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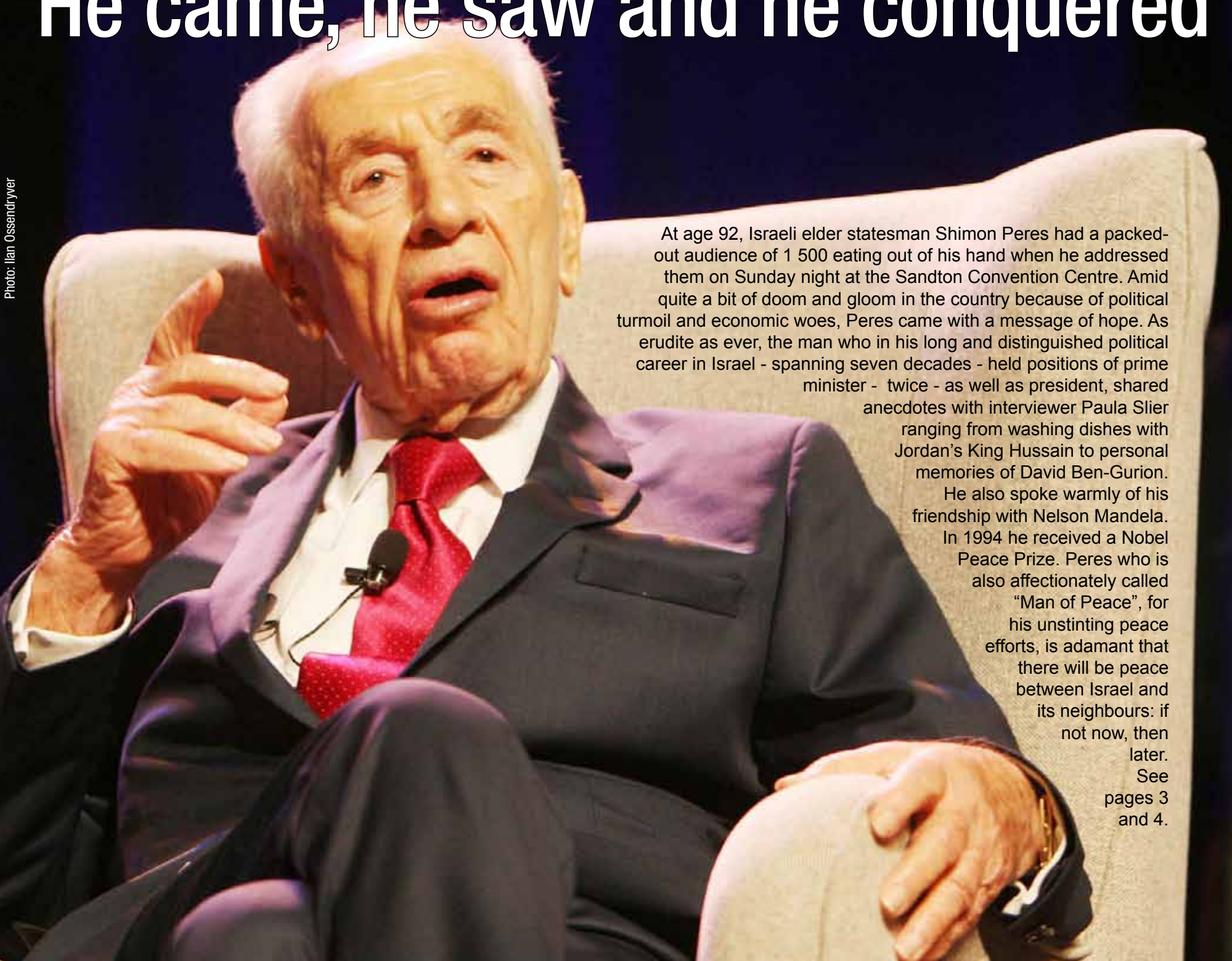
south african

Jewish Report

March 4 2016 / 24 Adar I 5776
Volume 20 - Number 8

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Photo: Ilan Ossendryver



At age 92, Israeli elder statesman Shimon Peres had a packed-out audience of 1 500 eating out of his hand when he addressed them on Sunday night at the Sandton Convention Centre. Amid quite a bit of doom and gloom in the country because of political turmoil and economic woes, Peres came with a message of hope. As erudite as ever, the man who in his long and distinguished political career in Israel - spanning seven decades - held positions of prime minister - twice - as well as president, shared anecdotes with interviewer Paula Slier ranging from washing dishes with Jordan's King Hussain to personal memories of David Ben-Gurion. He also spoke warmly of his friendship with Nelson Mandela. In 1994 he received a Nobel Peace Prize. Peres who is also affectionately called "Man of Peace", for his unstinting peace efforts, is adamant that there will be peace between Israel and its neighbours: if not now, then later. See pages 3 and 4.

Regulatory Board of Brith Milah - after botched bris - starts its work Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and the Johannesburg Beth Din this week announced the establishment of 'The Regulatory Board of Brith Milah in SA', following a botched bris in Johannesburg in 2014. 2	Israel's Dore Gold to visit SA next week In what is thought to be the highest level diplomatic engagement between Israel and South Africa in many years, Ambassador Jerry Matthews Matijila, director-general of the DIRCO, has invited his Israeli counterpart, Dore Gold, to hold bilateral talks next week. 5	Prospect of Trump nomination poses dilemma for Jewish Republicans Trump's surging candidacy has sent shivers through the Republican elite, creating anxiety among Jewish Republicans, some of whom are so unnerved, they may vote for Hillary Clinton, the Democratic shoe-in, if Trump wins the GOP nomination. 6	How the 2016 budget will affect you personally This year's national budget was one of the most important since the advent of democracy in 1994. More than the political intrigue and economic challenges around its delivery, the budget will have a significant impact on the finances of many South African Jewish households. 8	WIZO still enormously active after a century 'in the business' Last week Jewish groups in SA showed how successful they can be in unity, when they attended en masse the 102nd AGM of WIZO, the largest Jewish women's organisation in South Africa. 11
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Judaism is about applying theory in practice



Parshat
Shekalim Vayakhel
Rabbi Ari Shishler
Chabad of Strathavon

In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice. But, in practice, there is.

I recently saw a sign that said: “Your beliefs don’t make you a better person, your behaviour does.”

That concept should resonate with us Jews. We’re not a religion based on belief, but on action. Our aim as Jews is to do another mitzvah, not simply deepen our ideological connection to Torah values.

Someone who can pontificate on the virtues of charity, but doesn’t actually donate, lives out of sync with Judaism. A person who can become so embedded in prayer as to miss the opportunity to help another in distress, has betrayed his faith.

Rabbi Dovber of Chabad lived at one stage in the same home as his illustrious father, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the first Rebbe of Chabad. Both sages would burn the midnight oil studying ancient texts, each becoming so absorbed in their studies not to notice evening turn to velvety night and eventually to dawn.

One night, as they pored over their books, the younger rabbi’s baby son slipped out of his crib and began wailing in pain. The baby’s father was too engrossed in his study to hear

it. The older rabbi paused, attended to the baby, soothed him and returned to his studies only once the tot was asleep again.

In the morning, he rebuked his son, saying: “You may never become so caught up in Torah study so as not to hear the cry of a child.”

As the story was passed down through the generations, the subsequent rebbes of Chabad made sure to emphasise that “child” in the story really refers to any person in need.

You are likely to find Vayakhel a boring read. This parsha pretty much repeats, almost verbatim, information that we have already read in detail in previous portions, just two weeks ago. We have already waded through all the details of the mishkan structure, as well as all the materials needed for each component of the Tabernacle and the dimensions each one required. We have even been told where every single item is to be placed.

This Shabbos we get to read it all again. The only shift from last time to this is the tense. All the information on the Sanctuary described previously was in future tense. This week, we get to read about how the Jews actioned those instructions perfectly.

For a book that is typically hyper-concise, it is clearly out of character to repeat instead of using the more expedient “and the Jews did just as they were told”.

Here, the Torah wants to share a fundamental insight. Had the Torah only detailed all the specifics in the instructions, we would

know the theory of building G-d’s home. Once the Torah repeats every detail of how it was actually done, it highlights just how important it is to translate every detail of the theory into practice.

Living Jewish is not merely a matter of ideas or ideals or beliefs or philosophies. Judaism is about applying theory in practice.

KASHRUT ALERT

The kashrut division of the Union of Orthodox Synagogues advises that Ina Paarman Sundried Tomato Pesto no longer bears the Beth Din logo as it is no longer certified. The product's ingredients have been changed and it is no longer kosher. Old stock bearing the Beth Din logo may be eaten.

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Shabbat Times

Parshat Shekalim Vayakhel

March 4 / 24 Adar 1

March 5 / 25 Adar 1

Starts	Ends	
18:15	19:05	Johannesburg
18:15	19:51	Cape Town
18:07	18:57	Durban
18:15	19:15	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:22	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:12	East London

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World News in Brief

US Supreme Court turns down Jewish inmate’s discrimination case

WASHINGTON - The US Supreme Court has declined to take a case filed by a Jewish inmate accusing North Carolina prison officials of discrimination because they would not allow him to form a prayer and study group.

The court did not explain its decision on Monday not to hear Israel Ben-Levi’s case, The Associated Press reported.

In a dissenting opinion, Justice Samuel Alito said the court’s “indifference to this discriminatory infringement of religious liberty is disappointing”.

Ben-Levi, 68, a convicted rapist, appealed to the Supreme Court after the US Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit and a federal district judge ruled that prison officials could deny his 2012 request for a Jewish Bible study group.

The director of chaplaincy services for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, Betty

Brown, turned down Ben-Levi’s request because the department’s Religious Practices Manual, developed after consultation with “rabbis, experts and practitioners of Judaism”, requires that Jewish worship services have a minimum of 10 Jewish adults or a rabbi present, according to a brief filed on behalf of the defence.

No rabbi was available to lead the services and study, and Ben-Levi was asking for a group with only three participants. It is not clear why rabbis advised the prison service in this manner, as Jewish law does not require a minyan for a study group, and while a minyan is necessary to conduct a Torah service and recite certain prayers, it is not required for all prayers.

In his dissent, Alito said the prison policy treated Jewish groups differently than Christian or Muslim groups.

“The courts below should have considered whether [North Carolina’s] policy imposed a substantial burden on Ben-Levi’s ability to exercise his religious beliefs, as he understands them,” Alito wrote.

“Ben-Levi believes that relaxing the minyan requirement promotes his faith more than sacrificing group Torah study altogether.” (JTA)

News

Regulatory Board of Brith Milah – after botched bris – starts its work



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein; Dr Richard Friedland; Advocate Natie Segal; Rabbi Anton Klein; Rabbi Pinchas Zekry; and Av Beth Din Rabbi Moshe Kurtstag.

ANT KATZ

Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and the Johannesburg Beth Din this week announced the establishment of “The Regulatory Board of Brith Milah in SA”, following last year’s inquiry after a 2014 bris in Johannesburg led to irreparable damage for a baby boy.

The mandate of the Board is to oversee and govern the practice of brith milah, including the registration and accreditation of all practising mohalim, “as well as setting the norms and standards to ensure that the practice of brith milah is conducted with the highest standards of professionalism, health and safety,” the Chief Rabbi told Jewish Report this week, announcing the news of the committee.

The botched bris made international Jewish media headlines in June 2014 and had prompted the Chief Rabbi and the Av Beth Din to establish a commission of inquiry headed by retired Justice Phillip Levinsohn, a former Deputy Judge President of KwaZulu-Natal, to

investigate the incident and make recommendations.

The commission reported back to the community in November last year, by which time it had been established that the boy had suffered serious and irreparable damage. Levinsohn recommended the establishment of the Board and also recommended that the mohel concerned no longer perform circumcisions.

The community is “privileged to have four such outstanding people to take on the task of the Regulatory Board of Brith Milah,” said Rabbi Goldstein. “Each of them brings a wealth of experience and expertise from their professional life.”

The board members are Dr Richard Friedland, CEO of Netcare; Advocate Natie Segal, a highly regarded legal counsel; Rabbi Dr Pinhas Zekry, who has served as rabbi of the Durban Jewish community for more than 30 years and is also a qualified mohel; and Rabbi Anton Klein, a director of the Beth Din.

“We are all grateful to them for undertaking this important responsibility,” said Rabbi Goldstein.

South African Jewish Report

OMG... I don't believe you aren't advertising in the Jewish Report

Peres comes to SA with message of hope and inspiration

STEVEN GRUZZD

Ninety-two-year old Shimon Peres is a living legend, and Johannesburg Jewry thronged to hear him speak at the Sandton Convention Centre on Sunday night. Peres was twice Israeli Prime Minister (1984-1986 and 1995-1996), President (2007-2014) and a Nobel Peace Prize winner (1994).

