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# Heavyweights tackle the issues at SAJBD conference




Photo: Ilan Osendryver


South African Jewry were eager for some answers when about 1000 of them attended the impeccably organised South African Jewish Board of Deputies biennial conference at Gold Reef City in Johannesburg last Sunday. The roulette tables, one-arm bandits and flashing lights on the casino floor next door inspired a positive, uninhibited atmosphere in which heavyweights - President Jacob Zuma; World Jewish Congress President Ronald Lauder; and pièce de résistance, French philosopher and towering intellectual, Bernard-Henri Levy (pictured) addressed the crowd. Zuma was flattering in his comments about the Jewish contribution to South Africa but his listeners, the crème de la crème of Jewish society, and others, hoped for more. Levy, with his chic, French-accented English, debunked the canard of Israel as an apartheid state; and Lauder encouragingly noted that SA represents a beacon of hope in a very troubled world. See pages 3, 7, 8 & 9.

<p><b>Cyril Harris - a larger-than-life figure</b></p> <p>The legacy of the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris was the theme at the launch of a book in Johannesburg on his life to mark the 10th anniversary of his passing. The full title of the book is “Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris - How humanity, morality and humour helped lead a community”.</p> <p>2</p>	<p><b>A well-deserved honour for sprightly Bertie Lubner</b></p> <p>Energetic Dr Bertie Lubner (84) has devoted the greater part of his life to the community, both Jewish and secular. At the biennial conference of the SAJBD, he was awarded the prestigious Eric Samson/Mendel Kaplan Communal Service Award.</p> <p>4</p>	<p><b>Validity of Mavi Marmara warrants in SA contested</b></p> <p>There's a tit-for-tat spat between pro- and anti-Israel lobby groups over the validity of arrest warrants in SA for four Israeli generals who headed Israel's military in 2010, when the ship, the Mavi Marmara, was prevented from breaking the Gaza blockade, leading to nine deaths.</p> <p>5</p>	<p><b>Einat Wilf - razor-sharp master of many trades</b></p> <p>Dr Einat Wilf, an Ivy League-educated scholar, self-identifying atheist and feminist and ardent Zionist, was in SA as a guest of WIZO and the SAZF. She presented a version of the word “Zionist” that doesn't often get a hearing in today's soundbite-saturated media environment.</p> <p>10</p>	<p><b>A tale of two Pollards</b></p> <p>Pretoria playwright Victor Gordon, also a member of the SAZF Media Team, wrote a highly-acclaimed play on Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard, which played in Tel Aviv for two years. He writes about Jonathan and the young Springbok rugby sensation, Handré Pollard.</p> <p>17</p>
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# Peace in the Middle East: You carry the key



Parshat Vayislach  
Rabbi Asher Deren  
Chabad of the West Coast

The South African Jewish community is fuming over Hamas sympathiser President Jacob Zuma’s suggestion this week that the bombing attacks in Paris are somewhat connected to the Middle East and Israel in particular.

But he isn’t the only one hoping for peace in the Middle East this week.

“And I will return in peace to the house of my father.”

These words are from the narrative of this week’s parsha, immediately after Yaakov wakes

up from the dream of the ladder and the angels ascending and descending from heaven.

These are the words of Yaakov, brother of Esav, nephew of Ishma’el and soon to be son-in-law of Laban, all of whom would have gladly offered him peace - in the context of “rest in peace” our beloved Yaakov, G-d forbid.

But what is this peace that Yaakov is hoping for after everything else he asks for? He’ll already be, as the verse says “with G-d” and have his needs provided for, be protected, and everything will be OK. What’s this “AND I will return in peace” that he is looking for?

Sure, we’ll be OK. The Jewish people have thankfully “had G-d with them” from the yeshiva in Africa that Yaakov himself established in Goshen, all the way through to the plethora

of beautiful Jewish day schools and shuls in South Africa today.

Yes, “He will watch over us on the way” from the military crisis with Esav that Yaakov by the grace of G-d avoided, all the way through to the Iron Dome defence systems today, He has always found ways to watch over us.

But will I “return in peace?” The absence of peace is a reflection of our own inner war. Israel is at war with itself in defining what it does mean to be “Jewish,” as a state, a nation, and the borders around that. That war - the inner war - is what our enemies live off of.

Yaakov wasn’t worried about survival. That he knew G-d would ensure. But he wondered about the purpose and meaning of all this. Would anything useful and different be

achieved on this journey that he was setting out on?

Instead of us just fuming on Facebook about President Zuma (and Prime Minister Netanya-hu for that matter), we need to face the brutal truth that peace in Israel requires a far more holistic and internal solution than this or that status update. Yes, YOU carry the key to peace in the Middle East - and your midlife crisis.

Make peace in your home. Work on it. Make peace between the truth of Torah and our faith in G-d and a secular world that denies its existence. Be more Jewish yourself. That makes the Jewish state more Jewish - and more peaceful.

Yaakov realised that it was his own inner peace that would bring peace to his father’s home. Maybe it’s time we realise that as well.

News

World News in Brief

## Cyril Harris - a larger-than-life figure

SUZANNE BELLING

The legacy of the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris - a moral and mitzvah imperative - was the theme at the launch of a book on his life to mark the 10th anniversary of his passing, at the venue that bears his name, the Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre.

Edited by former Jewish Report editor Geoff Sifrin, the book, “Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris - How humanity, morality and humour helped lead a community”, was published by Batya Bricker for the Chief Rabbi CK Harris Memorial Foundation.

Ann Harris, widow of Rabbi Harris, opened the programme by thanking all those involved in the writing, production and financing of the book. She said it was the story of her late husband’s ministry.

Chief Rabbi Harris had intended writing a commentary on Pirkei Avot during his retirement, but he passed away prematurely before he was able to do so, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein said at the launch.

Yet Rabbi Harris created a commentary by living the principles espoused in each mishna of the tractate.

“A true Torah scholar is someone who embodies its teachings in daily life,” Rabbi Goldstein said, citing several verses from the Ethics of the Fathers.

“He lived life with urgency and impatience, but was loved by all.

“He was passionate about this country and endeared himself to all. He inspired us to believe in the future of South Africa,” Rabbi Goldstein said, as was illustrated at the 1994 inauguration of President Nelson Mandela, when Rabbi Harris spoke with “such majesty and golden words”, quoting Isaiah.

He was a great leader and his presence electrified the room when he entered.

Ann Harris and her husband were rightly described as the “royal couple” of South African Jewry, guest speaker Constitutional Court Justice Edwin Cameron said.



Photo: Suzanne Belling

Trustees of the Chief Rabbi CK Harris Memorial Foundation at the launch of the book on the late Chief Rabbi’s life, with the book’s editor, Geoff Sifrin (second from left). The trustees are (from left): Mickey Glass; Rabbi Jonathan Glass; Bertie Lubner; Herby Rosenberg, Ann Harris; and Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft.

Rabbi Harris was more than the right man at the right time - at a tempestuous and perilous time.

According to Cameron, the book reveals him as a commanding presence - “an open-spirited, large-hearted human being, with a rare gift for oratory and human engagement” - and human frailties and foibles.

He was closely connected to the presidency of Nelson Mandela and had “a previously unthinkable political prominence and political influence. This required risk-taking and courage.

“He went before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and apologised for ‘the evil of indifference which so many in the Jewish community professed’ during apartheid,” Cameron related.

Rabbi Harris had died before his time. Mandela died seven years later.

“What do their lives say for us in South Africa today? They call us to the three great gifts of humane leadership” - having vision when visibility is impaired or even seen as nonexistent; offering our foes what they did not offer us in return - dignity and justice; and calling us to an encompassing and inclusive vision of our own and others’ humanity.

“In an uncertain world we have to hope for many of Mandela’s and Cyril Harris’ kind.”

Justice Cameron highlighted the role Ann

Harris played in the life, career and impact of her husband.

“Ann is herself a person of formidable skills, strong personality and redoubtable courage.”

Zamie Liknaitzky introduced Justice Cameron and Foundation trustee Mickey Glass introduced a video by Shawn Levin on the work of the Foundation and its four groups of beneficiaries in which Rabbi Harris had a particular interest - Jewish community services, medical care for vulnerable children, development skills for disadvantaged communities and “rabbis for the 21st century, practical rabbinics”.

In her closing remarks, veteran community leader Marlene Bethlehem, recalled being present at the TRC when Rabbi Harris apologised on behalf of the community for its silence during apartheid.

Cantor Yudi Cohen and his group, Diversity, provided musical interludes.

• “Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris - How humanity, morality and humour helped lead a community” is published on behalf of The Chief Rabbi CK Harris Memorial Foundation by Batya Bricker. Price: R220. Available from the Kollel Bookshop, Johannesburg, and the Museum Shop, Gardens, Cape Town. Next year it will also be available at Exclusive Books.

## Palestinians have right to make ‘Israeli women cry’

JERUSALEM - An official from the Mahmoud Abbas-led Palestinian Fatah faction has said that Palestinian Arabs have a “right” to make “Israeli women cry”, Palestinian Media Watch reported through translations of Palestinian media reports.

Fatah Central Committee member Jamal Muhaisen - speaking at a rally honouring dead Palestinian terrorist Muhannad Halabi, who stabbed and killed two Jews last month – said: “It is the right of our young men to cause Israeli women to cry like our women are crying, even though our women make sounds of joy after their sons’ and husbands’ deaths as martyrs.”

At the same rally, Palestine Liberation Organisation members described Halabi as a hero and a role model for the youths. (JNS.org)

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“This product is not under supervision and cannot be eaten. Investigative and corrective action is being taken.” The kashrut division further advises that butter manufactured by Lady Smith is incorrectly labelled as “parev”. We are working with the company to amend this error as soon as possible.”

Shabbat Times		
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Starts	Ends	
18:15	19:18	Johannesburg
18:15	20:17	Cape Town
18:15	19:16	Durban
18:15	19:33	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:49	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:36	East London

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# Struggle icon Leon Levy finally honoured by the community



President Jacob Zuma, Leon Levy, Anne Harris and Mary Kluk.

## DAVID SAKS

Veteran trade unionist Leon Levy was involved in some of the most significant initiatives of the Congress Movement during the 1950s, a crucial decade that in retrospect laid the building blocks for a future democratic, non-racial society.

As president of the SA Congress of Trade Unions, a position he held for nine years, he helped to organise the famous Congress of the People, and on behalf of the independent trade unions, was one of the six original signatories to the Freedom Charter that was formerly adopted at that gathering.

For this, he was one of 30 activists who was tried and eventually acquitted, on charges of treason. He was the first person to be detained under the 90-day detention law and like many other Struggle activists, was finally forced due to state harassment to go into exile in the UK.

On his return in the 1990s, he resumed his work in the trade union movement, inter alia playing a key role in Cosatu’s submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

At its national conference on Sunday, the SAJBD honoured Levy by presenting him with the Rabbi Cyril and Ann Harris Human Rights Award. The award, inaugurated in 1999, is presented at each biennial Board conference to Jewish community members who have made a particularly noteworthy contribution to the advancement of human rights and social justice in South Africa.

This accolade was recently renamed in honour of the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, whose 10th yahrtzeit was in September this year, and his wife, Ann, both of whom were prominently engaged in various aspects of South Africa’s transition to democracy from their arrival in the country in 1987 onwards.

On coming up to receive the award, Levy was warmly embraced by President Jacob Zuma, whom he had known during the years when both were in exile in London.

The award itself was presented by Ann Harris, who praised Levy for having been one of only a small minority of whites who refused to accept the unjust, racially discriminatory system that denied the majority of the population the most basic human rights.

“The name of Leon Levy has an honoured place in the history of the liberation struggle. Tonight, the Jewish community recognises, and lauds you for the part you played in bringing freedom to our beloved country,” she said.

Prior to this, legendary philanthropist, business achiever and Jewish communal leader Bertie Lubner and the professional staff of the Community Security Organisation were presented with the Eric Samson Mendel Kaplan Communal Service Award by Eric Samson and Jill Kaplan respectively. CSO National Director Jevon Greenblatt accepted the award on behalf of his organisation.

# Jewish concern over Hamas visit ‘noted’, says Zuma

## DAVID SAKS

The number one question that those present at Sunday’s SAJBD national conference will have wanted President Jacob Zuma to answer would undoubtedly have been why his party not only invited Hamas to South Africa, but bestowed upon it the legitimacy of a bona fide liberation movement, little different from the ANC itself.

Predictably, there was no hint in the president’s address that his government may have rethought its position, nor that a reciprocal invitation to an Israeli delegation was being envisaged.

Zuma nevertheless departed briefly from his prepared script to concede that the manner in which Hamas had been received and the lack of consultation with the Jewish leadership in that regard, had caused concern in the Jewish community and that this had been “noted”.

This was evidently in response to what was conveyed to him by the SAJBD leadership at a private meeting just prior to the event.

Zuma also confirmed that the country would continue to interact with both sides with a view to helping to get the peace process underway again.

“We believe that as South Africa we can play a role and we are in processes of trying to make stronger interaction on both sides and I hope we will work together as we did before with many from the Jewish community,” he said.

He stressed that in the view of his government, its support for a free Palestine was “in no way against the existence of the State of Israel and the safety of the Israeli nation”, but that on the contrary, its establishment would “lay a solid foundation for lasting peace in the Middle East”. There was nevertheless a palpable rumble of dissent from the audience when Zuma said that East Jerusalem should become the capital of a future Palestinian state.

As has become standard in addresses by government spokesmen at SAJBD events, Zuma paid fulsome tribute to the many Jews who had taken part in the anti-apartheid struggle and urged the Jewish community to bring its skills and resources to bear in helping to address the pressing social and economic challenges that South Africa faced.

The garish décor of Gold Reef City’s Lyric Theatre, combined with the gaudy winking of the slot machines in the casino outside, may have had something to do with it, but the mood at the SAJBD conference was unusually uninhibited.

Spontaneous outbursts of clapping and cheering erupted throughout the event, with guest speakers Ronald Lauder and Bernard-Henri Levy receiving standing ovations and even President Zuma eventually receiving a generous round of applause.

In her introductory address, outgoing SAJBD Chairman Mary Kluk, pledged the Board’s commitment to helping ensure that South Africa remained a non-racial, multicultural democracy, where all minorities felt safe and accepted. She attributed

the country’s relatively low rate of anti-Semitism to “the strong culture of antiracism” that underpinned it, as well as to “the fundamental decency, generosity and spirit of tolerance that characterises the South African people”.

That being said, she noted that while anti-Semitism levels in South Africa remained relatively low, they were clearly on the rise.

Both Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, and celebrity French intellectual Bernard-Henri Levy, invoked South Africa’s success in achieving a negotiated, peaceful transition to multiracial democracy as a model for the international community at a time no-one could feel safe from the continued spread of radical Islam.

