking people to see Israel

for themselves has become quite passé, although still a very valuable endeavour. But hundreds of influential South Africans are taken on dozens of educational tours annually. Reeve Forman, acknowledged as the doyen of this genre, this time took the elite among financial and political journalists. Read what they have to say...

**HOW BDS AND IAW CAME SO UNSTUCK LAST WEEK:**

While BDS was again "selling" the old "Israel is an apartheid state" canard, SAUJS and colleagues at DEISI clobbered them at every turn.

**ISIS BOMBING:** Israelis killed and injured in Turkey were smartly evacuated, as always. Read how the IDF and MDA did their thing.

**US VP JOE BIDEN BLASTS PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT ABBAS at AIPAC** for his failure to condemn Palestinian acts of terrorism. "No leader has the right to tolerate terrorism," Biden told over 18 000 delegates at the AIPAC 2016 Conference.

Read the details of a ground-breaking **DIPLOMATIC BREAKTHROUGH BETWEEN SA AND ISRAEL**. It culminated in SA's most senior diplomat inviting his Israeli counterpart to meet. It promises to be the harbinger of many more positive events to come.



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# King David Victory Park gets in the swing of Purim

NIRVANA ROGERS

The King David Victory Park campus was buzzing with much excitement, laughter and merriment last Friday as the children and teachers dressed up in costume for the annual Purim celebrations.

The whole school was a blaze of colour with balloons, lanterns and coloured flags galore. All the children, teachers and assistants were very excited to arrive at school in their fancy dress outfits.

After icing Purim cut-out biscuits, the children were entertained by three of the parents (past pupils as well)! Peter Berman, Andy Cohen and Shelley Immerman sang songs, danced and told a beautiful story about Purim.

After eating hamantashen and exchanging shalach manot with friends everyone went home. A very special, happy and freileche day was celebrated by everyone.



Back: Jamie Smith; Misha-Lee Freinkel; Eli Sacks; Lori Cooperman; Ariella Hurvitz; Tyler Shapiro; and Talia Confait. Front: Ava Rozen; Jayden Pashut; Samantha Blend; Jacob Wainer; Yahli Shapiro; Shiraz Shapiro; and Paige Blacher.

# What a colourful lot these little tots are!



OWN CORRESPONDENT

Minnie Bersohn Nursery School in Johannesburg celebrated Purim with a great vibe. All the children came dressed up as different characters. They paraded around the garden to Purim songs. They were then treated to a Purim show acted out by the teachers. They lifted the school with their great spirit.

# Purim at RKNS full of energy

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY CARON LEVY, PRINCIPAL

This collage of photographs speaks volumes as to the positive, happy and dynamic energy that was prevalent at Rosabelle Klein Nursery School in Johannesburg last week as the children celebrated Purim - albeit somewhat early!

The kids were dressed up in all manner of costumes, from Queen Esther, King Achashverosh, Mordechai, naughty Haman, fairies, princesses, superheroes, penguins, bees, kung fu fighters and the list goes on! Even the teachers got into the groove!

The children exchanged shalach manot, gave tzedakah, ate hamantashen, and heard the story of Purim. What a wonderful spirit pervaded this very special school!



# Variety of characters for Purim at Sydenham Pre-Primary

JENNY MILLER

Purim was celebrated in great style at Sydenham Pre-Primary School last week. Kings and queens, heroes and villains, clowns, cowboys, ladybirds and policemen, made their way through the school gate.

The learners created beautiful Megillahs, puppets, clowns and rashanim to highlight the story and they baked delicious chocolate hamantashen. The chag was celebrated in the shul, songs were sung and Rabbi Yossy Goldman shared interesting information and thought-provoking ideas with the children.

To the delight of the youngsters, the staff dressed up as the Purim characters and narrated this epic tale in rhyme.



Jayden Lewus and Kayla Chemel.

# OY VEY!

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# Stand up to the school bully, Sven urges KDVPH learners

GITA LIPSCHITZ,  
SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

Sven Ruygrok who plays the part of “Ram-bo” in the local movie “Spud” was a guest at King David Victory Park High School last week. In the photograph he is pictured in the centre (with a blue shirt), surrounded by KDVP High learners. The theme of the day was blue and white in solidarity with Israel Awareness Week at university campuses.

Sven addressed the learners in an interactive talk in which he shared his personal story of how he was bullied for being a gymnast and actor.

He explained how bullies thrive off the power they get from the group who support

them. Without their “backup”, bullies won’t survive. It only takes one person to stand up to the bully, and he appealed to the learners “to be that person”.

Another excellent defence against bullying is building up your confidence, using your talents and gifts. Instead of judging people on their outside image, rather focus on getting to know who that person is on the inside.