His political career spans seven decades, as far back as being present at Israel’s Declaration of Independence in May 1948. And it is testament to the importance accorded to South Africa that he accepted the invitation of the IAU-UCF to bring his message of hope in person at his age.

Peres was interviewed, seated in an armchair, by journalist Paula Slier. He related anecdotes about washing dishes with Jordan’s King Hussein, mused about Moses, and

shared his personal memories of David Ben-Gurion: “A man ready to make compromises, who said Israel needs a moral base, or else there is no future.”

When asked about Israel’s growing international isolation, he said this tiny country introduced modern agriculture to China. “Having 1,2 billion friends is not so bad, is it?” he quipped, adding India’s billion too. He lauded improved relations with the Catholic Church under Pope Francis.

He said those so-called “scholars” demonising Israel had “gaps in their ignorance”. He dismissed any comparison between Israel and apartheid South Africa, saying: “There is no single word in our law that discriminates... Racism is a crime in Israel.”

When asked whether Israel would ever achieve peace with the

He dismissed any comparison between Israel and apartheid South Africa, saying: “There is no single word in our law that discriminates... Racism is a crime in Israel.”

Palestinians, Peres recalled that cynics had said peace with Arabs was impossible, yet Israel has long-standing peace treaties with both Egypt and Jordan.

And if peace is not reached soon, asked Slier? “We will reach it later,” Peres replied. “What’s the alternative? To kill each other?” He said negotiations had stalled due to the split in Palestinian leadership.

Peres spoke of the future. He urged young people not to waste their time and their talents, and

of the potential that science and technology have for overcoming poverty and ignorance that breeds extremism.

He had a special message for South Africans. He spoke warmly about his friend Nelson Mandela and his magnanimity. “In all South Africans,” he said, “you will find a small Nelson Mandela,” urging us to be inspired, positive and forgiving. “I believe in the future of South Africa, more than many South Africans... Israel succeeded, in spite of our smallness.” He spoke of how South Africa should learn from Israel that inspired people can achieve anything.

Peres’ final words resonated with the audience of 1 500. “Be optimistic. There are so many

pessimistic people. We all pass away in the same way. So rather be an optimist... Make the world a better place. Be a better person.”

Businessman Ivor Ichikowitz, who was instrumental in making the trip happen, summed it up: “This visit to South Africa could not have come at a more appropriate time. When the world is in such turmoil... when we South Africans think we have an exclusive mandate on tsores, this talk has had an inspirational effect on the entire Jewish community. South Africa needs to hear that Israel faced its challenges by realising the value of human capital... Peres is a man of huge optimism – we can only be inspired.”



Journalist Paula Slier interviews Israeli elder statesman, Shimon Peres, last Sunday evening at the Sandton Convention Centre.

Photo: Ilan Ossendryver

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Peres draws top MPs among crowd of 1 500

SUZANNE BELLING

The excitement and anticipation in the air were palpable as 1 500 people converged on the Sandton Convention Centre to hear statesman extraordinaire and Nobel laureate Shimon Peres address the community at the launch of the IUA-UCF campaign.

Top leaders joined the audience to pay tribute to the former president and prime minister of the State of Israel. They included members of parliament, among them ACDP leader Kenneth Meshoe, Cope leader Mosiuoa Lekota and IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

Buthelezi, was one of the first black leaders to visit Israel in 1986 and to address the South African Jewish community at a banquet on his return, when he described Peres as “a man of peace”.

Among his visits to Israel was a special trip he made to attend Peres’ 80th birthday in 2003. “He is a good friend,” Buthelezi told SA Jewish Report.

Diana Davids, who hails from India, was an enthusiastic guest. “I have worked as a chef for the Embassy of Israel for a very long time, first for the Consul-General in Mumbai, then in Qatar, where I worked for Dov Steinberg until the embassy closed its doors and I now work for Arthur Lenk in Pretoria.”

A fan of Shimon Peres, she was very taken with the man and the IUA-UCF launch.

Marc Lubner, CEO of Afrika Tikkun and chairman of the SA-Israel Foundation, truly wants to see good relations between South Africa and Israel. “I implore all parties to put efforts into finding a course that could bring South Africa and Israel together.”

He says he is opposed to any efforts that are not spent on finding resolution. “I believe there is so much positive coming out of Israel.” This should be concentrated on rather than Israel being “trashed and ignored”.

The 92-year-old Peres drew many spontaneous rounds of applause, as well as a standing ovation from the appreciative audience. His address took the form of an interview by South African-born television personality Paula Slier, who began her career on the SA Jewish Report and local Jewish television programmes.

Peres was introduced by Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk.

Entertainment with an Israeli-South African flavour was provided by the Amakhono we Sintu choir, vocalists Debbie Fleminger-Mizrachi, Dewald von Solms and violinist Waldo Alexander.

Not even the small demonstration by Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) supporters on the corner of 5th Street in Sandton, some 200 metres from the venue, could detract from this well-organised and novel evening.

“The demonstration is illegal,” a police spokesman told SA Jewish Report, even though the small group comprised only about 15 people. Many of the guests in the Convention Centre were not even aware of the anti-Peres demonstration outside.

“War on Civilians - Man of Peace?”, “Nuclear Programme - Blood on your Hands”, read some of the posters.

“It’s not okay. We know Peres is not right wing, but he collaborated with South Africa’s apartheid government. He has blood on his hands and should be arrested,” said Merlynn Edelstein, one of the protesters.

But, when asked about the stabbings in Israel, she admitted they were “horrifying”.

When told they would not have the cell phones they were carrying were it not for Israel’s technology, Edelstein said their argument was not with the manufacturers of cell phones, but with the government of Israel.

“The small number of demonstrators shows that there is really no substance to what they are proclaiming. They could hardly muster any support,” said Rabbi Doron Kline, CEO of Telfed, who was on a visit from Israel.

Shaun Zagnoev, chairman of the Gauteng Council of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, said Peres “is a man who represents both the history and the future of Israel. The right mind-set is required to ultimately achieve a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“This is a sharp distinction to the short-sighted and limited perspective of the BDS demonstrations,” he said.

“What demonstration?” asked Daniel Wolovitz, having the last word.

Happy to be a participant in the IUA-UCF launch, Wolovitz commented that Peres was making “such an effort” in extending his diplomatic ties (with South Africa).



Mangosuthu Buthelezi with Shimon Peres.



Mosiuoa Lekota with Shimon Peres.



Mr Mahole Mofokeng, MPL Gauteng Legislature, Cope; Mr Mosiuoa Lekota, MP leader of Cope; Mark Hyman, Co Chairman of South African friends of Israel (SAFI) and vice Chariman of SAZF; Reverend Dr Kenneth Meshoe MP, leader of ACDP; and Dr Lydia Meshoe.



Bev Schneider; Livnat Katz, Israel Centre; Sue Resnick, Israel Centre; Debbie Hurwitz, Israel Centre; and Aviad Sela, Director Israel Centre.



Sarit Shull; Debbie Ichikowitz; Paula Slier; and Meirav Foukz



Ziva Shenkman; Edna Halili; Anat Apter; Erica Golan; Dina Angel.

Survé includes Jews in the fight against racism

SUZANNE BELLING

“Racism in South Africa remains a blight on our country,” said Dr Iqbal Survé (pictured), executive chairman of Independent Media and Sekunjalo, at the recent launch of his brainchild #RacismStopsWithMe.

As if to prove a point that he meant any kind of racism (“I include anti-Semitism”), Survé invited as his personal guest to the launch, Israeli Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk.

“People should stop and think, look at history and the consequences of hate speech and inflammatory statements. I believe we should get South Africans talking to each other and put our country into this space.”

Dr Survé has taken some flak from members of the South African Jewish community who have accused him and the Independent newspaper titles of taking anti-Semitic and anti-Israel stances in their coverage of Israel. Survé says he tries to give his editors autonomy but has prevailed upon them not to allow their staff to take sides.

He told Jewish Report that he hoped that someone without an agenda, an individual as opposed to an organisation, might come forward to take a group of Independent Group journalists to Auschwitz, Israel and the Palestinian territories.

“I would like them to understand both the Jewish psyche and get a greater comprehension of the complexities of the situation in the Middle East,” says Survé.

Independent’s foreign editor Shannon Ebrahim, who has upset the community with her one-sided anti-Israel articles, recently returned from a trip to Auschwitz and wrote an article about her experience in last week Friday’s Star.

She described the “naked barbarity, the cruelty and the indifference to human suffering that brings you to your knees... “If we want an end to the cycle of repression and genocide - whether in Africa or the Middle East - opposing communities will need to go the extra mile to understand the historical and current trauma of the other.”

Sometimes Survé finds himself between a rock and a hard place, being accused by the Jewish community of siding with the Arabs/Palestinians and by the supporters of the Palestinian cause of siding with Israel.

“We should be able to help with the peace process and show how South Africa overcame challenges.”

Survé has held discussions with SAJBD National Chairman Jeff Katz; National Vice-Chairman and Cape Chairman Eric Marx; SA Zionist Federation Cape Chairman Rowan Polovin; and Charisse

Zeifert, head of communications at the SAJBD.

“The meeting was off the record, but fruitful,” Survé said.

The urgent need to address racism served as a rationale for the #RacismStopsWithMe campaign and to provide a platform for all voices regardless of age, race, education or class. There will be a dedicated website, giving guidance on how to deal with bigotry.

One of Survé’s campaign partners is the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation. Kathrada, himself, a former prisoner on Robben Island, has visited Auschwitz and drawn comparisons.

“As a doctor, I see people from all backgrounds, faiths and colours coming together as a cathartic process,” says Survé, who was the key figure in securing the release of Cape Town retired paediatric oncologist Professor Cyril Karabus when the latter was wrongfully arrested and incarcerated in the United Arab Emirates following the death of a three-year-old leukaemia patient while Karabus served as a locum there.

Karabus, Survé’s former professor at the University of Cape Town, was also a guest at the campaign launch.

“There is too much anger around,” Survé told Jewish Report. “Leadership should find that which is beautiful in people. We are all of the same blood. Together we can unite and give the country what it needs. We have a common humanity - let’s concentrate on what we have in common, rather than what is different, give voice to ordinary people across the country - we all want the same thing - jobs and to practise our religions in peace.”

Other partners in the #RacismStopsWithMe campaign include the SA Clothing and Textile Workers Union and the Fibre Processing and Manufacturing Seta.

A Sactwu clothing factory is producing around one million T-shirts sporting the campaign logo and Independent Media intends to employ 100 young South Africans to participate in the campaign as interns.

Photo supplied

Israel’s Dore Gold to visit SA next week

ANT KATZ

In what is thought to be the highest level of diplomatic engagement between Israel and South Africa in many years, Ambassador Jerry Matthews Matjila, director-general of the SA Department of International Relations and Co-operation (Dirco), has invited his Israeli counterpart, the director-general of Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ (MFA), Dore Gold, to hold bilateral talks in Pretoria next week.

Gold is the de facto highest ranking member of the MFA as there is no minister; that post is being retained by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

During his short visit, Gold, an accomplished writer, Middle East expert and past UN Ambassador, will also be engaging with South African Jewry.

Asked by Jewish Report if there was any special issue or item on the agenda for next week’s meeting, Israel’s Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk, said it was simply “normal between countries” who have diplomatic relations to engage at this level.

At the time of going to press, Dirco told Jewish Report it was seeking “the consent and approval of the executive authority of the Department” before being able to confirm the invitation.

Dore will be a guest of the Israeli Embassy and also would like to see Soweto during his visit. The request has been received and noted.

Gold, an accomplished diplomat and author, has been at the forefront of Israeli/Palestinian peace negotiations since 1991 when he was an adviser to the Israeli delegation at the Madrid Peace Conference. He was instrumental in forging the relationship between (then opposition) Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu and Jordan - and accompanied Netanyahu to meetings with the Jordanian leadership in 1994/5 in London, Amman and in Aqaba.

As the foreign policy adviser under Netanyahu after the 1996 elections, Gold worked with the PA, Egypt, Jordan and others in the Arab world.

While Gold has never personally written about the period in which he served as an envoy to the Palestinians and the rest of the Arab world, others have revealed that Gold was one of the first two envoys of the newly-elected Likud government to meet with Yasser Arafat in the Gaza Strip in 1996.

From 1997 to 1999, Gold served as Israel’s ambassador to the United Nations, during which time he also was a member of the Israeli delegation at the Wye River negotiations between Israel, the PLO, and then-US President Bill Clinton.

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The editor interviews... Nancy Spielberg

Vanessa Valkin spoke to Nancy Spielberg, documentary maker, businesswoman and philanthropist and sister of the legendary director Steven Spielberg on her first visit to South Africa this week.