South Africa, Lauder said, was “a beacon of hope in a very troubled world”. It represented one of the few cases where then warring parties had peacefully resolved their differences, and it had happened in the end because South Africans themselves had decided, “enough hatred, enough division, enough conflict”.

By contrast, Hamas had “absolutely no intention of living alongside a Jewish state”, and the Jewish experience showed only too clearly that when murderous dictators said they wanted to kill you, they meant what they said. South Africa could play a role in advancing Israeli-Palestinian peace prospects by engaging with all the parties and explaining why violence had to be rejected.

Levy recalled how the fight against apartheid had been one of the great causes of his generation and how proud he had been when apartheid was overthrown, not least because so many Jews had been at the frontline of the struggle to defeat it.

By contrast, today’s BDS movement only pretended to be conducted in the name of peace, democracy and human rights when in reality it was seeking Israel’s destruction through political means.

Addressing Zuma directly, Levy asked how BDS activists dared to describe Israel, the most successful multi-ethnic society that he knew and where Arabs, Africans, Europeans, Kurds, Turks and so many other races and ethnicities co-existed in peace and equality, as the “new apartheid”.

Today, he said, no-one was safe from the new terror of fascist Jihadism, and BDS were the useful idiots of this new fascist way.

At the SAJBD’s National Executive Committee meeting held in the morning prior to the conference, the following senior office-bearers were elected: National Chairman - Jeff Katz; National Vice-Chairmen (respectively representing Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal) Doron Joffe, Eric Marx and Ronnie Herr; National Treasurer - Raymond Goss; Chairman Country Communities - Marlene Bethlehem. Immediate Past Chairman Mary Kluk assumes the position of National President, while Zev Krengel remains on the executive committee in the capacity of National Vice-President.

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# Zuma at pains to portray government as ME honest broker

ANT KATZ

Last week Thursday President Jacob Zuma (pictured) was in the National Assembly for his final President’s Question Session for 2015. He used some 20 minutes of the 114 minute-session to explain government’s position on peace in the Middle East and the recent ANC-Hamas interaction in South Africa.

When questioned on the visit by the Hamas delegation to South Africa, he answered that “South Africa strongly believes that all Palestinian parties need to unite... in order to effectively negotiate with the State of Israel for a viable and united Palestinian state. In so doing,” he said, SA “supports reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas”.

In answer to an unstated question by Rev Kenneth Meshoe of the ACDP, Zuma said that South Africa “supports international efforts aimed at the establishment of a viable Palestinian state, existing side-by-side with Israel”. However, he added, “we think [of] internationally recognised borders based on those existing on June 4, 1967, prior to the outbreak of the 1967 Arab/Israeli War”, or as it is known to Jews, the Six Day War.

Zuma endeavoured to present the SA government as being impartial in the matter - and that the country would “continue to play a constructive role in the peace process”.

Meshoe then noted that: “The Hamas charter explicitly stipulates... and I quote: “There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad. Initiatives, proposals and international conferences are a waste of time and a farce.’ Hamas is an Islamist extremist movement committed to extending the global Islamic caliphate through radical violent means to every inch of Israel and beyond,” and does not share the values of democ-



racy, freedom of religion and gender equality that SA does.

Zuma responded by saying that the situation in the Middle East with regard to Israel and the Arabs in general had evolved over a period of time. “There was a time when all Arabs were saying... that Israel must disappear, but that time has passed. Now they [Hamas] accept the need for Israel to exist side-by-side.”

Zuma said that when the ANC [recently] met Hamas, Hamas “did not present that position to the ANC. They presented a position that accepts that there must be a peaceful solution there. That’s what they are saying.” He questioned when the Hamas charter had been written and said he believed Hamas’ policies had changed over time.

The opposition benches took Zuma’s claims of the ANC government’s impartiality and thus being able to be an honest broker in the Middle

East, with a pinch of salt.

One opposition member asked: “In light of the complex nature of the conflict... don’t you agree that picking a side compromises South Africa’s ability to play a crucial role in the future, in assisting to resolve this crisis, which requires us to be objective?”

Zuma replied: “We are not picking sides... we have a very clear policy on this. We’ve met Israelis. Many times... discussed the issues. They themselves have said they believe SA has a role to play to help them. To help both sides. They even agreed that meeting the Palestinians is very important for South Africa.

“We now have met Hamas. We have met other groupings. So we are not choosing sides.”

Zuma added that “both sides, by the way, accept that South Africa has a role to play to help them arrive at a conclusion of their conflict”.

It is for this reason, he said, that SA is viewed by both sides to be better placed to be able to assist in the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

At the end of the debate, an ANC back-bencher

asked Zuma whether he believed that “the continuous building of illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories is a hindrance to reconciliation”.

In response, Zuma said: “Yes, definitely. It is a hindrance. And it is, in fact, not helping the process to move forward... That’s part of what we discuss with Israel.”

The president said he believed Israel would retreat from where it was, that it would go back to the 1967 borders and show a readiness to live side by side with the Palestinian state.

“At the beginning of the existence of Israel, the issue of Israel’s defending itself was because all the Arab governments then had the view that it must not be there,” said the president. The Arab countries did not want Israel to exist. “And we all said they need to exist.”

But times had changed, he pointed out, and attitudes too. At times, said Zuma, people are one-sided and think that Hamas is more extreme. “They forget that Israel also is very extreme. And that’s why there’s been a non-ending fight.”

## A well-deserved honour for sprightly Bertie Lubner



SUZANNE BELLING

Dr Bertie Lubner is 84, although, with his energy and alert mind, it’s hard to believe. He has devoted the greater part of his life to the community, both Jewish and secular.

At the biennial national conference of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies on Sunday, he was awarded the prestigious Eric Samson/Mendel Kaplan Communal Service Award in the presence of both Eric and Sheila Samson and Jill Kaplan, widow of the late Mendel.

Bertie is a very emotional person, something that belies his business acumen and achievements, his high office in many organisations and his dedication to South Africa and the Jewish community.

“I hate to admit it, but I was so emotional that I forgot the last part of my speech [on the night] which included thanking my wife Hilary, my children Richard, Tony, Marc and Su and mentioning my six grandchildren!” Bertie admits.

He has a philosophy on his way of life: philanthropy. He asks: “What can I do to make a real difference?” He adds that “nobody can make a success in life without the help of others. You measure true success in two ways – in your own life, yourself and your family and the second part is when you add value to the lives of others.”

He has a favourite quote, given to him by his children: “Politics without principles, education without character, science without humanity, commerce without morality, are not only useless, but positively dangerous.”

He applies this to all aspects of his life.

Bertie has given about 40 years of service to the Board of Deputies and is honorary life president of the Gauteng Board.

When it comes to his résumé, through

length, one has to leave out his numerous awards and positions, but concentrate on the achievements in more recent years.

With the late Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris, he was founder of Afrika Tikfun, which has become one of the largest outreach projects in South Africa. Its chief patron was the late President Nelson Mandela, with whom Bertie had a close personal relationship.

He says that Afrika Tikfun “only really grew after (his son) Marc took over as chief executive eight years ago”. Bertie remains chairman of the organisation.

In business with his brother Ronnie, he was chairman of the PG Group, only stepping down after 40 years to concentrate on community and country.

He and Ronnie founded the Field Band Foundation, which gives previously underprivileged children a chance to develop their musical talents. There are branches throughout South Africa.

The oldest serving member of the Board of Business Leadership (formerly the SA Foundation of which he was vice-chairman), Bertie is also a founder of the Manufacturing Circle, “to give manufacturers their own voice”. He resigned as chairman after heading the executive for 20 years.

He is a vice-president of the Institute of Directors, a vice-chairman of the Board of Governors of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and president of the SA Associates of BGU.

He retains his seat on the board of the SA Jewish Report, on which he has served since its inception 17 years ago.

Still a keen golfer - he used to play tournament golf - Bertie played tennis until a few years ago and rugby and baseball during his days at the University of the Witwatersrand and beyond.

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# Validity of Mavi Marmara warrants in SA contested

ANT KATZ

A tit-for-tat spat between pro- and anti-Israel lobby groups over the validity of arrest warrants in South Africa for four Israeli generals who headed Israel’s military in 2010 when the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara was prevented from breaking the Gaza blockade - should they enter South Africa - continues. SAPS spokesman Brigadier Mangwani Malaudzi said he was “dumbfounded” when the letter over the six-and-a-half-year-old incident surfaced at an obscure SAPS unit. Malaudzi says that while he was correctly quoted as saying it “is being processed... for compliance”, this is actually a lengthy process, involves multiple agencies in numerous countries - and certainly does not mean anything had changed now, or will in the future.

Brigadier Mangwani Malaudzi said he was “dumbfounded” when the letter over the six-and-a-half-year-old incident surfaced at an obscure SAPS unit.

The current back-and-forth was sparked last week after South Africa’s Independent Media Group and their website IOL, published a story claiming that the Hawks had said they would arrest any of the four heads of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), for their role in the attack on the Mavi Marmara vessel which was part of the flotilla to Gaza in 2010.

Independent Media based their story on what was said to be an official letter written by a SAPS official, whose name the source of the story said they were “not at liberty to disclose”.



Jewish Report managed to establish from the Hawks that the story had been “malicious gossip” which was published last Tuesday.

Independent Group’s foreign editor, Shannon Ebrahim, then published a front page, Cape Times story headlined: “Israeli military chiefs face arrest in SA” on Thursday November 19, which was quickly followed up by a multitude of statements from anti-Israel lobby groups.

A prominent Jewish organisational pundit, who asked not to be named, told Jewish Report: “Suspiciously, links to this story were circulated suddenly by numerous anti-Israel lobby groups” that same morning. The SA arm of the US-based NGO Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (against Israel), (BDS-SA) and the Media Review Network (MRN) were among them.

On November 20, SA Zionist Federation National Chairman Ben Swartz hit back and publicly challenged Independent Newspapers to, essentially, put up or shut up as they continued to withhold sources and evidence and after he, too, had been told by the Hawks personally that they were not aware of the letter.

Last Sunday, November 22, IOL published a story sourced from African News Agency

titled “Tiff over Turkey arrest warrants report” on the ongoing spat between the pro- and anti-Israel lobbyists, in which they suggested that it was now an Interpol warrant that had been issued by Turkey.

“SAPS confirms pledge to arrest Israeli 4” was then posted on Monday morning by Ebrahim, who wrote: “On Sunday, SAPS Brigadier Hangwani Malaudzi confirmed” in writing that the letter which the SAPS had issued on this matter “is being processed to the relevant section for compliance”.

Jewish Report on Monday morning spoke to Brig Malaudzi who confirmed that a letter had emerged. He was also “dumbfounded”, when the letter finally surfaced, he said. It had been the SAPS’ “Crime Against the State Unit” he told SA Jewish Report.

However, says Brig Malaudzi, Ebrahim’s quote that he had said the letter “is being processed to the relevant section for

The Turkish ship Mavi Marmara was part of a flotilla of six civilian boats which sailed from Turkey on May 31, 2010, trying to break an Israeli blockade of Gaza. It was the only ship in the flotilla which refused Israeli military instructions not to proceed - and was thus boarded by Israeli naval commandos.

Some 40 of the 590 passengers put up a fight. Nine, including eight Turkish nationals and a Turkish American, died. A tenth one died some four years later, having been in a coma.

Ten of the Israelis commandos were injured, one seriously. It put tremendous strain on Israeli-Turkish relationships.

compliance”, did not mean that the Israeli generals would be arrested if they entered SA now, or, maybe, ever. It was “somewhat misleading”.

The matter was “now being taken to Interpol”, Malaudzi told SAJR. The original letter had been issued by Interpol and Malaudzi said that, as an Interpol member, South Africa still had to establish the veracity and validity of the document from the “Interpol mother body”.

If Interpol confirms the document is still valid, said Malaudzi, SAPS would still have to go through a series of processes and “deal with bodies such as the NPA (National Prosecuting Authority), DOJ (Department of Justice), DIRCO (Department of International Relations and Co-operation), etc, before making a decision regarding any action they may take.

“All of these procedures still have to be complied with” before anyone could say whether arrests might be made, he said.

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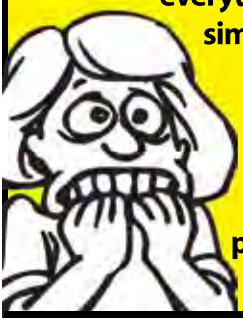
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# The hijacking of our beloved press

Last week Thursday I was most alarmed to see the very bold headline on the front page of the Cape Times: “Israeli military chiefs face SA arrest” with a closely followed pull-quote that read: “I saw blood on the walls and three bodies wrapped in white sheets”.

The quote was from an account by a South African journalist, Gadija Davids, who was on board the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara when it attempted to breach the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip in May 2010. Nine passengers were killed when they opposed Israel Defence Forces troops boarding the ship to prevent it from docking in Gaza.

This piece in the Cape Times and subsequent coverage in The Star, two of the most prominent titles in the Independent Media Group stable of newspapers, were written by Independent Group’s foreign editor Shannon Ebrahim.

Her story has since unleashed what one media outlet called a “war of words” over whether the SA Police Service (SAPS) has decided to comply with the arrest warrants (issued by Turkey) for the four Israeli generals considered responsible for blocking and raiding the vessel - or not.

The SA Zionist Federation and the Israeli embassy’s research found the Cape Times claims to be false. Our own newspaper talked to SAPS spokesman Brigadier Hangwani Malaudzi, who dismissed the claim as “gossip”.

Ebrahim wrote another piece on the weekend, defending her front page story, stating that the same SAPS spokesman, Brigadier Malaudzi, had confirmed that the same warrants of arrests were being processed for the sake of international compliance.

Malaudzi then clarified for the Jewish Report that South Africa still had to establish the veracity of the arrest alerts from Interpol and that it would then need to go through various regulating bodies before any decision was to be taken.

And so it continues. A pro-Israel, Jewish lobby claiming that South Africa would never comply and arrest the generals and a pro-Palestinian, Muslim lobby saying that they would. Both sides seem to think they have the true story and whether South Africa will actually observe the arrest warrants, remains to be seen. It will be interesting to follow in the coming weeks.

What is so disturbing is that this one-sided, anti-Israel, Muslim lobby on the issue is being led by Ebrahim, in her role as foreign editor for Independent Media.

In her original, front page story, she quotes

South African lawyer Ziyaad Patel near the top - “SAPS has sent a clear message to Israel that it can no longer continue to carry out war crimes with impunity.”

This is in essence the message of Ebrahim’s entire piece, with no opposing view that it may be Israel’s right to protect her people and borders.

I am not about to judge Israel’s behaviour regarding the raid on the vessel that broke the blockade or the veracity of the arrest claims - as we all know how easy it is for each side to ascribe evil intent to their enemies.