Words are like toothpaste; once you have squeezed the tube, it’s impossible to get the toothpaste back in.

Even though you may press “delete” on your computer, the damage has been done, so he urged learners to choose their words wisely.

More news on our website [www.sajr.co.za](http://www.sajr.co.za)

## Kids’ ‘masterpieces’ adorn Cape Town piazza



OWN CORRESPONDENT

As part of the celebrations for the South African Jewish community’s 175th anniversary in Cape Town, more than 100 children enjoyed a day of painting on the piazza in front of the Jewish Museum.

The team from Art Jamming, a local art entertainment franchise popular with children, helped the children - and some adults - to create their own masterpiece. Each participant added his or her thumbprint to a “tree” which will be put up in the Gardens Shul succah hall.

Face painters, a magician and balloon artist, entertained the children while the adults enjoyed food from Café Riteve.

## KDL takes a serious view on Human Rights Day

OWN CORRESPONDENT

In light of Human Rights Day on Monday, King David Linksfield is not going to be a silent witness to the inequalities and injustice happening around the world. In order to combat this, the Awareness Committee ran a week-long informative initiative highlighting various causes such as racism, mental wellbeing, and LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer/Questioning, Transgender plus) rights.

This was the official launch of a first school-driven campaign in South Africa, run by King David, to make the school LGBTQ+ friendly. The week culminated in a powerful assembly where Leon Levy, who was one of the signatories of the Freedom Charter and was flown from Cape Town, addressed the school. During the week, pupils were asked to enter a competition, that unbeknownst to them, was fake. They were asked to upload selfies of themselves from around the school and post it onto Facebook and stand a chance to win a GoPro.

It was revealed in the assembly that the learners had “sold” their identities and “given it to us all because we promised them something” - a GoPro. The sad reality that they faced was meant to simulate the feeling of a broken promise and the dangers of being “sold”.

In the world, millions of people are promised

something - a better life or a better job - and so they give themselves to the traffickers, treating them like possessions. With a sombre atmosphere in the hall, learners were given the chance to stand up against human trafficking, or any other cause dealt with throughout the week.

Learners gathered outside the hall and flew paper aeroplanes which they had made the day before, as part of the international #FlyToFreedom campaign started by CNN.

The planes emphasise the right to be human and the personal responsibility that every person has to reduce inequality, and restore dignity to those whose humanity has been taken from them.



Photo: Benji Tenzer

Photo: Yael Gordon

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# International recognition for Margaret Hirsch



Margaret Hirsch, chief operations executive of South Africa’s Hirsch Group, is a winner of the Queen Victoria Commemorative Medal. The announcement was made by the European Business Assembly.

The award celebrates “truly responsible personalities and companies of all levels on the international business front”, with the main focus on an all-round effort to give back to the community, including company organised volunteer programmes, philanthropy and sustainable business practices.

Other recipients of this prestigious award are from the Union National Bank, UAE; Koncern Farmakom MB, Serbia; Nick Cery Conglomerate Inc, US; Polycorp Ltd, Canada; Puncak Niaga Holdings Berhad, Malaysia; Al Amar Consulting Group, Egypt; and ISD Portolan Ltd Hungary.

This is Hirsch’s 16th major business award. At the end of last year, she was the winner of the CEO Global Award for the Most Influential Woman in the Retail and Wholesale Industry for the African continent and received its Lifetime Award.

Hirsch who is a sought-after motivational speaker, is also a known champion of women’s rights.

# Ohr Somayach celebrates completion of new Sefer Torah

RABBI ZE'EV KRAINES  
OHR SOMAYACH SANDTON

On Sunday, March 13, Ohr Somayach Sandton celebrated the completion of a new Sefer Torah with a joyous parade to the shul grounds. Everyone gave honour to the Torah and took part in the music, dancing and treats.

People from the entire Johannesburg community and even from abroad, have bought their shares in this particular Sefer Torah as part of the “Tree of Life” Torah project.

A special initiative enabled schoolchildren to acquire the first letter of their Hebrew name at a reduced price and receive a beautiful laminated bookmark bearing that letter!

The writing of the last letter of the Torah was an exciting event, as the community pooled their pledges in order to dedicate the letter in the merit of Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein.

The Torah was written in Israel on the highest level of halacha and beauty.



RABBI YEHUDA STERN  
SYDENHAM SHUL

On Tuesday night last week, Sydenham Shul and Education Africa presented “Sounds of Celebration III” at Emperors Palace, a musical production featuring 180 young performers from all South African backgrounds.

They included King David Linksfield Primary School Marimba

Band, Yeshiva College, Yachad Boys’ Choir, St Dominic’s Steel Band, the CMCM Pennywhistle Ensemble and many more.