She came as the guest of Cape Town’s United Jewish Communities (UJC) for their big fundraising launch. Jewish Report caught up with Nancy before the UJC top donors’ function and a subsequent screening of her acclaimed film “Above and Beyond” - about the birth of the Israeli air force.

How did you come to screen this film in South Africa?
I had always known what a valuable role the South Africans played in the early days of Israel’s independence. At the American Jewish historical society, I spoke to a group and after the screening, this beautiful young woman came to me with tears in her eyes and said: “I am just blown away by this film. It needs to be shown in South Africa.” I said: “So make it happen.” This woman, Gigi Pollack, went through so much to make it happen.

Spielberg’s film is about a small group of largely American Jews who, during Israel’s War of Independence in 1948, evaded the FBI and snuck Second World War aircraft into Israel to fight against the armies of six Arab nations. Why did you choose this film?



I chose this film when I first read Al Schwimmer’s obituary. He was an American who was credited with the founding of the Israeli Airforce along with some of his buddies. They became criminals for sending supplies to the Middle East when there was an arms embargo.

They had a secret underground network. It felt like a Spielberg film, “A catch me if you can” (which her brother Steven directed in 2002 about a conman played by Leonardo Di Caprio who wangled millions of dollars’ worth of cheques as a Pan Am pilot, doctor, and legal prosecutor.)

What will you be talking to Cape Town’s top donors about?
I am talking about one of their main themes which is dor le dor - passing the baton to the next generation. I will be talking about my Jewish upbringing and my Jewish journey. There was a lot of anti-Semitism in Ohio where we grew up.

I will talk about how we all got into the film business and what led me down the path to choose the topics I do and my love for Israel and what we can teach our children. So I am creating visual historical documents and thereby keeping us connected to the next generation.

I will also be paying respect to the South African Jewish community that played a huge role in the War of Independence. There were some South Africans who did big things - people like Cecil Margo who was in the Royal Air Force and a Supreme Court Judge.

Back in 1948, David Ben-Gurion asked him to be the head of the new air force and he wrote the entire operational guide of how the air force would be structured. There were other South Africans – Sid Cohen and Boris Senior...

Smokey (Harold) Simon is in the film. He flew 24 operational missions. He is today 95 and is still

the chairman of World Machal, the organisation of Diaspora volunteers. He has dedicated his entire life to tell his story.

What does your brother Steven say about the film?

He is so proud. One thing I didn’t want to do was ask for his help. We are four siblings and we are very close and we are always sharing things and I didn’t want to ask him anything. I needed to do this me, me and only me! The only thing I did do was check that he wasn’t doing a film on this.

I didn’t want to go into a box office against him and he said: “You have my brocha.” When he finally did see it, he said: “You made me cry. I am so very proud of my little sister.” He said: “I am recommending four films to Cannes and I am recommending your film.”

And I keep getting phone calls from Steven’s friends because Steven is telling them that they need to see it. And I keep getting e-mails. He is schlepping a lot of nachas from his little sister.

And what is even better is that my mother and father are so tickled by my journey. My dad who is 99, came to Israel with me when I screened the film there and he cried with pride.

Why a film focusing on Israel?
I wanted to show Israel in a better light and to reach out to the anti-Israel camp - people who don’t even want to discuss it; I wanted to try to

creep under their skin.
The Jews are probably the first place I needed to start because the division in our own ranks is bad, and then I wanted to reach beyond. The film was finished in the summer of 2014, which was probably the worst time to release the film. I felt the doors closing at the European film festivals, but I have to say that the Jewish community has been overwhelmingly supportive.
My first premiere was at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, and that was a left-wing audience, and they loved it! Not one bad comment even in Berkley where the seeds of BDS in the US were sewn.

Nancy, through her company Playmount (Spielberg in German) has finished a few more important documentaries lately. One is called “On the map” about the Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball team that in 1977 beat the four-time defending European champions, the Soviet Red Army team from Moscow. Another one is called, “Who will write our history?” about the thousands of archives that were secretly compiled by Jews about their experiences of starvation, disease, and deportation in the Warsaw Ghetto. They were hidden in milk cans and tin boxes and were discovered much later. Nancy is soon off to Warsaw for filming.

Prospect of Trump nomination poses dilemma for Jewish Republicans

**RON KAMPEAS
WASHINGTON**

Donald Trump’s surging candidacy has sent shivers through the ranks of the Republican elite and created deep anxiety among Jewish Republicans, some of whom are so unnerved they are prepared to vote for Hillary Clinton if Trump wins the nomination. Yet others say that despite Trump’s promise to be “neutral” on Israel and his support from white supremacists, conservative principles demand deference to the eventual nominee.
Trump emerged as the clear GOP winner in the Super Tuesday contests, with Hillary Clinton comfortably pulling away from Bernie Sanders, for the Democratic ticket. Trump took six of the 11 contested states with Clinton, for the Democrats taking seven.
The other top Republican hopefuls, Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, each won a state - Cruz in his home state of Texas and Rubio in Minnesota. Trump has now won three of the four Republican contests.

Candidates are trying to win delegates who will vote for them at the parties’ national conventions in July, ahead of the November presidential election. For Republicans 595 delegates were at stake on Tuesday - more than one third of the 1 237 needed to become the party nominee.

“As boorish as he is, as occasionally foolish as he is,

and how vituperative he can be, I would vote for Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton any day,” said Ari Fleischer, a former spokesman for President George W Bush and a board member of the Republican Jewish Coalition.

Fleischer said he was speaking only for himself, not the RJC, which declined JTA’s request for comment.

For other Jewish conservatives, Trump is too unpalatable to support - for obvious reasons. Trump has refused to side unequivocally with Israel, declining at a recent campaign event to pin blame for the Middle East conflict on either Israel or the Palestinians, saying instead that he wished to remain “neutral”.

His conservative credentials are shaky, having previously favoured abortion rights and argued for the imposition of tariffs, which is anathema to the business community. And Trump’s rhetoric has won support for the billionaire real-estate magnate from quarters not known for their deference to Jewish sensitivities, including former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke and National of Islam chief Louis Farrakhan.

In an editorial this week, William Kristol, the neoconservative scion who runs The Weekly Standard, said the party must be saved from “a charlatan and a demagogue”. The Emergency Committee for Israel, which Kristol founded, also released an ad this week featuring clips of Trump speaking favourably of Syrian President



Donald Trump arriving at a rally at Radford University in Virginia, on Monday.

Bashar Assad, former Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein.

“For this former Republican, and perhaps for others, the only choice will be to vote for Hillary Clinton,” Robert Kagan, a veteran of the Reagan State Department and now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, wrote last week in a widely shared Washington Post op-ed. “The party cannot be saved, but the country still can be.”

Jonathan Tobin, the online editor at Commentary, a conservative magazine that does not take positions on candidates, said he was doubtful Trump would garner much support from Jewish Republicans.

“There are the Jewish Republicans who are focused on foreign policy, on economic policy - the sense among that group is that Trump doesn’t speak for them,” Tobin said. “And the question is, if he is the nominee - and right now it looks like it - will they vote for him. And I suspect a lot

won’t.”
A Jewish Republican operative who spoke on condition of anonymity said more than one Republican would secretly cast a vote for Clinton should Trump secure the nomination.
“We would prefer to have mainstream candidates who don’t devolve into demagoguery, ethnocentrism and racism,” said the operative, referring to Trump’s recent equivocation over the Duke endorsement.
Trump last week brusquely disavowed Duke at a news conference. But in an interview on Sunday on CNN, he professed not to know who the former KKK leader was. Then Trump again disavowed Duke on Twitter after the interview aired, chalking up the discrepancy to a faulty earpiece. The following day, the Anti-Defamation League issued a list of extremists that candidates were advised to steer clear of, with Duke’s name at the top of the list.

Continued on page 11 >>

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‘You’re basically invisible unless you’re white’



TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

Political battles between those who would make a kleptocracy of this country - epitomised by President Jacob Zuma’s cronies in powerful positions feeding at the trough without doing their jobs - and stalwarts in the ANC and elsewhere wanting responsible government serving the people - like Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan - is one cause of the major disillusionment prevalent among citizens today.

Another is that if we don’t address pervasive racism, everything Nelson Mandela’s generation fought for, will be undone.

Ordinary people have little control over the former, except every few years when they vote at the polls. But they can do something about the latter. When the organisation Gesher was formed after the 1994 democratic elections

to encourage Jews to engage with post-apartheid South Africa, it held a workshop bringing together black members of a Soweto Methodist Church and Jews.

The participants were asked to express their thoughts and feelings. An old black woman told the Jewish whites: “I have been waiting for 40 years for you people to want to talk to me; what took you so long?”

It will take generations to get past the complex, ingrained attitudes of racism: superiority versus inferiority; power versus powerlessness; privilege versus poverty; and so on.

The racial firestorm on social media over the last few months, triggered by a white woman calling blacks “monkeys”, and a black person saying whites should suffer what “Hitler did to the Jews”, led some people to believe South Africa is doomed to a race war.

Before apartheid came down, the world at large thought this would happen. But contrast this with a recent survey by the Institute of Race Relations of a balanced sample of 2 245 South Africans. It found that 76 per cent of respondents thought race relations had either improved or stayed the same since 1994. The view that a race war is imminent is not shared by most South Africans.

One interesting result of the survey links the two themes mentioned above: Politicians and racism. Some 62 per cent of South Africans believe that “all this talk of racism and colonialism is an attempt by politicians to find excuses for their own failures”.

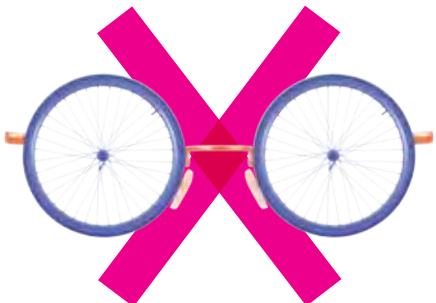
Attitudes and perceptions are not cast in stone and can change quickly. It is clear from comments of whites and blacks during recent confrontations countrywide, that most people on both sides don’t really understand each other.

Despite the survey’s positive findings, the cry of black students at universities that they are treated as inferior and patronised by white faculty and students, points back to the old black woman’s statement at the Gesher workshop: many whites still don’t try to honestly engage with them.

A quote in the Daily Maverick from a black student at the University of the Free State captures it well: “You’re basically invisible. Unless you’re white. If you’re a black student you’re made to feel different. They make you feel like, ‘Okay I’m black and don’t mean shit and they’re white and important’.” On Sunday at the Sandton Convention Centre, former Israeli President Shimon Peres praised the SA Truth and Reconciliation Commission in which perpetrators and victims of apartheid atrocities came together in 1997, imbued with the euphoria of Nelson Mandela’s ethos of reconciliation; they told the truth about atrocities committed during apartheid, he said, and perpetrators were “forgiven”.

It sounds uplifting, but South Africans know the reality is more complicated. The IRR survey points in a positive direction, but there’s a lot of work to be done to ensure this country really does move away from a race war.

• Read Geoff Sifrin’s regular columns on his blog sifrintakingissue.wordpress.com



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Exposing young minds to a fresh Middle East narrative

ANT KATZ

“I just hope that I come home alive,” was the overriding thought in the mind of Bafana Modise, 22, one of 15 young ANC-affiliated political leaders who recently went on an educational trip with the South Africa-Israel Forum (SAIF) to Israel and the Palestinian territories.

“South African media run so many religious war stories,” he says, to the extent that he was expecting “fighting” in the streets. “Also, I was expecting to find more religious people - many more religious people.”

What he discovered was so different. “The media can influence one in such a way...” he told Jewish Report, leaving the rest unsaid.

The trip was, in a sense, a coup for SAIF, a privately funded organisation that aims to educate people on the Middle East. It included some heavyweight BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) activists, to Israel and, significantly, took place in the wake of President Jacob Zuma’s first-ever (January 8) call on party members not to travel to Israel. Yet it did not result in a single cancellation among the 15 SAIF

tour members.

By the time they returned, says the SA Zionist Federation’s Benji Shulman who hooked up with the group in Israel, not one of the 15 was in favour of any sort of boycott of Israel.

Part of the victory, says Shulman, was that “BDS seems to no longer be willing to have a fight” with its members going on educational tours. After the previous tour of ANC youth leaders, late in 2015, ANCYL, BDS and Cosas all had a lot to say to their members, including temporary suspensions and threats of disciplinary hearings. That process became a damp squib and petered out. This time nobody had said anything, despite losing members and support.

“It was a perception changer for me,” says Lebogang Zulu, 28, who hails from Durban and is successful in the construction industry. He feels the media don’t fully understand the story and simply reduce its complexities to a “very one-sided twisted narrative of the oppressor and the oppressed”.