I cannot, however, help questioning the approach of South Africa’s major newspaper group who through both the content and tone of their coverage of this arrest warrant, have amplified voices that call Israel a violator of international law, perpetrator of war crimes and a censor of freedom of speech without giving any prominence to opposing views or facts.

Before her role at Independent Media, Ebrahim worked as an international affairs consultant for Al Jazeera, a news network that has recently had a spate of lawsuits filed against it by former employees, some of whom have complained that the news network advances a pro-Arabic/Middle Eastern agenda, often at the expense of Jewish people.

Tragically, our beloved and longstanding

newspapers of record - the Cape Times and The Star - that cater to a diverse South African audience, and by virtue of geographic distance are far from the Israeli-Palestinian battle lines, have brought themselves so close to it.

The cause of Muslims in the Palestinian-Israeli issue is evidently close to Ebrahim’s heart, but she has taken her agenda to the pages of the mainstream press with loyal support from a group of organisations that include Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions-South Africa, the Media Review Network (which aims to dispel myths about Islam) and the Palestine Solidarity Alliance.

Our largest, most important daily papers have moved out of the hallowed space of impartiality that we all used to look to them for and have become a battleground for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Let me please admit that our own paper has covered the story with a pro-Israel stance, but that is probably our job. We are the paper of record for South Africa’s tiny but feisty Jewish community. But the Cape Times, The Star and Independent’s other major newspapers, are a voice for our whole rainbow nation. It is a sad day that they have come to be the voice of the anti-Israel movement.

– Vanessa Valkin, Editor

# Terror shakes suburban normalcy of Gush Etzion

**BEN SALES**  
**ALON SHVUT, West Bank**

A soldier stands inside a U-shaped concrete barrier at a quiet roundabout at the Gush Etzion junction, helmet strapped on and armoured vest tied to his waist.

The barrier is a recent addition to the scenery at the junction, a major transit point for the area, and residents have already adorned it with political art. On one side is a painting of boxy white homes sitting on brown hills with the slogan “Gush Etzion, an Israeli home”. On the other is a poster with bold, black letters reading “Kahane was right”, a reference to Meir Kahane, the extremist rabbi who wanted to expel Palestinians from the West Bank.

The artwork reflects the tension between security and normalcy that is a fact of life for Gush residents.

Gush Etzion, a group of bedroom communities about 30 minutes south of Jerusalem, typically feels much like any other Israeli suburb. But a string of terror attacks in recent weeks has shattered the area’s calm, putting its residents on high alert and prompting calls for an increased military presence here.

Last week Thursday, a Palestinian man opened fire at the junction from a moving vehicle before ramming his car into another car, killing three people, among them an American yeshiva student. On Sunday, a 21-year-old Israeli woman died after sustaining multiple stab wounds. Several other stabbings and attempted stabbings have been reported at the junction in the past month.

“Our neighbourhood looks like Vietnam,” said Rivka Epstein Happin, who lives in this Gush settlement adjacent to the junction, where she led a protest on Monday. “Every day there are more and more soldiers. Once a terrorist gets to our neighbourhood, it’s too late. We need to stop the flow of terrorists in our neighbourhoods.”

Located roughly halfway between Jerusalem and Hebron, the 21 settlements that make up Gush Etzion are home to about 70 000 Jews. The bulk of those residents live in two cities, Efrat and Beitar Illit, the remainder in smaller settlements. The entire area is widely expected to remain part of Israel in any eventual peace agreement.

The first Jews settled in Gush Etzion prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, but the area fell to the Arabs in the War of Independence. The area was resettled following Israel’s victory in the 1967 Six Day War.

Gush Etzion junction is a major commercial and transit hub for the southern West Bank. Buses pass through en route to Jerusalem and Hebron, while locals often use it as a hitchhiking spot.



Gush: Israeli soldiers guarding a barrier at the Gush Etzion junction, a major transit point for the West Bank, on Monday.



Protesters on Monday call for increased security in Gush Etzion, which is home to about 70 000 Jews.

A strip mall has sprung up on its south-western corner containing a supermarket, cafe, filling station and tyre repair shop.

Many local Palestinians work in Jewish-owned homes and businesses and Palestinians and Israelis shop and work together in the supermarket. Now an armoured vehicle stands in front of the market, which is fenced off from the street, and Palestinian workers have been barred from entering the settlements.

Pairs of soldiers stand at each exit from the roundabout, ready to check passing Palestinian cars. Concrete blocks sit in front of bus stops to guard against attacks by vehicles. Overall, about 20 soldiers now patrol the junction, while the Israeli army is making some 30 arrests per week in nearby Palestinian villages to head off potential attacks.

The area’s seeming normalcy is what makes it such an attractive target, said an Israeli military commander stationed in the area. Beyond killing Israelis, he said, terrorists hoped to turn a tranquil place into a war zone.

“This isn’t just about hurting people’s lives,” said the commander, who asked to remain anonymous per Israel Defence Forces protocol. “It symbolises a fabric of life, and the steps we’re taking, from their perspective, represent a certain kind of success.”

The officer said his goal was to “minimise the friction” in the area, but some residents want the army to go further. At a rally on Monday at the junction, hundreds of women demanded better security measures, with some speakers suggesting closing off the main roads to Palestinians.

“All of the roads of the bloc are roads meant only for Jews,” said Ruti Hasano, a resident of Kiryat Arba, a settlement south of Hebron, whose husband was killed last month when an assailant in a truck hit him. “They paved them for us. Before they paved these roads, [Palestinians] had their own paths. They



The protesters holding a poster of Israelis killed in terrorist attacks.

should return to those paths.”

Shuli Mualem, a parliamentarian from the right-wing Jewish Home party, called on the government to launch a military operation in the West Bank and formally annex Gush Etzion to Israel.

“Arabs have nothing more to do in Gush Etzion,” said Mualem, who lives in the Gush settlement of Neve Daniel. “We’re stepping up the war on terror.”

But other settlers feel that more separation from their neighbours will only make matters worse, further alienating Palestinians and driving more of them to acts of terror.

“We should internalise that in Israel, as long as it exists, Jews will live together with non-Jews - most of whom will be Arabs,” Shalom Arbiv, a doctor who lives in Alon Shvut, wrote on the community’s e-mail list. “We don’t need to turn the other cheek. But we also don’t need to act zealously, to no effect, and to continue poisoning the atmosphere.” (JTA)



# Jacob Zuma’s speech a non-event amid crisis



## TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

The audience at the national conference of the SAJBD on Sunday expected President Jacob Zuma’s keynote speech to be the event’s highlight, despite other eminent speakers, including World Jewish Congress President Ronald Lauder and French philosopher-activist Bernard-Henri Levy.

The latter had torn himself away from his “beloved, bereaved Paris”, still traumatised because of the recent terrorist attacks there by the Islamic jihadists of ISIS. Despite the emotional difficulty of leaving Paris, his family and friends at a time like this, he had decided to come, he said, because of the importance of South Africa, which was “one of the battles of my generation” - the anti-apartheid struggle.

The key leadership of SA Jewry assembled at the impeccably organised event, offered Zuma a chance to inject some optimism into the Jewish constituency that, although numerically small, is an important part of the South African mosaic. Its general feeling today - along with numerous other South Africans – is gloomy about the state of the country and its political directions.

Jewish rage simmers about the ANC’s attitude to Israel, symbolised by its embrace of terrorist organisation Hamas when it visited three weeks ago.

Zuma did, at the end of his speech, talk about Hamas. But for the bulk of it, he simply plodded through the tired script about the important role Jews had played in the liberation struggle.

As if by flattering the Jewish audience in this way, he could divert their anger. But instead of making them feel good, it came across as patronising. We know all that history already; the facts are correct. It is, however, history.

Today’s urgent issues are about other things: South Africa’s flagging economy, political instability, racism in the society, corruption, foreign policy, particularly regarding Israel, international terrorism and South Africa’s place in it, and so on. That is what people came to hear about.

From 1915, Jews helped form the first South African socialist organisations, said Zuma; in 1921 they helped create the SA Communist Party; in 1922 they tried diverting striking white miners’ anger to more constructive directions for the good of all; in the 1960s with the liberation movements’ bannings, Jews like Denis Goldberg provided safe houses for activists hiding from police; other activists went into exile, like Joe Slovo, a founder of Umkhonto we Sizwe; whites in the Rivonia trial were Jewish; Eli Weinberg was the courageous photographer of the liberation movements; in Mandela’s post-apartheid South Africa, Jewish jurists Arthur Chaskalson, Albie Sachs and Richard Goldstone were prominent in the legal system. And so on.

In his few sentences about the state of the country, he spoke about economic growth being too low to solve unemployment, affected by the slowdown in China’s economy. But there was nothing new said, or much hope offered. He looked like a man without a vision.

Regarding global terrorism, he said the incidents in Paris, Mali and other places put the spotlight on peace and conflict in the Middle East, including Palestine. And the key to Israeli-Palestinian peace is a two state solution based on the 1967 borders,

with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian state’s capital.

Audible murmurs of disapproval were heard from parts of the audience, and one wondered whether Zuma would be booed.

But, he stressed, South African support for a Palestinian state does not exclude support for the safety of Israel. South Africa will engage with all sides. But again, he provided no programme or details for such engagement, no vision beyond his bland statement of principle.

Then he got to Hamas and said quietly that he had become aware that the effusive manner in which Hamas had been

received by the ANC, concerned the Jewish community. He had taken note of this, he said pointedly.

This acknowledgement was perhaps as far as he was able to go in terms of his own political realities. He did not, however, specifically denounce Hamas’ terrorist tactics - or even acknowledge they existed - nor apologise for the welcome given to them. Rather, he repeated, South Africa must engage with all parties, in the belief that it has something to offer in the promotion of peace in the world.

Zuma is not regarded by Jewish leaders as an enemy of Israel, personally. Indeed,

outgoing SAJBD President Zev Krenzel stated categorically that on many occasions he intervened behind the scenes to solve problems regarding Israeli issues in South Africa.

But clearly, the hostility towards Israel in ANC ranks is something Zuma does not have control over. Or is perhaps, unwilling to exert control over. Flattery about Jewish heroes of the Struggle cannot hide this. The most glaring element in Zuma’s speech was the absence of any vision for a better future.

• *Geoff Sifrin is former editor of the SAJR. He writes this column in his personal capacity.*

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# A view from the bleachers

HOWARD SACKSTEIN

It was Gold Reef City, the casino where fortunes are lost on the spin of a wheel and the flip of a card. In the Lyric Theatre, downwind from the flashing lights and ringing slots, the fate of South African Jewry would be determined.

And then, a man wandered over to the podium with more swag than Mick Jagger. Flowing grey hair, an unbuttoned wing-tip shirt, a slightly dishevelled tailored black suit - this was Bernard-Henri Levy, rock star of French philosophers, towering intellectual and international media icon.

Suave and debonair, Levy with his poetic French accent, took to the stage at the Jewish Board of Deputies conference and erupted into animated gestures, impassioned pleas from the heart and a clarity of thought that cut through the fog of political posturing.

Flying in from Paris with its bloodstained streets, Levy let loose on the new anti-Semitism, on the rise of Islamic fundamentalist terror and on the bankrupt policies of the BDS movement.

“Israel is open to everyone,” said Levy “It is not an apartheid state.” He described the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign as a fascist movement led by idiots. Bernard-Henri Levy stole the show.

The biennial conference of the Jewish Board of Deputies left no room for questions or debate; it was a carefully orchestrated showcase presenting some of the best that world Jewry had to offer. Former President Kgalema Motlanthe and billionaire businessman Patrice Motsepe sat in the audience.

The 1 000 strong audience rose in muted smatterings of applause, welcoming President Jacob Zuma to the stage but offered waves of cheer to Public Protector Thuli Madonsela in the house. Even President Zuma was forced to join in the rapturous applause.

Zuma began his address with the standard recitation of the roll-call of Jews involved in the anti-apartheid Struggle, but appeared to lose his audience with the idea that “the organised attacks in Paris have brought sharp focus onto the problem of global terrorism... All these attacks, wherever they occur, put the spotlight on the Middle East peace process.

“It is difficult to imagine peace in the world without the achievement of peace in the Middle East. South Africa continues to contribute to attempts at finding peace in the Middle East, especially with the age-old Palestinian-Israeli question.”

The Times of Israel, maybe unfairly, immediately led with a headline: “S African president links Paris attacks to Israeli-Palestinian conflict”.

When Zuma said: “We believe that the key to peace in the Middle East is the establishment of a free and sovereign Palestinian state, co-existing in peace with the State of Israel, based on the borders of June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital”, the audience hissed and booed the President, despite the fact that this formulation is identical to the offers made by Israeli Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin, Ehud Barak and Ehud Olmert. The Citizen newspaper commented: “But this did not go down well... there were murmurings last night by a section of the crowd...”

Zuma reiterated that South Africa “shall, in the future, invite to our shores different groups that are involved in the Middle East Peace Process so as to share with them our past experiences and to also exchange views with them”. He failed to mention that no Israelis had been invited.

The speech was highlighted by Zuma’s continued support for a two-state solution, and an acknowledgement that the manner the ANC had welcomed Hamas could have been handled better.

“The coming of Hamas into South Africa has caused some concern among the Jewish community. The manner in which Hamas was received concerned the Jewish community. We are aware of that, and it is noted.

“We are also aware that we did not communicate with the Jewish community beforehand. But we believe that South Africa can play a role and we are in the process of making a stronger interaction on both sides. I hope we work together, as we did before, with the Jewish community.”

Of far greater significance was the fact that President Zuma twice applauded the statement that Israel was not an apartheid state. That in itself made the Zuma appearance worthwhile and notable.

The dishevelled group of five lonely BDS demonstrators, claiming to be Jewish, protesting at the gates of the casino, must have felt deeply betrayed by Zuma’s applause.

Ambassador Ronald Lauder, businessman, art collector, philanthropist and scion of the Estee Lauder cosmetics fortune, rose to the podium in his capacity as president of the World Jewish Congress.

“South Africa represents a beacon of hope in a very troubled world,” said Lauder, while reading from his American presidential style teleprompter.

“During a time where no one feels safe anywhere, where there are not many examples of conflicts resolved peacefully, South Africa stands out as a shining star...

“I am not naive. I am aware of the difficulties. But I believe South Africa can engage all parties and explain why violence must be rejected. South Africa can show that compromise in the interest of peace with respect for the other side, can lead to a better future for all. And South Africa can show the importance of democratic values and the acceptance of other cultures.”

Lauder, condemned “terrorist organisations” like Hamas saying: “They continue to call for the destruction of Israel, I believe South Africa can engage all parties and explain why violence should be rejected.”