The performers were joined on stage by popular Jewish singer Choni G of the Gardens Shul in Cape Town and special guest artist, South African music icon, Pops Mohamed.

“Sounds of Celebration” is a project of Education Africa that aims to uplift and unify young South Africans through establishing “marimba hubs” in schools and community centres.

# Renowned Israeli singer leads Sandton Shul service

RABBI DAVID SHAW

Yonatan Razel, renowned Israeli singer, composer, musical arranger and conductor, was the guest artist for Shabbat Zachor at the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol in Sandton recently. He was in South Africa to perform at the wedding of friends.

Razel led a most moving Mussaf service punctuated with both his special and traditional tunes.

After a Sandton Shul kiddush, he delivered an emotional talk in which he shared some of the stories behind his most popular songs and performed a number of his well-known melodies such as Ashira Lashem, Vehi Sheamda, Katonti and others.

He spoke and performed at the third meal as well as thrilled the community with his musical rendition of Havdalah - the closing ceremony of Shabbat.



Yonatan Razel; Rabbi David Shaw; Advocate Richard Solomon; and Rabbi Ziggy Suchard.

Photo: Dan Chazen

## World News in Brief

## Biden: ‘No political will’ on either side for Israeli-Palestinian peace talks

WASHINGTON - Reflecting on his recent visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories, US Vice President Joe Biden told the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference on Sunday that there was currently “no political will, among Israelis or Palestinians” to move forward with serious peace negotiations.

“After extensive meetings with leaders on all sides, including the different [political] parties in Israel, I must tell you I didn’t walk away encouraged,” Biden said.

He condemned what he called actions on both sides that undermine trust between the Israelis and Palestinians, including Palestinian efforts to marginalise Israel at the United Nations and Israeli settlement activities. Biden drew some boos from the AIPAC crowd when he said that settlements were “eroding prospects” for a two-state solution.

While he said he knew that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was “talking about it (a two-state solution), and I hear it being talked about on the Palestinian side”, Biden argued that such talk was not being backed up by actions.

“I know we have to work on renewing that will for peace... The terrorist attacks must stop, the rhetoric that incites violence against innocents... it must stop. The acts of retribution and revenge must stop,” Biden said.

“Trends on the ground... are moving in the opposite direction, towards a one-state reality, which is a reality that is dangerous,” he said.

Biden - who on his latest visit to Israel found himself about a kilometre away from a Palestinian stabbing rampage in Jaffa that injured 11 Israelis and killed visiting American graduate student Taylor Force - condemned “the failure to condemn” terrorism and said that was “exactly what I said to [Palestinian Authority] President [Mahmoud] Abbas when I met with him in Ramallah.” (JNS.org)

## Istanbul suicide bomber reportedly trailed Israeli tourists

ISTANBUL - Several Turkish media outlets reported on Monday that contrary to initial assessments by Turkish authorities, a group of Israeli tourists were in fact the specific target of a suicide bombing on Istanbul’s busy Istiklal Street last Saturday.

Three Israelis were killed in the suicide bombing which occurred on a long pedestrian avenue lined with stores and foreign consulates. An Iranian man was also killed.

According to the latest Turkish reports, the terrorist, whose identity has since been confirmed, had waited outside the restaurant where the group of Israelis had dined on Saturday morning, detonating himself moments after they exited the establishment.

Turkey’s Haberturk newspaper reported that police were examining closed-circuit TV footage from the scene, which appeared to corroborate the report that the suicide bomber had followed the group of Israeli tourists for several kilometres from their hotel and then waited outside the restaurant where they ate breakfast.

The report suggested that the suicide bomber, identified as Islamic State member Mehmet Ozturk, recognised the Israelis were speaking Hebrew and decided to target them for that reason. (JNS.org)



# Terms ‘left’ and ‘right’ have become meaningless in SA politics



Wailing and gnashing of teeth among traditional, middle-of-the-road leftist-liberals, touched off by the election last year of the ultra-leftist Jeremy Corbyn as British Labour Party leader, continues apace.

That an unreconstructed neo-Stalinist throwback had been entrusted with leading Her Majesty’s Opposition is seen as yet more evidence of how badly “The Left” has lost its way, to the point of betraying outright the fundamental human rights and democratic values that its adherents (rather presumptuously) consider themselves to be the primary guardians of.

What has long been seen as the natural ideological home for adherents of secular democratic humanism is being hijacked by vindictive anti-Western hardliners whose deeds routinely contradict the human rights-flavoured rhetoric they purport to espouse.

Corbyn typifies this new - or, perhaps, not so new - breed of leftist. His previous record includes lauding radical Islamists as “friends” and defending Vladimir Putin’s land grab in the Ukraine.

