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ARCHEOLOGISTS ECSTATIC AT DISCOVERY OF HEROD'S TOMB

The long search for Herod the Great's tomb has ended with the exposure of the remains of his grave, sarcophagus and mausoleum at Mount Herodium. The burial site - which has been described by the archaeologists as one of the most striking finds in Israel in recent years - was via a monumental flight of stairs leading to the hillside, that were especially constructed for the funeral procession. **PAGE 21**



Mendel Kaplan contender to succeed Bronfman at WJC

Edgar Bronfman's resignation this week as president of the World Jewish Congress, put a sudden end to a 30-year reign at one of the world's best-known Jewish organisations. Philanthropist and businessman Mendel Kaplan of South Africa, chairman of the WJC executive, appears to be the leading contender at least as interim president, according to sources. **PAGE 12**

Jews condemn 'invitation' to Hamas leader to visit SA
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Top MTN award to computer scientist Hillel Bilman
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A moving performance by Sher of Primo Levi in Auschwitz
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David Abel argues for SA version of AIPAC
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Israeli film festival
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Some 27 Jewish organisations joined in a festive Lag B'Omer celebration at the Great Park Shul in Johannesburg last Saturday night. In the picture Helen Heldenmuth presents a sparkler to some young participants. (PHOTO: SHELLEY ELK) **PAGE 6 & 19**

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SA Jews view Haniyeh invitation with unease

STAFF REPORTER

THE CONTROVERSIAL “invitation” by Intelligence Minister Ronnie Kasrils, to Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of the Hamas faction in the Palestinian unity government to visit South Africa, was not a formal one by the South African government.

So said Kasrils in response to a barrage of criticism from the SA Zionist Federation and the SA Jewish Board of Deputies.

In a statement, Kasrils says his words to Haniyeh were that he would like to see him, as part of a delegation from the Palestinian Government of National Unity, visit South Africa in the near future.

“No formal invitation was issued to Prime Minister Haniyeh as protocol does not allow it. It is only the president and the minister of foreign affairs who issue such invitations. The intention of this

remark (to Haniyeh) was to encourage co-operation within the (Palestinian) government of national unity,” he said.

Kasrils suggested Haniyeh should visit South Africa in what would be Haniyeh’s first trip outside the Muslim world, when he met with Haniyeh in the Gaza Strip earlier this week.

Kasrils said South Africa supported and stood by the new Palestinian unity government, which is a coalition of Hamas and the Fatah movement. Haniyeh accepted the invitation, but no date had been set for such a visit.

“We stand by you and support you. We look forward to you being able to lead a delegation to our country,” Kasrils told Haniyeh at a news conference.

Haniyeh said he accepted the invitation and intended to visit South Africa at “the appropriate time”.



Michael Bagraim

Both the SAJBD and the SAZF have condemned “in the strongest possible terms” the invitation, and have called on the government to rethink its position on the matter.

Michael Bagraim, chairman of the SAJBD, said the Jewish community viewed the invitation as an indication of South Africa’s solidarity with an organisation with a “racist ideology” and an “openly genocidal agenda against the Jewish people” and its record of having perpetrated some of the most barbarous terrorist atrocities in modern times had made it an international pariah.

“We condemn, in the strongest possible terms, Kasrils’ invitation to the Hamas movement to visit South Africa and we call on the government to rethink its position,” said Bagraim.

“Expressing support for an organisation whose very founding charter describes the Jewish people as fundamentally evil enemies of humanity and calls for their total annihilation, fundamentally contradicts both the ideals of South Africa and of the ruling ANC itself,” he said.

Bagraim commended South Africa’s ambassador to Israel, Major-General Fumanekile Gqiba, for his strong condemnation of Palestinian terrorism. Gqiba described the strategy of suicide terrorism as morally unjustified, against international law and against the military code.

Unfortunately, Bagraim said, South Africa’s voting record in the United Nations and the statements and actions of senior government leaders, including Minister Kasrils, had been telling a very different story.

“As Jews and as South African citizens, we cannot but view these developments with the deepest unhappiness,” Bagraim added.