As famed as Lauder is for his Jewish work, his true claim to fame was his purchase in 2006 of Gustav Klimt’s Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I for \$135 million, the most expensive artwork ever purchased at the time.

Remarkably Lauder also owns the world’s largest private collection of mediaeval and Renaissance armour, although he surprisingly wore none of it on the night.

While in South Africa, Lauder held private talks with President Zuma; Fifa presidential hopeful Tokyo Sexwale; Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, chairman of the African Union; Gwede Mantashe, secretary-general of the ANC; and Minister in the Presidency, Jeff Radebe.

As Lauder jetted out on Monday morning, the last remaining punters pulled the one-armed bandits at Gold Reef City hoping that they too would soon be in the market for a Klimt.



Zev Kregel, Jacob Zuma, Mary Kluk, Ronald Lauder, and Bernard-Henri Levy.



President Jacob Zuma and Mary Kluk.



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and Patrice Motsepe.



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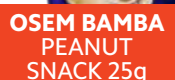
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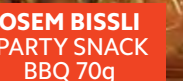
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# Israel’s message must come across loud and clear

MICHAEL BELLING

Jews and Africans - groups that have both known persecution for long periods - should stand together. It is important for Jews to make that point to Africa, World Jewish Congress (WJC) President Ronald Lauder told the biennial meeting of the African Jewish Congress in Johannesburg on Sunday.

There are some 40 countries in Africa that could theoretically vote with Israel.

Lauder said the WJC stood with the members of the AJC, which is active in 13 sub-Saharan countries, with nine represented at the meeting - Botswana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

“Every place you are, you are the face of Judaism,” he said. “We stand with you. We are very proud of the African Jewish Congress,” Lauder added.

Israel does not do enough to explain itself. “We need you to talk about what Israel stands for,” he told delegates.

The WJC also needs Jews in the

AJC countries to tell it what their problems are.

Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa, Arthur Lenk, said Israel has a wonderful relationship with the majority of sub-Saharan countries. One example is the planned visit of the Swazi prime minister to Israel next year.

There are opportunities and realities in both directions, he said.

Ann Harris, newly-elected president of the AJC, said that the communities represented in the organisation had great variation in the strengths and challenges presented by their countries.

She paid tribute to Mervyn Smith, the former AJC president and vice-president of the WJC, who died in November last year.

“He always saw the big picture,” she said. “The AJC was not only his vision, it was actually his creation.”

Peter Sternberg, who represented Zimbabwe at the meeting, paid tribute to Sam Benatar, another AJC leader who had died recently. He had held office as vice-president of the AJC and as national president of the Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, CEO of the AJC, reported on a wide variety of AJC activities in many countries, focusing in particular on the new Jewish museum in Mauritius and activities in Zambia, including significant funding for institutions of higher learning in Israel and Zambia that are now working in co-operation with each other.

Steve Felder, representing the Kenyan Jewish community, which had recently rejoined the AJC, said Kenyan Jewry comprised a number of distinct groups, including Kenyans, expatriates and diplomats.

“For most of its history,” he said - the community was founded in 1903 - “the community has functioned without clergy, but has managed to sustain Jewish life in Kenya”.

Future prospects were “mixed”, with only 300 affiliated to the community, of a Jewish population of around 1 000.

There is a synagogue in Nairobi, the main centre, built in the 1940s to replace the small building constructed in 1912, as well a community centre, started in 1985.

Relations with Israel are good, he



Ronald Lauder, World Jewish Congress president; Ann Harris, newly-elected African Jewish Congress president; and Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, CEO of the AJC.

said, with senior officials from each country visiting the other.

The new AJC office bearers are: Ann Harris (South Africa), president; Mary Kluk (South Africa); Richard Lyons (Botswana); Geoff Ramokgadi

(Swaziland); Peter Sternberg (Zimbabwe) vice presidents; Li Boiskin and Irene Zuckerman (both South Africa), sub-committees; and Steve Felder (Kenya) and Michael Galaun (Zambia), committee members.

## News

# Einat Wilf - razor-sharp master of many trades

BENJI SHULMAN

What is a Zionist? The term is an often contested one, not just by placard-bearing protesters and angry academics, but by Israelis themselves.

The visit of Dr Einat Wilf to South Africa recently, organised by WIZO and the South African Zionist Federation, presented a version of the word that doesn’t often get a hearing in today’s soundbite saturated media environment.

Wilf is an Ivy League-educated scholar, self-identifying atheist, and feminist, who is a passionate supporter of LGBT rights and believes in the legalising of marijuana. She is also a Zionist, a strong advocate of the two-state solution and a sharp critic of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Wilf served as intelligence office in the Israel Defence Forces, is a former adviser to President Shimon Peres and is a member of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee.

Since finishing her term in politics, Wilf has used her unusual set of talents and perspectives to act as a sort of “roaming ambassador”, giving Israel’s perspective to eager audiences around the world.

She is especially popular among “progressive” Jewish groups because of her political positioning. Utilising her razor-sharp insights, she has delved deeply into the key issues facing Israel and the Jewish people, writing about everything from electoral reform to the Israeli education system.

Her South Africa tour included interviews on local media as well as talks before a variety of audiences, both Jewish, and the wider community, and her balanced but critical style was well received.

After a series of talks in Johannesburg last week, she headed to Cape Town as keynote speaker at the opening night of WIZO South Africa’s 35th Triennial Conference, where she explored how Zionism and feminism have both become taboo concepts.

Throughout her engagements, she focused attention on the global campaign to de-legitimise the State of Israel. She noted that South Africa had become a sort of “ground zero” for the global boycott campaign because the country successfully transitioned from apartheid to democracy. The country serves as a key hub where ideas about the conflict are being formed and spread.

By targeting problematic ideas such as “labelling”



WIZO National President Tamar Lazarus with Dr Einat Wilf, keynote speaker at WIZO South Africa’s 35th Triennial Conference

of goods while they are still small issues here in South Africa, she argued that they could be significantly blunted before they become bigger, more expensive problems when they inevitably arrive in Europe and America.

She says she is one of a few from the Israeli policy establishment who seems to grasp the importance of the “apartheid analogy” and the damage that it can do to Israel’s interest and world Jewry as a whole.

At one presentation on Syria and Iraq, a member of a major national think-tank called her talk “dazzling”.

She was also asked what Israel could learn from the South African experience. Leaning on her knowledge of Ireland, she said that in other conflicts, the two sides had always reached “symmetry” - the state where no one power can impose its will on the other - a situation which then leads to negotiation.

The Israeli-Palestinian case she argued, is different; the Palestinians still believe that Israel can be defeated and will keep fighting as long as they believe this. Therefore, she argued, only a very powerful Israel can convince them to drop that narrative and move toward peace.

## World News in Brief

# US Senate passes bill to cut off financing for Hezbollah

WASHINGTON - The US Senate has unanimously passed a bill that seeks to target and cut off financing for the Iranian-backed Lebanese terrorist organisation Hezbollah.

The bill, co-sponsored by Senators Marco Rubio (Republican Florida) and Jeanne Shaheen (Democrat New Hampshire), aims to sanction international financial institutions that knowingly engage in business with Hezbollah.

The legislation also requires President Barack Obama to report to Congress on Hezbollah’s involvement in narcotics trafficking and transnational crime, as well as its global logistics networks and fundraising, financing, and money laundering activities, Rubio’s senate office said.

The bill now heads to the House of Representatives for consideration.

“We cannot afford to jeopardise our national security by letting Iran’s leading terrorist proxy, Hezbollah, continue to pose a direct threat to us and our allies, including Israel,” Rubio said. (JNS.org)

# Jewish deaths in terror wave reach 20

JERUSALEM - A Palestinian terrorist killed A 21-year-old Israeli woman, Hadar Buchris in a stabbing attack in Gush Etzion last Sunday, bringing the number of Jews killed in the current wave of Palestinian terror to 20.

“We received a call from the ZAKA hotline about a woman seriously wounded from a stabbing attack,” said Israel Klatchkin, a volunteer for the Israeli emergency response organisation ZAKA.

“We arrived at the scene of the attack a few minutes later. The terrorist was killed by soldiers at the junction. The young woman died of her wounds at the hospital, after being evacuated by ambulance in a critical condition. ZAKA volunteers from the Shai region cleared the site of human remains.” (JNS.org)

# Fatah official praises toddler for wanting to shoot Israelis

JERUSALEM - An official from Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas’ Fatah party, Tawfiq Tirawi, has expressed pride in his two-year-old son for wanting to shoot Israelis.

“Listen, my son is two years and 10 months old. Yesterday, he sang to his mother: ‘Escort the martyr to his wedding.’ He doesn’t know the meaning of this song (for instance, the Islamic belief that martyrs marry 72 Virgins in Paradise),” Tirawi said on Palestinian Authority TV, Palestinian Media Watch reported.

“Today his mother told me that he sang: ‘Daddy, buy me a machine gun and a rifle, so that I will defeat Israel and the Zionists.’ A boy who is not yet three! A Palestinian grows up with a feeling of belonging to the land, the homeland, and the people,” added Tirawi, a Fatah Central Committee member. (JNS.org)



# Look ma, no hands!

**MEYER BENJAMIN**  
**MD, SUZUKI JHB SOUTH@iPOP**

The car is dead. Long live the car!

All right, I had better qualify that. This business of physically driving ourselves - call it analogue driving if you will - is clearly on the way out as myriad manufacturers race to bring autonomous or driverless cars to the market.

And in a couple of decades hence, future motorists may very well look back with wonder, amazement and disbelief at the fact that in a bygone age we were allowed to regularly pilot two-ton missiles capable of doing 250 kmh and more - all without supervision.

The excellent American motor-ing magazine Road & Track puts it like this: “Autonomous cars are coming, and it’s time for everyone to just accept it.”

The magazine adds: "It might seem odd to have to state such a thing so plainly, but denial is a powerful drug. And enthusiasts tend to be heavy users."

Yet technology and progress are irrepressible, so here we are. For people who love to drive, the idea of an automated car is an affront to everything they hold dear. But the truth is inescapable. If you consider building-block technologies like stability control, adaptive cruise control, lane keeping and steer-by-wire, this shouldn't even really be surprising."

Even today, certain cars available on our market - such as the phenomenal Mercedes-Benz S-Class, which even its normally modest makers dub "the best car in the world" - are almost capable of driving themselves. But that's just the beginning.

Massive, rapid strides are being made in terms of fully autonomous cars, with the likes

of Google, and Apple, as well as more established players including BMW and Volvo, among others, all working on honing this technology. So the big question is: How long before driverless cars becomes an everyday reality as opposed to mere concepts?

Well, the remarkable Elon Musk, of Tesla and SpaceX fame, reckons that we're looking at just

a few short years. In a recent interview with the Danish news site Borsen, Mr Musk had this to say:

“The Tesla that is currently in production has the ability to do automatic steering autopilot on highways. That is currently being beta tested, and will go into wide release early next month. So, we are probably only a month away from having autonomous driving



at least for highways and for relatively simple roads. My guess for when we will have full autonomy is approximately three years."

But even if and when the technology is available for large-scale roll-out, it raises a raft of legislation difficulties, with scores of tricky questions raising their heads. Among them: who is liable in the case of an accident? The occupant of the vehicle or the manufacturer!

Well, it's interesting to see that autoblog.com reports that Volvo has decided to accept liability if there's a crash involving one of its vehicles - and if it's running autonomously.

Meanwhile, the benefits of autonomous cars promise to be legion. A Business Insider piece cites a study that estimates that such vehicles could reduce energy used per vehicle by up to almost 80 per cent because of factors like efficient traffic flow and parking and automated ride-sharing.

But the biggest benefit of self-driving cars will be safer roads. In the US, for instance, 94 per cent of collisions are caused by human error. In South Africa the figure is potentially even higher.

Yet for all that, petrol heads who revel in physically holding a steering wheel and flooring an accelerator can rest assured that analogue cars may well still continue to soldier on into the future - if only as niche curiosities.



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# Telfed’s academic programme is steadily gaining momentum

MARGOT COHEN

A new academic programme providing a structured and supervised framework for South African students who would like to pursue tertiary education in Israel - a Telfed initiative - was launched at the home of Dori Weil in Johannesburg last weekend.

SASI (SA Students Studying in Israel) has a selection of subjects from which prospective students may choose, from inter alia business, computer science and psychology degrees.

In the past, explains CEO of Telfed, Dorron Kline, “some of the main difficulties in being accepted to Israeli universities were the need to pass psychometric tests and undertake studies through medium of Hebrew.

“Today there are universities which provide courses of studies in English and evaluate students on the basis of their matric results. The students will have the benefit of obtaining higher education on an international level.”

At present there are more than 45 South Africans studying both as olim and as

tourists and a further 20 new students are anticipated in the coming year.

The project plans to facilitate support such as Hebrew classes and accommodation.

Steve Handler, volunteer fundraising chairman for Telfed, explained that there are a number of different needs-based bursaries available that could collectively (depending on eligibility) cover up to 50 per cent of the university tuition costs in the first year, as well as a housing bursary covering accommodation costs.

One of the biggest pluses is the warm environment with a family-like support system, and guidance provided by Telfed to help acclimatise to Israel, as well as the assistance offered in securing employment post-graduation.

Situated in Ra’anana, Telfed started its operations in 1948. Over the past 67 years, the organisation has expanded its multifarious charitable activities serving the South African community in Israel. One of these activities is the provision of 104 apartments for olim to rent in Tel Aviv and Ra’anana at rates well below market levels.



In addition, Telfed provides vital support to the elderly, families at risk, families with special needs, lone soldiers and single parents.

Besides the 200 olim who arrive from South Africa each year, Telfed also extends its absorption services to approximately 200 Australian olim a year and just last month,

signed an agreement to train a Dutch klita counsellor in the absorption of some 50 immigrants yearly from Holland.

More than 250 volunteers are involved in regional community activities and many of the students who are on annual bursaries, are active in giving back to and assisting the local community.

## Features

# Arthur Mwamba’s story: One of overcoming tremendous obstacles

The Mwamba family - Joy, Ashley (8), Lesley (6), Ley (23 months) and Arthur.



SUZANNE BELLING

Sometimes people take car guards - a unique South African phenomenon - for granted. Drop them a coin, or if more generous, a note. Thank them for their services and drive off into the sunset.

Not so with the predominantly Jewish shoppers at Chestnut Hill Shopping Centre in Raedene, Johannesburg. They are known for their generosity when coming out of the kosher butchery, the travel agent, the hairdresser, consulting rooms, the lingerie shop, the pharmacy, or even the studios of Jewish community radio station, ChaiFM.

All the car guards there were efficient and helpful. But one, Arthur Mwamba, always stood out, going the extra mile to accompany patrons into the shops, depositing their purchases into the boots of their cars and complimenting them on their hairstyles in a charming French accent.