He sees the situation as being “so multi-layered” that it is easier for



the media to “distort the story... it becomes easier to reduce it to right and wrong as it is easier to tell.”

Modise, who hails from Krugersdorp where he is very active in the ANC Youth League, said that a friend of his had been on the earlier tour and had recommended he contact SAIF about going to see the “real” Israel. He returned a lot wiser, and more than a little embarrassed that he had wondered if he would get back to South Africa alive.

“During our first few days there we all looked at it from an ‘apart-

heid’ point of view,” he explains. And, in fact, he says that he had “found some places where we could not go. But then I found out why those controls exist”. He says he learned that Israelis want to look out for themselves. They are not asking anyone for anything.

It worries him that there are young boys there who are prepared to die for what they believe to be their religious rights.

“The conflict is more a religious one - but it is portrayed from a political point of view in the media.”

He says, given what he had now experienced, he would be quite comfortable to go to Israel or the Palestinian territories on his own. “I felt very welcome in both,” he said.

“To be honest, I had some initial doubts as to what I would see and experience (on the) educational tour to Israel and the Palestinian territories,” says another senior delegate, Lesiba Bapela, WITS SRC’s “All Faculty chairman” and an ANC Youth League member.

However, he says, the tour “turned into one of the most remarkable revelations to new and different cultures, enabling me, with the information I gained and the accompanying balanced and fair exposure, to better distinguish between the Israeli and Palestinian narratives.

“I also came to realise that the purpose of the tour was not to make me and my fellow young leaders pro-Israel, but rather to allow us to see and hear for ourselves, and somehow participate in, a narrative that is seldom - if ever - heard in South Africa.”

The group was hosted by SAIF’s Dan Brotman and Natan Pollack.

Budget

How the 2016 budget will affect you personally

MICHAEL KRANSDORF

This year’s national budget was one of the most important since the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994. More than the political intrigue and economic challenges around its delivery, the 2016 budget will have a significant impact on the finances of many South African Jewish households.

This is how it will affect you:

The major story was the announcement of a final exchange control and tax amnesty for South African residents with undisclosed offshore funds. It provides favourable terms to encourage people to come clean ahead of the introduction of the OECD’s automatic exchange of information programme next year.

Taxpayers who choose to bring their funds back to South Africa, will pay a five per cent penalty while a 10 per cent levy will be charged on those funds that remain abroad. Moreover, back taxes and interest on the foreign undisclosed investment income, will only be payable for the last five years.

In 2003 a similar amnesty was provided. More than 42 000 applicants with R69 billion in illegal offshore assets were approved. Nevertheless, many chose not to disclose, believing long-standing bank secrecy laws in places such as Switzerland would continue to protect them.

However, under pressure from global anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing initiatives, almost all tax havens have now agreed to automatically share the names of offshore account holders with relevant tax authorities, including SARS.

First wave countries (including popular tax havens such as Guernsey, Jersey, Mauritius and the Cayman Islands) have committed to hand over taxpayer information by as early as September 2017. Israel is in the second wave, which requires compliance by 2018.

In conjunction with the amnesty, SARS has set about to undermine the popular tax mitigation vehicle, the international discretionary trust. Once disclosure has taken place, people with offshore funds will need to urgently relook at how their affairs are structured.

Tax increases were also an important feature of this year’s budget. Although the expected hike in the top personal income tax rate was avoided, the treasury hit capital gains tax hard.

The effective capital gains tax rate for individuals will increase to 16,4 per cent from 13,7 per cent and for companies to 22,4 per cent from 18,6 per cent. Moreover, the transfer duty rate on property sales above R10 million has also been raised from 11 per cent to 13 per cent. Influenced by the work of popular French economist Thomas Piketty, this trend of increasing the tax on capital (effectively a wealth tax) will likely continue in the years ahead.

Consumers, who are generally struggling under the weight of rising interest rates and high inflation, were unfortunately also not spared. While the politically unpopular decision to raise the VAT rate was postponed, additional revenue was shrewdly raised by hiking sin taxes. A new tax on sugar-sweetened drinks was introduced, alcohol (especially spirits) and cigarettes were hit hard and the fuel levy will jump by a significant 30.5 cents per litre.

There was somewhat better news for elderly members of the community. The old age grant was increased to R1 505 per month. The Medical Scheme Fees Tax Credit was also increased to keep up with inflation.

Offshore funds



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Capital Gains Tax



INCREASES
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Companies **increase from 18.6% to 22.4%**

Sin taxes



Increases up to 8.5%



Fuel levy



Increases by 30.5c per litre

De Klerk and Mirvis – both steeped in the soil of Africa

SHIRA DRUION

The renowned South African spirit of philanthropy was highlighted at a recent dinner held in support of non-profit Migdal Ohr and the FW De Klerk Foundation at the glitzy Churchill Hotel in London’s West End. The event attracted many expats who generously donated to worthy causes seeking to help impoverished children in Israel and handicapped children in South Africa.

Founded more than 42 years ago by Rabbi Yitzchak Dovid Grossman, winner of the Israel Prize and recipient of the Presidential Medal of Distinction, Migdal Ohr (Tower of Light) assists 12 000 orphaned, abandoned, impoverished and immigrant children across Israel annually. This is done through its 160 youth clubs and three main campuses.

Migdal Ohr provides indigent children with an education, loving home, clothing, food, medical care, psychological counselling and recreational activities from birth through to childhood.

The graduates of Migdal Ohr have gone on to become productive Israeli citizens, and are among Israel’s top doctors, lawyers, community leaders, army generals and one is even a member of the Knesset.

Migdal Ohr’s dinner organiser, Assaf Admoni, said: “Following Rabbi Grossman’s visit to South Africa last June (as the guest of Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein at the Sinai Indaba), it was decided that we should try to partner with local South African causes.

“We approached the FW de Klerk Foundation with the idea of raising funds for children at risk in Israel and South Africa and we are delighted that the idea has come to fruition.”

Chief Rabbi of the Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, attended the event and with charisma held the stage alongside former South African President and Nobel Laureate FW de Klerk.

Aurum CEO, expat Kevin Gundle, interviewed them in a panel discussion that brought to the fore priceless anecdotes from a bygone era.

The two men gave their views on leadership and spoke candidly of their pasts and how they had influenced them to go into politics



Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis and former President FW de Klerk.

and the rabbinate respectively.

De Klerk had the audience chuckling when he commented: “I grew up quite differently to the rabbi.” He spoke of growing up in a very political home which was still obsessed with anger towards the British (after the Anglo-Boer War of 1899 - 1902).

“We were preoccupied with becoming an independent republic. In this whole process, obviously we neglected the position of people of colour in South Africa. What moved me to make the changes that I did, were not sanctions, but the admission that our dream of so many independent states of which all Africans could get their political rights, landed up in failure. “We realised that and that

the idea to succeed through separateness would fail and that we needed to embrace inclusivity.”

Chief Rabbi Mirvis spoke of the very disturbing comparison between apartheid in South Africa and Israel and how Jews have a responsibility to fight against the evil slur against their homeland.

De Klerk said: “The two greatest challenges with which the world is grappling is the plight of those in abject poverty and being able to cope with diversity.

He also tackled the need to live in a society that embraced diversity as has been done in

South Africa. He said: “Leaders should take initiatives to change the status quo. All of us have a deep inherent fear of fundamental change. It’s easier to go in the ways that you are used to. So, unless you take quantum leaps and create new realities, old conflicts will not be resolved.”

“It was a privilege to interview Chief Rabbi Mirvis and Mr De Klerk,” Gundle commented. “Here are two men who share a common South African heritage, but where the context of their upbringing shaped two very different men. Both went on to have a significant impact on communities and in the case of Mr De Klerk, transforming a country.”

Seven-year-old Israeli hiker discovers 3 400-year-old statuette

JERUSALEM - A seven-year-old Israeli boy last week discovered a rare 3 400-year-old relic while on a hike with his father and some friends in the Beit She’an Valley in northern Israel.

While climbing a hill in the archaeological park of Tel Rehov, Uri Grinholtz found a clay statuette of a nude woman.

“We explained to him that it was an antique, and that the [Israel] Antiquities Authority maintains its findings for the general public,” said Grinholtz’s mother, Moriah. The family then reported the finding to the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Amichai Mazar - an emeritus professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the leader of a delegation of archaeological excavation representatives in the area - examined the statue and said he determined that “it is typical of the Canaanite culture of the 15th to 13th centuries BC. Some researchers believe the figure represents a woman of flesh and blood, and others see it as Astarte, goddess of fertility, known from Canaanite [history] and the bible.” (JNS.org)

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Our journeys to reclaim the past

NADINE WOJAKOVSKI

The ceremony in Rhodes reignited interest in the island’s Jewish heritage

When Nicci and Neal Menashe started planning their daughter Raquel’s batmitzvah, there was only one possible destination. The South African couple, who live in London, knew that the week-end of celebrations, in honour of their eldest child, had to take place on the island of Rhodes in Greece - home to Raquel’s great-grandmother Rachel, and her ancestors.

The family had lived there peacefully for 450 years before abruptly fleeing in 1939, never to return. But what started off as a weekend of celebrations, turned into the realisation that re-affirming the past in a city that had been decimated by the Nazis, could not be a one-off event, done only in honour of a celebration. Instead, it confirmed a plan to do it again and again for a weekend - to resurrect other Nazi-invaded cities and experience life as it was once for the Jews, before their vibrant communities

were wiped out.

The Rhodes batmitzvah gave guests an authentic feeling of how life back then really was. Raquel’s great-grandmother, Rachel Amato, was born in Rhodes in 1907. One of seven children, she grew up in the Jewish quarter of the mediaeval city. A brilliant, creative student, she recited poetry, played the violin, and spoke seven languages. When she married Papu Neta-nel in 1934, he built her a beautiful home on the island’s Mount Smith, a stone’s throw from the Rhodes Acropolis.

In this idyllic setting, surrounded by olive trees and overlooking the sea, she raised her son. The island was by then an Italian colony, ruled by Benito Mussolini, who enforced Hitler’s anti-Jewish laws.

The family were warned to escape quickly and in 1939 fled, along with 2 000 other Jews. Ra-chel and her family eventually settled in South Africa. But many of the other Jews, including Papu’s brother and children, did not leave.

In 1943, the Germans occupied the city and the following July the Jews were deported to

Auschwitz. Only 151 Rhodes Jews survived.

The Menashes invited friends from all over the world - including their rabbi from Hampstead’s Village Shul, Yisroel Weisz - for a celebra-tion themed on the earlier, happier lives of the Jews of Rhodes.

Much of the spiritual celebration, including the Shabbat service, took place inside Greece’s oldest surviving synagogue, the Sephardi Kahal Shalom, built in 1577.

“It was as if time had stood still,” said Nicci. “The beautiful old synagogue, cobbled streets, the family home - they were all the same, as when Rachel lived there. So it was a voyage back in time, reliving the community’s history, eating their food and celebrating as they did.

Remembering the story of great-grandmother Rachel, through a journey in place and time, was really the best way of honouring her life and of passing on her legacy to future generations.”

For Raquel, the story will stay in her heart forever. “My commitment is to promise to retell my stories to my future generations so that they will never be forgotten.”

Reprinted with kind permission of the UK Jewish Chronicle



The Menashe family in the synagogue on the island of Rhodes.

But while the weekend was full of rejoicing, the guests could never forget the dark, tragic modern Jewish history. For in the same street as the synagogue, in the “Square of the Mar-tyred Jews”, stood the monument emblazoned with the words “Never Forget”.

On each side of the six-sided, black granite column, was written in another language: “In Eternal Memory of the 1 604 Jewish Martyrs of Rhodes and Cos who were murdered in Nazi death camps. July 23, 1944”.

Said Nicci: “For those Jews of Rhodes who were rounded up and murdered, there was destruction, but for us it was a weekend of resurrection.”

The journey into the past not only connected the family with their ancestors, but struck a chord with many of the guests. “Suddenly”, said Nicci, “there was this thought: what about doing this again in another city? By coming back, even for just a weekend, we can come close to expe-riencing life as the Jews did before the war. It’s the best way to honour their memories.”

Since her return from Greece, she has formed a committee for the new organisation, called “Present in the Past”.

She said: “Unfortunately, because of what the Nazis did across Europe, we have plenty of choice of destinations. I am currently looking at planning trips to Amsterdam, Krakow, Morocco and Zamosc.”

The first weekend is anticipated to take place in Amsterdam in May this year. Like Rhodes, Amsterdam had also attracted many Jews who had been persecuted in Spain and Portugal in the 15th century. The Jewish name for Amster-dam is Mokum, which in Hebrew means “place” and in Yiddish refers to a “safe place”.

