



A humdinger of an
SAZF conference
awaits. Good
speakers and
scintillating
topics.
(page 4)

South African Jewish Report

www.sajr.co.za

Photo: Ian Ossendyver

Iran: It's a bad deal Bibi tells US Congress



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed a joint session of the US Congress on Tuesday, following a six-week build-up that raised questions about the propriety of an Israeli prime minister using Congress as a platform for his views two weeks before elections in his own country. Netanyahu warned against the deal being negotiated between Iran and world powers, saying it would not block Iran's way to obtain nuclear weapons, but rather pave the way to a nuclear bomb. Contrary to expectations raised in briefings by Netanyahu's staff ahead of his speech, he revealed no classified information regarding the emerging agreement with Iran. Although the speech had caused tensions between Netanyahu and the White House, President Barack Obama contained any major fallout, telling news sources on Monday that he would meet Netanyahu again, soon after Israel's March 17 elections, if the prime minister gets re-elected. See page 6.

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Born free or born frum - a glass half full or is it empty?

MICHAEL BELLING

Living a committed Jewish life took nothing less than greatness, Rabbi Dovi Goldstein, spiritual leader of Ohr Someach Savoy, said at a debate on “Who is a Better Jew: Born Frum or Born Free?” at the Sydenham Community Centre at the Sydenham-Highlands North Synagogue.

The debate was the second in the 2015 Johannesburg College of Adult Education (CAJE) learning events.

Speaking in favour of “born free”, Jews born into secular environments, Rabbi Goldstein said three elements were required for greatness:

- Inspiration, which was hard to come by. The secret lay in doing something or having something new or fresh. The same applied to Judaism.
- Challenge and sacrifice. Fulfilment came from doing something difficult, otherwise it would be easy come, easy go. Nothing good came from anything easy.
- Commitment, which born free Jews had in abundance. The secret of commitment was choice. This commitment came naturally to born free Jews who became ba’alei teshuvah, returning to Judaism.

The Talmud taught that the most righteous could not stand where the born free stood.

Those born into observant Judaism, the “born frum”, or frum from birth (FFB), often suffered from apathy, as they had not had to make the same sacrifice and did not face the same challenges as those returning to Judaism from a non-observant world. Their Jewish commitment was all they knew.

While both born free and born frum had to live their lives as ba’alei teshuvah, one thing the born free usually had that the FFB often struggled with, was humility.

“The born free has so much to teach the world and share with the world,” Rabbi Goldstein said.

Rabbi Gidon Fox, spiritual leader of the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation, said whether a person was a good Jew had nothing to do with lineage, whether we were born observant Jews or not, but with our conduct.



“Who is a better Jew: Born Frum or Born Free?” was debated by Rabbi Dovi Goldstein (left) and Rabbi Gidon Fox (right), under the auspices of CAJE. Rabbi Yehuda Stern (centre) chaired the debate.

He posed the question: If you had the choice, would you rather be born free or be born frum?

He disputed that born free was the antithesis of born frum.

“Born frum is the only really born free,” he said.

It allowed the freedom to choose to live as a Jew and not have one’s life ruled by the latest fashion, the freedom to express one’s identity through his Judaism.

Children copied what they saw. “There is nothing more potent than what you saw in your home,” he said.

“The greatest source of education comes from the home. Children learn because they see how their parents live, the embodiment of Jewish life.

“There is no greater teacher than experience.”

There was no such thing as a person who did not have to do teshuvah, he said.

He questioned whether he would be able to rise to the occasion as a ba’al teshuvah, saying it was easier to be born frum.

Rabbi Yehuda Stern, who chaired the debate, said that 40 years ago such a conversation would never have been heard in a synagogue. Born free ba’alei teshuva were often shunned by other born frees. This had changed completely.

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Helping to realise dreams



Parshat Ki Tisa
Reverend Ilan Herrmann
Doornfontein Shul

Benjamin Netanyahu presents the case for Israel’s concern of a nuclear capable Iran to the American congress. Is it coincidence that it happens in the same week we celebrate Purim, an event commemorating a reprieve from what was a genocidal plot against our people in the year 357 BCE?

Did Esther need support in presenting her case to Ahaseurus? Indeed she called on her people to fast and pray for her success. Did Netanyahu need support to advance his petition? He too prayed at the Kotel before his travel, but certainly without a strong coalition backing him he would not be able to have the opportunity, weight or confidence to do so.

Moses is on Mount Sinai in this week’s portion and is in the process of completing his 40-day sojourn to receive and deliver to Bnei Yisrael the Torah and the two Tablets carved out of stone with the Ten Commandments. But his trip is cut short because G-d says: “Leich reid” - “Go down (the mountain) for your people have become corrupted.” The incident of the golden calf refers.

Rashi citing Chazal explains that the deeper connotation of you must “go down” is that Moses cannot remain on the high level he was on, but had to descend to a lower spiritual level.

He was according to this commentary only on that elevated plateau because he was being anchored by the Jewish people’s strength of faith and devotion to G-d, to his leadership and to the mission. When they collapsed he could no longer sustain the level he was on and had to “go down”.

To a significant extent, hinged on achieving one’s potential is the unified and collective brace and underpin that affords a person his or her ability to strive towards reaching those heights.

The relevant message is not only true of Esther, Moses or a leader of a community who certainly cannot realise a vision for a respective congregation or movement they may be mandated to lead without the strength of support afforded them, but extends as a very clear and personal directive to each one of us.

Take a look around. Leaders abound. Our spouses, children, students, friends, are the leaders of today and tomorrow - leaders in our homes, in community, in schools and varsities, in social, business and political circles.

Through words of encouragement, supportive gestures, helpful insights, constructive feedback, an open ear and conveying a sense of solidarity and support that we are behind them is of infinite value.

The story is told of a unique, precious bird, one of a kind that was aloft a tree so high it could not be reached. It was decided that the only way to net the bird would be to form a pyramid with the catcher on the top who would capture the rare species.

The pyramid was formed and the catcher climbed on top of the layers of people, from rung to rung until he was perched very high. Just as he was about to reach out his net to catch the elusive bird, a fellow on the lower rung of the pyramid got thirsty and went off to have a drink. You can guess what happened next. It all came a-tumbling down.

The moral is obvious. We are all a part of pyramids that enable dreams to be realised. Let us ensure our cog is secure as we help build the lives of and opportunities for the people around us.

Shabbat Times		
Parshat Ki Tisa March 6/ 15 Adar March 7 / 16 Adar		
18:15	19:04	Johannesburg
18:15	19:49	Cape Town
18:06	18:55	Durban
18:15	19:14	Bloemfontein
18:15	19:21	Port Elizabeth
18:15	19:10	East London

South African

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AIPAC wants to talk Iran, but can’t get away from ‘Speechgate’

RON KAMPEAS
WASHINGTON

For all its focus on Iran, AIPAC on Sunday couldn’t seem to get away from the controversy surrounding Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s speech to Congress on Tuesday.

Speaking to attendees at the launch of the largest-ever annual conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, CEO Howard Kohr acknowledged the elephant in the room head on.

“There’s no question that the way this speech has come about has created a great deal of upset among Democrats,” Kohr said.

“It frankly may have upset people in this room,” he said. “All of us should be concerned [who] care about the bipartisan nature of the relationship.”

The notion that anyone attending an event for America’s premier pro-Israel lobby might be unhappy with the sitting Israeli prime minister has not haunted the organisation since the early 1990s, when it suffered the opprobrium of the late Yitzhak Rabin, who thought AIPAC overly aggressive in its tactics. Netanyahu arranged his speech with Republican leaders in Congress while agreeing to keep it a secret from the White House, congressional Democrats and the pro-Israel community, including AIPAC, until just before it was announced.

Netanyahu’s defenders said his manoeuvring and the decision to go ahead with the speech were necessary because Netanyahu needed the widest possible audience for his message - that the Iran nuclear talks underway were headed for catastrophic results that could leave Iran a nuclear weapons threshold state.

In his own speech to AIPAC on Monday morning, Netanyahu expressed few regrets for



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressing AIPAC on Monday.

going ahead as planned with his controversial speech to Congress.

“I deeply appreciate all that President [Barack] Obama has done for Israel: security co-operation, intelligence sharing, support at the United Nations,” Netanyahu said in remarks that drew multiple standing ovations. “I am deeply grateful for this support and so should you be.”

However, he said his differences with the Obama administration over the course of Iran nuclear talks were too important not to take up the offer to speak to Congress.

“I have a moral obligation to speak up in the face of these dangers while there’s still time to avert them,” he said.

Netanyahu said he regretted that the speech had been “misperceived” as partisan and said bipartisan support for Israel was critical.

“Israel should always remain a bipartisan issue,” he said.

AIPAC had wanted to use the conference and its massive lobbying finale to shore up support for the Iran bills among Democrats. Yet Netanyahu’s speech kept getting in the way. Nearly

half of American voters believe that Republican lawmakers should not have invited Israel’s prime minister to speak to Congress without first notifying Obama, a Wall Street Journal/ NBC poll found.

Some 48 per cent of voters polled said that the president should have been consulted and 30 per cent said they believed the invitation proffered by House Speaker John Boehner (Republican, Ohio) was appropriate.

Kohr himself did not criticise Netanyahu, and emphasised that AIPAC was encouraging lawmakers to attend the speech on Tuesday, but his acknowledgment of the legitimacy of being upset about the address cast a shadow over a conference that focused on increasing congressional influence on the Iran talks.

AIPAC’s legislative agenda, which in past years has featured an Iran component along with components on the Middle East peace and the US-Israel alliance, this year focused only on Iran.

“While we will continue to lobby on many important issues to strengthen the US-Israel

relationship, on Tuesday we will encourage Congress to take immediate action on just one: stopping Iran,” Brad Gordon, AIPAC’s legislative director, told the conference.

On Tuesday, the last day of the conference, many of the 16 000 activists attending the conference visited Capitol Hill to promote two bills and a letter related to the Iran nuclear talks.

Democratic lawmakers, as Kohr noted, have expressed their discomfiture with how Netanyahu’s speech was organised, and on Sunday for the first time that unease seemed to extend to a Republican lawmaker.

Asked his view on the speech, Senator Lindsey Graham (Republican South Carolina), a sponsor of the bill that would require congressional review of an Iran deal, referred to Netanyahu as a “politician” and said he preferred hearing from AIPAC activists.

“I will listen to him and then I’ll decide what’s good for America,” Graham pointedly said, emphasising Netanyahu’s status as a foreign leader, during a panel discussion on Monday morning.

“To my AIPAC friends, you’re going to make more difference than any speech that any politician can make,” Graham said. And if that weren’t clear enough, the South Carolina senator said that given the choice between Netanyahu and the AIPAC conferees coming to Washington - although no one had asked him to make such a choice - he preferred AIPAC.