It was little known initially that Arthur was a refugee from the war-torn Democratic Republic of the Congo and had trained there as a nurse.

He came to Johannesburg defying xenophobia and requalified as a senior nurse after he was told he could not be employed unless he redid his theory and practical exams in English and met South African medical standards.

His wife, Joy, whom he met in college, is also a nursing sister and is in the process of doing her final exams here in South Africa.

In the beginning, she earned money by sewing and he relied on the tips and odd

jobs given to him by shoppers in Chestnut Hill. He had to “book” his place as a car guard and give part of his earnings to a fellow guard who “owned” the spot.

Gradually, the Chestnut Hill shoppers learnt of Arthur’s aspirations and started a collection to enable him to pay the fees for his exams. He now works in a hospital, sometimes recognising his former shoppers when they come in as patients.

Asking Arthur why he had moved from his Lubumbashi home in the south of the DRC to the war-torn east of that country, he said he was part of Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) which had transferred him there.

After coming to South Africa, “I had to overcome many difficulties, including language, accommodation and security. I have been here since June 2006 to join Joy, who arrived in January of that year.

“I worked handing out pamphlets on street corners, welcoming people into a store and did the odd driving jobs. It was mainly the Jewish people I met who gave me work; I owe them a debt of gratitude. There were a lot of challenges to overcome,” he remarked wistfully.

After first living in questionable areas, the Mwamba family was able to move into a pleasant apartment near King Edward Primary School where the boys are enrolled.

He has never forgotten the people of Chestnut Hill and even featured in a broadcast on ChaiFM to tell his story - overcoming tremendous obstacles and believing that “where there’s a will, there’s a way”.

# Conversion means a lifelong commitment with no turning back

SHIRA DRUION

Conversion to Judaism has become a controversial subject and the process of conversion differs in expectations and accepted norms across communities worldwide. The Jewish Report examined three different communities’ approaches.

**Syrian Jews in Brooklyn**

Since 1935, the Syrian Jewish community in Brooklyn has allowed not a single conversion within their community. It’s a well-known fact that the Syrians of Brooklyn are bound by an invisible fence known as “The Edict” - a rabbinical threat of excommunication if they act outside the parameters.

The Edict was issued by five Syrian rabbis in Brooklyn in 1935 with a simple goal: to preserve the age-old Syrian Jewish community in the New World. The Edict has successfully done this: the rate of assimilation is believed to be less than three per cent, as opposed to an accepted 50 per cent of the general American Jewish population.

**South Africa**

“Many applicants come to the Beth Din with a misconception,” says Rabbi Ron Hendler, director of the conversion programme for the Johannesburg Beth Din. “They think the court’s function is chiefly to measure the sincerity of the would-be convert and to assess the worthiness of the applicant to join the Jewish people.

“This leads to much frustration when applicants believe they have amply demonstrated their sincerity, yet the Beth Din still holds back from converting them.”

He explains how the Beth Din in fact plays a very different role: Jewish law, not the Beth Din, determines who can convert.

“Simply put, anyone who can fully accept the demands of a committed, halachic Jewish life is a candidate for conversion.”

But prior to doing so, the Beth Din, over a 24-month period, has to determine, based on many years’ experience, whether the conversion will be in the best interests of the candidate.

“We need to predict that the obligation of full observance is something that the candidate will be able to bear, given his or her unique situation and challenges; after all, conversion means a lifelong commitment from which one can never back out.”

**United Kingdom**

The London Beth Din conversion process is con-

sidered a rigorous one. Co-ordinator Rabbi Rashi Simon explains: “We have collegial relationships with many other Batei Din around the world. In general, our conversion process takes a minimum of 18 months and is often complete within three years, but for some, ‘forever and a day’ is not long enough.

“Essentially, it entails studying regularly with a tutor (of our appointment), and gradually integrating Jewish knowledge, observance and values into one’s lifestyle. The main thing, however, is for the candidate to be able to make a firm commitment to continue to do so in the future as well. This assessment can be difficult to make.”

•

Rabbi Hendler says that if the Beth Din fails to make the correct assessment, it has a negative bearing on the candidate. “In order to make this prediction, the Beth Din observes the growth and adjustment of the candidate over an extended period of time: How well does he/she integrate in the community? What problems, if any, need to be addressed in the short run and the long run?

“The conversion process requires more than learning material and finding a comfortable synagogue. It means joining a community and developing a support system. This reassures all responsible that the decision to convert is a positive and healthy one. It also ensures that the conversion is widely respected and accepted around the world for its thoroughness and integrity.”

Rabbi Hendler says: “Candidates are required to live within a reasonable proximity of an Orthodox synagogue, where they can comfortably participate in traditional community life. Walking great distances, or making arrangements to stay with friends on Shabbos, is not an acceptable alternative. There are no exceptions to this requirement because we know it is essential for candidates’ future growth and success.”

The London Beth Din differs in this regard and requires candidates who are single to live with a religious family for a year prior to them being converted.

“Many converts testify that the immersion experience of living with a family is a very effective tool in the habituation and socialisation of the conversion process. It can be likened to the difference between study and practice, learning and experiencing. The latter is much to be preferred. It is true that this requirement is sometimes unpopular, but its effectiveness has been confirmed time and again.”



A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies



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

In particular, I would like to single out Mary, Zev, National Vice-Chairman Doron Joffe and National Director Wendy Kahn. Having worked closely with them over the past few years, I can testify to the extraordinary dedication and wisdom they have shown in addressing the many pressing issues confronting our community.

I have been assured by each of them and can assure you, that they are and will remain very much part of the national executive team. Their guidance, knowledge and expertise will continue to be utilised and will no doubt be indispensable, given the challenges ahead.

The new SAJBD executive has come into office at a difficult time, not just for our Jewish community and our country, but for the international community. Our conference took place against a backdrop of a global wave of horrific terrorist attacks in France, Lebanon, Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon, Turkey and, of course, Israel.

Closer to home, our country is being confronted with mounting social, economic and political chal-

lenges. This in turn threatens to undermine the ethos of non-racialism and tolerance that remains so crucial to the health of our democratic society.

So far as our own community goes, we continue to face relatively low rates of anti-Semitism, but even so, there has been a definite upsurge in that regard. The recent visit of Hamas and its warm reception by the ruling party generated much concern and anger in our community, with our views being strongly put to President Jacob Zuma in our pre-conference meeting with him.

All this being acknowledged, we must always balance our perspective by looking at the positive side of things. In terms of global terrorism, the world’s major powers are now clearly waking up to the seriousness of the threat and are increasingly finding ways to work together to confront it.

Regarding South Africa, we continue to be a robust constitutional democracy in which all fundamental democratic freedoms - including universal suffrage, freedom of expression, religion and association and judicial independence - are fully upheld.

So long as this is the case, I believe our country has the necessary self-correcting mechanisms to confront our problems and put things right. In this environment, Jewish communal life in all its forms, be it religious, cultural, Zionist or other, has been able to thrive.

On behalf of the SAJBD, I pledge that we will do everything in our power not just to protect what we as Jews have in our country, but to enhance and strengthen this going forward.

• 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

A column of the Chevrah Kadisha

## The year has been a blur

Time passes quickly, we all know that. But no matter who I have spoken to - from school kids to residents in our aged facilities and every age group in between - the sentiment has been unanimous: This year has passed in a high-speed blur!

Looking back, I can see the many difficulties we have overcome at the Chev, despite the pace at which we travelled, and it has been, thank G-d, productive and successful.

I’m pleased with both our internal and external achievements in so many areas. The expansion and advancement of our Protected Employment division - currently providing work for over 250 people with intellectual, physical and mental disabilities - is exciting.

Over the past year we were at the forefront of establishing the Jozi Forum, a national forum for 57 Protected Workshops in the Johannesburg region under the MEC of Social Development. Another especially rewarding project this year has been the refurbishment of the ground floor and communal areas at Our Parents Home, which has delighted our residents.

Our human resource is our most valuable asset and energy invested in developing our staff offers huge



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returns for the people in our care. To that end the teambuilding Culture Campaign involving all employees promotes Chev values and has shown measurable results in loyalty, commitment and performance.

The ohel has been completed at West Park and the Tahara room transformed into a functional and durable space for the holy work of preparing deceased people for burial.

Like most of us, I need a holiday and have booked one in a faraway location with wide open spaces and poor cell-phone reception! I hope it will provide a much-needed opportunity to regenerate, regroup and rethink, because already 2016 is presenting with a number of challenges.

Although the organisation is doing better on a number of levels, the desperate

needs of our shrinking, ageing and stretched community are escalating and ever more demanding.

Maybe 2016 will proceed at a slower pace. What are the chances? If you are going away, please travel safely and return refreshed and relaxed. If you’re in Johannesburg and have the opportunity to visit our residents, they would really appreciate that.

May our partnership continue to thrive.  
feedback@jhbchev.co.za

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

### World News in Brief

## 18% of Muslims in Israel say Islamic State is not a terror group

JERUSALEM - Eighteen per cent of Muslim Arabs living in Israel do not consider Islamic State to be a terrorist organisation, according to the newly released 2015 Index of Arab-Jewish Relations in Israel survey, produced by Professor Sammy Smooha of the University of Haifa.

The index reveals that 57 per cent of Muslim Arabs in Israel think that the Islamic Movement in Israel – whose northern branch this week was outlawed due to incitement to violence over the Temple Mount holy site – represents them faithfully, while half categorised themselves as supporters of the Islamic Movement or as being active members.

The survey, according to its website, is “based on a survey of adult Arab and Jewish populations, with more than 100 questions on 16 different issues, including segregation, perception of the other, alienation, threats, collective memory, legitimacy of coexistence and the state, the conflict with the Palestinians, Israel’s integration in the region, identity, minority leadership, means of struggle, and possibilities for change.” (JNS.org)



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JVJP MUST DO SERIOUS SOUL SEARCHING REGARDING JEWS AND ISRAEL

I want to respond to the letter by Jewish Voices for a Just Peace in last week’s Jewish Report. They claim that they care about Palestinians and Israelis. This is not true. If that were the case, why have they never condemned attacks by Palestinian terrorists on Jewish women and children?

A prominent JVJP member seemingly openly supports Hamas’ killing of Israeli women and children, calling it “resistance”. He also denies that Hamas is a terrorist organisation and that it engages in racist abuse against Israelis as a nation.

It is sickening that the JVJP can compare themselves to Germans who opposed the Third Reich. They need to look at Judenrat (Jewish Council) and kapos (a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp assigned by the SS to supervise forced labour) to find a better analogy for themselves.

One of the most unfortunate developments in the exile was the loathsome moser (informer), the negative counterpart of the shtadlan (intercessor) who intercedes with the authorities who speak for the Jews to those in power.

The Jewish community was always hostile to its unhappiest members who stood to gain by serving the powers-that-be.

Denis Prager points out: “Among no group in the world are there so many individuals who so single-mindedly attempt to damage the group into which they were born.”

These Jews also seem to hope that by showing “pathological hate” of their fellow Jews in Israel, their friends and colleagues at work and on campus will like them again.

What they need to remember is that singling out a particular nation for hatred, makes them racists.

Gary Selikow  
Johannesburg

ANTI-ZIONISM THE RESULT OF ANTI-SEMITISM, NOT VICE VERSA

To Jewish Voices for a Just Peace, I want to point out that the rally in support of Israel (they are going on about) was not a “rally in support of the Israeli military and might”, nor was it to support the destruction of Gaza or the innocent civilian deaths.

It was to show camaraderie and support for Israel and Jews who were being fired upon and terrorised, and their lives threatened. It is a pity that some people did not understand this point.

JVJP must please explain one of their points in last week’s letter in the Jewish Report: They say the “the best way to counter anti-Semitic sentiment is to pressure Israel... into negotiating a just peace with the Palestinians”.

This implies that if Israel would “negotiate a just peace with the Palestinians” then there would be no anti-Semitism or it would be greatly reduced.

I want them to please consider Jewish history: Centuries of pogroms, expulsions, exiles, inquisitions, and of course the Holocaust. These all occurred BEFORE the modern State of Israel. To me this means that actually anti-Semitism has nothing to do with Israel. It has to do with people hating Jews.

Therefore, anti-Zionism is a result of anti-Semitism, not the other way around.

President Jacob Zuma spoke at last weekend’s SA-JBD conference in Johannesburg. Some members

WATER CRISIS: CUTTING YOUR NOSE TO SPITE YOUR FACE?

The letter by Beverley Price in last week’s Jewish Report regarding a water project between University of Johannesburg (UJ) and Ben-Gurion University (BGU) aroused my interest and I am intrigued to learn why Professor Farid Esack (head of religious studies at UJ) said: “The claim is false and reflects a desperate attempt to counter Israel’s isolation”.

This was in response to the reinstatement of the research agreement between UJ and BGU.

In the light of the fact that South Africa desperately needs a solution to its water crisis, it must be said that those who thwart or protract any solution resulting in a positive outcome (to solve our water crisis) will have to bear the responsibility of their actions.

Esack was quoted in the media on November 18, (he also appeared on television) to say that he was “sick and tired of being expected to apologise on behalf of Muslims, after the Paris attacks”.

He refused to condemn Islamic State for its terrorist acts and in fact, blamed the West’s policies for interference in the Middle East and for also excluding the Muslim population (all over the world).

The innuendo in those remarks seems to suggest that the West is getting precisely what it deserves.

That is Esack’s standpoint on terrorism.

He is also an outspoken critic of Israel’s “occupation “.

of our community did not support this, but I feel that firstly we should respect the office of the president of our country, even if we don’t always agree.

Secondly, if we distance ourselves from the powers-that-be, then a vacuum will be created that will be filled with something that won’t have our interests at heart.

President Zuma said the ANC “noted” the dissatisfaction our community had with the reception Hamas received. It was a positive gesture that he presented to us. Perhaps more consideration will be given to our community in the future.

Lastly, Zev Krengel commented that President Zuma had an open door policy to the SAJBD and also said he recognised that sometimes it’s not easy for the president to make certain decisions, especially because other forces try to pressurise him to make different decisions.

Events go on behind the scenes that the public is not privy to and we may never know about. I believe in giving credit where credit is due and acknowledging the positive there is between the Jews of this country and the ruling party. Gestures of goodwill and acknowledgment usually lead to better relationships.

Michele Engelberg  
Johannesburg

So it maybe a reason for people like Esack, to reject any assistance, from a country like Israel and with whom he has political differences.

This approach is not only unfair and unsophisticated, but not soundly based in logic.

The masses in our country need water. Does it matter to those who don’t have water, from whence it comes? I think not.

Our government, having hosted Hamas (through the ANC), has not endeared itself to many people here and abroad and therefore, with the ANC and the government’s hostile attitude towards Israel, it must also be questioned why Israel or any university in that country would want to co-operate and assist South Africa with its water crisis (or any other for that matter).