South African Zionist Federation Chairman Avrom Krengel, said the Federation viewed the invitation with grave concern. He said the United Nations, the European Union, Russia and the US would not acknowledge the Hamas government until it recognised Israel’s right to exist, renounced violence, and accepted peace deals.

Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum was quoted as saying this week that the Palestinian unity government would not debate recognising Israel.

Coveted MTN award to Bilman and co.

RITA LEWIS

AT THE recent annual 3GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) World Congress, “Where the Mobile Industry meets the future” and which showcases the latest developments in cell phone technology, Hillel Bilman, the managing member of eCommunicate together with two other team members, were not only chosen out of 200 entrants to represent South Africa but also won the MTN award.

Bilman who is in his late 30s, was educated at Yeshiva College in Glenhazel and has an electrical engineering degree (light current) from Wits.

The MTN award winning South African team of Hillel Bilman as well as two other post-graduate students, Thamsanqa Moyo and Mamello Thinyane, who are doing a Master’s and Doctorate respectively, in Computer Science at Rhodes University, demonstrated their newly created innovation of an application for a SIM card called SIMPre (Presence on a SIM card).

Bilman said he was very upbeat about the award and said he and his team had worked hard for some time to produce such an exciting product. He said that his company had already taken out a patent and were now approaching mobile operators to market the product and put it on their networks.

Explaining his innovation Bilman said the idea of the name SIMPre was taken from the word “Siempre” which means “always” in Spanish.

The new innovation had various applications. One enabled a person to view the various contacts in his cell phone address book and immediately know if they were on a call or were free and available to receive a call. This would thereby saving the time and effort of the caller phoning them - only to find out that they were engaged, unavailable to speak at that particular time or had put their cell phone off.

“Mobile phone contacts display their presence with an icon or letter, eg “A”, or a message will scroll on the terminal when the contact’s presence changes. The solution provides a flexible framework for operators to offer customized presence

information,” he said.

This facility would also be applicable to people using Skype or any other such programme of phoning via the internet, but the process would now be able to be done on the cell phone instead of on the computer - which is the case at present.

The innovation would also allow for a message to be left on a cell phone, which could be picked up only by authorised callers - obviating the voicemail route or having to switch the phone off.

Another most useful facility is that it creates the possibility of seeing the physical whereabouts of a designated person - an absolute boon for parents, as it would enable them to know the exact location of their children by just looking at their child’s number in the address book of their cell phone.

He said eCommunicate also provided specialised development for cell phones some of which would enable both corporates and organisations to send bulk emails, SMSs and MMSs both reliably and economically. It would also enable SMSs and MMSs (Multi Media Messaging Service) to be sent via email, Outlook, the Web and databases.

The company would also offer an automated SMS service tailor made for a specific industry or geared to an individual’s needs.

According to Bilman, the company will also provide short codes for competitions, promotions and mobile services.

For the duration of the fair, Bilman and Thamsanqa demonstrated their innovation to mobile operators from around the world and keen interest was shown in this new product.

Bilman said he was very upbeat about the award and said he and his team had worked hard for some time to produce such an exciting product.

He said he still had several other ideas focusing on new applications, modifications and improvements for cell phones, “which were an amazing opportunity for communication”.

The congress which was held in Barcelona, Spain was attended by over 1300 exhibitors and delegates who filled eight exhibition halls at FIRA de Barcelona.

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History’s sweet smell of a White Rose

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY
MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

AN EXHIBITION on the activities of The White Rose, the student resistance movement against Hitler, which was based at the University of Munich, is currently on at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre (CTHC).

“German Resistance: The White Rose Movement” has been mounted under the auspices of the Centre and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Eighty-two-year-old Franz Josef Möller, who participated in the activities of The White Rose during the Second World War and is founder and honorary president of the White Rose Foundation, was at the opening. He told the audience of how, as a 17-year-old, he had received a pamphlet about the German killing of the Jews and decided that he “had to get involved”.

He left the Hitler Youth and became active in The White Rose movement. As a result, he was arrested by the Gestapo and had to stand trial at “the highest Nazi court”. While he was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment, many of his comrades were sentenced to death.