The activists appeared to understand the distinction that Graham was making between Netanyahu and AIPAC. For an audience that usually roars its approval at flattery, it delivered tepid applause.

Indeed, the rank and file seemed enthused about Netanyahu’s speech - the mere mention of it during the first session, by a moderator, evinced roaring applause. (JTA)

Anyone in SA can vote in Israeli mock election

ANT KATZ

The Israeli Embassy in South Africa is hosting a mock election campaign for the upcoming Israeli elections on March 17 and wants as many South African citizens as possible to take part. It’s not only open to Jewish South Africans and Israelis in the country, but to everyone who cares to vote. Sound crazy? “Not at all,” says the embassy’s deputy head of mission, Michael Freeman.

In a unique initiative, the embassy in South Africa has created a website - www.israeldemocracy.co.za - which will go live next week. They are also going on a nationwide publicity campaign to promote the novel venture which encourages the general population of the country to cast a vote - but obviously this is a mock election.

“We are holding a nationwide poll which will track how South Africans feel about the upcoming Israeli elections,” explains Freeman. The site was designed and built in South Africa and gives each party’s platform for the Israeli election. This will expose South Africans to the political playing field in Israel and explain how Israel’s electoral system works.

“We are hoping to get everyone in South Africa voting,” Freeman told Jewish Report. To help encourage people to vote, the embassy will be giving away thousands of rands worth of prizes - from an iPad, to Israeli wines and Israeli tech items. Winners will be drawn randomly.

An individual is only allowed to vote once and the mock election will close on Monday March 16, a day before the real election. The South African mock election results will be published on the Monday evening on Jewish Report Online.

Why go to all this trouble? “The underlying



purpose of the exercise is to demonstrate and highlight the vibrant democracy of Israel,” said Freeman.

Christian, Muslim, Bedouin, Druze and other minority citizens enjoy all the same freedoms and rights as any other Israeli citizen, he says, and Arab political parties participate fully in Israel’s democracy. Twelve members of the outgoing Knesset are of Arabic descent.

To demonstrate how democratic Israel is, says Freeman, “we are going to be publicising this through as many media formats as we can”, with the objective of “allowing people to learn and understand more about the democratic system in Israel.”

The website also offers information about the demographic breakdown of Israel’s population, facts about Israel as a democracy and the role of Arabs and other minorities, including women, within the democratic process.

What if the majority of votes cast in South Africa are, for instance, for Arab parties? Jewish Report asked Freeman. Unfazed, he replies that this would be perfect: “It will prove how democratic we really are.”

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A humdinger of an SAZF conference awaits

SUZANNE BELLING

“Israel, Nation of Creation” is the theme of what promises to be the biggest and best attended conference yet of the South African Zionist Federation, with an unequalled line-up of top speakers and visitors both for the opening night this Saturday (March 7) and on the following day in the Sandton Convention Centre.

On the opening night the delegates and observers will be treated to two musical interludes by the Amakhono Choir.

The Sunday will incorporate the first-ever SA/Israeli Expo, with 110 exhibitors including communal organisations, local and Israeli businesses and aliyah experts.

There will be entertainment for children and teenagers, entertainers and lots of prizes, including a car, international and local air tickets, hotel accommodation and jewellery. The history of Zionism in South Africa as well as an art exhibition, will also be featured.

Isla Feldman, national executive director of the SAZF, is upbeat about the conference and the speakers, especially Prof Irwin Cotler, Canadian MP, former Cabinet minister and human rights activist, who will come to Johannesburg directly from attending the America-Israel Public Affairs Committee meeting, which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed, before his speech to Congress on Tuesday.

There are two other drawcards in the mayor of Jerusalem Nir Barkat, and Natan Sharansky, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel.

“I don’t think the Zionist Federation ever has done anything like this before and is unlikely to do it again. I urge people to come and make hay while the sun shines,” Feldman said.

The opening night will feature messages from Netanyahu, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein, Israeli Ambassador Arthur Lenk and the SAZF chairman’s report by Avrom Krengel.

There is an extensive programme on the Sunday with debates and discussions on “Unity, Diversity and Dissent”, “Africa Rising: Does Israel have a Role to Play?”, “The Purpose of Israel: Survival or Tikkun Olam”, “Israel, the Innovation Nation”, “The

Impact of Israeli Technology on the African Continent”, and “The Four Horsemen of the Middle East: Threats to the Jewish World”.

During the sessions a special award will be made to SAZF President Jonathan Silke. Resolutions will be adopted and there will be an announcement of new officebearers.

Coincidentally, inside the Convention Centre, discussions will be held on the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) organisation and the apartheid analogy, led by Ben Swartz, vice-chairman of the SAZF, while outside, on Maude Street, the BDS plans a protest, supported by Israel Apartheid Week.



A cornucopia of study opportunities on offer

ANT KATZ

The Israel Centre in Johannesburg has brought representatives of six Masa-related, higher learning institutions in Israel to South Africa to meet and talk on their institutions to SA Jewry in Cape Town and Johannesburg.

The representatives are visiting Cape Town this week and will be in Johannesburg for the Israel Expo at the Sandton Convention Centre on Sunday. They are speaking at Jewish day schools and other schools with large numbers of Jewish learners. They are also holding one-on-one meetings with prospective students and their parents.

The Masa programme is designed to attract international Jewish students to study in Israel and offers scholarships and bursaries towards this end.

Most of the delegates still have some one-on-one appointments available and their contact numbers in South Africa appear on the Jewish Report Online website.

- Technion - which offers engineering degrees, taught in English. Giselle Rothman, who works in international recruitment and marketing, is the delegate.
- IDC - Stephanie Miller, the head registrar of the International School, is the representative. She is a former South African. It boasts the largest number of students studying in English in Israel.
- Hebrew University - is represented by SA-based Carmel Krawitz who is the executive director of SA Friends of the Hebrew University and Cassi Gewe, a student at Hebrew University, who is from King David Linksfield and has made aliyah.
- The Aardvark gap-year programme - represented by Amy Gross, the co-ordinator of admission and recruitment. Aardvark offers a nine month, two-semester programme in which students spend half the time in Jerusalem and the other half at the Tel Aviv campus. Students can also elect to do one semester and pick the campus of their choice.



Stephanie Miller, the head registrar of the International School at IDC, is a former South African who made aliyah from Paarl 27 years ago.

- Israel Experience - an arm of the Jewish Agency, offers short- and long-term programmes. Represented by Noa Metuki, who is programmes director and in charge of the SA and Australian desk, Israel Experience creates life-changing experiences in Israel for youth and adults, from two-week to year-long programmes.

All of the study opportunities are linked to Masa and hence offer Jewish Agency-funded scholarships for students who need assistance. All offer either on-campus residences or nearby off-campus accommodation which they hire and sub-let to students.

SAJBD, YCL explore common ground on an array of issues

As a first step towards improved relations between the SA Jewish Board of Deputies and the Young Communist League, the Board met with the YCL’s national chairman, Yeshan Pillay last week. The meeting, at the request of the Board, explored ways of finding common ground on various issues.

In a media release the Board said a wide range of issues were discussed. These included finding common culture and nationhood, the Palestinian and Israeli conflict, social cohesion, entrepreneurship, job creation and the role of the youth in building South Africa.

On the Palestinian-Israeli situation, Pillay shared his views that from a class perspective the YCL supported Palestinian statehood and SAJBD National Director Wendy Kahn spoke of the SAJBD’s ongoing commitment to the creation of a two-state solution, with a viable Palestinian state living side by side an Israeli state, with secure borders.

Both parties regretted the polarisation that this issue was causing in South African society and expressed the need to create forums for dialogue to find commonalities on issues important to South Africans.

Concern was expressed by Pillay that while differing views were important, tolerance was unfortunately slipping away in the country and that it was essential to address contentious issues without excluding or targeting individuals and communities with differing views.

In finding a way to bridge the divide between different communities the idea was discussed to bring diverse youth groups together on projects to find a common identity on matters of mutual concern, and a suggestion was made for an interfaith dialogue forum to bridge the divide between young people.

Both parties further decided that future engagements would be arranged between the SAJBD and YCL in the spirit of finding a common culture and in exploring joint projects to develop the country in areas such as entrepreneurship and job creation.

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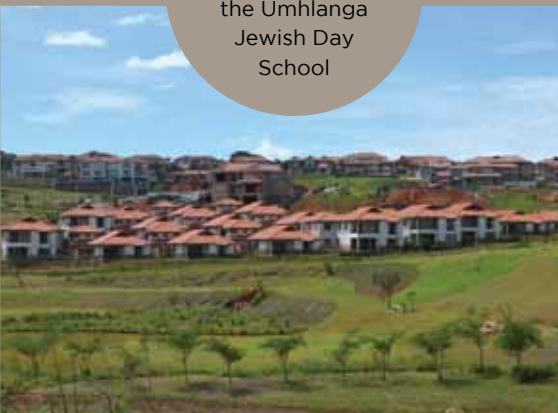
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Counting and recording ourselves

I am frequently asked the question, how many Jews live in South Africa. I have also been told with a surprising certainty by a non-Jew that there must be at least a million living here. They were shocked when I told them our community had a mere 60 000. At the time, in the late '90s, that seemed to be an accepted figure. People assumed there were 120 000 in the heyday and that the figure had halved.

When I returned from almost two decades abroad, I heard I was wrong. A slightly higher figure of between 70 000 and 80 000 was bandied about. The estimate made sense because, as global economic issues impacted business centres like New York and London, job markets had changed and young Jewish singles and families seemed to be returning from overseas.

But I was wrong then too. "When it comes to people coming back," says Professor Milton Shain, director of the Isaac and Jessie Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research at UCT, "the numbers get inflated. You hear of someone coming back and I hear of the same person coming back and suddenly two people are coming back."

Actually, the experts say, the numbers are not increasing or decreasing but are staying even. David Saks, deputy director and senior researcher at the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, says: "Even though religious Jews are having more kids, there are still people emigrating and older people dying, so it evens it out."

Census efforts in South Africa

In 1996, the post-apartheid South African government conducted its very first population census, collecting, analysing and publishing demographic, economic and social data of South Africans. The 2001 census counted a white Jewish population of 61 675. Factoring in people who did not respond, it was re-estimated by Saks and other demographers at about 75 000.

In the next census, 10 years later, Stats SA decided to drop the question on religion as it was considered a low priority. Members of the community were none too pleased with the decision and people like Professor Shain were furious about it.

The Kaplan Centre did its own detailed survey of the Jewish community in 1998 and a follow-up survey in 2005, asking a range of interesting questions: from allegiance to Israel, perceptions of anti-Semitism, optimism about the future of the country, degree of religiosity and plans to emigrate.