His attitude towards his own country is demonstrated by his conspicuous refusal to sing its national anthem. Naturally, he is viscerally anti-Israel, so much so that even when address-

ing an understandably worried Labour Friends of Israel group after his election, he could not once bring himself to mention Israel by name.

Naturally, he is a full-blown BDS advocate, even as he presses for closer ties with Hamas and Hezbollah. What exemplifies the ‘Corbynistas’ of this world is their regarding Western democracies as the primary source of evil on this planet while elevating genuinely tyrannical regimes to the status of victims of the former’s supposed depredations.

Islamist movements are the primary beneficiaries of their largesse although non-Islamist dictatorships (such as Russia and North Korea) also get a clean bill of health.

The latter cases hark back to the Cold War days, when it was de rigueur in trendy leftist circles (certainly in the academic and NGO arena) to demonise “Amerika” and root for the Viet Cong and Mao tse Tung.

It is mostly mainstream Labour supporters who are dismayed by Corbyn’s unexpected ascent. Tories, already on a high following their comprehensive victory in last year’s general elections, are delighted that their traditional rivals, in apparent over-reaction to having lost so badly an election they were widely expected to win, have in choosing an unreconstructed Marxist extremist for their leader, effectively made themselves unelectable.

As the saying goes, those whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad. One hopes this is true so far as the loony left is concerned. That being said, in view of the bizarre course that the

upcoming US elections are taking, it would appear that collective insanity is not an exclusively left-wing phenomenon. Right now, Bill Clinton must be looking forward to living in the White House again, albeit under somewhat different conditions.

For decades prior to this, it was largely taken as a given that British Jewry overwhelmingly voted Labour. This in part harked back to the early years of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, when Jews substantially formed part of the struggling working classes.

A second, even more compelling reason was that originally, the worst manifestations of anti-Semitism emanated from right-leaning conservatives.

In the years leading up to the Second World War, leading members of the Tory aristocracy emerged as overt supporters of Nazi Germany (among them the weak, selfish and ultimately treacherous King Edward VIII).

It took a long time for Jews in the UK to realise that the epicentre of anti-Semitism, now directed against Jews as a national political entity rather than as a religious or ethnic group, had gradually but unmistakably shifted from the right to the left wing of the political spectrum. The penny now, however, has definitely dropped, with most Jews having supported David Cameron in both of the last two elections.

I wish one could say the same for the American Jewish community, nearly 70 per cent of whom voted for Barack Obama the second time round, despite his distinctly cool attitude

towards Israel by then having become more than apparent.

If Donald Trump does indeed capture the Republican nomination, the Democrats are likely to capture even more than the 86 per cent of the Jewish vote received by Bill Clinton in 1992.

In South Africa, by contrast, the terms “left” and “right” appear to have become meaningless in view of all the other dynamics at play.

Prior to 1994, Jews in the main voted for the liberal opposition - not altogether unexpectedly, given that by then they mostly lived among upper middle-class English-speaking progressives.

It is rather interesting to note that, taking into account the inevitable splits, amalgamations and name changes that have taken place over the years, the origins of today’s Democratic Alliance can be traced all the way back to the unification of South Africa in 1910.

It began with the South African Party, which later merged with the Nationalists to form the United Party. Then followed the breakaway of a number of UP parliamentarians to form the Progressive Party, which successively became the Progressive Federal Party after amalgamating with further UP breakaway groups, the Democratic Party after joining up with disaffected Nationalist MPs and finally, following further amalgamations, today’s DA.

In the main, it is the abovementioned parties that have captured the Jewish vote over the years (with the UP and Progressives sharing it in the 1959-1974 period).

Community Columns

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



**Above Board**  
**Jeff Katz**  
National Chairman

## SA Jewry punches above its weight

For a relatively small community, South African Jewry has always prided itself on punching above its weight in the international as well as the local context. In both respects, last week was an especially noteworthy one.

On the international front, three members of the SAJBD delegation featured on the programme of the World Jewish Congress meeting in Buenos Aires. National President Mary Kluk presented one of the resolutions during the plenary, Marc Pozniak spoke in his capacity of chairman of the WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps and African Jewish Congress President Ann Harris chaired an AJC meeting attended by representative of eight affiliated countries.

Simultaneously, Alana Baranov, who is both a member of the Board’s professional team and a vice-president of the Council for KwaZulu-Natal Jewry, was in Geneva, making representations to the United Nations Human Rights Council on behalf of the WJC Jewish Diplomatic Corps.

Among other issues, Alana addressed questions relating to minority communities, countering violent extremism and the incompatibility between democracy and racism.

On the local front, as described in more detail elsewhere in this issue, the Board, in close partnership

with SAUJS and the Jewish day schools, was involved in a range of anti-racism and community-building initiatives in the lead-up to Human Rights Day.