Another aspect to consider is our government’s cavalier attitude and dereliction towards many of its state entities.

Can we expect a different attitude towards our water supply?

I agree with Price that SA should try and overcome its ambivalent attitude toward Israel, if only for selfish reasons, namely (for the sake of) the people in this country.

Nathan Cheiman  
Northcliff, Johannesburg

STOP FLOGGING THE DEAD HORSE TWO-STATE SOLUTION

Isn’t it time, finally, that the State of Israel and Jews everywhere, stopped talking about and punting a two-state solution, as a realistic proposition?

The Oslo Accord is dead; it was never something the Palestinians even remotely came close to accepting - one Intifada after another and refusing to accept up to 97 per cent of the West Bank as offered by former Premiers Ehud Barak and later Ehud Olmert.

Any land we give up for “peace” will backfire in our faces. We have only to refer to Gaza.

The world at large likes the idea of a two-state solution with the Palestinians. Many of our “friends” believe that from such a “solution”, the days of the State of Israel will be numbered: numerous hostile forces will make their way to our reduced borders.

Do we still talk about the possibility of a two-state solution because this is what Israel wants and needs, or because the world so demands it, or do we go along with it merely to placate such demands?

We know it won’t work and the world by and large knows it as well, but for its own reasons wishes to impose this suicidal “solution” on Israel.

Why does (PA President Mahmoud) Abbas consistently refuse to negotiate with (Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu?

He knows that his demands will be laughed at by Israel. No matter how

strong Israel is, and thank G-d it is very powerful, it will have its work cut out to defend the country if we accede to reduce our borders as demanded by Abbas and/or other “well-meaning friends”.

At least the status quo must remain and Israel will get stronger in every way as time goes on.

I believe that Israel should in fact annex the “territories” so that these become de jure part of Israel, being part of the land promised to us by Hashem.

Those who do not wish to be under Israeli sovereignty, can ask to be accepted by Jordan or any other Arab state nearby and in the likely event that such requests are refused, depart for the shores of Europe as hundreds of thousands of their faith have already done.

Many hundreds of thousands still have their eternal UN and UNRWA “refugee certificates” which the EU must recognise.

Obviously these proposals need to be fleshed out. There will be many in Israel and elsewhere who will disagree, for whatever reasons, including that it is still fashionable to talk about the impossible two-state solution, but Israel must always remain a single, undivided state.

SAJB PRESENTED A MAGNIFICENT, SMOOTH-RUNNING CONFERENCE

To all at the SAJBD, congratulations and most sincere thanks in appreciation of an excellent and phenomenally well-organised biennial conference on Sunday night at Gold Reef City.

From smooth, safe and secure parking facilities, to catering, to ensuring timeous seating of everyone into the theatre, well done!

For a most wonderful array of guests, celebrities and a glittering line-up of speakers, Sh’Koach to you all.

To the most worthy recipients of several awards presented, a big mazeltov for their unstinting efforts to create a better life for all in South Africa, the world and in particular, Israel.

To Mary Kluk and Zev Krengel, a gigantic vote of thanks for their most wonderfully dedicated and exceptionally devout yeoman service to the Jewish community and to South Africa as a whole throughout the years in their respective positions. May they be blessed to continue this amazing journey to assist wherever and whenever necessary.

Time and space constraints naturally prevent me from listing all at SAJBD and others for what they do. You know who you are.

Les Markowitz  
Gresswold, Johannesburg.

JVJP A BUNCH OF NAIVE JEWS NOT UNDERSTANDING MIDEAST REALITIES AT ALL

I would like to respond to the letter in last week’s Jewish Report by Jewish Voices for a Just Peace. I believe that quite often Jews are extremists in different ways, probably because we are passionate people and we take issues to heart.

I have no doubt that JVJP consists of a bunch of well-intended, extremely naive Jews who live in the clouds. They cannot see, nor understand, the realities of the Middle East in particular.

I agree that not all Muslims are barbaric fanatics, but those who lead and dominate these trends, definitely are; you cannot reason or negotiate with them unless you are prepared to sacrifice yourself.

They are determined to impose Islam on the world and Israel is in their way... I am proud of having participated in the big rally in support of Israel and was very sad to see a prominent young Jew from Netzer standing together with all the sworn enemies of Israel, supporting them.

I lived in Israel and still have a big family and friends there. Israel was, is and will continue to be, in my heart for as long as I live.

Yossi Bogacz  
Highlands North, Johannesburg



ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD KNIFE ATTACKERS MUST STIR JVJP’S CONSCIENCE

Jewish Voices for a Just Peace (JVJP), prior to last weekend’s SA Jewish Board of Deputies’ conference in Johannesburg, penned a collective letter to President Jacob Zuma, urging him to address certain issues.

Defining racism, they make mention only of Islamophobia, but surely that definition must encompass a host of other “phobias” or “isms”; I am wondering what they’re actually saying.

The crux of their piece, however, seems to be the beef they have with the SAJBD, whom they claim only represents those uncritical of Israel, whereas it should represent the views of the entire community. This is tantamount to saying the South African government only represents members of the ANC and not all its citizens and marginalises others.

I stand corrected, but isn’t the Board a democratically elected body and if so, these “voices” would be shortchanging themselves by not joining this organisation to represent their views?

The conference addressed the upsurge of anti-Semitism and the best way to combat this, according to JVJP, is by pressurising Israel to negotiate a just peace with the Palestinians.

Who would possibly argue with this? Indeed probably every clear-thinking member of our community would wholeheartedly support such an initiative. I seem to recall that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in his recent address to the UN General Assembly and again during an interview on CNN, made an impassioned plea to PA President Mahmoud Abbas to sit down with him with no preconditions and discuss peace.

I don’t seem to recall any response from Abbas. Correction! His response was incitement which precipitated the current wave of knife attacks (some by children as young as 11) and car rammings.

JVJP has raised the Board’s support of Israel during last year’s Gaza war, quoting statistics of Palestinians killed, but not a mention of casualties on the other side. Mention is also made of the destruction of infrastructure and homes that have not been rebuilt.

Perhaps this group is not aware of a donor conference convened last October where over \$5 billion was raised for this very purpose; what has happened to that enormous sum if not used to rebuild Gaza?

Full marks to their resolve, guided by their conscience to continue to speak out against injustices and we hope to hear these same voices speaking out against the heinous crime of teaching children as young as 11 to commit murder. Surely this is a cause that must touch the conscience of those seeking a just peace?

**Allan Wolman  
Rosebank, Johannesburg**

WHY IS KERRY SILENT ON ATROCITIES IN ISRAEL?

US Secretary of State John Kerry condemns the unspeakable brutality of the ISIS terrorist attack in France.

Why don’t we hear a call from him for the violence to stop on both sides, like we heard from him and also from the United States representative at the United Nations? Also, from other parties when Israel is attacked with unspeakable brutality by terrorists, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad from the Palestinian territories.

The bias from the media and much of the world when Israel is involved, is so wrong.

**Mervyn Bloch  
Glenhazel, Johannesburg**

RACISM: JEWS MUST LOOK AT THEMSELVES, ESPECIALLY ISRAELI JEWS

We at the Jewish Voices for a Just Peace recognise that anti-Semitism is a problem in the world and has resulted in the Holocaust where six million Jews died, and has resulted in deaths and of Jews in other parts of the world.

In South Africa, we are fortunate that we have not experienced anti-Semitism on more than a very small, individual scale. The culture of racism is abhorrent in any form.

Given that the biennial conference of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg at the weekend was entitled “Gathering Voices”, we wanted to make a point that Jews must look at themselves when it comes to racism, and specifically Israeli Jews need to address their problems as well.

To this end, we handed out a pamphlet at the conference, showing statements by ministers in Israel’s government: Minister of Defence Moshe Yaalon said “The Palestinian threat harbours cancer-like attributes”; Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked, in a Facebook post said “[Palestinians] should go, as should the physical homes in which they raised the snakes”; former Housing Minister Ariel Atias said “Prevent[ing] the spread” of Palestinian citizens is “a national duty”; and Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely said “[Palestinians] are beasts, they are not human”.

While handing out these pamphlets, unfortunately, the Community Security Organisation took it upon themselves to “rough” us up, standing on feet, hitting [us] on the back, push[ing] us around the crowded hall and tried to bully us into taking away our pamphlets.

They refused to let us distribute the pamphlets and hence we thought it was important that the pamphlets be publicly available so that it can be discussed in the context of racism.

We are proudly Jewish and very critical of Israel. We are NOT anti-Semitic, and nor are others anti-Semites just because they criticise Israel. Israel is seen as a pariah state, NOT because it has a majority of Jews, but because it is illegally occupying and stealing land owned by people who they control under military occupation.

Israel refuses to recognise non-Jews living in East Jerusalem as citizens; they are only permanent residents - and that is Christians and Muslims alike.

**Jewish Voices for a Just Peace**

Around the Jewish World



FIRST RESPONDERS TRAINED SINCE KOSHER SUPERMARKET ATTACK

JERUSALEM - When 130 people were killed and 368 injured in a series of terror attacks in Paris earlier this month, 15 clinicians trained by Israeli experts fanned out to area hospitals to offer psychotrauma interventions as the victims were brought in.

These French mental health professionals from OSE, the largest Jewish welfare organisation in Paris, were among a group of 80 who had been trained by members of the Israel Trauma Coalition (ITC) following the terror attack on a Paris kosher supermarket last January.

ITC Director Talia Levanon tells ISRAEL21c that Israel’s unfortunate experience and expertise in the psychological effects of terror bring a critical perspective to foreign professionals more used to dealing with isolated incidents.

As France is suffering such attacks on a more frequent basis, the ITC and Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) are stepping up efforts to train clinicians there - even as a wave of terror in Israel is keeping the ITC very busy at home.

“Like people in Israel, the French are getting

ready for long-time duress, which requires a different approach,” explains Levanon. “In Israel, we know there is no safe place or time and I think now people in France understand this. They understand they are very vulnerable.” - ISRAEL 21c

SELF-HEALING ‘ELECTRONIC SKIN’ MAY NOT BE SCI-FI MUCH LONGER

HAIFA - Israeli scientists used a new synthetic polymer to develop a self-healing, flexible sensor that mimics the self-healing properties of human skin.

These incredible advances are a step closer to reality thanks to chemical engineering researchers at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa.

Inspired by the natural healing properties of human skin, Professor Hossam Haick and postdoctoral researcher Tan-Phat Huynh used a new kind of synthetic polymer to develop a self-healing, flexible sensor.

Flexible sensors have already been developed for use in consumer electronics, robotics, healthcare and space flight. However, these sensors are easily damaged. Several scientific groups have succeeded in synthesising self-healing materials but have not succeeded in integrating them into working devices.

The Israelis therefore experimented with a new material that can be integrated into flexible devices to “heal” incidental scratches or damaging cuts that might otherwise compromise the functionality of the device.

Beyond devices, however, the sensor’s self-healing properties could be incorporated into electronic skin of the future, giving it the critical ability to “heal” itself in less than a day. Theoretically, sensors could also be built into prostheses that would allow wearers to feel changes in their environment.

Haick - the well-known inventor of such futuristic advances as the NaNose cancer sensor - and Huynh published a paper outlining the characteristics and applications of the

unique self-healing sensor in the journal Advanced Materials.

The Israeli sensor platform comprises a self-healing substrate, high-conductivity electrodes and molecularly modified gold nanoparticles.

“The gold particles on top of the substrate and between the self-healing electrodes are able to ‘heal’ cracks that could completely disconnect electrical connectivity,” said Haick. – ISRAEL 21c



DR ALAN FINKEL NAMED CHIEF SCIENTIST

CANBERRA – Dr Alan Finkel, a strong advocate for an end to coal-fired power, has been appointed as Australia’s next chief scientist.

The announcement was made in Canberra by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science Christopher Pyne.

“I’m absolutely honoured and excited about the opportunity to make a contribution,” Finkel, who is the outgoing chancellor of Monash University, told The AJN.

A Mount Scopus College alumnus, Finkel is a prominent engineer, respected neuroscientist, successful entrepreneur and philanthropist with a personal commitment to innovation and

commercialisation. He is also president of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering.

Succeeding Professor Ian Chubb, Finkel will commence the prestigious role in January 2016. It will see him advising Turnbull, Pyne, and other portfolio ministers on matters pertaining to science.

He hopes to utilise his varied experiences across areas including education, research, engineering, business and philanthropy to formulate the best possible advice and advocate for science in the wider community.

“I would like to see our investment in research maximally improve our prosperity and productivity,” he said of his aims for the role. - Australian Jewish News

CHIEF RABBI LEADS SEMINAR IN TACKLING CHILD ABUSE

LONDON - More than 120 religious leaders have taken part in a training seminar led by Commonwealth Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis aimed at encouraging them to tackle child abuse within Jewish communities.

The session included dozens of United Synagogue rabbis and rebbetzens and was supported by the S&P Sephardi community.

Rabbi Mirvis has made tackling child sex abuse a key point of his Chief Rabbinate. He committed to organising the seminar to ensure rabbis were properly equipped with the knowledge and understanding required to deal with cases of abuse arising in their communities.

Among the speakers and trainers of the sessions in London were Chief Rebbetzen Valerie Mirvis who is a social worker with years of experience in front-line child protection issues, senior police officers and leading local authority experts.

Rabbis were told of the halachic requirements to tackle abuse and were given training by psychotherapists on how to advise victims. - Jewish Chronicle



# KDVP introduces its SRC for 2016



Photo: Yael Gordon

OWN CORRESPONDENT

It's this time of the year again when Jewish day schools announce their Student Representative Council for the coming year.

King David Victory Park is proud of the “group of 2016” that embodies everything that is good about the school.

Back: Anna Moross; Aaron Fleishman; Matthew Rosenthal; Jesse Blou; Daniel Cramer; Matthew Sive; Joey Avinir; Jared Class; Jayna Goldstuck; and Micaela Tucker. Front: Dalia Solomon; Daniel Levenstein (chief whip); Cassidy Gordon (deputy head girl); Bradley Mervis (head boy); Liora Katzew (head girl); Jared Wolf (deputy head boy); and Tori Ichikowitz (chief whip).

We wish them every success for 2016.

# Youth show off their art talent



Photo: Merle Maselle

GABY COHEN

King David Junior Primary, Linksfield, last week exhibited beautiful works of art, lovingly created by the school's grade 1 to 3 pupils, at Norwood Mall.

The works on show took months of hard work under the guidance of art teacher Merle Maselle.

Pictured at “Art Expo 7” - Jessica Sack, a grade 3 pupil, proudly standing in front of her artwork.