Professor Shain gives the figure at between 72 000 and 85 000. The high end of this figure is higher than previous estimates. It also tries to account for a group no-one is quite sure of - the estimated 15 000 Israeli Jews that come and go.

The Kaplan Centre has not done a follow-up survey since. They estimate it would cost as much as R1 million to conduct.

The number of Jews in the United States has been a cause for debate too. In 2012, Professor Ira Sheskin and Professor Arnold Dashefsky came to a figure of 6,72 million based on surveys and US census data, but voiced concern over double counting and suggested the real figure might be closer to 6 and at most 6,4 million.

The Steinhardt Social Research Institute estimated about 6,8 million Jews in 2013, while famous Israeli demographer Sergio Della Pergola put the number at 5,43 million in 2012, which would mean the US Jewish population was smaller than that of Israel, thought to be 6,18 million. Then comes France, followed by Canada and then the UK.

The 2011 National Household Survey in Canada has sparked little debate (very little sparks debate in Canada!) and is considered accurate. It showed that roughly 329 500 people identified themselves as Jewish, 1 per cent of the population.

Attempts for a community database

Estimates and census issues aside, we would do well to try to keep a record of ourselves. The Cape Town community has been very diligent with its community register and we can commend them. It has the names and contact information of almost 15 000 of the 16 000 believed to live in the city.

SAJBD efforts to compile a similar data base of the estimated 50 000 or so Jewish residents in Johannesburg, have not worked. Stringent opposition arose from certain quarters who worried the information could be used against the community, should an anti-Semitic government get into power, or perhaps they did not want to be contacted for fundraising purposes.

But our community should rethink this, even if it means we get the occasional call to contribute to a good cause. Having a communal database allows us to plan effectively for our future.

We will then know how many new classrooms, schools, synagogues, old aged homes, and community centres we should be building or not building; in which areas and when. In a context where we don't know when we might next lose electricity or if our government will always be motivated to protect our interests, we should at least support our own leaders' noble efforts to be efficient and plan well for our collective future.

– Vanessa Valkin, Editor



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressing the US Congress.

Speaking to Congress, Netanyahu slams the 'bad deal' with Iran

RON KAMPEAS WASHINGTON

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech, in the end, was about reminding Americans that the enemy of your enemy may still be your enemy.

He may have lost some friends in the process.

Netanyahu spoke before the US Congress on Tuesday following a six-week build-up that spurred questions about the propriety of an Israeli prime minister using Congress as a platform for his views two weeks before elections in his country and resulted in a rupture, for now, between the Obama and Netanyahu governments.

"To defeat ISIS and let Iran get nuclear weapons would be to win the battle and lose the war," Netanyahu said during his 45-minute address, referring to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the terrorist group targeted by a US-led coalition. "That is exactly what would happen if the deal currently being negotiated is accepted by Iran."

Netanyahu spoke at the invitation of the House Speaker John Boehner (Republican Ohio), who in a breach of protocol did not consult the White House, congressional Democrats or the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. No Obama administration officials attended the speech, and Vice President Joe Biden, who conventionally co-chairs such events with the House speaker, was out of the country.

"I know that my speech has been the subject of much controversy," the Israeli leader said early in his address. "I deeply regret that some perceive my being here as political. That was never my intention."

Netanyahu praised Obama for his support of Israel, eliciting a rare standing ovation for the president from both sides of the aisle. (Sheldon Adelson, the billionaire casino magnate who is a patron both to Netanyahu and the Republican Party and was present, did not clap.)

It was clear, however, that there were those on the Democratic side who remained unhappy with the speech. At least 60 lawmakers, including one Republican, chose not to go, and applause was often perfunctory on the Democratic side.

When Netanyahu strode up the centre aisle of the US House of Representatives chamber, it was mostly Republicans who rushed to shake his hand. Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz (Democrat Florida), chairman of the Democratic National Committee and one of the most prominent Jews and outspoken Israel supporters in the party, studiously hung back. So did Representative Nancy Pelosi (Democrat California), the minority leader in the House.

"As one who values the US-Israel relationship, and loves Israel, I was near tears throughout the Prime Minister's speech," Pelosi said. "Saddened by the insult to the intelligence of the United States as part of the P5 +1 nations, and saddened by the condescension toward our knowledge of the threat posed by Iran and our broader commitment to preventing nuclear proliferation."

The P5+1 is the acronym for the six major powers negotiating with Iran: The United States, Russia, China, Germany France and Great Britain.

Netanyahu received multiple standing ovations. However, at the point in which he came out most forcefully against the deal being negotiated, most Democrats remained seated, with some clapping politely, while many Republicans

stood, whooped and hollered.

"This is a bad deal, it's a very bad deal and we're better off without it," Netanyahu said.

Republicans said Netanyahu's speech was a necessary tonic for talks that they say have been conducted without transparency.

Earlier in the week, there were reports that the Obama administration was worried that Netanyahu would reveal secrets that its negotiators had shared with the Israelis. Netanyahu in his speech said that the two main areas of the emerging agreement that concerned him were easily found in a Google search.

He said that the two likely outcomes - allowing Iran a limited uranium enrichment capacity and letting the deal lapse after a period of at least 10 years - would leave Iran a nuclear threshold state. Netanyahu instead counselled a deal that would require Iran to moderate its behaviour, ending its regional troublemaking and backing for terrorism, and its threats against Israel.

Obama administration officials have said that demanding the dismantling of Iran's enrichment capacity would collapse the talks, in part because it is seen as unrealistic by some of the major powers now squeezing Iran with sanctions. Additionally, the administration has said that any deal must have a period of duration, and it has resisted attaching non-nuclear issues to the talks, including Iran's behaviour in the region.

On Monday night, speaking to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Susan Rice, the US national security adviser, confirmed reports that any deal would lapse after a set period. Rice said the term would be at least 10 years.

A nuclear deal with Iran must include access to its nuclear facilities even after the expiry of restrictions "to provide the international community the assurance that it was not pursuing nuclear weapons", Rice said.

While Netanyahu spoke, thousands of activists attending the AIPAC Policy Conference here this week visited Capitol Hill to lobby lawmakers' offices on two bills that would subject the talks with Iran to greater congressional involvement. Obama has said he will veto both measures should they pass.

This year's AIPAC conference - the pro-Israel lobby's largest ever - drew 16 000 activists representing all 435 congressional districts. Speakers over the three days included congressional leaders from both parties and Samantha Power, the US ambassador to the United Nations, along with Netanyahu and Rice.

The primary focus of the conference and the lobbying efforts was on Iran. And although much of the programming was indeed Iran-focused, the controversy surrounding Netanyahu's congressional speech, and the blow it may have dealt to bipartisan support for Israel, surfaced repeatedly at the event.

After Netanyahu spoke, an Obama administration official told CNN that Netanyahu offered nothing new.

"Literally, not one new idea, not one single concrete alternative; all rhetoric, no action," the network quoted the anonymous senior administration official as saying.

Obama himself has said that the fallout from the speech will not cause permanent damage. On Monday, the president told Reuters that he would meet Netanyahu again soon after Israel's March 17 elections if Netanyahu was re-elected. (JTA)

In whose Jewish name does Bibi speak?



On what basis did Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu claim to speak for the entire Jewish people in his controversial speech to the US Congress this week about Iran? Before leaving Jerusalem for Washington he said: “My responsibility is to worry not only about the State of Israel, but also the future of the Jewish people... Seventy, 80 years ago no one could raise their voice when there were plans to destroy us. Today... it is my obligation.”

To the chagrin of his foes, Netanyahu has projected himself as similar to previous daring Israeli prime ministers who made controversial decisions, standing against international and internal opposition for the Jewish people’s critical interests.

David Ben-Gurion took the leap in 1948 of declaring the Jewish state when many objected, or believed conditions were not right and the new entity would be quickly wiped out by hostile Arab armies. Levi Eshkol, after resisting pressure for a hasty attack, gave the green

light in 1967 for pre-emptive Israeli strikes against the combined armies of Syria and Egypt which were threatening Israel, starting the Six Day War. Menachem Begin concluded a historic peace treaty with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1979 - for which both received the Nobel Peace Prize - giving back to Egypt the entire Sinai Peninsula which had been captured in the Six Day War and demolishing the Israeli town of Yamit, against the protests of many Jews and Israelis.

These seminal moves by past Israeli prime ministers affected Jews across the world dramatically. In retrospect, they are widely understood to have been justifiable decisions. At the time, however, they required considerable mettle to stand up to critics and foes and the danger of things going terribly awry.

Will Netanyahu be seen in years to come as the Jewish Churchill, the leader who had the courage and foresight to brush aside opposition and diplomatic protocol for the sake of a life-and-death matter, shouting out the “truth” the global community and a weak US president were denying? A heroic figure history will applaud?

Netanyahu said as much in answering critics of his Congress

speech and its negative effect on the US-Israel relationship: “I think... Iran with an atomic bomb is much more dangerous than one disagreement or another [with the US].”

Jews do not march in lockstep. Jewish leaders, including Israeli ones, are not easily accepted by all. There have been many Jewish “not in my name” campaigns relating to Israel under different leaders. In South Africa in 2002, one mounted by former SA government minister Ronnie Kasrils drew support from a range of Jewish South Africans, criticising Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territories under Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

During last year’s Gaza conflict, 500 South African Jews, describing themselves as “proudly Jewish” – including prominent personalities in South African and Jewish society - placed a full page ad in the Sunday Times denouncing Israeli actions under Netanyahu, effectively saying it doesn’t speak for them.

A current international case in point involves Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein of California, who told CNN she rejected Netanyahu’s “arrogant” claim that he was lobbying for the entire Jewish population.

“He doesn’t speak for me on this... I think it’s a rather arrogant statement. I think the Jewish community is like any other community. There are different points of view.”

So, can an Israeli prime minister claim to speak on behalf of all Jews? In less than two weeks Israeli elections take place and obviously Netanyahu - like all politicians - wants to score points by projecting himself as the champion of Israel and the Jewish people.

But the issue is greater than Israeli electioneering and the Jewish people. Whatever one thinks of pre-election posturing, Netanyahu deserves credit for his wake-up call to the world about the danger of an atomic Iran. Whether a Jew in Israel or the Diaspora accepts him as leader, is almost irrelevant compared to the gravity of the topic.

Increasing terrorist attacks, particularly those sponsored by Iran’s radical theocracy, threaten the whole world, not just Israeli and Jewish security. On this issue, Netanyahu does speak for many people who might disagree with him in other areas.

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

World News in Brief

Iran: ‘Nuke Inspections will continue’

WASHINGTON - A nuclear deal with Iran must include access to its nuclear facilities even after the expiry of restrictions, which would last at least 10 years, Susan Rice, the US national security adviser, told AIPAC.