Our involvement was in itself of much importance to our community, particularly our youth. As has been stressed so often in this column, by myself and by my predecessors, it is incumbent on us to combine addressing our own needs as a Jewish community with participating in the affairs of the greater South African society.


As we know, the continued prevalence of racism and related intolerance in our society, which is doing so much to undermine the culture of national unity, is one of the most pressing challenges South Africa faces. Here, South African Jewry is already playing a useful role, from the outstanding work done by the SA Holocaust & Genocide Centre, through to the outreach activities carried out by our students, schools, communal organisations and the SAJBD itself.

It has been very encouraging of late to see how much these efforts are appreciated by our counterparts and how today the Board is regarded as being at the forefront of the debate on how to resolve these problems.

The experience we have in dealing with issues of anti-Semitism, racism and discrimination and the institutions we have worked with over the years to address them, means that we are well positioned to play a constructive part on the national stage.

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

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



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# A year after Nisman’s death, signs of progress in Argentina probe

**NOGA TARNOPOLSKY**  
**BUENOS AIRES, Argentina**

An extraordinary series of developments are bringing new hope - and new heartbreak - to the family and colleagues of Alberto Nisman, the Argentine federal prosecutor who was found dead last year just days after accusing then-President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner of covering up Iran’s role in the 1994 bombing of this city’s AMIA Jewish Centre.

Fourteen months after Nisman was found dead in his apartment with a single bullet in the head, no post mortem results have been released and no official cause of death has been determined.

But on February 29, Antonio “Jaime” Stiuso, Argentina’s former head of intelligence operations, who has been living in exile in the United States for the past year, delivered bombshell testimony here, accusing Kirchner of ordering a hit on Nisman and seeking to portray his death as a suicide.

“They killed Nisman because of the work he was doing,” Stiuso said in testimony lasting 17 uninterrupted hours, according to numerous media reports.

“The author of all this madness was that woman, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner,” he said. “When the madness of the former president became explicit, I had to take my family and move.”

Stiuso wasn’t done. Referring to Iran, he said: “When you have these people as your enemy, there’s no point in having bodyguards.”

At the time of his death, Nisman, 51, had been under guard by a contingent of officers from the Argentine Federal Police. Their absence from his residence on the night of January 18, 2015 has yet to be explained.

Hours after Stiuso finished testifying, the presiding judge, Fabiana Palmaghini, who took charge of the probe in December, excused herself from further handling the case. In a document over 30 pages long that she managed to produce in a matter of hours, Palmaghini charged Viviana Fein, the investigator of Nisman’s death, with ignoring testimony Stiuso provided in 2015 in which he allegedly said Nisman was killed. Hours after Nisman’s death was discovered, and for no reasons, Fein announced she was investigating it as a suicide.

The developments come exactly 100 days into Mauricio Macri’s term as president, and some see them as part of his campaign to convince world leaders he can restore Argentina’s global standing. Since he took office in December, he has been visited in Buenos Aires by the leaders of France and Italy. And Wednesday President Obama arrived, accompanied by 400 American business leaders, on the first state visit to Argentina by a US president in 27 years.

On Monday, at a news conference held in anticipation of Obama’s visit, Foreign Minister Susana Malcorra described the government’s task as “inserting Argentina in the world” - as if the Kirchner years had caused it to fall off the planet.



A vigil in Buenos Aires on January 18, the first anniversary of Argentinean prosecutor Alberto Nisman's death.

Macri’s presidency began with a flourish, annulling what was left of Kirchner’s pact to jointly investigate the AMIA bombing with Iran. Nisman had accused Tehran of masterminding the attack and produced evidence that led Interpol to issue extradition requests against senior Iranian officials, including a former foreign minister.

Last week, appearing before the first meeting of the World Jewish Congress to be held in Latin America, Macri promised to advance the investigation and lamented the harm done to Argentina’s international reputation by the lack of progress in the AMIA probe

and the scandal surrounding Nisman’s death.

“But now we are determined to bring what happened to light,” Macri told The Associated Press. Nisman had devoted the last decade of his life to investigating the AMIA bombing, which left 85 dead and hundreds wounded. Four days before his death, he charged Kirchner with attempting to cover up Tehran’s role.

Last week, Daniel Berliner, the director of Argentina’s Jewish news service, Agencia Judía de Noticias, released what he claims is the last recording of Nisman’s voice. In a telephone call conducted two days before he was found dead, Nisman spoke with eerie clarity.

“I knew that no matter what, I had to do this,” Nisman said. “I couldn’t keep this evidence to myself either for me or for the country. And well, I’ll end up as I end up. As long as the truth is known.”