# P stands for ‘phantastic’ at Rosabelle Klein Nursery School

CARON LEVY

Last week the grade R class at Rosabelle Klein Hebrew Nursery School in Waverley completed learning the sound “p” and they celebrated this by hosting a large “Pyjama Picnic Party”!

They arrived in pyjamas and set out on their “P Picnic”. They ate pretzels, popcorn, Pringles, pistachios, pasta, pineapple, peaches, peppermint crisp and pizza and then happily shared their “P Picnic” with the rest of the school.

Pictured are Lisa Klaff and the grade R Class.



Photo: Merle Maselle

# Daniel Appleton (12) in top 5 for gymnastics

SIMONE LIPSHITZ

Daniel Appleton (12) recently competed in the Central Gauteng Regional Championship, the Gauteng Provincial Championship and the SA Gymnastics Games, where he achieved fifth position in his age group.

He received a gold medal for rings and also his provincial colours.

Due to the fact that he was among the top six gymnasts in his age group in South Africa, he has been invited to take part in the Africa Region 5 Gymnastics Championships in December.

Daniel, who lives in Waverley, Johannesburg, is a member of the Wanderers Gymnastics Centre at the Wanderers Club in Illovo.



Young Daniel Appleton in action.

# Whoever says that learning can't be oodles of fun!



SUE BENJAMIN

A trough was filled with blue and yellow ice and grains of raw rice. Scientific thinking was promoted and the children at Sydenham Pre-Primary School were encouraged to make observations and predictions as to what may happen in the tub.

It was a great way to demonstrate the mixing of how primary colours yellow and blue make green.

The kids learnt about scientific concepts such as absorption and solids and liquids.

Language development which included descriptive words, finding words to rhyme with rice and ice and exploring opposites, made it all so much fun. These skills, combined with all the benefits of sensory play, made it a very successful hands-on learning experience!

# Sydenham Shul pays homage to its 2015 batmitzvah group



INGRID SEEFF

The Sydenham Highlands North Shul batmitzvah group of 2015 was feted at the shul recently to mark the momentous occasion.

The 16 girls participated in their batmitzvah ceremony on November 1.

Their choral verse was entitled: “It’s a Small World After All”, and it focused on the powerful role women play in uniting the Jewish people.

In addition to the inspiring Roots syllabus they were taught by Lee Unterslak, the girls participated in informal activities throughout the year, which they found to be both rewarding and fun.

Pictured are, back: Ingrid Seeff; Lee Unterslak; Mirah Krinkin; Hanna Green; Dina Kay; Natalia Levin; Mikaela Cohen; Liat Mindel; Talya Atie; Kerri Markowitz; Ariella Scop; and Rabbi Yossy Goldman. Front: Liora Scop; Amber Michel; Adan Windsor; Shaina Blau; Rachel Hertz; Demi Unterslak; and Tyra Liebmann.



# A tale of two Pollards

VICTOR GORDON

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” For Handré Pollard, the 21-year-old rugby whizz kid, the best of times has arrived with every likelihood that even better times will follow.

An athlete endowed with a unique “rugby brain”, Pollard is every fan’s golden boy - innovative, dependable, versatile, confident and a natural leader. The girls swoon while their parents live in hope that this handsome lad next door just might ring their door bell and date their daughter.

Indeed, the world is Handré’s oyster where even his few transgressions (like the odd poor kick) will be overlooked and put down to a forgivable lapse of concentration.

Then there is another Pollard - Jonathan Jay, whose life for the past 30 years has been excruciatingly different. While the former Pollard has spent thousands of hours breathing in the intoxicating odours of fresh mown grass, crisp air and the sweat of rugby camaraderie, the latter Pollard’s experience of the outside world has for the past three decades been limited to supervised periods of exercise in a drab prison courtyard and the foul smells prevalent within the confines of any typical prison.

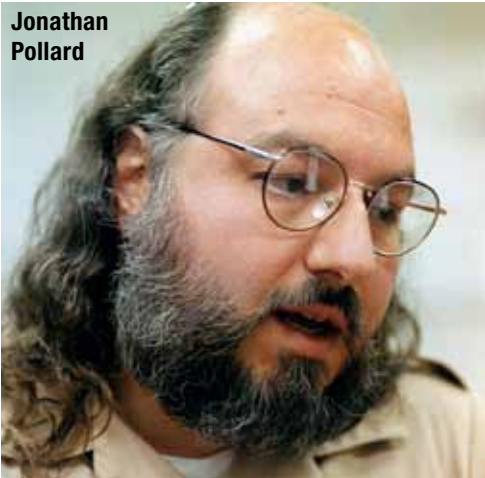
To see green grass, let alone press your cheek against it, would not have been part of his daily experience.

Neither man knows of the other. They occupy different planets. Their lives have taken vastly different directions and will, with certainty, never converge. Each man made a choice at approximately the same stage of his life - Handré to become a sporting hero; Jonathan to save his people - the Jews of the State of Israel.

In this did Jonathan succeed? We don’t know and probably never will. Israel’s ultimate gains from Jonathan’s enormous sacrifice cannot be determined. Did he forfeit much of his life in trying to achieve it? Undoubtedly.

At 61, Jonathan’s best years are gone and even after serving an even longer term than that of Nelson Mandela, he still remains vilified by some and admired and appreciated by others.

Jonathan’s self-sacrifice in the interests of his fellow Jews, came at a terrible price. Yet having paid his debt to American society and having been granted his freedom, he still remains reminded by his former jailers that he has yet to be granted the ultimate freedom



that he so desperately seeks.

The case of Jonathan Pollard has brought out the very worst of America: its soulless side - unforgiving, dishonest, untrustworthy, manipulative and heartless.

Undoubtedly, Pollard’s passing American secrets to Israel, a close ally of the former, was a criminal act worthy of harsh retribution. But when courts turn their backs on confirmed plea-bargains, when senior state officials interfere with court proceedings, when the accused has no access to alleged incriminating “evidence” and when presidents (Bill Clinton) pardon convicted terrorists who have served a fraction of their sentences while refusing to do so for Pollard (who by then had served twice the years of any other spy convicted for the same offence - espionage), one has to ask an obvious question... Is it possibly because Pollard was Jewish and the benefactor the Jewish State? Perish the thought.

Of everything suffered by Pollard, one incident stands out above all else. In 2013 Pollard’s father became desperately ill. It was obvious that he had a short time to live. Jonathan requested a final visit to his father’s bedside. The request was turned down.

Later, when his father passed away, his only son again requested sanction to attend his father’s funeral and recite Kaddish. Again, permission was withheld. Even intervention by Israel at the highest level had no effect.

Was Pollard a flight risk? Of course not. He could have been well guarded and, if necessary, shackled. Was this no less than emotional torture of a man who, at that time had already spent 27 years in a prison cell? We’ll come to our own conclusions.


And now, with Jonathan Pollard finally released, not through the benevolence of Barack Obama but after a decision taken by the parole board, he is still restricted for a further



five years from making aliyah, going to his beloved Israel for which he gave so much.

Handré and Jonathan - the one still to realise his full potential while supported by adoring fans; the other to pick up the pieces of his life as they lie scattered before him. May they both succeed.


• Victor Gordon is a member of the South African Zionist Federation Media Team, committed to monitoring media bias against Israel and anti-Semitism. He is a playwright with several professional productions including the highly-acclaimed “Pollard’s Trial” about the plight of Jonathan Pollard.



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## World News in Brief

### Elderly Jewish ladies busted for weekly mahjong game

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS - Four elderly Jewish women playing mahjong in Florida, may not sound like a crime - but that’s what was recently alleged in the city of Altamonte Springs.

Lee Delnick, Bernice Diamond, Helen Greenspan and Zelda King - aged 87 to 95 - had their weekly game interrupted by police who stopped them from playing in their usual spot, the Escondido Condominium clubhouse, on suspicion that the group was illegally gambling.

King told the Heritage Florida Jewish News that a “troublemaker” in the building had alerted authorities to their weekly game.

The ladies were told by the Escondido property manager to “lay low” for weeks until the issue sorted itself out.

“This is ridiculous!” King said. “We haven’t played in the clubhouse for weeks! We have to go to each other’s homes to play, and not everyone lives in Escondido. It is an international game and we are being crucified!”

As it turns out, there is no ordinance in Altamonte Springs against mahjong gambling. The Heritage Florida Jewish News reported that Florida’s gambling laws allow certain “penny-ante games”, or games through which a winner wins \$10 or less.

The bubbes’ mahjong game, which caps the winner’s earnings at a steep \$4, falls within the confines of the law.

King told the Heritage Florida Jewish News that the ladies can now laugh about the whole affair at their next mahjong game in the condo clubhouse, scheduled for after Thanksgiving. (JTA)

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

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# Defying stereotypes: Jewish life in the South is flourishing

**PAUL BERGER**  
**FORWARD STAFF WRITER**

*This article originally appeared in the Forward, November 13, 2015, and is reproduced with permission.*

When Courtney Ferriter arrived six years ago in the predominantly Protestant community of Auburn, Alabama, she needed a place where she felt like she belonged. “You feel like you’re a bit of an outsider, so the natural inclination is, you want to go find your people,” Ferriter said.

Ferriter, a graduate student at Auburn University, found Congregation Beth Shalom, a 25-year-old Reform synagogue that is steadily growing in the heart of the Bible Belt.

Six years on, Ferriter, 29, is a co-president of the congregation and leads services once a month.

According to a new study conducted by Ira Sheskin, one of America’s leading experts on Jewish populations, Congregation Beth Shalom is not unusual. Sheskin told the Forward that although there is some truth to the cliché of the dying, small Southern Jewish community, there are also plenty of new small communities springing up and flourishing across the South.

Moreover, this flourishing has taken place against the backdrop of a broader growth of Jewish life in major Southern cities.

During a 60-year period that Sheskin examined, from 1955 to the

present, the percentage of America’s Jewish population that is living in the northeast fell to 44 per cent from 68 per cent. During that same period, the percentage of American Jews living in the West grew to 24 per cent from 10 per cent and the percentage of Jews living in the South, including Florida, grew to 21 per cent from 8 per cent.

The growth is “not monolithic”, Sheskin told the Forward. “And it’s not just in Florida. It’s in Atlanta, Dallas, Houston. You’ve got small communities that are appearing, as well as small communities that are disappearing.”

Sheskin, a demographer from the University of Miami, presented his study on October 31 at the Southern Jewish Historical Society’s annual conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

He said that while much of the growth of Jewish life in the South can be attributed to a rise in the Jewish populations of Florida, Maryland and the District of Columbia, that’s not the only factor.

Since 1960, excluding those three areas, the number of Southern Jews more than doubled, to 508 000 from 216 000, Sheskin said.

While Atlanta accounts for a large part of that growth - the city’s Jewish population grew to 120 000 last year, up from 77 000 in 1997 - the Jewish communities of Houston and Dallas in Texas, Charlotte in North Carolina, and Richmond and Tidewater in Virginia, have experienced considerable growth, too.

Sheskin’s study also challenges the notion that small Jewish communities are dying out.

It is true that the South has seen a significant migration to large cities: This year, 81 per cent of Southern Jews live in communities of 25 000 Jews or more, compared with 50 per cent in 1960. But the region has also seen the birth of many small Jewish communities.

Sheskin’s study found that the number of small Jewish communities - defined as those numbering between 100 and 500 Jews - has bounced back to levels not seen since 1960. This year there were almost 100 such small Jewish communities, up from 62 in 2008.

He said that he discovered many new communities by searching the Internet or by using increasingly detailed studies conducted by the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, two resources that were not available to researchers until more recent years.

While many small Jewish communities are dying out as the economies of these Southern towns contract, professional Jews are being lured to other communities where jobs in academia, medicine and business are plentiful.

Ferriter’s Congregation Beth Shalom, in Auburn, is one such thriving new community. The congregation, which celebrated its 25th anniversary this past April, runs a small building with a sanctuary, a kitchen and two



**Demographer Ira Sheskin is one of America’s leading experts on Jewish populations.**

classrooms. This year, the religious school had about a dozen learners.

Like Charlottesville, Virginia, or Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the rise of Auburn’s Jewish population is tied closely to the city’s university. Almost all of the congregation’s 50 to 70 members have ties to Auburn University.

Paula Hunker, a co-president of Congregation Beth Shalom, said that because congregants have to work to maintain a Jewish life, members are very committed and engaged.

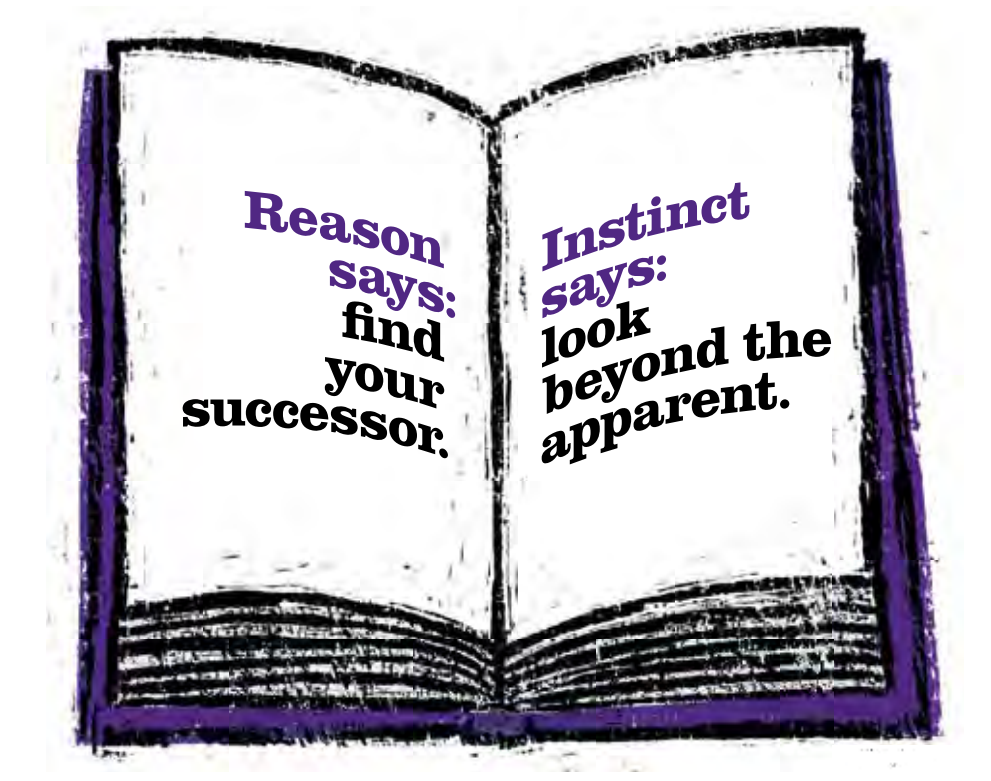
Congregation Etz Chaim, in Bentonville, Arkansas, home of the retailer Walmart, is also thriving. The unaffiliated congregation, which was founded 11 years ago, recently hired its first fulltime rabbi.