Rice, addressing the American Israel Public Affairs Committee on Monday, said expectations that Iran would cease uranium enrichment altogether or that restrictions would be in place indefinitely, were unrealistic. But she added that intrusive inspections would continue indefinitely.

“At the end of any deal, Iran would still be required to offer comprehensive access to its nuclear facilities and to provide the international community the assurance that it was not pursuing nuclear weapons,” she said.

Insisting on no enrichment would collapse the alliance the Obama administration had built to sanction and isolate Iran, factors which had led Iran to agree to nuclear negotiations, Rice said.

“Let’s remember that sanctions have never stopped Iran from advancing its programme,” she said. Without a deal, Rice said, Iran would return to enrichment levels it achieved before the terms governing nuclear talks with the major powers imposed restrictions, and seek to expand its nuclear capability.

“And, we’ll lose the unprecedented inspections and transparency we have today,” she said.

Rice also addressed concerns about reports that any deal restricting Iranian nuclear activities would expire after 10 - 15 years.

“I know that some question a deal of any duration,” she said. “But, it has always been clear that the pursuit of an agreement of indefinite duration would result in no agreement at all.”

Restrictions would be in place at least for 10 years, she said.

“A deal that extends for a decade or more would accomplish this goal better than any other course of action”. (JTA)

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We will also be in Cape Town from 9-11 March

- We can meet you anywhere at your convenience for a chat.**
- Please contact us for a one on one or a group meeting by appointment.**

Selwyn Hare
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8 SA JEWISH REPORT		Letters		6 – 13 March 2015	
<div>Disclaimer</div> <div>The letters page is intended to provide opportunity for a range of views on any given topic to be expressed. Opinions articulated in the letters are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, staff or directors of the Jewish Report.</div> <div>The Editor, PO Box 84650, Greenside, 2034 email: sharon@sajewishreport.co.za</div>		<div>Guidelines for letters</div> <div>Letters up to 400 words get preference. Provide your full name, place of residence, and daytime contact phone number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.</div>			
<div>RADICAL ISLAM WILL NOT DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN JEW AND CHRISTIAN</div> <div>It was said by “Adam” (hijacked on an El Al flight by terrorist Leila Khaled in 1970) that “the real issue is the hypocrisy of those who gave a platform to people like Khaled...”</div> <div>This is partly true but the real issue is education (actually the lack thereof).</div> <div>I watched Khaled’s talk on ITV, and it was barely coherent. Other than the words “Zionists, imperialists and Israelis”, she could not string together an intelligible sentence.</div> <div>Her fans were even less mentally acute and I counted fewer than 70 in the audience.</div> <div>The real problem with people like Khaled is the support that she garners from government and a naïve person like Kebby Maphatsoe, deputy minister of defence.</div> <div>This ignoramus has “advised” the SAJBD “to arm itself with real facts, rather than to serve as the insidious hand of the terrorist apartheid Israel Zionist state in South Africa”. This is a dangerous and inflammable statement by the deputy minister.</div> <div>Apart from the fact that his use of the word “insidious” is erroneous and out of context, he displays considerable ignorance also, with an arrogant flavour, to demonstrate his hatred toward Jews and Israel.</div> <div>We should be mindful of recent media reports that radical Islamists are probably using this country as a base for training and financial transactions and that radicals feel safe here given the state of corruption in the country and the inability of our police to curb crime.</div> <div>Maphatsoe, if aware, is either complicit or perhaps preferring to turn a blind eye.</div> <div>Most South Africans do not countenance the radicalism and terrorist activities currently occurring globally, but it should be borne in mind that the majority who vote for government, are generally unsophisticated and therefore easily influenced by people such as Maphatsoe.</div> <div>Radical Islam, ultimately, will not differentiate between Christians and Jews, of whom there are millions living here in this country and this is the core of the problem that government fails to grasp.</div> <div>Nathan Cheiman</div> <div>Northcliff, Johannesburg</div>		<div>HOW MILLIONS OF JEWS LEFT EGYPT ON THE TREK HOME</div> <div>The question (in last week’s paper) regarding the extraordinary number of Bnei Yisrael that left Egypt after only 210 years of living there and after having arrived in Egypt as only 70 souls, is statistically a very sound question.</div> <div>Indeed, the Scriptural text (Exodus 12:37) states: “Bnei Yisrael journeyed... approximately 600 000 men on foot, besides the children” (Targum Yonatan explicitly puts the total number of people at over three million).</div> <div>Our Sages point out that the growth in population of the Jews in Egypt was absolutely miraculous and supernatural.</div> <div>Many scriptural sources, some very explicit, such as Exodus 1:7 “Bnei Yisrael were fruitful and prolific and their population increased ... very, very much (they became so numerous) that the land (of Egypt) became filled with them” - illustrate and substantiate our Sages’ claims.</div> <div>I would like to relate statistical and mathematical proof towards the claim that the Jews in Egypt multiplied at a miraculous rate. This proof was expressed by the Alter Rov of Telshe, Lithuania, Rabbi Eliezer Gordon (1841-1910).</div> <div>The Midrash (Ex Rab 1) expounding on the above verse claims that the Jewish mothers would each give birth to six children at a time (quoted by Rashi). Rabbi Lazer Gordon showed how this can actually be proven via mathematics and statistics.</div> <div>In the book of B’Midbar (Numbers 3:40...) a census of the Israelite firstborn males from the age of one month old is taken - which totals 22 273.</div> <div>The total war-eligible and able-bodied Israelite males above the age of 20 years (until 60) is given as 603 550 (Num 1:46).</div> <div>The total male population - including males below 20 and over 60, is very plausibly double the 20 to 60-year-old male census - at 1,2 million males.</div> <div>If there were only 22 273 male firstborn - the ratio of firstborn male to not-firstborn male, is plausibly 1:55 (realising some of the firstborn males were included and some were not included in the overall Israelite adult male count).</div> <div>If the 22 273 mothers, whose firstborn child was a male, gave birth approximately 10 times during their lifetime, they would have then given birth to about six male children at a time!</div> <div>(Obviously statistically all these numbers just need to be doubled to account for the female population.)</div> <div>Aron Ziegler</div> <div>Cyrildene, Johannesburg</div>			
<div>MIRACLES IN JUDAISM ARE WELL-DOCUMENTED AND IRREFUTABLE</div> <div>With respect to Martin Frack regarding his reply to Rabbi Pesach Fishman (Jewish Report, February 27), I believe he should think through more carefully the whole issue of miracles in Judaism.</div> <div>It is true, of course, that other religions also have their miracle stories. The crucial difference, however, is that whereas these purported miracles happened only to individuals, those key events recorded in the Torah were directly witnessed and experienced by the entire Jewish nation.</div> <div>Such claims of mass revelation can hardly be forged after the fact. It entails convincing people that they (or alternatively their ancestors) themselves experienced something that never actually happened, an obvious impossibility.</div> <div>The fact that throughout history, no other religion has even attempted to convince its adherents that either they themselves or even their distant forebears experienced miraculous revelations en masse, seems to me irrefutable proof that, at the very least, something extraordinary happened to our ancestors in the desert all those centuries ago. Put simply, if it is possible to fabricate traditions of mass revelation after the fact, then not only the Jews would have done it.</div> <div>Regarding the theory that the Torah was cobbled together by multiple authors centuries after the events described, those advocating it have evidently fallen for the quasi-logical sleight of hand known as “assuming the conclusion”, whereby one at the outset assumes something to be true and then works backwards to “prove” it.</div> <div>In the case of “Biblical critics”, it is taken as a given from the outset that Judaism’s sacred canon is a human cultural-intellectual construct that merely purports to be of Divine origin. Having thus already secularised Tanach, they then proceed to dissect, analyse and deconstruct about its meaning as they would any other piece of literature, and of course end up spinning every manner of academic theories about its origin and meaning.</div> <div>At the same time, of course, they award one another PhDs and declare themselves to be the reigning scholarly experts, and the whole system becomes self-perpetuating.</div> <div>Suffice it to say that the ever-growing numbers of Jewish youngsters in yeshivot and seminaries around the world have little time for this sort of thing. The more one delves into the Torah, the more its Divine origin becomes apparent.</div> <div>David Saks</div> <div>Johannesburg</div>		<div>STILL ON TORAH AND MIRACLES</div> <div>In last week’s SAJR Martin Frack raised a host of issues which I will attempt to respond to in this limited space.</div> <div>He challenges the statement that the Torah has been handed down unchanged and unchallenged for millennia. Indeed, the Torah was transmitted for several thousand years largely unchallenged within the Jewish people until the rise of various forms of Biblical criticism (and its offshoots), gaining steam in the 19th century. I think we are both basically in agreement on that.</div> <div>Frack (and the authors he refers to) take as an article of faith that the Torah was written by committee some 800 years after the Exodus. This theory was espoused by Bible critics in the 1800s based on a flawed literary analysis that was in vogue at the time.</div> <div>That theory is not tenable for a number of reasons, including the fact that it ignores the entire body of Torah commentary that preceded it that address and explain the very issues that baffle these critics. One cannot possibly form an accurate picture of the Torah (or anything) while wilfully ignoring all of the relevant context and clarification.</div> <div>Frack is disturbed by the “ethnic cleansing” of the inhabitants of the Promised Land by Moshe. Regrettably, Moshe never entered the Land of Israel.</div> <div>His comparison of the Jews’ conquest of Israel to the savagery of the Wermacht is odious and totally ignores the distinction between a just war (which at its best results in death and destruction) and an unjust war and importantly what actually happened. Were the actions of the Allies and the Germans in the Second World War also comparable?</div> <div>“By what legal and moral right did Hashem donate the flourishing land of others to the Jews?” The very first comment of Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki), the prime commentator on the Torah addresses this very point - it was first promised and given to Avraham (and his Jewish descendents), later occupied by those foreign nations and then returned to its rightful owners, the Jewish nation. (This is a prime example of the hazards of ignoring the classical commentators and then being perplexed by the Torah’s narrative of events.)</div> <div>Frack does not accept the miraculous events of the Torah. Usually the Bible critics’ attacks were/are accompanied by a denial of the existence of G-d as understood by normative Judaism which leads to a denial of the possibility of miracles.</div> <div>There is a crucial difference between the events of the Exodus and Mt Sinai and the claims of miracles of other religions. The miracles of Egypt and Mt Sinai were national events and had they not occurred their veracity would have been challenged immediately - not 3 100 years after the fact (or according to Frack 2 300 years later).</div> <div>The claims of other religions are based on statements of an individual or small group of followers that are more difficult to verify.</div> <div>Ultimately though, belief in miracles is not the basis for Judaism - the validity of the Torah is its foundation.</div> <div>In response to the many challenges of Frack, I have just one challenge - take the time to study the authentic Torah sources that address the questions you have.</div> <div>Rabbi Pesach Fishman</div> <div>Northcliff Shul, Johannesburg</div>			
<div>PLEA TO OUR LEADERS FOR GOODWILL AND DECORUM</div> <div>Overseas visitors often comment on the warmth of South Africans, both black and white. The spirit of ubuntu (goodwill) uplifts this great land.</div> <div>Nelson Mandela surprised the world with his amazing grace and goodwill towards tough enemies, saving South Africa from a probable racial civil war. He and FW de Klerk did us proud by winning Nobel Peace prizes.</div> <div>Yet our present parliament has degenerated into a hateful place where members have lost much of Mandela’s grace. Our leaders on most sides hysterically shout each other down, often over relatively petty matters.</div> <div>Instead of debating issues, the arguments have become increasingly personal. Rather play the ball and not the person.</div> <div>Instead of trying to win political points by trying to impress voters with vigorous opposition and show that they are effective, parliamentarians should also give credit where it is due. Rather focus on building up while criticising as well.</div> <div>For criticism to be effective, it should have meat. To just complain about everything will diminish criticism which is important and relevant.</div> <div>We often teach our children to be good and have respect, yet we encourage our leaders to be hateful. No wonder there is so much stress in our society.</div> <div>Martin Zagnoev</div> <div>Sunningdale Ridge, Johannesburg</div>		<div>LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON BEADED HOLOCAUST BRACELETS</div> <div>About three years ago Jewish Report ran a story on a woman who was promoting Holocaust memorial beaded bracelets to raise funds for charity. The bracelets consisted of six yellow beads (representing the six million who perished in the Holocaust), a pewter disc with a Magen Dovid, with the rest black beads. The price was R40 of which R25 went to the old black women who did the beading and R15 to Jewish charity.</div> <div>Many of my friends asked me to buy some of these bracelets on their behalf.</div> <div>If any reader can supply me with contact details, I would be very grateful. My contact details are cell 083-792-4709 or (031) 562-9650.</div> <div>Alwyn Immerman</div> <div>La Lucia, Durban</div>			
More news on our website www.sajr.co.za					