Formally, Nisman’s death is still considered a “suspicious death” and is being handled by a lower court. Last week Friday, in small, stuffy chambers on the fifth floor of the Criminal Court building in downtown Buenos Aires, a panel of three judges heard arguments about the future handling of the case. (JTA)

## Arts

# Storyteller par excellence through a camera lens

**TALI FEINBERG**

Paul Weinberg (pictured) is a well-known Cape Town-based photographer, curator, filmmaker and lecturer. He spoke to Jewish Report about his activism, inspiration, and turning the camera to his family’s Jewish roots in Eastern Europe and South Africa.

“I am passionate about storytelling through the camera. Sometimes photography is not enough. Exhibitions today are all about multimedia and creating layers of interest. From very early on in my career I began working in this way,” says Weinberg.

He combined photography and activism during apartheid, founding the agencies Afrapix and South, which gained international recognition for their uncompromising role in documenting apartheid and resistance to it.

“Our main aim was to provide an alternative archive that was accessible to the left and the anti-apartheid movement,” explains Weinberg. “Many of us were doing long-term projects that looked beyond the narrow political frame of the time. I began my work on the San, (people) for example, in 1984. So, many of us were engaged in open-ended work that spoke to the issues in a more nuanced way.”

Weinberg has also delved into his Jewish roots both in South Africa and Eastern Europe. The exhibition and book *Dear Edward* (exhibited at the South African Jewish Museum in 2013), “was about turning the camera on myself and my family’s history, inspired by my great-grandfather Edward,” he explains.

“The book explores my past as I retrace my family’s footprints in South Africa. It took me to far-flung small towns in the interior, where the family found a niche in the hotel trade. In the form of postcards to my great-grandfather Edward, it is on one hand a visual narrative of this journey and on another, a multi-layered travel book, as I pieced the jigsaw of my family’s past together.”

Weaving history, historiographies, memoir and archive into a personal pilgrimage, *Dear Edward* offers insights and perspectives into a family who made this country their “adopted home”.

Explains Weinberg: “The metaphor of the postcard sets up a dialogue between me, my great-grandfather, the past and the present, and asks important questions about who writes history and who is left out.”

Much of Weinberg’s work has been with indigenous people and he has lived and worked with them often for months at a time. “I have lived a lot of my life in the bush. My most enduring project has been with the San, which has continued for 30 years. I



work against the commercialised image of the San – often presented as ‘a group of people who lived romantically as hunter gatherers in the Kalahari as if time stood still.’ Nothing could be further from the truth.”

Weinberg has just completed an exhibition about his 30-year journey with the San called *Traces and Tracks*. “It is currently showing at the !Khwa ttu gallery near Cape Town and it will move to the Origins Centre at Wits later this year, with some international venues after that. I am completing it as a book which I hope to publish before the end of 2016.” He currently works as a curator at the Centre of African Studies Gallery at UCT.

Weinberg has invested in young photographers by creating the Ernest Cole Photographic Award, “a project that David Goldblatt and I established to support creative photographic work in South Africa with an emphasis on human rights and social change”.

The award allows for a long-term project to be made into a book. “It is in honour and in the spirit of Ernest Cole, who documented black life under apartheid in the mid-1960s.” It was awarded to Dale Yudelman in 2011 and Ilan Godfrey in 2012.

Weinberg’s advice to aspiring young photographers is to “follow your heart and ask hard questions. It is both of these pursuits that will define your journey. Most of my journeys started off with a question.”

- For more information visit [www.ernestcoleaward.uct.ac.za](http://www.ernestcoleaward.uct.ac.za) and [www.paulweinberg.co.za](http://www.paulweinberg.co.za)

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Kabbalat Shabbat Service: Time: 18.00 - 19.00. Venue: Bet David, Morningside. Enquiries: Sharon (011) 783 7117.

Saturday (March 26)

• Bet David Torah study and light breakfast. Time: 08:45 – 09:45. No charge. Youth service and activities for all children ages 3 - 10. Time: 10.00 - 12.00. Shabbat morning service. Time: 10:00, followed by a brocha.

Sunday (March 27)

• Jewish Genealogical Society of SA hosts Vivienne Pivo on “Jewish Life in Mozambique from the 1890s”. Venue: HOD. Time: 19:00. Cost: R25 (incl tea & refreshments). RSVP: Hannah (011) 485-2188.

Wednesday (March 30)

• South African Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity (Sacred), presents, a talk by broadcast journalist Najma Khota on “My Journey”. Venue: The Rondavel, at Bet David Progressive Synagogue. Time: 18:30. Cost: R20 (incl light refreshments). Booking open to all faiths (but essential for catering & seating purposes.) RSVP: Rabbi Julia Margolis, e-mail: rabbijuliamargolis@gmail.com or cell 076-673-0750.