Jews settled there, enjoying a religious toler-ance in the Dutch Republic that was unheard of in the rest of Europe. But with the Nazi invasion came the destruction of this vibrant Jewish community. Five out of every seven Dutch Jews were murdered.

Today, the Holocaust Memorial Museum is housed in the former theatre that had been used to deport the Dutch Jews. On its wall are inscribed the 6 700 family names of the 104 000 murdered Dutch Jews.

Rabbi Weisz of The Village Shul is very excited about the planned trips. As he said in Rhodes: “For this Shabbat, for this weekend, we are res-urrecting the city. We have come back and have responded to the decimation with rebirth.”

• For more information about future trips e-mail presentinthepast@outlook.com

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WIZO still enormously active after more than 100 years ‘in the business’

MARGOT COHEN

Jewish women’s groups working together in South Africa show how successful they can be in unity. Last week many attended the 102nd AGM of WIZO, the largest Jewish women’s organisation in South Africa.

“It empowers women to identify with the State of Israel through education, support of beneficiaries and special projects,” explained Andrea Wainer, co-chairman of WIZO Johannesburg, in her chairman’s report. “We link ourselves with Israel and become partners in the upliftment of the lives of people in Israel.”

At the Beyachad auditorium, Wainer last week outlined WIZO’s programme of events and projects of 2015, both locally and in Israel. Some of the programmes in Johannesburg included a golf day, a Yom Ha’atzmaut party and regular “Lunch and Learn” sessions with Rabbi Michael Katz.

In Israel Neve WIZO provides a loving home environment for children who have been removed from their biological families by court order. There are five homes with house parents who take care of up to eight children, from babies to 18 years of age. These children receive support from psychologists,

social workers and educational staff, to help them grow into productive Israeli citizens.

Ironi Cariera is a diagnostic treatment and rehabilitation centre for delinquent youth, operating in conjunction with the Tel Aviv municipality and the Israeli Ministry of Labour. Another beneficiary is Beit Halochem which supervises rehabilitation therapies including sports programmes for injured soldiers and victims of terror.

At the World WIZO Conference in Tel Aviv in January, a delegation of 26 South African women, including

10 from Johannesburg, attended.

Helen Maisels Trisk, whose late mother Muriel worked tirelessly for WIZO and whose sister, Elizabeth, is currently chairman of WIZO Oxford, described how overwhelming the experience had been.

“It was a remarkable gathering of 500 delegates from 25 countries. Its aim was to show how WIZO embodies the very best in human values and the Jewish spirit.” The conference reiterated that WIZO was “a social movement for change and improvement in society with particular emphasis on the lives of

women today”.

The theme was the “Empowerment of Women and its aim was to familiarise delegates with the many WIZO projects, bringing together delegates from all over the world, providing a platform of speakers.

“We got off the plane and went straight to see two of the day-care centres that we support - Chorley Day-Care Centre in Kfar Saba and

Inez Bernstein,” Maisels Trisk explained.

The conference took place at the Hilton Hotel in several conference halls. Most speeches were in English, translated simultaneously into Spanish and French.

There was a lightning-like energy about the event, said Maisels Trisk. The SA delegation was one of the smaller ones “but we were inspired to participate more fully in future”.

Two speakers who stood out for her were Adi Altschuler, one of Time Magazine’s Women of the Year in 2014. When she was 12 she formed a relationship with a cerebral palsied boy, which inspired her decision to create an organisation called Krembo Wings, a model of Israel’s contemporary strain of volunteerism.

Fainy Goldschmidt, a Haredi woman formed a support group of Orthodox women following her divorce. She was ostracised by the community at the time; WIZO gave her the tools to form the support group.

Maisels Trisk says the trip afforded her the chance to see exactly what WIZO is and how it changes lives.



Co-chairmen of WIZO Johannesburg, Lee Joffe and Andrea Wainer.

Inset: Yvonne Jawitz

Prospect of Trump nomination poses dilemma *continued*

>> Continued from page 6

Trump candidacy could help rally votes for congressional Republicans, the logic being that Trump is so unappealing, he practically guarantees a Clinton presidency - and that in turn strengthens the case for GOP control of the legislative branch as a means to rein her in. Tobin was sceptical.

“Jewish Republicans, like other Republicans, will say that,” he said. “But in a presidential election year, if you don’t like the guy at the top of the ticket, it depresses the turnout. I suspect a lot of Jewish Republicans will sit it out.”

As much as Trump repels some Jewish Republicans, he could still command their support, if only because expectations of party loyalty run so deep. Fred Zeidman, a Houston businessman who supported former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, said propriety demanded deference to the winner.

“I won’t say anything negative about Donald Trump any more than other [Republican] candidates,” Zeidman said. “I wish he had a different approach, but in America you get to vote, and if most Republicans want to get Donald Trump, that’s what it is. And the fact of the matter is we have to go on to defeat the Democratic candidate.”

Some Jewish Republicans remain reluctant to declare. Republican mega-donor Sheldon Adelson, who is said to be wavering between Senators Marco Rubio of Florida and Ted Cruz of Texas, took care to cover his ballot sheet when he attended the Nevada caucus last week. But a Wall Street Journal reporter was able to see him check a box on the ballot’s lower third, which included the names of Rubio, Trump and former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum, who has quit the race.

Still, Trump is a shock to the system for a Jewish constituency that has prided itself on shaping the party in recent years as unassail-

ably correct on Israel and open to diversity. Fleischer co-wrote a report after the last election on how to reach out to minorities.

“He’s given a lot of people a lot of reason to pause and question whether he is a supporter of Israel,” Fleischer said.

“The word neutrality is fingernails across a chalk board in the Jewish community. It screams at you, and it sends up all kinds of warning flags about who he is and what he believes.”

Norm Coleman, a former Republican sen-

ator from Minnesota who backs Rubio, said the fight was not over.

“I won’t speak about the unspeakable and I still believe that my party is not going to nominate Donald Trump,” Coleman said. “The prospect of Trump leading our party is deeply troubling. It would be destructive of the party and would harm the nation, and give us four more years of Clinton-Obama foreign policy, which has gravely weakened us in the world and undermined our allies.” (JTA)

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KDS - developing teachers and creating connections

GABY COHEN AND ROBYN SMOOKLER

Rabbi Craig Kacev, director of the South African Board of Jewish Education, together with Rabbi Mark Friedman and Robyn Smookler, led the first King David Schools teacher “Journey to Israel” trip late last year.

Forty-five teachers and staff from all King David Pre-Primary Schools left on a journey of a lifetime. This initiative was not just a sightseeing trip but aimed at being an educational process that will grow and engage all participants, educating them about the complexity and dynamism of Israel and equipping them to be better in their teaching.

The SABJE’s vision is that with the assistance of the King David Schools’ Foundation (KDSF), all fulltime members of every King David staffroom will travel to Israel for a 10-day experiential tour over the next five to seven years.

The feedback from the members of staff who experienced this journey to Israel was that the trip was life-changing.



King David Pre-Primary School teachers on top of Masada.

Photo: Robyn Smookler

Topsy-turvey and upside down, what a lot of fun!

RUTH KIRKEL, PRINCIPAL, YESHIVA COLLEGE PRE PRIMARY SCHOOL

A very different perspective of drawing and art was gained when the children in Yeshiva College Nursery School’s middle group created their pictures by drawing on paper attached to the underside of a table rather than on the table top!

The strengthening of various muscles took place in an educationally fun and unconventional manner. Sheer enjoyment was the order of the day!



Jude Helper and Gilad Karp viewing the world from a new perspective!

Photo supplied

Sydenham tots have oodles of fun in fake snow

HAYLEY BREST

Shaving cream - what fun! The children at Sydenham Hebrew Pre-Primary School love the texture and have played with it in many different contexts.

A trough was filled with shaving cream and the children loved driving the toy trucks and cars through the fake snow. The older ones had the opportunity to practise pre-writing patterns like waves and hills in the snow before driving the cars around the writing track.

Gabriella Marcus (pictured) took such delight in this activity that she ended up covered in shaving cream from head to toe! After a while the vehicles were no longer identifiable and they were promptly taken to the “car wash” to be washed and dried.



Photo: Hayley Brest



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Learning all about the tradition of a Jewish wedding

MICHELLE VINOKUR

Last week Thursday Minnie Bersohn Pre-Primary School hosted a “mock wedding” ceremony for Carla Drieband, a teacher at the school who is genuinely planning a wedding of her own! The children were enthralled and entertained as they learnt about the process, meaning and traditions of a Jewish wedding. The children loved being involved in the celebration and felt very proud of their special teacher.

Girls from middle group at Minnie Bersohn, with teacher and bride, Carla Drieband.

Photo: Michelle Vinokur


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Wanted terrorist found dead in Bulgaria

SOFIA - A wanted Palestinian terrorist who was convicted with his brother and another man for the murder of a yeshiva student in Jerusalem in 1986, has been found dead in the Palestinian embassy in Bulgaria, media reports said last week Friday.

Omar Nayef Zayed, a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) terror group, was wanted for the murder of Eliyahu Amadi. He was sentenced to life in prison, but in 1990 he escaped from Israel, eventually settling in Bulgaria.

Two months ago, Zayed came to the Palestinian embassy in Bulgaria to escape Bulgarian police, who were searching for him based on an Israeli request for his extradition. Zayed faced several ultimatums from Bulgarian authorities and from Palestinian Authority (PA) Ambassador to Bulgaria Ahmad Madbough, giving him 24 hours to turn himself in, all demands that he refused.

Last week Friday, Bulgarian news websites reported that emergency services came to the embassy and found Zayed with critical injuries to his upper body. He later died. Conflicting reports surfaced about the nature of his death. The PA's deputy foreign minister, Tayseer Jaradat, said Zayed was not killed by a shooting, while the PFLP said he was shot in the head. Another Bulgarian media report claimed he was pushed to his death from a fourth-floor window. (JNS.org)

Fifth, South Africa maintains formal if frosty diplomatic relations with Israel and trade is increasing. Israel's embassy continues to successfully promote cultural, scientific and agricultural co-operation. But it's not for want of trying by the Palestinian lobby.

When hostilities in Gaza flare up, they call for the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador and severing of ties. They bully artists and academics. The increasing number of high-ranking ruling alliance figures, including ministers, making the Israel-apartheid comparison, shows some success for this agenda.

At times, the Jewish media gives BDS-SA and its anti-Israel agenda more headlines than it garners in the general press and adds fuel to its propaganda pyre. But we cannot deny or ignore how Israel is put under pressure in South African policy circles, with a ban on ministerial travel, differential labelling of settlement products and fallout from the refusal to grant a visa to Minister Blade Nzimande to visit Ramallah.

As the peace process meanders meaninglessly, this hostility is only likely to be ratcheted up even further.

• Steven Gruzd is an analyst at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).



MARGOT COHEN

It's a frantic hive of activity at the near-completed Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre (JHGC) in Forest Town, in Johannesburg these days.

The Centre will open officially in April, but events have already begun, says director Tali Nates.

The exhibitions - both temporary and permanent - are being put in place, the coffee shop and library are being erected and a full programme of lectures, film screenings and commemorations for the year are being planned.

The Centre seeks to raise awareness of the evils of genocide with particular focus on the Holocaust in Europe and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

The first exhibition starting this month will be Germany's confrontation with the Holocaust in a global context.

One of the Centre's main functions is to serve as a hub for educational programmes, addressing issues of prejudice, racism and xenophobia and the dangers they pose to freedom and democracy.

Says Nates: "It is envisioned that the new Centre will be a vibrant place of learning, memory and lessons for humanity, where young and old from all walks of life come together to learn from the histories of genocide."

Replying as to why the Centre chooses to focus in addition to the Holocaust, also on the Rwandan genocide and not on other genocides, Nates says: "In April 1994, the very year that South Africa voted in a new democratic government, gruesome killings were taking place on our doorstep in Rwanda,

"Here more than 800 000 minority Tutsis were murdered by Hutu extremists.

"The world, including South Africa, chose not to intervene. The exhibitions featuring Rwanda and the Holocaust will be separate; the two case studies are running side by side.

"Apart from the rich education and public programmes, the Centre also works with Holocaust and Rwandan genocide survivors."

Nates says the Rwandan survivors group have been meeting for two years with a group of dedicated JHGC volunteers, bringing to the fore relevant issues that Rwandans have had to confront. The co-ordinators are Trudy Friedland and Bonaventure Kageruka.

There are more than 50 volunteers who are involved in varied activities, including educating the educators and learners, running workshops, showing films, setting up a research centre, arranging events, commemorations and organising survivors' meetings.