Rabbi Marcus awarded an MBE for Holocaust education

LESLIE HARRIS

Former South African Rabbi Barry Marcus who recently received an MBE, made an impact on South African Jewry when he led Johannesburg’s Waverley Shul in the 1980s. Now rabbi of the Central Synagogue in London, he is making similar ripples in England.

He is the only rabbi among the 1 164 honoured in the Queen’s New Year’s list. Last week he was at Buckingham Palace, where the Prince of Wales invested him as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE), in recognition of his contribution to Holocaust education.

In October last year he was knighted by the Polish government for his work in Holocaust education and fostering dialogue between the Jewish and other communities.

Rabbi Marcus dismisses as “dangerous” the suggestion that there is more anti-Semitism in Poland than in other countries. “When you do that, you fall into the trap of making wild generalisations about this group or that group and that doesn’t help anybody.

“The truth of the matter is that there are more Polish people who have been recognised as ‘Righteous Among the Gentiles’ by Yad Vashem than any other nation in Europe.”

It would be foolhardy to suggest that there are not people in Poland who harbour enmity towards the Jews. You probably can say that about any country, but you can’t ignore the fact that Poland today is Israel’s second-best friend, after Germany. Both countries vote in support of Israel.”

Rabbi Marcus is not surprised at the current wave of anti-Semitism sweeping Europe. Whereas before, the hostility had been driven by Christians, today it is being driven by Muslims, who have co-opted the Christian rhetoric for their own purposes.

“They’ve dug up the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, and Mein Kampf has now been translated into Arabic. They’ve adopted that and adapted it to use in different places.”

There has, however, been a mutation in anti-Semitism over the years. “First they targeted our faith, then with the Nazis it was our race, and now it is the Jewish state that is being targeted. But it is all a guise, and we know that it is a guise.”

Rabbi Marcus sees the attacks on Jewish communities in Europe as the natural consequence of unchecked Islamic extremism.

“In France, after the attack on Charlie Hebdo, the guy that went into the supermarket made it quite clear that he wanted to kill Jews. That is being brushed aside because no one wants to actually deal with the reality. There’s been a slow-drip irrigation pipe of anti-Semitism being allowed to flourish.”

He sees education as the antidote to anti-Semitism. “You can’t pretend that centuries of hatred didn’t have an effect. It had an effect. And it continues to have an effect. Look at the effects that education had, so let’s try to counter it by educating people in a much more positive way and to build bridges so that we don’t have to face what we faced in the Second World War.”

As part of that education, 15 years ago the rabbi pioneered the concept of a one-day visit to Auschwitz. “I chartered my own plane, took 250 people. We flew in the morning, spent time in Krakow, Auschwitz and Birkenau, then returned to London in the late evening. During the flight I showed videos of Jewish life in Poland before the war and videos of the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945.”

It soon became a sought-after pro-

gramme, leading to a partnership with the Holocaust Education Trust. To date about 25 000 people have been on the trips, including prime ministers, teachers and groups of non-Jewish students over the age of 16.

“The response has been very positive and we encourage them to become ambassadors, to tell others what they’ve learned and so combat the spread of anti-Semitism.”

Rabbi Barry Marcus MBE (left) has the award conferred on him by the Prince of Wales during a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.



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IAW: SAUJS and BDS (again) square up

ANT KATZ

The annual week-long tussle between BDS and SAUJS on campuses around the county, is in full swing. What BDS calls Israel Apartheid Week and Jewish students dub “Israel Awareness Week” (IAW) looks to be a draw at this stage.

The local arm of US-based NGO Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (Israel), BDS-SA and its many affiliates are pitted against the SA Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) - supported by a host of Jewish organisations and pro-Israel groups in the annual battle to win the hearts and minds of students on campuses.

Some incidents have been reported however, including forcing Palestinian peace activist Bassam Eid to end his speech at the University of Johannesburg early.

The Jewish students, says SA Zionist Federation’s Benji Shulman, have been better prepared and trained this year. This has been “very helpful in that (the students) are able to engage on Israel in a more informative manner”, which is crucial as on some campuses and at certain times, the SAUJS tents have more students visiting with a genuine interest in finding out more about Israel.

“BDS seems to have put more focus on UCT in Cape Town this year,” says Shulman.

On the Wits campus the pro-Israel

lobby was heartened by the fact that the first two days weren’t rained out as the case was last year. This has been a boon, says Shulman, as they have been able to erect their gazebos and are handing out free ice creams “as a way of engaging the general student body”.

Shulman says SAUJS nationwide has been better organised, having learned from their experiences at IAW 2014. “There seem to be more little events being staged by BDS this year,” he says, adding that “so far, it has been less intense and aggressive.”

BDS is also fielding lower profile speakers this year, while SAUJS have done the opposite, with various innovative new campaigns and top speakers they have brought out, including Father Gabriel Naddaf of the Greek Orthodox Church and Bassam Eid.

Father Naddaf is talking on various campuses on “The Rights of Christians in the Middle East” while Eid, director of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, spoke on “Peace and the Palestinian People”.

Also in South Africa for the week is World Union of Jewish Students (WUJS) head, Andi Gergly from Hungary. She will speak on several campuses.

The speakers have also moved out of halls at Wits this year and are

speaking on the lawns, right opposite the BDS tent.

Defend Embrace Invest Support Israel (Deisi), the SA-based Christian Zionist group, has joined forces with SAUJS to promote Israel Awareness Week this year. Part of their campaign is to ask Christians to light a candle for Israel.

Apart from the traditional campuses covered by SAUJS’ counter-IAW events, the Jewish students have spread their wings further for 2015. With a new SAUJS branch established at Tuks in Pretoria, they have added this campus to their activities. Deisi has also been opening new branches on campuses which has allowed SAUJS to include UWC in Cape Town and to bolster their presence at UJ in Johannesburg.

SAUJS’ efforts received a boost when the SRC at Tuks refused to endorse any IAW events - and, in fact, on Thursday the SRC is hosting an “Israel Palestine Awareness Conference”.

The innovative approach in 2014 of bringing Israeli students of mixed demographic backgrounds to engage students, was so successful that SAUJS again has a dozen of them on campuses around the country. UCT even has a Muslim Israeli student in their contingent.

“Students visit both the BDS and the SAUJS tents,” says Shulman,



Father Gabriel Naddaf, a Greek Orthodox priest, who is speaking for SAUJS on campuses on “The Rights of Christians in the Middle East”, stops off at a local store to buy tomatoes that were developed at, and licensed by, Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

despite the best efforts of BDS-SA’s supporters like the ANC, Cosas, Cosatu and many more.

The SA Jewish Board of Deputies, Zionist Federation and Deisi, held a protest at BDS’ IAW launch media

conference last week.

Jewish Report Online will be posting daily updates from around the country with the assistance of SAZF’s Benji Shulman. Also see more pictures on www.sajr.co.za

Board, CSO reassure Jewry over leaked spy cables



ANT KATZ

“The SAJBD and CSO continue to work very closely with South African government security services, which are committed to doing everything that needs to be done to ensure the safety of our community,” was the assurance given to SA Jewry in a notice this week, co-signed by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies National Chairman Mary Kluk and SAJBD President Zev Krengel, as well as by the CSO management.

The assurance was given in the wake of the continued publication by the Aljazeera news network of leaked spy cables which have shed light on the murky world of “Spy vs Spy”, particularly between South Africa and Israel.

The notice to the community advised: “This past week has seen progressive revelations in the media concerning the leaked State Security Agency cables. A number of these relate directly to our Jewish community, including information regarding an envisioned terrorist attack against a Jewish installation in Cape Town in 2010.”

The two bodies add: “Reference is also made to possible attacks against our community over Yomtov in September last year. As you will no doubt remember, the SAJBD and CSO were aware

of this at the time, and as a result asked the Jewish community to be especially vigilant and arranged for there to be extra security arrangements in place during that period.

“The SAJBD and CSO continue to work very closely with South African government security services, which are committed to doing everything that needs to be done to ensure the safety of our community. The CSO also continues to work very closely with our shuls, schools and other communal organisations to upgrade their security, both from a physical as well as process point of view.

“Once again, we call on the Jewish community at large to assist us in this area and to minimise any possible risk,” said the statement to the community.

The Board and CSO ask SA Jewry to report any suspicious activity to the CSO national number 086 18 000 18 or the Cape number: 086 18 911 18. These numbers are both manned 24/7, 365 days a year.

Follow the ongoing leaks on SA Jewish Report Online, where many of the most interesting items have been published and contextualised. The website, www.sajr.co.za will continue to keep users updated.

Zimbabwe communal leader Sam Benatar passes on

DAVID SAKS

Tributes have flowed in for the late Sam Benatar (pictured), president of the Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies and one of Zimbabwe Jewry’s most experienced and active communal leaders.