• RCHCC hosts a presentation by Wayne Josselson on “A Road Trip of a Lifetime”. He has an honours degree in sports science as well as an LLB and is a partner in an international law firm. His enthusiasm for sports, adventure and nature and a spiritual connection to Israel, led him to undertake a road trip of a lifetime. Venue: Clive M Beck Auditorium. Time: 19:30. Booking: Hazel or René (011) 728-8088/837, a/h (011) 728-837, e-mail: rchcc@telkomsa.net or rene.s@telkomsa.net or www.greatpark.co.za

• Lodge Jerusalem of the Hebrew Order of David international is holding a bingo evening at the HOD Centre in Orchards. All prices in cash. Time: 19:30 for 20:00. Tickets at R100 for five games are available from Colin 072-114-6969; Louis 083-457-7827; Joe (011) 485-5140 [w]; or Allen 082-334-0998.

• Second Innings hosts an outing to Lifestyle Garden Centre and guided tour of Student Garden Exhibition. The bus departs at 09:30 from the parking below Golden Acres. Cost: R140 includes the bus, a guided tractor trailer tour and one drink. Helen Wolfson (011) 532-9701.

Thursday (March 31)

• Bet David weekly discussion group with Rabbi Adrian Schell covering “The Prayers of our Siddur”. Time: 18:00 – 19:30. No charge. Venue: Bet David, Morningside. Enquiries: Sharon (011) 783-7117.

• JJAC invites Jewish singles aged 27 - 49 to Jittery Citizens Comedy Improv Troupe” at 20:00 at the Joburg Theatre. If you like “Whose Line Is it Anyway” then this is for you. E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za to book.

News

World Jewish issues at UNHRC

ALANA BARANOV REPRESENTED SA JEWRY

Minority rights, Iran, Israel and the state of racial discrimination worldwide, were just some of the many topics covered in statements delivered by representatives of the World Jewish Congress at the UN Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva over the last couple of weeks.

I was one of the representatives for the World Jewish Congress at the UNHRC. The WJC was created over 80 years ago in Geneva in response to growing anti-Semitism in Europe and today works to combat all forms of intolerance and represents over 100 Jewish communities worldwide.

As a steering committee member of the WJC’s flagship programme, the Jewish Diplomatic Corps (JDCorps), I was among a group of Jewish Diplomats who travelled to Geneva over the past few weeks to deliver prepared statements on topics of vital interest to Jewish communities across the globe.

I also represented the World Jewish Congress at various side events held alongside the general assembly at the United Nations, as well as at various diplomatic meetings and events.

As part of my preparation for the Council, I drafted four statements to be delivered as part of debates on minority issues; the human rights dimension of countering violent extremism; the incompatibility between democracy and racism; and the state of racial discrimination worldwide.

Despite the time constraints and competition between non-governmental organisations for the few spaces available to speak, I was able to deliver three statements directly to the Council and submit the fourth to be included in the records of the discussions.

The key point of all four statements were intrinsically intertwined with



Alana Baranov listening to the translation of the discussions at the UN Human Rights Council.

the underlying need to both prevent and combat anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry around the world, whether it is hate targeting Jews, refugee and asylum seeker groups, or members of the LGBTI community.

Drawing on my experiences with both the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and the Hate Crimes Working Group, I was able to share best practice on issues such as the monitoring of patterns of hate crimes to solutions for restorative justice where discrimination has occurred.

The rise of anti-Semitism across the world, as well as the need to strengthen democratic principles and mechanisms to truly challenge violent extremism were stressed in all my submissions alongside the need for community outreach projects, government awareness campaigns on discrimination and interfaith initiatives.

Multifaceted strategies that take a whole-of-society approach, are the only way to combat hate and violence fuelled by radical ideologies.

While in Geneva, I also had the opportunity to not only meet with the Israeli Mission at the United Nations and the diplomats representing South Africa at the Human Rights Council, but also to attend side events.

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# Cecil Alexander sets his sights on sinking his putts

**JACK MILNER**

“When I lost my sight people said I was brave. When my father left, people said I was brave. But it is not bravery; I have no choice. I wake up and live my life. Don’t you do the same?”

This is a line spoken by a blind French girl to a young boy in Pulitzer Prize-winning author Anthony Doerr’s All The Light We Cannot See.

Those words could so easily apply to Cecil Alexander, who lost his sight in an accident 27 years ago. The adjustment obviously had to be huge, but the optimism displayed by Cecil is remarkable and contagious. He spent almost eight months at the (then) Johannesburg General Hospital to recover, but the adjustment to a “new life” took far longer.

“I don’t think about what I haven’t got. I just thank Hashem for everything I have got,” says Cecil. “We have to realise how much we take for granted. I was a watch-maker. And I repaired watches for blind people, brail watches and ones where you had to feel the hands. I never thought I would one day be wearing one.”