"Already several thousand teachers and learners have been exposed to workshops about the Holocaust. Now they will be coming to the newly-built Centre. The national curriculum for grades 9 and 11 includes Nazi Germany and Holocaust studies.

"We are committed to fulfil the need to assist provincial education departments and educators with its human rights curriculum and thus contribute to a more caring society in which human rights and diversity are respected," explains Nates.

This is the first centre of its kind that brings together stories of genocide across two continents.

Born to a family of Holocaust survivors, Nates' father and uncle were saved by Oscar Schindler.

• To contact the JHGC, call (011) 640-3100 or e-mail the Centre on info@jhbholocaust.co.za

Has Palestinian issue hijacked SA foreign policy?

STEVEN GRUZD

Regular SA Jewish Report readers might feel that South African foreign policy has a preoccupation with Israel and the Palestinians. This newspaper is frequently filled with anti-Israel activities, from public protests to poisonous pronouncements from the Union Buildings or Luthuli House.

The temperature rises every March as pro-Palestinian groups stage "Israel Apartheid Week" (IAW), mainly on university campuses countrywide. IAW compares Israel's actions to apartheid South Africa and is designed to generate maximum media attention.

In 2015, two South African ministers and five deputy ministers were IAW speakers. Many preceded them. But to what extent is South Africa's foreign policy really dominated by an anti-Israel or pro-Palestinian agenda?

First, keep things in perspective. The Middle East is not the major focus of contemporary South Africa's foreign policy. Yes, under apartheid, close ties were forged between Israel and South Africa, as both found themselves isolated internationally. Trade and military co-operation burgeoned.

But today, democratic South Africa channels much more diplomatic energy into its relations with Africa and the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) nations. It also prioritises its ties with Europe, the

Americas and Asia.

Second, there has long been a kinship between the African National Congress and the Palestine Liberation Organisation. They saw their struggles for liberation as interlinked, and the movements shared offices in exile. In 1995, reciprocal diplomatic missions were opened in Ramallah and Pretoria. There is a historical sympathy for the Palestinian cause among South African political leadership.

Third, South Africa's own transition and peace-making experiences have taught it that all sides to a conflict need to be included. This partially explains the controversial visit of Hamas in 2015, much to the chagrin of the Jewish community, Israeli Embassy and several Arab missions in Pretoria.

The visit was touted as merely a "party-to-party" encounter, even though they met senior ministers, including the president. Similarly, the ANC and its alliance partners officially endorse BDS [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions South Africa], while government punts Israel's right to exist and "two states for two people", though the same people run both party and state. Talk about having your cake and eating it too!

Fourth, despite South Africa's efforts to be a Middle East peace broker - witness the trip to the region last year by former ministers Aziz Pahad and Zola Skweyiya - it remains very much a bit player. Government's vitriolic, one-sided condemnation of Israeli actions undermines trust in its peace-making efforts by Israel.



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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Privileged to host one of Israel’s greatest sons

Sunday’s address by Shimon Peres was undoubtedly one of the most uplifting communal events to have taken place in years, and I warmly congratulate the IUA-UCF for putting it all together.

At least 1 500 people packed into the Sandton Convention Centre to listen to this living legend among international statesmen, one who over the past four decades has been at the very centre of Israel’s efforts to achieve peace with its neighbours, while at the same time maintaining its security.

For us it was as much about showing solidarity with Israel and paying tribute to one of her greatest sons as about hearing what he had to say about current events. In addition to our own community, a wide array of religious and political leaders from across the spectrum were in attendance, including Christian friends of Israel who have supported us so loyally over the years in standing up for the Jewish state in good times and bad.

There was also a substantial media presence, in which regard the SAJBD played a substantial role through advertising the event and setting up interviews.

If there was one key message that everyone can have taken away with them afterwards, it is that even in the most intractable of conflicts, we should never lose hope of achieving

peace and must continually devote our efforts to achieving that goal.

That message is a universal one, applying not just to Israel and its neighbours, but to everywhere in the world where there is division and conflict, our own country included.

There are too many voices in our society seeking to drown out the voice of reason and moderation, people who see politics as a zero-sum, winner-take-all game in which anyone putting forward an alternative view is an enemy who must be silenced and side-lined.

Sadly, one is seeing this manifesting particularly strongly on our university campuses, the very spaces where the give-and-take of free, fair debate must be taken as sacrosanct.

Shutting down debate, as we know, has emerged as a standard tactic by hard-line anti-Israel campaigners, both in this country and abroad.

During the annual propaganda jamboree known as “Israel Apartheid Week”, it has become standard practice to disrupt Israel-related events, sometimes preventing them



Above Board
Jeff Katz
National Chairman

from going ahead altogether.

We had a further taste of this in the lead-up to Mr Peres’ visit, with dire threats being made to have him arrested as a “war criminal”, as well as protest action being promised at the venue where he would be speaking. For this lobby, what Peres had to say was irrelevant - the very fact that he was speaking at all, should not have been allowed.

Nothing, of course, came of any of this, beyond a rather bedraggled handful of protesters trying to make themselves heard and, for the most part, being ignored.

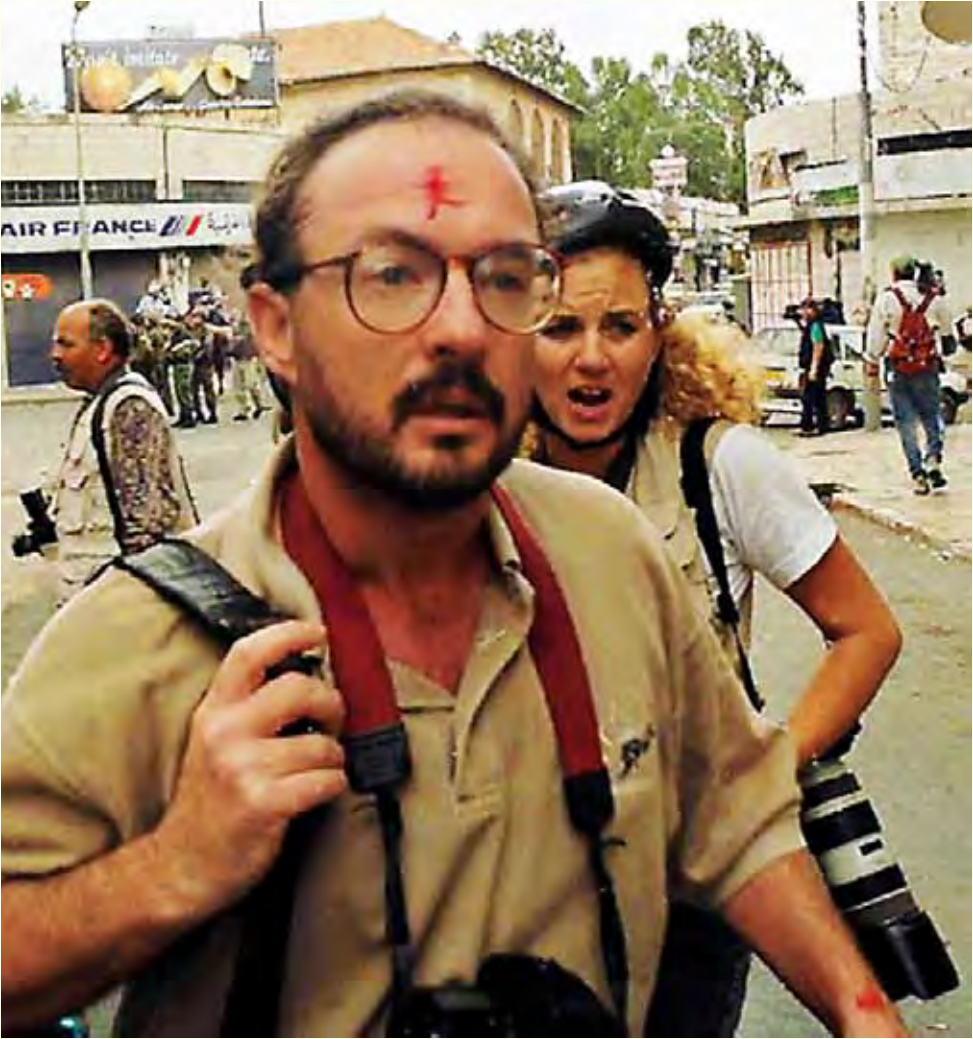
Our country, for all its challenges, remains a democracy, and by and large, South Africans do not appreciate being told which views they are expected to endorse and which ones are off limits.

I am extremely proud of all South Africans in the manner in which Shimon Peres was warmly welcomed and we as the Jewish community look forward to hosting him and other Israeli dignitaries in the near future.

• 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

Photographer Brian Hendler dies in Jerusalem



Former Jerusalem Post photographer Brian Hendler, a South African who made aliyah many years ago, died suddenly in Jerusalem at the age of 63 last week Wednesday morning.

A very talented photographer, he inter alia worked for The Jewish Agency, World Zionist Organisation, the Associated Press, Reuters, National Geographic and other publications in Israel and South Africa. He freelanced for the Jerusalem Post for two decades.

“Brian made aliyah at a young age all on his own and stuck it out. He was committed to Israel and Jewish values and was passionate about his photography,” said a relative in Jerusalem, Yael Newman.

Hendler, who was not married, is survived by a brother and mother in South Africa. (Jerusalem Post)

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World News in Brief

‘Turkey and Israel are nearing a reconciliation deal’

ISTANBUL - Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu recently told Turkey’s Cabinet ministers that a reconciliation deal with Israel is close to materialising, the Turkish newspaper Hurriyet reported on Monday.

According to the report, Cavusoglu said Turkey and Israel might issue a joint statement “in the coming days”.

The once-close relationship between Turkey and Israel soured after the May 2010 Gaza flotilla incident, in which nine Turks were killed in clashes after Turkish militants attacked Israeli naval commandos who had boarded the Mavi Marmara vessel, which was seeking to breach the naval blockade of Hamas-ruled Gaza.

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Pragmatic budget keeps threats of ratings downgrades at bay - for now

MICHAEL KRANSDORFF

Of all the many ideas Jewish people have bequeathed to mankind over the centuries, prudent fiscal policy is perhaps the most overlooked and underappreciated. Joseph after all was the first and possibly greatest finance minister in recorded history. Back in biblical times already, he understood the importance of the business cycle and the need for what economists today call counter cyclical fiscal policy.

Joseph warned Pharaoh that his dream about seven fat cows eating seven thin cows was a forecast on Egypt's economic outlook: seven years of plenty followed by seven years of scarcity. And what was his advice? Save in the good years through higher taxes, which you can distribute as social grants to help alleviate the suffering in the bad years.

When South African Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan rose in Parliament last week to present his 2016 budget, it was too late to channel Joseph. If only our government ministers had paid more attention to their bible studies. For we have squandered an unprecedented 21 fat years and now face a significant number of lean years without reserves to draw on.

In fact, we have actually built up significant debts and the major objective of Gordhan's speech was to try and keep our nervous international creditors at bay.

Gordhan seems to have done enough on this front for now. With a pragmatic mix of tax hikes and spending cuts, he was able to close the R30 billion funding gap for 2016. The major credit rating agencies responded relatively positively to this.

Following the speech, they announced that barring any unforeseen developments (like a firing of another finance minister) they will keep our credit score unchanged - at least until their midyear review.

While fiscal belt-tightening may keep our creditors from the door in the short run, reinvigorating growth (and consequently expanding the tax base) is the only longer term strategy for averting a credit crisis.

On this count, the budget fell short of expectations.

...we have actually built up significant debts and the major objective of Gordhan's speech was to try and keep our nervous international creditors at bay.

Growth has fallen from highs of 5,6 per cent in the fat years of the 2000s to a paltry 1,3 per cent in 2015. And the National Treasury (optimistically in my view) estimates that it will slow further to 0,9 per cent this year.

Our economy is experiencing the perfect storm. A drought, plunging commodity prices on the back of slowing Chinese demand for our major exports, the outflow of capital from emerging markets as US interest rates begin to rise and now tighter financial conditions at home as well.

In light of the situation, continued lip service to the much praised but largely unimplemented National Development Plan, will just not cut it.

Major policy reforms are needed to boost business confidence and encourage corporate South Africa to invest the very large pile of cash sitting idle on its balance sheet. South Africa now ranks a disappointing 73rd on the World Bank's Doing Business Index, well behind developed countries and most of its middle income peers.

We score particularly badly on key metrics like ease of starting a business and trading across borders. This needs to start improving quickly if we are to have any hope of stimulating growth.

This can only be achieved with strong political leadership willing to challenge parasitic vested interests, be they in organised labour, the civil service, or big business. We failed to heed the financial advice of Joseph but now we require a Moses to lead South Africa on a new economic path.

• Michael Kransdorff is a global investment strategist with a focus on retirement and tax planning.