Benatar, who was born in the small town of Concession in what was then Southern Rhodesia, passed away following a long illness in Harare, aged 86.

Rabbi Moshe Silberhaft, who had a long working relationship with Benatar through his involvement with the African Jewish Congress (AJC), travelled to Harare to deliver a eulogy at his funeral. He said that Benatar had worked tirelessly to promote the welfare of Zimbabwean Jewry during times of great stress and turmoil in the country. This included serving as president of the African Jewish Congress Zimbabwe Relief Fund, which assists community members affected by the ongoing economic turmoil in Zimbabwe.

Benatar was a vice-president of the AJC, and in that capacity represented southern African Jewry at a number of major Jewish gatherings abroad, including the 2013 World Jewish Congress meeting in Budapest.



Last year, he received a special award from the AJC for the “multiple contributions... made to the fostering of Jewish communal and religious life in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa”.

Benatar was also a long-serving president of the Sephardi Hebrew Congregation in Harare. Outside the Jewish community, he was a senior member of a Freemasons lodge in the city. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Sara, and daughter, Ingrid.

World News in Brief

Report: Saudi Arabia may lend Israel airspace for attack on Iran

JERUSALEM - In closed talks with European lawmakers, Saudi diplomats have expressed their willingness to co-operate with Israel on a possible attack against Iran’s nuclear facilities, Israel’s Channel 2 television network has reported.

According to the report, however, Saudi officials have said that they would first need to see some meaningful progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in order to muster up public support for allowing Israel to use Saudi Arabia’s airspace for an attack on Iran.

The report comes as Arab governments have expressed deep reservations about the ongoing progress in nuclear negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 powers.

According to a recent Wall Street Journal report, leading Arab countries including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates have said that any nuclear deal that allows Iran to retain its capacity to enrich uranium, would likely force them to develop their own nuclear capabilities. (JNS.org)

JEI 2015 heard some inspiring words from the Svensons



CELESTE EVERITT

Every year, Helping Hands (the young fundraising division of the Chevrah Kadisha) hosts the very popular Jewish Entrepreneur’s Insight (JEI) event, sponsored by Investec, which attracts over 600 young Jewish people. JEI 2015 took place at Investec’s Auditorium on February 17.

This year’s event was no different from the highly successful previous ones and bookings filled up faster than ever. The guest speakers, Scott and Ally Svenson from the United States, discussed their entrepreneurial journey, which included the founding of the Seattle Coffee Company, Scott’s presidential role at Starbucks, as well as the founding of Carluccio’s Italian Delicatessen and MOD Pizza in downtown Seattle.

Their presentation was followed by a question and answer session and a fantastic prize giveaway.

CSO’s ‘Memories of Madiba’ a resounding success

Thursday February 12, saw a who’s who of the Johannesburg Jewish community and business leaders gathering in support of the Community Security Organisation (CSO) at Huddle Park. Zelda la Grange, long-time personal secretary to Nelson Mandela, and Rory Steyn, Mandela’s head of security, shared their memories of Madiba. It was mediated by journalist Mandy Wiener.

The audience was spellbound by the often hilarious stories they told and the insights offered into the character of the legendary icon.

The festive evening and topnotch catering was appreciated by all who attended. Security was of course ensured by volunteer protectors of the CSO.

The CSO is a non-profit, volunteer organisation, which performs various roles in protecting the Jewish community at Jewish schools, synagogues, and at communal functions. The main focus and mission of the CSO is the protection of Jewish life and empowering the Jewish community to protect itself.

Donor funding plays a pivotal role in its mission and enables the volunteers and staff to continue with their vital work.

“We thank all donors most sincerely for their generosity and appreciate the ongoing contributions,” the organisation said in a release.

Brave heroes of Israel tell personal stories



OWN CORRESPONDENT

This past Sunday afternoon Sydenham Shul hosted a delegation of 12 wounded IDF soldiers who were injured in the line of duty. The delegation belongs to the organisation, Hope for Heroism and was hosted by Mark and Bendita Gordon, co-ordinators of the delegations to South Africa.

Rabbi Yehuda Stern opened the event and introduced the grade R class of the Sydenham Nursery School who sang Purim songs for the soldiers and presented them with mishloach manot and get-well cards.

Israeli Ambassador to South Africa Arthur Lenk, welcomed the delegation on behalf of the embassy, as did Avrom Krengel on behalf of the South African Zionist Federation and Johannesburg’s Jewish community.

The highlight of the afternoon was hearing from the soldiers themselves. They shared the most compelling tales of how they were injured in combat. They described the healing process and how they had continued to live their lives and build their own families. Many in the audience commented on how inspired they were by these brave heroes of Israel.

UJW rolls out red carpet for domestic workers

CINDY KREE
PROJECT MANAGER

On February 24, domestic workers in and around Johannesburg attended a special function in appreciation of all the hard work that they do.

This year the Union of Jewish Women’s annual Domestic Workers’ Tea was attended by 90 guests who were treated to a tea, beautiful gifts packs, interesting and informative talks and live entertainment.

Talks on breast cancer were given by Ruth Kalmek and Rebecca Musi, a breast cancer survivor and member of the Breast Health Foundation.

Bev Cohen entertained the guests with an interesting cooking demonstration on how to make a quick, easy and delicious pizza, after which everyone enjoyed tea, and music by a live band, Thabang and Brothers.

Three of the guests, Linah Moe-

ketsi, Thabitha Moeketsi and Nomiah Malumane, who also attended last year, reflected on how they had enjoyed every second of the event, from the talks to the demonstration and the tea.

Malumane has worked for Katz’s daughter, Nikki Wachsberger, for the last five years and has been an amazing support to her family.



Linah Moeketsi; Thabitha Moeketsi; and Nomiah Malumane, enjoying the Domestic Workers’ Appreciation Tea at the Union of Jewish Women, with their employer, Elaine Katz.

A big thank you for hospital volunteers



JOY GAFIN

Bikkur Cholim held a successful hospital volunteers “thank you” meeting last Sunday at the Waverley Sports Centre.

The crowd enjoyed sitting under the cool thatched lapa where they exchanged experiences and suggestions, while enjoying a sponsored breakfast.

The highlight of the morning was Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein’s appearance and his words of wisdom and encouragement.

• Should you be interested in participating in this rewarding mitzvah, please contact Joy on (011) 440-3606 (am).

More news on our website www.sajr.co.za

Silver Rimonim, yads and other silver regalia have mysteriously been removed from the Holy Ark at the Shul of the Johannesburg Sephardi Hebrew Congregation at the HOD Centre, Oaklands Avenue, Orchards.

If anyone knows or suspects anything about this unfortunate incident would he or she immediately contact Rabbi Kazilsky at Kazfam@gmail.com

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11:00

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CURRENT IMPROVEMENTS OF PROPERTIES

Property 1: Holding 60 Kempton Park Agricultural Holdings Extension 1, 60 Tulbagh Road, Kempton Park.
Extent: ± 2, 0304 ha
Improvements: Offices

Property 2: Holding 61 Kempton Park Agricultural Holdings Extension 1, 61 Tulbagh Road, Kempton Park.
Extent: ± 2, 4845 ha
Improvements: House with various flatlets

Property 3: Holding 56 Kempton Park Agricultural Holdings Extension 1, 56 Tulbagh Road, Kempton Park.
Extent: ± 2, 0304 ha
Improvements: 4 bedroom house

Property 4: Holding 57 Kempton Park Agricultural Holdings Extension 1, 57 Tulbagh Road, Kempton Park.
Extent: ± 2,0304 ha
Improvements: 3 bedroom house

Property 5: Holding 58 Kempton Park Agricultural Holdings Extension 1, 58 Tulbagh Road, Kempton Park.
Extent: ± 3, 9895 ha
Improvements: Approval for Residential 2 Township Development

Property 6: Portion 2 of Holding 271 Pomona Estates Agricultural Holdings
Extent: ± 3, 9895 ha
Improvements: Approval for Residential 2 Township Development

Property 7: Portion 1 of Holding 149 Pomona Estates Agricultural Holdings
Extent: ± 1, 0097 ha
Improvements: Unimproved stand

Property 8: Remaining Extent of Holding 143 Pomona Estates Agricultural Holdings, 143 Deodar Street, Kempton Park
Extent: ± 1, 0114 ha
Improvements: Unimproved stand

Property 9: Holding 155 Pomona Estates Agricultural Holdings, 155 Deodar Street, Kempton Park
Extent: ± 2, 0229 ha
Improvements: Offices with shooting range and outbuildings

Property 10: Portion 4 of Holding 284 Pomona Estates Agricultural Holdings, West Street, Kempton Park
Extent: ± 4, 0449 ha
Improvements: House

Property 11, 12, 13 & 14: Erf 399, Erf 400, Erf 518 and Erf 519 Serengeti Estate
Extent: ± 1 468 m², 1 001 m², 1 921 m², 1 001 m² and 1 086 m²
Improvements: Unimproved stands

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‘Hope for Heroism’ soldiers visit KD Victory Park

HANNA BEN-MOSHE

King David High School Victory Park was privileged to host two young men from the “Hope for Heroism” organisation at the school’s assembly last Friday.

Hope for Heroism, “Achim LaChaim” in Hebrew, is a non-profit organisation created and run by wounded soldiers from Israel’s elite Duvdevan anti-terror unit. The organisation operates on the unique model of “injured soldiers helping newly-injured soldiers”. Hope for Heroism is currently working with over 450 injured soldiers and their families.

• For further information visit www.hopeforheroism.org



Pictured are Matanya; Oz; Mr B Nozaic; and Hanna Ben-Moshe.

YC Nursery School celebrates with a pyjama party

OWN CORRESPONDENT

In honour of Rosh Chodesh Adar, the Yeshiva College Nursery School had a pyjama party and breakfast for its pupils. The children and teachers were very excited to come to school in their pyjamas! The morning was filled with dancing, singing and a lovely breakfast to ensure that “when Adar enters, we increase our joy”.



Eden Cane; Amire Swartz; Gia Suckerman; and Liat Swartz all from Morah Dena Smith’s class at Yeshiva College Nursery School.

Four injured Israeli soldiers visit KDL on a ‘healing’ tour

AVIGAEEL BROWN, GRADE 12

Hope for Heroism is an organisation that aims to help injured soldiers of the IDF. The organisation pairs two injured soldiers together as “brothers for life”. The soldiers help each other during the road to recovery, until they are able to return to society.

The organisation helps soldiers to physiologically heal. As part of their healing, a group of soldiers recently visited South Africa.

While in the country, four soldiers came to speak to the grade 11 and matric learners of King David Linksfield. Three of the soldiers were Israeli and one was from Venezuela. All four had served in the IDF and had acquired some form of injury during their service. Two of them were injured during last year’s Gaza war.