But Cecil loves golf and a radio story coupled with his enthusiastic former dentist changed his life. Cecil listened to a radio programme where they discussed the Wii Nintendo Sports and a chat to Zummy Isenberg, who had a passion for the television game.

Cecil was looking for ways to improve his golf and found the solution in Zummy and the Wii game. It looked an impossible task for a totally blind person to play the game, but Zummy, after some thought, came up with a solution.

Very much like a second helps a blind runner to keep him in his lane, Zummy

devised a way in which he could talk Cecil through the game. But when you watch the pair, there is very little advice coming from Zummy. It’s more about lining Cecil up so he gets the best direction for the ball.

For example, the game puts up a wind speed and direction which Cecil obviously cannot read off the TV, so Zummy will pass on that information.

“I give him no more information than he would get from a caddy if he was on the golf course,” says Zummy.

Otherwise it’s all up to Cecil and the day I sat with him he had just failed to get to his record of seven-under-par for the nine holes.

But Cecil also gets on to the “real” golf course where he does his thing with a proper club and proper ball. “For me walking on to the tee is like walking into Hashem’s of-

“For me walking on to the tee is like walking into Hashem’s office. The grass is like walking on a thick carpet, you have the birds singing, the warmth of the sun... It is a beautiful experience.”

fice. The grass is like walking on a thick carpet, you have the birds singing, the warmth of the sun... It is a beautiful experience.”

Former pro Gavin Levinson is the man who works with Cecil. “The clubs have what I call a ‘nipple’ so I can line up properly. I have to get the thumb for my left hand on the top bump and the thumb from my right hand on the lower one. When both thumbs



Blind golfer Cecil Alexander sinks another putt as he is ably assisted by his “caddie” Zummy Isenberg.

are touching those bumps it indicates to me the club face is straight.

“Gavin tees up the ball for me and holds the driver head behind the ball. I then bend my knees and put my hands on my knees and have to shuffle my feet to get into my position.

“From that point I straighten my knees, place my right foot out and turn my left toes to the left. I am now standing on my own.

“Gavin leaves my club head, looks around and gives the command ‘clear’. We do that because on one occasion some guy walking by was so interested in what we were doing that he came too close to me as I was taking my back swing, and I hit him.”

Cecil then also responds to “clear”, takes his back swing, connects with the ball “and I then stay in the follow-through position at which point Gavin tells me where my ball has gone.

“I can tell from the sound my club makes when it hits the ball, whether I have connected the ball beautifully on the sweet spot. That’s basically like a ‘ting’. On the other hand I can also tell from the sound how badly I may have hit the ball.

“Gavin then tells me the distance and direction the ball travelled and whether I lifted my head. Actually, I seldom miss the ball because I don’t have to lift my head to see where the ball has gone.”

Cecil is the only totally blind golfer in the country and a few years ago he played the Disabled Golf Championship in Somerset West. “Funnily enough, the blind world champion is an Israeli.”

Cecil also goes around to schools and talks to the kids about living with a disability. But Zummy has performed a superb job in helping Cecil to wake up and live his life and he would be keen to do the same thing for others.

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# It was a glorious day of football as Maccabi triumphs



**ILAN HERRMANN**

Teams from across Johannesburg came together last weekend to participate in the 3rd Soul Workout Annual Jewish Unity Sports Event. The day was nothing short of gruelling and intensive with some five hours of soccer being played.

Under shul names, community group representations and some independents, the teams comprised all types: rabbis, high school learners, university students, former professionals, some veterans and some up-and-coming talented youngsters.

The early round robin matches were fierce in speed and high velocity, but as the day wore on and legs started to weary, the games slowed and became more about skill

and strategy.

This was the backdrop to the victory by the team playing under the name Maccabi. They were in the blue and white colours of Israel and had strong representation from the Sephardic communities.

With blistering results Maccabi cruised through to the semi-finals. There they met a rugged Vets Inc team that had squeezed through to the knock-outs and came into the game carrying limps and injuries.

Vets went ahead and all agreed that they were undone by a refereeing error when Maccabi equalised. The blue and white then snatched victory with a second goal just before the final whistle and went through to the finals.

Arguably the most focused and well-blended side with skill and teamwork on the day, was team Baseruto. They trounced their way to the final with goals galore and a charming interplay style.

On to the final and despite early pressure from Baseruto, Maccabi snatched a goal with a counter-attack. This clever strategy worked again midway through the match to give Maccabi a 2 - 0 lead. Baseruto did everything they could, but Maccabi were stoic and eventually capitalised again with a stunning individual goal to seal it 3 - 0.

What a day! The braai and music complemented the soccer and the Maccabi players were all smiles as the trophy, gold medals and a R2 800 cash prize were handed out.