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News

Sandler documents SA Jews' 'Litvak inheritance'

A book on the history, life and times of the Jews in Lithuania, has been compiled by South African expat David Sandler, who has been living in Australia for many years, but who has retained an active interest in the land of his birth.

"Our Litvak Inheritance" volume one of the Litvak and South African Jewish inheritance series of six, has been completed and may be ordered from Sandler in Australia.

All proceeds go to the Arcadia Children's Home in Johannesburg and Oranjia in Cape Town or the JDC.

In a media release, Sandler says volume one commences with a timeline of Jewish history, leading on to a detailed history of the Jewish settlement of Keidan and of Lithuania. It reports on the migration of the Jews from the east to the west and discusses origins, philosophies and values of South African Litvak Jews.

Section two tells of the horrors of the First World War and the displacement of Jews from Lithuania and Latvia in 1915.

The third section tells of life in the shtetl through family histories and photographs. The fourth section tells of the massacre of the Jews in the second half of 1941. The fifth section consists of reports of visits back to Lithuania after Lithuanian independence in 1990. Also included is a history of Latvia, Riga and Libau and visits after independence.

The sixth section discusses the reasons for immigration, problems encountered along the way and why Lithuanian Jews chose South Africa.

"Volume two of this book - South African Jewish History - will be published by year end."

Between 1881 and 1914 close on 3 000 000 Jews migrated from Eastern Europe to overseas countries. The

vast majority went to North America, while smaller numbers sought refuge elsewhere. The Argentine, South Africa, and Palestine each attracted an almost equal number of Eastern European Jews during the last two decades of the 19th century. For Lithuanian Jews, however, South Africa was second only to North America as a land of destination.

"Like most South African Jews, my ancestors emigrated from Lithuania to South Africa between 1880 and 1920. We were the lucky ones, escaping the horrors of the Holocaust and most of us left relatives behind in Lithuania who perished in the Holocaust.

"For about 100 years, we generally prospered and multiplied in South Africa until, in the early 1960s, the evils of apartheid started to appear. We then began seeking more secure futures for our families by immigrating to Israel, the UK, the US, Canada and Australia and by the year 2000 about half of South African Jews had left.

"The purpose of this book is to gather and share the history of our Litvak and South African inheritance with our children and grandchildren.

Explaining his "soft sport" for Arcadia, Sandler writes: "My mother died of breast cancer at the early age of 34 and I spent most of my childhood, 1954 - 1969, in Arcadia, the South African Jewish orphanage, from age three until 17, when I finished school. My older sister Jenny and younger brother Brian were also in Arcadia where we, in fact, had many Arc 'brothers and sisters'."

• For information on price and to order a book, please contact Sandler on sedsand@iinet.net.au

Auschwitz medic's trial suspended; he's 'unfit'

LONDON - The trial of a 95-year-old former Auschwitz medic has been suspended after he was deemed unfit to go to court.

Hubert Zafke, a former SS medic who was stationed in Auschwitz in 1944, has been charged with being an accomplice to the murder of at least 3 681 people.

However, a doctor who examined Zafke last Sunday, found him to have "suicidal thoughts and was suffering from stress reaction and hypertension", prompting the judge to rule on Monday that he was "not in a state" to be transported to court or stand trial.

Prosecutors say that Zafke would have seen prisoners being sent to their deaths from where he was stationed - a path that led to the gas chambers. The charges against him focus on a month in 1944 - between August and September - when 14 trains arrived at Auschwitz. On one of these trains was Anne Frank who, along with her sister Margot, was later transported to Bergen-Belsen where they died in April 1945.

Zafke's suitability for trial has been questioned since charges were first brought against him. An appeals court ruled against an original finding that he could not stand trial due to dementia. When he was first identified as a suspect last year, his son said: "My father is an elderly man. He has lived his life, so leave him in peace." - Jewish Chronicle, London

Non-Jew becomes ambassador against bigotry

PITTSBURGH - Shortly before Hurricane Ivan struck Western Pennsylvania in September 2004, Bill Stevens had poured more than \$30 000 into renovating his family's home in Carnegie: new windows, a new kitchen, a new water heater - the works.

Stevens, the director of maintenance at Beth El Congregation of South Hills, lost everything when his house was flooded with six metres of water. He had no flood insurance, and his homeowner's policy did not cover any of the damage. But thanks to donations from Beth El's congregants, Stevens was able to rebuild and replace almost everything that he lost.

"My family knows how blessed we are," said Stevens, who has worked at Beth El for 20 years. "I don't know what we would have done if I didn't have my Beth El family."

Prior to moving to Pittsburgh and taking a job at Beth El, he really had no experience interacting with Jewish people. Now, he is overwhelmed with respect and love for those with whom he has worked and served for two decades.

Despite some negative stereotypes

he had heard about Jews before coming to Beth El, Stevens was always open to forming his own opinions.

"I've learned how kind, and respectful and nice Jewish people are," he said. "I think they have big hearts." - Jewish Chronicle, Pittsburgh

Rivlin cancels Australian trip

SYDNEY - Israeli President Reuven Rivlin has cancelled his scheduled visit to Australia next month, and will instead travel to Moscow to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In what would have been the first visit Down Under by an Israeli head of state since Moshe Katsav in March 2005, Rivlin was due to spend five days in Australia in mid-March, and visit Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney.

During the trip he would have met with Governor-General Peter Cosgrove, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and other major political figures. In Sydney he was due to attend a Shabbat service and a communal event on Sunday, March 20.

"Because of regional developments related to the events in the Middle East, and the need for a meeting between the presidents of Israel and Russia in Moscow, the president is forced to postpone his trip to Australia, which was scheduled [for the same time]," the President's Residence said.

"The decision was made in consultation with the relevant bodies in the foreign service and with the prime minister."

The President will speak with Cosgrove and Turnbull and express his intention to set an alternative date for his visit "as soon as possible". - Australian Jewish News

Anne Frank's letters come alive

SYDNEY - Australians will be able to take part in a world first at the Sydney Jewish Museum (SJM) this week at a cocktail party launching the museum's exhibition, Anne Frank: A History for Today.

Attendees will be able to view recently discovered correspondence from the 1950s to 1970s between young Australians and Anne's father Otto, following the publication of his daughter's diary.

The letters, which form part of the exhibition, were located by the SJM team last year and reflect how those teenage Australian girls were inspired by the young Bergen-Belsen victim's words.

Consul-general of the Netherlands Willem Cosijn will officially open the exhibition, which has been on show at the SJM since last week and will run until September this year.

Among those in attendance will be some of the women whose letters feature in the exhibition. - Australian Jewish News



A must-read book on ‘competency and charisma’

SUZANNE BELLING

Spanning continents and oceans, expat South African Nadia Bilchik - now living in Atlanta - and Lori Milner, of Johannesburg, have produced a book, “Own Your Space: the Toolkit for the Working Woman”.

Every woman should own this book to own her space and keep it with her as a secular bible and guide to conducting her life - in its way as effective as Dale Carnegie’s “How to Win Friends and Influence People”.

It outlines the heights a woman can reach if she becomes the very best version of herself and provides practical tools and insights from workshops held globally and through interviews with some of South Africa’s most accomplished women.

The book illustrates how to own your:

- Headspace (attitudes and mind-set);
- Physical space (verbal and non-verbal communication);
- Interpersonal space (emotional intelligence);
- Virtual space (e-mail, phone and social media etiquette);



- Time (learning to prioritise in the most productive way);
 - Networking (maximising these skills in personal and professional relationships);
 - Decisions, successes, failures and finances;
 - “Asking” - by eliminating fear and learning the best way to ask for anything;
 - Podium - finding a confident voice to present information; and also
 - Learning from others who “own it”.
- Bilchik and Milner sourced inspiring quotes and insights from some of South Africa’s top executives in business, media, the professions, education, as well as authors, psychologists and a high court justice.
- The “shidduch” between the two women was made through Milner’s relatives living in Atlanta.
- Bilchik, who has two published books behind her - “The Little Book of Big Networking Ideas” and “Small Changes: Big Impact” - was putting out feelers for a suitable partner, when Milner’s relatives recommended “the engag-

The two women met in a New York apartment and for the next 12 months worked on the book via Skype and e-mail.

ing facilitator, thought leader and mentor, known for her insightful approach to being a modern corporate woman.”

There was instant rapport between Milner and Bilchik, president of Greater Impact Communication and a CNN editorial producer.

Bilchik began her career with MNet in South Africa, going on to host feature shows and segments for CNN.

“Lori is the yin to my yang and saw the potential to turn our passion into a product,” Bilchik said.

The next step was earning the approval of Terry Morris, MD of Pan Macmillan South Africa.

The two women met in a New York apartment, “as it was more central”, and for the next 12 months worked on the book via Skype and e-mail.

Both of them are alumni of King David - Bilchik of Linksfield and Milner of the Primary School in Sandton, followed by high school at Crawford.

Milner has an honours degree in marketing from the University of



Nadia Bilchik and Lori Milner... owning their space.

Johannesburg.

Bilchik, an internationally recognised TV personality, is in demand as a keynote speaker, renowned for her expertise in “getting people to like you, trust you and wanting to do business with you”.

She feels the impetus for her career was assisted by Elliot Wolf, her former high school principal, who encouraged her aspirations in drama, for which she was awarded colours.

She also pays tribute to her University of Cape Town drama professors who first introduced her to the concept of “owning her space”.

Both women praise their husbands, JJ Milner (Lori) and Steve Kesler (Nadia), and their parents An-

netta and the late Morris Bilchik and Glenda and the late Arnold Levitan for giving them the confidence and support to pursue their careers.

“The project worked easily for us because of the time difference between South Africa and the US.

“We would communicate in the evenings for me and the afternoons for Nadia after my children Aiden and Noa were in bed,” Milner said.

Bilchik’s daughters Alexa and Julia are in their twenties and allow Bilchik the freedom to work whenever she wants. The book, the two say, is about “competency and charisma”. It also teaches women how to say “No” in the nicest possible way.

Opinion

BDS: What a lot of impotent huffing and puffing

DAVID SAKS

It was predictable that the visit by Shimon Peres visit would elicit a flurry of dire warnings from local anti-Israel lobbies and, in light of what has gone before, equally predictable that these would come to nothing.

No steps were taken to arrest the “notorious war criminal”, notwithstanding the much trumpeted application made to that end by the Muslim Lawyers Association (who two years ago tried a similar stunt over the Obama visit).

As for BDS-SA, little more than a dozen took part in its protest on Sunday evening outside the Sandton Convention Centre, where Peres was speaking.

Taken as a whole, efforts to promote a boycott of Israel have been characterised more by impotent huffing and puffing than practical success (despite the generally supportive stance of the media).

The last few years has seen a string of failed initiatives by BDS, with concrete achievements appearing to be in inverse proportion to the amount of publicity it generates. This is especially true of its anti-Woolworths boycott campaign to pressurise the retail giant into discontinuing its line of Israel-sourced products.

Despite disruptions of its AGMs, orchestrated acts of intimidation and interference with staff and patrons and even the looting of one of its branches in Pretoria, Woolworths was unwavering in its refusal to deviate from its standard practices.

Even more tellingly, in monetary terms the boycott failed to make even the slightest dent in its revenues - indeed, healthy group sales figures suggest that the opposite was the case.

In response, BDS resorted to concocting an alternate financial report ostensibly revealing huge monthly losses by Woolworths since the boycott began; it was subsequently revealed that the “academic expert” who produced the study was a Wits sociology student who just happened to be an active BDS member!

The most recent Woolworths-related disaster for BDS was the demonstration it organised against the Pharell Williams concert in Cape Town last September. Bombastic predictions were made, suggesting that up to 50 000 demonstrators would descend on the venue, and the media dutifully fell in line by creating the impression that a major confrontation was on the cards.

The actual protest turned out to be an embarrassment of epic proportions, with barely 500 protesters turning up. All in all, the Woolworths boycott fiasco exposed how little influence BDS exercises, even in its natural constituency, the Muslim community.

Starved of real successes, BDS has resorted to concocting imaginary victories out of perfectly commonplace events. It has depicted the decision by the Reggies toy store chain to cease contributing to the JNF as a victory for the boycott movement; in reality, the chain’s Jewish owner had sold the business to two non-Jewish partners.

Last month, a BDS press release strongly intimated that an envisaged water summit had been cancelled because of opposition to the

Continued on page 18 >>

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Today, Friday (March 4)

- Chabad House hosts “Friday Night Live at Shul in Sandton Central”. Time 18:15. Information: 079-434-1293 or rak@chabad.org.za
- Bet David hosts a “Special Kabbalat Shabbat Service” celebrating the role of women in Judaism. Venue: Bet David, Morningside. Time: 18:00 - 19:00 followed by light refreshments. No charge. Enquiries: Sharon (011) 783-7117.
- UZLC hosts Justice Stanley Sapire on “Reflection on ‘Bad Jews’”. Venue: Our Parents Home. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria 072-127-9421 or (011) 485-4851.