The soldiers all told their personal stories. They also answered questions put by the learners and spoke about life in the army. Everyone present was able to see the dedication that these men gave to the State of Israel and to the Jewish people.

Each soldier mentioned the importance of friendship and unity and the importance of these values during their army service. They also spoke of the importance of hope, because without hope, they felt that they would not survive.

After the meeting the learners left the room feeling emotional and appreciative. It is because of the brave young individuals, such as these men, that Jews have the State of Israel and it is because of them that Jews all around the world know they have a safe place that they can always return to.



Photo: Avigael Brown

Month of Adar - spreading joy at Herzlia

RABBI RYAN BASSERABIE
HEAD OF JEWISH LIFE AND LEARNING AT HERZLIA

Mi she’nichnas Adar marbim b’simcha - When the month of Adar enters we increase joy.

Our sages describe the Hebrew month of Adar as the happiest month in the Jewish calendar, so when the opportunity arose to bring smiles and good cheer, Herzlia got proactive about it.

Crazy Hat Day was a sensational way to herald the new month of Adar. On Rosh Chodesh Adar the entire UHS system - pre-school to matric, teaching staff, admin and maintenance - all participated by wearing crazy hats.

This generated incredible excitement across all the schools. The grade 8s, who were away on their Life Sciences camp, also managed to get involved.

Herzlia looks forward to making this an annual Rosh Chodesh Adar UHS event.



Photo: Heather Simpson

THE LITTLE STEPS PROJECT

Fundraising Bridge and Kaluki Morning

The Links, 147 Tenth Street, Linksfield

Thursday, 26th March, 2015

13h15 for 13h45

Cost: R160 per person includes delicious tea and lots of prizes.

The Little Steps Project is a group of concerned people whose aim is to improve the lives of underprivileged children. We have focused on two non profit organizations in Marlboro that provide for the kids and to improve their facilities. We are in the process of helping to upgrade the day care facilities. We hope to increase the development of skills through workshops with experienced teachers so that the children can benefit from this and be more equipped to enter into the school system. Help us make a real difference and get involved.

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KDLPPS kids bake hamantashen for Purim

SHEVA MESSIAS

During this month of Adar KDL Pre-Primary School increased its joy by having a mom’s and children’s “Hamantashen Bake” for the grade Rs in the King David High School hall.

This was planned for early in the morning, so that moms could go on to work. The school was pleased to have a few dads join too!

Rebbetzen Chaya Avtzon from the King David Shul engaged both the children and adults in her discussion on the hidden miracles of Purim. She left her audience with interesting and thought provoking ideas.

The children thoroughly enjoyed making hamantashen with their parents.

Pictured are Sky Sluzki and her mom, Lauren and Mandy Price and her daughter Jaimie.



Musical fundraising hoot for the two King Davids



LIORA MICHAELS

On Thursday, February 26, King David Linksfeld and King David Victory Park united to dance and party to various bands.

Goldilox Zone, Tees and Seas, Go Barefoot and Shortstraw performed for learners from all grades.

The evening’s entertainment was very successfully put together by the Eco committees of both schools, as an organised fundraiser with food and drinks on sale. It was a night enjoyed by all.

In the photograph Shortstraw performs for excited King David learners.

TA Primary boys get into the Purim spirit

OWN CORRESPONDENT

These grade two boys from Torah Academy Primary School had a “dress up” rehearsal for Purim. Really into the parts of fireman, Ninja warrior and Buzz Lightyear from Toy Story (Aharon Zwick, Aron Cohen and Ilan Glasser) found their own “jungle” in the school grounds where they played their chosen characters to the delight of their peers.

The boys donned their costumes again this week on Purim (on Thursday) and Shushan Purim (Friday) when they enjoyed the traditional treats of hamantashen and exchanged mishloach manot at school.



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CLOSING DATE: 20 March 2015

A Curriculum Vitae, with letter of motivation and references should be delivered, faxed or e-mailed to:

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Linksfeld
E-mail address: sofero@sabje.co.za
Fax: (011) 640-1649
Tel: (011) 480-4569

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A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

ME peace not a straightforward morality play

By ironic coincidence, this year’s annual hate fest known as “Israel Apartheid Week” takes place at a time when Jews around the world are celebrating Purim, the festival that both demonstrates the implacable hatred of our enemies and assures us of our ultimate triumph over them. The message of Purim - as epitomised by the heroic figures of Mordechai and Esther - is that we should not be intimidated by those who wish us harm. Rather, we should continue to proudly affirm our commitment to our Jewish heritage and our right to celebrate it.

On the frontlines of this battle are our university students. I have received glowing reports of the activities of SAUJS at UCT, and indeed, the firm, principled and dignified response of the students there has been in evidence on all campuses where SAUJS has a presence.

We can be proud of the commitment and resilience of our youth in the face of so much ugly invective, and take heart at how the future leaders of our community are willing to brave a hostile and deeply unpleasant environment to stand up for their beliefs.

The Board, in addition to supporting our university students, has also been very active on the media front. Here, we have been working closely with Bassim Eid, a visiting Palestinian human rights activist who believes, as we do, in the creation of a democratic Palestinian state co-existing in peace alongside Israel.

While the other side will continue propagating their rejectionist message, we can ensure that the media is also provided with our perspective. Contrary to what BDS and others would have people believe, the Israel-Palestine question is not a straightforward morality play about victims and victimisers.

Another important Board focus has been to bring home the extent to which the inflammatory and dishonest tactics of BDS et al, while doing nothing to resolve the Middle East conflict, are fostering overt anti-Semitism while undermining relations between South Africans in general.

Last week I attended a meeting with the vice-chancellor of the Durban University of Technology to discuss the way forward in the wake of the SRC’s shocking demand that Jewish students there be expelled. We were encouraged by the abhorrence felt by the DUT leadership regarding this call and will be working with them in formulating an envisaged new social cohesion programme to foster the values of tolerance, diversity and freedom of opinion on campus.

On Sunday, National Director Wendy Kahn led a counter-demonstration against a BDS event at Liliesleaf, Rivonia. The intention, through the banners displayed and in interaction with the media present, was to convey how BDS, despite claiming to be a human rights organisation, was responsible for provoking, and also condoning, gross acts of anti-Semitism by its supporters.

Recent such cases include the above DUT incident and the depositing of a pig’s head in a Woolworths store in Cape Town last November.

As Purim teaches us, anti-Semitism has been with us for thousands of years, even if the form it takes varies from generation to generation. Our challenge is not to be discouraged by this, but rather to continue to affirm without equivocation what is important to us as Jews, be it our religious faith, our support for the State of Israel, or our right to live both as proud, committed Jews and as equal, patriotic citizens in the countries we inhabit.

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



Above Board
Mary Kluk
National Chairman

The highest level of kindness

Last week I attended the Chev’s annual Zayin Adar dinner, always a heart-warming function. As usual the guests were made up of rabbonim, community leaders, donors, staff and most of all - because this event is really to honour and thank them - those who prepare the departed for burial, our Tahara workers.

Most of the people who do this holy work are volunteers and the custom is for them to fast on this day (the birthday of Moses) to atone for any possible disrespect they might have inadvertently shown towards a deceased person.

The sensitivity is great and the work itself is called Chesed Shel Emet, which roughly translates as true kindness because the beneficiaries can never repay, or even express appreciation for this final act of humanity. Purifying and clothing people who have passed away for their last journey on this earth is often not easy and it’s certainly not for everyone.

While there are many wonder-



ChevrahKadisha
AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITY WELFARE
Partners in Chesed
Michael Sieff
Group CEO

ful ways to give, this is considered the highest level of kindness.

Every human being is unique and we each want to help make the world a better, happier place in our own way. The good news is that there’s lots of room for personal expression in doing that. From money, to time and expertise, our incredible donors each give the best of what they have to offer. And under those headings are countless detailed approaches and projects which

impart an individual stamp to their generosity. In my sixth year of serving as CEO of the Chev, I still can’t think of a single conduit for kindness we don’t offer.

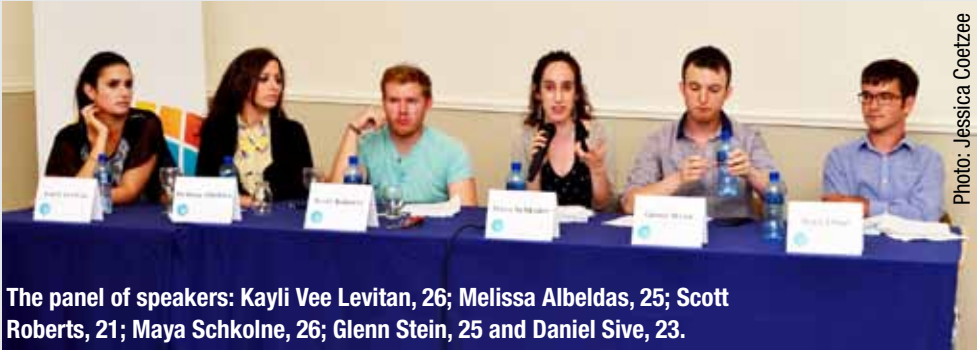
To prove that point, today is the festival of Purim and I want to thank every reader who joined with thousands of others in our city to support out Matanot l’Evyonim charity programme. By fulfilling this mitzvah, you give us the honour of distributing your funds for you to the poorest Jews among us - because we know who, and where, they are.

May all our Purims be joyous and may our partnership continue to thrive!

Chag Purim Sameach!

This column is paid for by the Chevrah Kadisha

Confidence or victimhood – the choice is ours



LAUREN KESSLER

Who are our community’s young Jewry? What are their views? How do they identify as Jewish and as South African? How are they revolutionising their Judaism to meet their unique needs and world experiences?

From those who feel at home on the periphery of the community, to those at the heart of it, the launch of GenerationNext was the first opportunity for them to speak and be heard.

A Cape summer evening brought together a bustling crowd of Jews of all ages. Such congregations, however, don’t usually consist of over 80 per cent being under the age of 30! Indeed, as a first of its kind, the event - the official launch of the Cape Jewish Board of Deputies’ new portfolio, GenerationNext - saw passionate, interested and engaged young Jews who felt inspired to take up the cause of community development and leadership.

The event took the form of a panel of six young adults, each representing a different point of interest and identification with the Jewish community. They spoke powerfully and personally of the places where they felt comfortable to identify as proudly Jewish, as well as the places with which they struggled to identify.

The speakers made the point that several competing identities – gender, sexuality, political views,

social networks and even forms of religious affiliation – are currents in a pool of competing identities.

The event concluded with an address by British Jewish educator and innovator Clive Lawton, who said that despite the challenges discussed, there were many reasons to be hopeful. “Jews are probably the most privileged and educated group of people on the planet right now. We can choose to see the world through a lens of confidence or of victimhood.”