Dawn Bachman, the congregation’s president, said that the hiring of Rabbi Rob Lennick is “a key turning point” in the synagogue’s growth. It has elevated the congregation’s visibility in the non-Jewish community and it has attracted a dozen new member families in the past six months.

Rabbi Jeremy Simons, staff rabbi of the ISJL, said that one of the main problems that Southern Jewry faces is the perception among the broader American Jewish community that size matters - that being a small congregation is somehow bad.

Today, more than 60 per cent of American Jews live in large communities in New York, California, Florida and New Jersey, Sheskin noted.

Simons serves as a travelling rabbi for 110 Southern congregations that are too small to employ a fulltime rabbi.



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# Erudite Peretz a pawn star of note



**PETER FELDMAN**

Roy Peretz is one of the true “characters” of the pawn industry. He became a TV star when the series “Pawn Stars SA” was launched on the History channel (DStv 186) last year and a new season is being filmed for screening early next year.

The man with the slicked-back look and silver tongue has also expanded his field of influence and is sharing his knowledge with his own one-hour radio show on Mondays at 17:30 on Radio Today (1485 AM). He is also about to launch a new show with his team on ChaiFM.

Called Pawn Stars Hour, the radio show discusses all aspects of the pawn industry, invites experts on jewellery, antiques and artefacts to give their opinions and handles callers who phone in about “hidden gems” in the cellar which may be worth a lot of money.

Peretz owns a pawn shop in Hyde Park, which he operates with Israeli partners Eytan Nadler and Liel Rimon and assistants Irene Bower and Solly Mabasa. Here they meet customers from all walks of life who flock to pawn or sell anything from the quirky, the unexpected, to the downright hilarious.

A chemical engineer by profession, Peretz started in the business of pawn-broking 20 years ago and believes he took it to a different level. He says it is unfortunate that people’s conception of pawn-broking is that it’s seedy and devious.

“It’s a misconception,” he stresses. “The customers who come to me will feel like they are doing me a favour, and not I’m doing them a favour. A lot of people come to me to sell or replace items. I’ve got clients who have been with me for 20 years and they keep coming back.”

But the company’s main core of business is gold, diamonds, expensive watches and motorcars. “But I also love antiques,” he confesses.

Peretz and his team are well schooled in their business with degrees and diplomas in their various fields of expertise. They say “experience” and a “gut feel” are crucial in their line of work. “You develop another sense when you’re in the business. You must know whether the diamond you have just bought will sell.”

South Africa boasts a rich and diverse culture and it provides a treasure-trove of fascinating artefacts for the shop, ranging from military items, an ancient Khoi-San hunting kit, a Boer War coin or a Pontiac Firebird - everything has a story, and a price.



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### Today (November 27)

• UZLC hosts Cherisse Zeiffert of the SAJBD on “A Visit to Israel Updated.” Venue: Our Parents' Home. Time: 12:45 -14:00. Contact: Gloria, (011) 485-4851 or 072-127-9421.

• Shalom Masorti Seniors Club meets the last Friday of each month for those wishing “to make new friends and have some light-hearted fun”. Tea is served and there is a selection of board games. Motivational speaker Roz Basserabie will speak on “Just Because You Are Over 60+ Does Not Mean You're ‘invisible’”. Information: Esther, (011) 485-5619 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday mornings.

### Sunday (November 29)

• Second Innings hosts Jose Luis Camacho on “Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Hearing Loss And The Right Solutions To This Problem”. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres.

### What's On

Time: 10:00 for 10:30. Cost: R20 members, R30 visitors (incl tea and refreshments) Contact: Linda Fleishman tel (011) 532-9701.

• JJAC hosts “Jittery Citizens”, a group of comedy and musical improvisation artists. Venue: The Market Theatre. Time 15:00. Cost: R100. Information: sheli@jjac.co.za. Cell: 082-929-9765.

### Monday (November 30)

• UJW has its year-end celebrations with cartoonist Dov Fedler reading from and discussing extracts from his book “Out of Line”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Contact: UJW office (011) 648-1053.

### Wednesday (December 2)

• SA Centre for Religious Equality and Diversity hosts DA MP Darren Bergman on “Against All Odds? Should I Stay or Should I Go?” Venue: Slome Auditorium,

Beit Emmanuel Progressive Synagogue, Parktown. Cost: R20 (incl a light meal). Time: 18:30. RSVP for catering purposes to Rabbi Julia Margolis 076-673-0750 or rabbijuliamargolis@gmail.com

### Thursday (December 3)

• JJAC hosts a table tennis, pool and games evening: in the youth centre of Sandton Shul. Time: 19:00. Cost: R25. E-mail whatson@jjac.co.za with “Table Tennis and Games.”

### Sunday (December 6)

• Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets in the St John's College Auditorium, The programme is compiled by Harry Fidler, A video, “The Best of the Durban Jazz and Swing Society” will be shown. Also “All Things Glenn Miller”. After interval a further video, “Night With the Stars” - John Wilson and his Orchestra. Time: 14:15 sharp. Enquiries: Marilyn 072-243-7436 or Jack 082-450-7622.

## What's on the web

## Chock-a-block with news

Only on sajr.co.za this week:  
There is a wealth of web-only content for users this week:

Mazeltov to reader Liron Mazor and family on winning the Jewish Report's “Personalised Family Fitness Competition”. Liron had graciously offered when he entered, to share some of his prize with another entrant, Barbara Garnitz.

We have covered the local-gone-global brouhaha between pro- and anti-Israel lobbyists which erupted over the Mavi Marmara issue. The Zionist Fed's national chairman, Ben Swartz, publicly bashed Independent Newspapers last week and, after further Independent reports that didn't gel, Jewish Report online published “SAPS ‘dumbfounded’ over Mavi Marmara letter” on Monday. It seems that pro-Palestinian lobbyists were using the non-issue of the day to promote a media event they held this week.

Read about the Jewish primary school that was evacuated by the bomb squad.

There are also links to the podcasts of all 13 speeches at the SAJBD conference, uploaded individually by ChaiFM, so users listen to those they want to hear. They include the



speech of President Jacob Zuma.

You will also find stories from Israel on the Prime Minister meeting French Ambassador Patrick Maisonnave; and on Netanyahu holding urgent consultations with his security officials after Bloody Thursday, which was the first time five Jews died (and seven more were injured) on one day. President Reuven Rivlin said at one funeral: “The pornography of death is striking across the world.”

During our Shabbos last weekend, US citizen and Israeli spy, Jonathan Pollard, was finally freed - albeit on very strict parole terms, after 30 years of confinement. In our “**Whacky Jewish World**” section we have the story of the Jew who coined the term “fast food” and many others - scientist and food activist Michael Jacobson.

You will also find the video of President Zuma's 20-minute-long address on Israel and Palestine in his last Questions session of the year in Parliament last week. The president tried to clarify SA's policies – but not all are convinced. See it for yourself.

• Remember that the main tab “LATEST” is the easiest place to find all recent stories that have dropped off, or never made, the home page.

## World News in Brief

### Putin to meet with Ayatollah Khamenei

TEHRAN - Russian President Vladimir Putin this week makes his first trip to Iran since 2007. He will meet with Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani. The meeting will take place on the sidelines of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum in Tehran, Putin's presidential aide Yuri Ushakov said. The talks will focus on “issues in bilateral relations, including atomic energy, oil and gas and military-technical co-operation,” Ushakov added. Russia has sought to deepen economic ties with Iran following world powers' nuclear deal with the Islamic Republic in July. Both Russia and Iran are supporting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in his country's civil war, with Russia providing air support and Iran reportedly supplying thousands of ground troops.

Russia has sought a broader coalition of countries to help fight the Islamic State terror group after the bombing of a Russian airliner over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula in October, an attack Islamic State said it committed. (JNS.org)

### Jewish leader suggests cap on refugees in Germany

BERLIN - The head of Germany's main Jewish organisation has suggested capping the number of refugees allowed into the country, so Germany can do a better job of integrating those already there.

At issue were attitudes toward Jews, women and gays in the home countries of many refugees, said Josef Schuster, head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, in a wide-ranging interview with Die Welt.

The problem was not the Muslim faith, but rather a cultural problem that would not go away by itself, he said.

In the interview, which appeared last Sunday, Schuster said eventually a limit would have to be established because of the challenges of integrating newcomers from cultures that were intolerant of Jews, didn't believe in equality for women and men, and eschewed homosexuality.

“Many of the refugees are fleeing from the terror of the Islamic State and want to live in peace and freedom,” he said. “At the

same time they come from cultures where hatred of Jews and general intolerance are par for the course.”

Schuster suggested that the integration problem he sees in European cities and countries has to do with the culture of the countries from which many refugees are fleeing and not with religion.

Unchecked acceptance of refugees “will make it increasingly difficult to transmit our [society's] values,” said Schuster, who on November 15 volunteered at a refugee shelter as part of the Jewish community's annual Mitzvah Day programme.

Schuster's remarks drew criticism from a refugee aid organisation, Pro Asyl, which pointed out that his words echoed the position of the conservative Christian Social Union party, the Bavarian sister party to Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Party, in “overriding the European human rights convention”.

Pro Asyl's director, Günter Burkhardt, told the French news agency AFP on Monday that both the European convention and the Geneva Refugee Convention guaranteed protection from being rejected at the border.

The governing Christian Democrats have proposed a discussion about limiting the number of refugees to be accepted. (JTA)

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# Bookman: a Jewish soccer pioneer in the UK

JACK MILNER

I have to admit to being a bit of a history buff. Some 13 years ago I met Billie Jean King at a junior tennis event at Sun City for 12 and 14-year-olds from all over the world.

King was shocked when she discovered none of the Swedish kids knew who Bjorn Borg was. “How do you go where you’re heading if you don’t know where you come from?” she asked them.

That’s when I realised why I had a passion for history: It fills in so many blanks.

Take the name Louis James Arthur Oscar Buchalter. How many people have heard of him, or even the name by which he was generally known, Louis Bookman?

Many Jews follow British football, but very few will know that Bookman was the first Jew to play in British soccer’s top professional league early in the 20th century. What made it even more remarkable is that he was the son of a rabbi who was horrified at the thought of his son playing professional football.

Even after his soccer career ended, Bookman continued to make his name as a cricketer, despite having parents and a wife who found it humiliating to have an athlete in the family.

Bookman was born Louis Buchalter, in Zagare, Lithuania, one of nine children of Mathias and Jane Buchalter. In 1895, the family boarded a ship with the intention of immigrating to New York.

According to family lore, however, they misunderstood an announcement when their ship stopped for provisions in Cork, Ireland, and got off the boat. The family soon settled in Dublin, where Mathias became a cantor in the city’s Lennox Street Shul.

As a teenager, Bookman played soccer for the local Jewish team, Adelaide, which in 1908 won the All-Ireland Under-18s Cup. Two years later, in spite of his parents’ objections, he turned professional and joined the Belfast Celtic club.

Within a year he had crossed the Irish Sea to join Bradford City, the then-reigning Football Association (FA) champions. This made Bookman, whose new teammates immediately dubbed him “Abraham”, the first Jew to play in Britain’s top-tier league.

Bookman played three seasons for Bradford City, mostly sitting on the bench. Even that did not prevent people from attributing the team’s tumble in fortunes to the arrival of this swarthy Semite, to whom they attributed a mystical negative power.

Nonetheless, he stayed with the Yorkshire team for three seasons, but was happy to move on from there to West Bromwich Albion where he remained for only a year, returning to Ireland when the First World War broke out.

The year 1914 also marked Bookman’s first international tournament - with the Irish national squad, who he helped win the British Home Championship.

It was hardly a surprise to find his parents unsupportive, but according to Bookman’s daughter, Joyce Levy, her mother refused to marry Bookman until he gave up professional sport.

“She came from Manchester and all her family were very learned and musical and, let’s be honest, a bit snobbish,” she told Irish sports-writer Eoin O’Callaghan.

Bookman was 40 when he finally married Rebecca Sirota and Joyce was born the following year.

Bookman played soccer until 1925, most notably during three seasons (1919 - 1922) with Luton Town during which time he appeared in 101 matches and scored eight goals.

According to his daughter, people often called Bookman “Eye-Tie,” assuming he was Italian because of his dark complexion. In fact, Anthony Clavane, author of a book about Jewish soccer players in the UK, notes that many fans had a peculiar preoccupation with Bookman’s heritage.

He refers to a contemporary newspaper cartoon in which a reporter is seen asking the footballer: “Does your brother play, Mr Bookman?” “Well, he is able,” responds Bookman’s character. “Did you say his name is Abel?” “No! I say he can play the game.”

When he left the sport, Bookman returned to Dublin where he worked both as a railwayman and as a jeweller. He was, however, a dreadful businessman, according to his daughter. When her father repaired watches and customers would ask for the bill, “he’d say ‘Ah sure, it doesn’t matter!’ So he never made any money and that was another nail in his coffin as far as my mother was concerned,” Levy said.

He also began playing cricket, including for the Irish national team - “the first Jew to be picked for the Gentlemen of Ireland”, according to his daughter; he appeared 14 times in the 1930s for the team.

Bookman died on June 10, 1943, at age 52. Joyce Levy recalled that after his death, her mother banned all talk of sport in the house. Yet, years later, she discovered her mother had saved many scrapbooks with press clippings about Bookman, which she had held on to. “I’m not that madly interested,” said Joyce. “I just have them to show the quality of the man.”



Louis Bookman, the first Jew to play in the top flight of British soccer.

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# Syd Nomis - proudly Springbok, proudly Jewish

OWN CORRESPONDENT

Springbok rugby legend Syd Nomis was the guest visitor at the Lions Shul in Doornfontein in Johannesburg recently, where he spoke at the kiddush/breakfast after the Shabbat service, addressing the large gathering, many of whom are keen sports enthusiasts.

Syd, in his humorous and down-to-earth way, recalled some anecdotes from his career, shared his views of the recent Rugby World Cup and particularly his views on the Springboks and their World Cup experience.

He recalled the almost accidental way he came into rugby and how he rose through the ranks to eventually claim 25 Springbok caps. He made it clear that he always carried his Jewish identity firmly and proudly throughout his career.

The Lions Shul’s early morning service, at 06:00 on Shabbat, is known for its chavershaft, lively atmosphere and delicious breakfast. The Lions Shul is Johannesburg’s longest serving synagogue.

“It is becoming more and more popular, enjoying bigger attendances than we’ve had in a while, especially as the shul enters its 110th year of its existence,” notes Rav Ilan Herrmann.



Rugby great Syd Nomis posing with Rav Ilan Herrmann, prior to Shabbat.

Photo supplied