Saturday (March 5)

- Bet David Torah study and light breakfast, 08:45 - 09:45. No charge. Youth service and activities for children ages 3 - 10, time: 10.00 - 12.00. Shabbat morning service - an inclusive, inspiring women-themed Shabbat service in honour of International Women’s Day, time: 10.00 followed by a brocha. Venue: Bet David, Morningside. Enquiries: Sharon (011) 783-7117.

Sunday (March 6)

- Chabad hosts “Tefillin Club & Breakfast” at 08:15 at the Shul in Sandton Central. Information: Rabbi Ari Kievman (011) 440-6600.

Monday (March 7)

- UJW adult education division hosts Helena Dolney, former president of the Land Bank, on “Let’s Talk About Dying”. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R35. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

- Chabad Seniors Club for men and women meets at Chabad House in Savoy. Memory enhancement, lectures and discussions, refreshments, lunch, iPad lessons, and much more. Free transport. Time: 09:00 - 13:00. Information: Rabbi Ari Kievman (011) 440-6600.

Tuesday (March 8)

- WIZO Forum hosts Michael Freeman, deputy head of mission at the Israeli Embassy on “Israel and the Middle East: Where to from Here?”. Venue: Beyachad. Time: 09:30. Cost: R40. Bookings: Batya (011) 645-2517 or wizojhbaccounts@beyachad.co.za

Wednesday (March 9)

- Chabad House hosts “Jewish Course of Why” at The Kirsh Goodness & Kindness Centre. Time: 19:15. Information: www.JLI.org.za or Rabbi Ari Kievman (011) 440-6600.
- UJW adult education division hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, formerly of Dept of English at Wits, on “The Written Word Leaps off the Page” Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R35. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Thursday (March 10)

- Bet David weekly discussion group with Rabbi Adrian Schell covering “The Prayers of our Siddur”. No charge. Venue: Bet David, Morningside. Time: 18:00 - 19:30. Enquiries: Sharon (011) 783-7117.
- JWBS presents “The Miracle of Flowers” morning of fun, flowers, prizes, inspiration and hope. Venue: HOD. Cost: R270pp incl. breakfast. Time: 08:30. Information: (011) 485-5232 or admin@jwbs.joburg.



JHB 3 APRIL | DBN 7 APRIL | CT 10 APRIL

News

Stand-off at Wits over an exhibit introduced ‘by subterfuge’

ANT KATZ

The erection of a Palestine solidarity exhibit on Wits campus on Monday is an act of “subterfuge”, the university’s acting vice-chancellor told Jewish Report on Wednesday.

The exhibit had been erected on the library lawns a week ahead of Israel Apartheid Week, the officially sanctioned, annual event and its nemesis, SA Union of Jewish Student opposing Israel Awareness Week, taking palces across university campuses across the country next week. Wits management demanded the students leave after claiming the exhibit had been set up under “false pretences”.

Prof Zebulon Vilakazi, deputy vice-chancellor for Research and Post Graduate Affairs at Wits, told Jewish Report on Wednesday that the venue had been booked by the university’s Orienteering Club to hold an exhibition there for the week.

Tuesday saw a stand-off between Wits management and the organisers, with both refusing to budge.

On finding that the exhibition had “morphed into something else” and had “deviated from the original

protocol, which was signed by both parties”, Prof Vilakazi on Wednesday said that Wits management’s attempts to have the exhibit removed had “become heated”.

Although Wits had the police and campus security on standby to “forcefully remove the exhibit” on Tuesday, said Prof Vilakazi, once “substantial media presence” arrived, “we decided not to do so due to the general campus climate around the country”.

Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib, who was present on Tuesday, had elected to “escalate the matter to committee level”, Vilakazi said.

“Please assure Jewish students that we are engaged with members of SAUJS (SA Union of Jewish Students) and its chairman, Ms Dani Hovsha,” Vilakazi told Jewish Report. He asked the newspaper to convey his assurance to the community that the matter would be dealt with and that Wits management had a plan, should the present “stand-off” continue.

Prof Vilakazi said a statement would be placed on Wits’ website on Wednesday. (JR Online will post the statement once it appears.)

Azra Karim a member of the Wits Palestine Solidarity Committee told Wits Vuvuzela student newspaper that “all procedures were properly followed and the event was approved by university management.

“Everything was approved by them and now all of a sudden when they actually realise what it’s about, they want us gone,” he said.

However, the university accused students of being in violation of a court interdict. “The students broke the university’s rules and their behaviour is irresponsible, duplicitous and could put our campus at risk,” reported Vuvuzela.

The students were told in no uncertain terms by Vilakazi on Monday that the exhibition needed to be removed by 18:00 and could not remain for the rest of the week.

The students, however, are just as adamant that they won’t go. “We are going to challenge this and we are going to challenge this on a protocol level,” said SRC General Secretary Fasiha Hassan.

A statement on “Events on the Library Lawns” pertaining to Israel Apartheid Week, has been posted by Wits management on their website. It can also be read on the Jewish Report website - www.sajr.co.za

>> Continued from page 17

BDS: What a lot of impotent huffing *continued*

participation of the Israeli ambassador, whereas, as confirmed by the organisers, it had been due entirely to logistical and funding issues.

Here and there, there have been small gains. In January 2013, Karsten Farms reportedly terminated its relationship with an Israeli company that operates in a West Bank settlement. BDS made much of this “breakthrough”, but since then no further leading companies appear to have followed suit.

Meanwhile, bilateral trade between Israel and South Africa continues to grow at a steady pace.

Aside from its consistent failure to achieve practical results, BDS campaigns have resulted in a number of out-and-out PR disasters that have embarrassed the entire local Israel boycott movement.

Topping the list has to be the notorious “Shoot the Jew” chants by its supporters at



Wits University three years ago, a blunder greatly compounded by BDS National Co-ordinator Muhammed Desai’s blithe denial that there had been anything seriously wrong with this.

Not far behind would be the “Porkgate” blunder, when overzealous BDS activists deposited a pig’s head in what was thought to be the kosher (but was, in fact the halaal) meat counter of a Cape Town Woolworths store.

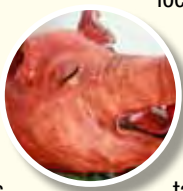
As for the SRC of the Durban University of Technology, they did the BDS cause no favours by demanding of the vice-chancellor that, as a show of solidarity with the Palestinians, Jewish students at the institution be “de-

registered”. There has been a host of other, less high-profile, incidents in which anti-Israel rhetoric has crossed over into blatant anti-Semitism.

None of the afore-going should be taken as implying that the BDS movement is essentially toothless and incapable of posing any kind of realistic threat to the South Africa-Israel relationship.

Even though they have, in concrete terms, achieved little to date, BDS campaigners (both locally and abroad) may in time be seen as having successfully prepared the ground for boycotts against Israel in the future.

The battle against this pernicious movement is far from over, therefore, but Israel activists can nevertheless take heart from the victories that have thus far been achieved.



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Maccabi Table Tennis Club again on top of the league

JACK MILNER

The Maccabi Table Tennis Club continued its good form by winning last year’s Premier League for the 10th time in the past 11 years. Established in the 1960s, the club has a long history of providing a facility for players to enjoy table tennis both on a social level and, for the more serious players, at league level.

The club is affiliated to the Gauteng Central Table Tennis Association and teams participate in the various leagues, from beginner to the advanced level of the Premier League. Many players have started there as juniors and have gone on to represent the province and even South Africa.

Presently the club has in its fold a recent national open men’s champion and veterans champion, as well as players ranked nationally in the top 10, at both senior and junior levels.

A number of years back the club employed Nigerian player Chijioke Osuji as their resident coach and he has had great success with the club. He provides private coaching as well.

Among his pupils are Danica and Aiden Schlome and he accompanied Danica to

Pietermaritzburg recently to take part in trials for a single place in the National Under-18 team. She won all but one of her six matches and finished top of the log.

Two of the contenders were National team players and she beat both of them twice. Against the other players she won one decisively and lost her other, also decisively, but Danica did well enough to finish on top of the log.

Now she is awaiting word from the national federation to see if she has made it to the team.

Maccabi Table Tennis is also considering sending a team of juniors to next year’s Maccabi Games.

The club staged a Maccabi Schools Day in October last year and had 40 kids attending. “We will be holding trials during the next two months,” said Mark Schlome, “but costs have become a challenge.

“Look, it has always been a challenge to raise the money, but at the current rand-dollar exchange rate, this time it is going to be a massive challenge. The cost is estimated to be around R90 000, or even more.

The Maccabi Club is based at Linksfeld Primary School and is always keen to invite new members to join, whether they be juniors,



The successful Maccabi Table Tennis team, Aiden Schlome; Chava Barit; Dean Levy; coach Chijioke Osuji; Danica Schlome; and Alan Ginsberg.

seniors or veterans and whether it is just for social purposes or to play in the league.

Practice sessions are held on Sundays with juniors playing from 16:00 to 18:00 and seniors from 19:00 to 22:00.

Anybody interested in joining can contact Mark Schlome on 082-777-7469 for more details.

Maccabi SA Futsal focuses on Maccabiah

JACK MILNER

Preparation for next year’s Maccabiah is well under way, with Maccabi SA Futsal having already selected a national under-16 training squad of 26 players from around the country.

Maccabi SA is very excited about this young crop of players who will be representing South Africa at the Games next year.

“The training squad is extremely strong and we are very lucky to have such a talented bunch of players to work with,” said convener Ronen Cohen.

Meanwhile, season two of the WP Maccabi Girls Futsal League kicked off last month in the superb Beck Sports Hall on the Herzlia High School campus and saw the addition of new players, together with their new team kits.

This league has become even more competitive with many of the matches ending in nail-biting finishes.

The idea behind this league is for the girls to showcase their talent for next year’s Maccabiah. There are currently four teams in the league, with WP Maccabi having 15 girls participating in two teams.

The final round of trials will take place on Sunday, March 20 and Monday, March 21.

The Maccabi SA Under-16 (born 2001, 2002, 2003) Boys Futsal team trials will be played on both days, from 09:00 to 12:00 at the Herzlia High School Sports Hall.

Trials for the Maccabi SA Girls Futsal team will take place on Sunday, March 20 from 12:30 to 14:00, also at the Herzlia High School Sports Hall.

• For more information contact Ronen - futsal@maccabi.co.za

World News in Brief

Iran to reward Palestinian terrorists’ families

TEHRAN - Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last week Thursday slammed Iran’s announcement from a day earlier that it will offer monetary rewards to the families of Palestinian terrorists killed while attacking Israelis, or those whose homes have been demolished by the Israeli government in response to such attacks.

Iranian Ambassador to Lebanon, Mohammad Fathali, made the announcement at a news conference in Beirut last week Wednesday, a month after the official lifting of international sanctions against Iran as part of the nuclear deal between the Islamic Republic and world powers last summer. Iran’s sanctions relief amounts to approximately \$150 billion.

“The decision firstly includes giving an amount worth \$7 000 to every family of a martyr of the intifada in Jerusalem,” and secondly it includes giving “\$30 000 to every family whose home the occupation (Israel) has demolished for the participation of one of its sons”, Fathali said, Reuters reported.

“This shows that Iran, even after the nuclear agreement, is continuing to aid terrorism, including Palestinian terrorism, Hezbollah terrorism, and its assistance to Hamas. This is something that the nations of the world must confront and condemn and assist Israel - and other countries, of course - in repelling,” Netanyahu said last week Thursday. (JNS.org)

Sanders opens up about Judaism at town hall

NEW YORK - Democratic presidential candidate Senator Bernie Sanders, opened up about his Jewish heritage during a town hall interview with MSNBC’s Chris Matthews last week Thursday.

“I’m very proud of my heritage,” Sanders said. “And what comes to mind so strongly is a kid growing up in Brooklyn and seeing people with numbers on their wrist; you probably have not seen that but those were the people coming out of the concentration camps, and knowing that a good part of my family was killed by the Nazis.

“And that lesson that I learned as a very young person is that politics is serious business and when you have a lunatic like Hitler gaining power, 50 million people died in the Second World War,” he added. “So, I am very proud to be Jewish and I’m very proud of my heritage.”

Sanders, who during February in New Hampshire became the first Jewish presidential candidate to ever win a primary, has rarely spoken about his Jewish faith and instead has focused on his Polish heritage and secular socialist beliefs, to the dismay of some Jewish leaders. (JNS.org)

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