Lawton added that he had heard much about the need for unity from the panel who expressed weariness with the divisions the community faced. He agreed with the call for unity, but stressed that it was only good if it also meant guarding against uniformity.

He further encouraged the diversity present in the community, that it is better for seven people to want to host a Purim party than only one person and six indifferent people as a result. He left the audience with the message that, “We are here to make the world a better place. That’s what Jews are for. There are many reasons to be optimistic and hopeful - and after being here tonight, I don’t have to try very hard.”

• For more information about this new communal initiative, contact the GenerationNext co-ordinator, Lauren Kessler, on laurenk@ctjc.co.za

Will the 2015 Budget make light work?

Given the impact of South Africa’s power crisis on our country’s economic growth, the question is... how much tax will you have to fork out to keep the lights on?

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Today, Friday (March 6)

- UZLC hosts Paula Slier on "Up Close and Personal with ISIS". Venue: Our Parents' Home. Orchards. Time: 12:45 - 14:00. Contact: Gloria (011) 485 4851 or 072-127-9421.

Sunday (March 8)

- Big Band Music Appreciation Society meets at St John's College Auditorium, Houghton. A short DVD will be shown of Big Band performances followed by an audio presented by Ivan Daniels

who takes us on a musical (vocal and instrumental) Latin-American trip. After interval a DVD, "Bathing Beauty", will be screened. Time: 14:15 sharp.

- Second Innings hosts an outing to the Alan Committee Show "The Sound of Laughter". Where: Pieter Toerien's Main Theatre at Montecasino. Time: 15:00 for the show; meet the bus at Golden Acres at 13:00. Cost: R120 for the show; cost of bus per person is R90. Book with Ros Berman (011) 532-9616.

Monday (March 9)

- UJW hosts John Kane-Berman, former CEO of the SAIRR, on "Fixing the Future". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R35. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Wednesday (March 11)

- Chev Social Services /CAJE's "Enrich your Life" series presents "Waiting for a Miracle: Living Through Infertility" with reproductive specialist Dr Gobetz, medical director of Vitalab; Rabbi Fox, shifra (supervisor of infertility according to Jewish law); Tanya Rubin, social worker/fertility counsellor. A couple will share their personal story. Venue: Sydenham Shul Hall. Time: 19:45. Cost: R40 (light refreshments served). To book: Sharon (011) 532-9616/sharonp@jhbchev.co.za
- UJW hosts Dr Lorraine Chaskalson, former lecturer in Dept of English at Wit, on "Contemporary Poetry". Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Time: 09:30. Donation: R35. Contact: (011) 648-1053.

Developing an elite group of Israeli engineers

DARRYL EGNAL

Israeli engineers are highly sought-after in Israel and abroad. The hi-tech capabilities within the country are renowned globally and major corporations are opening research and development operations throughout Israel.

Engineers of every type are succeeding in almost every corner of the globe and yet, the country is not producing enough engineers. An elite academic programme in Israel aims to change the status quo.

Amit Avidov imagines herself as an aeronautical engineer who flies airplanes. This dream is one she plans to achieve in Israel through the Aniëres Elite Academy programme, launched by three educational institutions - Naale Elite Academy, World ORT and the Centre for Pre-University Education at the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa.



Amit Avidov plays the flute at a Kabbalat Shabbat event for 9th grade learners on the Naale-Anieres Elite Academy programme.

The Israeli-born 14-year-old who grew up in Skokie, Illinois, is one of about 60 international and Israeli students who was awarded a science and technology scholarship to attend high school and university in Israel.

The programme continues until the students successfully complete university level engineering studies. Choices include aeronautical engineering, robotics, computer science, mechanical and chemical engineering, among others.

"It's kind of scary because everything is planned out for the next eight years, but I have no doubt I want to be here," says Avidov. "I am more interested in aeronautics though, probably because I've wanted to be a pilot in the Israeli Air Force since I was a kid."

The Aniëres Elite Academy programme addresses the need for a long-term approach to help teenagers achieve an advanced academic degree in engineering. During the first stage of the programme, students live and study at the WIZO Nahalal Youth Village in northern Israel, the foreign students through Naale, a well-established programme that enables young Jews from the Diaspora to complete high school in Israel.

Part of their high school curriculum will include enrichment classes in physics, biotechnology, aeronautics and robotics at the Technion.

The Naale scholarship covers all costs relating to the regular high school programme (tuition, food, accommodation and other expenses) while the World ORT

scholarship covers any Technion courses the students have to complete during high school and thereafter, as well as educational field trips. The academic staff of Nahalal School and World ORT provide students with extra tutoring sessions.

"This is the second year of the Aniëres programme," says Ira Lotman, Aniëres Elite Academy project manager. "We launched it in September 2013 with the first group of 20 students from the FSU. They have now joined the Israeli students in 10th grade, bringing the number up to 55 this year. In 9th grade, we have 33 students from the FSU and the West, who have taken their first steps to becoming engineers."

"The 10th grade students have all integrated very well on the programme," Lotman says.

The selection process for the Aniëres programme is extremely stringent and the academic and intellectual level of the students is very high.

"Naale Elite Academy has a comprehensive testing process to ensure that only students who will be able to cope with all aspects of being away from their parents are accepted. The tests determine academic ability, maturity, independence levels and psychological aptitude, to name a few," says Yeshayahu Yechieli, director and co-founder of Naale Elite Academy.

- Debbie Mankowitz is the Naale representative in South Africa. Her cell phone number is 082-604-5826.

On the web this week...

The pick of what you'll find on our website - www.sajr.co.za

ISRAEL AWARENESS WEEK: All of the stories highlighted have either been:

- Exclusively published Online; or
- Published in greater depth Online.

The majority of the big news stories this week on the website (and in the print edition) focus on an agenda that has captivated SA and in some cases world Jewry over the past week. Israel and Zionism are the order of the day.

THE SPY CABLE LEAKS: which have compromised Israel unilaterally; the relationship between Mossad and the SA spy agencies; and SA and Iran's underground activities. JR Online continues to publish a series of stories on the leaks as they relate to SA and Israeli relations.

IAW: SA Jewish students are giving BDS a run for their money again this year with BDS hosting Israel Apartheid Week with SAUJS' parallel campaign, Israel Awareness Week.

NETANYAHU IN THE US: Much to the chagrin of US President Obama, the Israeli PM has delivered two emotive speeches in two days, to 16 000 AIPAC members and to the US

Congress on Iran. Jewish Report Online carries both speeches in video and text.

MASA IN SA: There's a higher education expo by Israeli institutions associated with the Sochnut's Masa programme visiting Cape Town and Johannesburg over the next few weeks.

SAZE CONFERENCE & ISRAEL EXPO: This weekend sees the opening of the Fed's elective conference with incredible speakers at the Sandton Convention Centre. On Sunday the Conference proper takes place. The same venue will host the must-attend Israel Expo.

ISRAELI ELECTIONS: The Israeli Embassy in SA has come up with a unique initiative: It has built a website and is asking all South Africans to cast a vote in a mock Israeli election.

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Earl Grainger faces his Davis Cup acid test

JACK MILNER

It is always an advantage to have a winning start when one moves into a new job and that is exactly what South African Davis Cup coach Earl Grainger will be hoping for when he takes his team into battle against Turkey this weekend.

The tie is taking place in the city of Mersin at the Mersin Tennis complex. It begins on Friday with two singles rubbers in which the No 1 player from one country takes on the No 2 player from the other country and vice versa. The next day sees the doubles rubber taking place, while on Sunday they play the

reverse singles - No 1 versus No 1 and No 2 versus No 2.

Grainger stepped into the job as South African captain in January after the resignation of John-Laffnie de Jager and despite the low status of the Turkish team, especially as he will be without South Africa's No 1 player Kevin Anderson, ranked 17 in the world.

Grainger is already the SA Federation Cup captain and they started the year with a bang by gaining promotion to Europe/Africa Group 1 next year.

With the Davis Cup team currently languishing in Group 2, Grainger will be looking to achieve the same feat this weekend.



SA Davis Cup captain Earl Grainger (right) with his team as they prepare for their Europe/ Africa tie against Turkey in Mersin this weekend. From left are coach Stephan de Kock; Fritz Wolmarans; Tucker Vorster; Ruan Roelofse; and Raven Klaasen. In the front is team trainer Fayaadh Dhansay.

Without Anderson, Grainger announced a “best possible” squad to take on the Turks, comprising Raven Klaasen, Tucker Vorster, Fritz Wolmarans and Ruan Roelofse.

For the first time since 2007 Fritz Wolmarans will be representing South Africa and at 427, is the highest ranked singles player in the named side. Raven Klaasen, who at No 29 is the country's highest ranked doubles player, will be playing in his 11th tie for South Africa.

“As the new captain my main objective was to get the best team assembled,” said Grainger. “I made contact with Kevin Anderson and his agent and I had good positive discussions with both, but unfortunately Kevin said due to scheduling reasons, he could not play against Turkey.

“I am hopeful that he will down the line play Davis Cup and I will continue to work hard at making that possible. Kevin will no doubt be a major asset to our Davis Cup team and his participation in the team will no doubt improve the team's chances of success.

“Regardless of Kevin not being available, I am pleased Fritz is back in the Davis Cup fold and that Raven once again has shown his loyal support to his country by making himself available. With Tucker and Ruan also named, we have the best possible side to take on Turkey. It's a very experienced team. It's crucial for us to win this tie to give us any chance of promotion back to Group 1.”

Dean O'Brien has been named as a non-travelling reserve. “Dean can continue with

his schedule but will be available should any of the four players named injure themselves ahead of the official draw,” said Grainger.

The squad arrived in Turkey on Monday and immediately got into action preparing for the tie. Speaking from Turkey, Grainger said he was very happy with the conditions. “We are very happy with our hotel and the stadium where we will be playing the tie. The facilities are great.

“My team are in real good spirit which will set a positive tone for the week.”

They will be playing indoors on a hard court and that should be fine for the South Africans. The Turks may have set themselves up for more success as they opted to play the tie on clay. At the time of writing, the team had not yet had an outing on the official court. “After practice we will be able to give a better assessment of the hard indoor surface,” said Grainger.

With the exception of the Turkish No 1 player, Marsel Ilhan, who is ranked 77 in the singles, the two teams are fairly well balanced. The fact that South Africa has Klaasen in the doubles team will be hugely beneficial.

In 2014 Klaasen formed a new partnership with multiple Grand Slam winner Leander Paes of India, and at the age of 32, Klaasen is playing the best tennis of his career. He has enjoyed a solid run recently in Auckland, New Zealand at the Heineken Open where he and Paes won the title. At the start of the year, Klaasen and Paes reached the final in Chennai as well.

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