In 1987, together with participants of the resistance group and close relatives of those executed, he established the White Rose Foundation in Munich to ensure that “we’re not thrown out of German history. I confess that I’m a little bit proud that the Nazis disappeared and some of us, like



German Ambassador Harro Adt, Holocaust survivor Ella Blumenthal and Franz Josef Möller of the White Rose Foundation, at the opening of the White Rose exhibition at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre.

me, survived.

“We’re regarded as one of the most noble chapters of German history, although there were only 40 - 50 of us,” he said.

German Ambassador Harro Adt, who opened the exhibition, said he felt “humbled and a little bit proud. The White Rose talked to the German population about the fate of the Jews, but this was not their prime concern - they were talking about injustice and oppression.

“I think we’ve come a very, very long way if an exhibition describ-

ing something evil (like this) can take place at a Holocaust museum in South Africa,” he said.

Director of the CTHC, Richard Freedman, said it was “fitting that we host an exhibition on resistance on the eve of South Africa’s Freedom Day. It is testimony to the great courage of young people to stand up to tyranny and evil.”

Recognising the “key role young people have in creating a caring society”, the Centre launched the first Desmond Tutu Lessons for Humanity Award “to a teacher and a school in recognition of out-

standing assignments or projects undertaken by students in response to studying about the Holocaust”.

“We need to encourage our young people to become social activists,” commented Marlene Silbert, education director of the CTHC.

This year’s award went to Somerset College and their teacher, Dr Celene Hunter.

The White Rose exhibition will be on at the CTHC until May 10 and in South Africa until the end of September.

AROUND THE WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

SUPPORTERS LINE UP BEHIND SINGER

NEW YORK - Supporters are lining up behind Israel Singer in his quest to remain president of the Claims Conference.

The support, in letters from Agudath Israel and prominent Holocaust survivors, comes after Singer was fired from the World Jewish Congress in March amid allegations of financial impropriety.

Singer is the lead negotiator for the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, which has secured billions in restitution payments for Holocaust survivors.

The WJC will determine who it supports for the next Claims Conference president during a steering committee meeting on Monday, a WJC spokesman told JTA.

That meeting is the first since Singer’s firing, which prompted outcries from WJC affiliates over the way it was handled.

Members of the steering committee include the European Jewish Congress president, Pierre Besnainou, who was a vocal critic of Singer’s firing, and Shai Hermesh, the head of WJC in Israel, which also has been at odds with the New York office.

The show of support for Singer came after the umbrella body of Australian Jewry expressed its opposition to Singer remaining as Claims Conference president. A vote for conference president is scheduled for July. (JTA)



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Mr Gerassi and Miss Flaum celebrate Yom Haatzmaut with students



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LAG B’OMER PARTIES

Warm hearts and warm fires at Lag B’Omer



The Field Band from Dobsonville, warming themselves by the fire before their performance at the Great Park Lag B’Omer celebration.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHELLEY ELK

TWO THOUSAND sparklers lit up the evening at the Great Park Synagogue in Johannesburg at the Lag B’Omer celebration on Saturday night.

Roaring bonfires dotted the shul grounds as Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, rabbi of the Great Park Synagogue, kicked off the celebrations and reminded the audience of their bond to Israel.

A prayer for the speedy and safe return of captive soldiers, and a reading of Psalm 121 by Rabbi Levi Wineberg followed. Rabbi Wineberg asked all present to pray for the security and welfare of Israel, and that all should look up to the mountains for Hashem’s help.

At least 2 500 people attended the celebrations, said Rabbi Hazdan.

The only day of celebration and dancing, during the counting of the Omer, Lag B’Omer translates as the 33rd day of the Omer, and marks the anniversary of a full-stop to a great tragedy when “24 000 of Rabbi Akiva’s students had died from a mysteriously sent plague” because they did not show each other enough respect. Lag B’Omer commemorates the day when the plague stopped.

“Shakoach,” said Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein in congratulation to Rabbi Hazdan and his wife and family for bringing so many diverse communities together to celebrate Lag B’Omer, in a spirit of unity, and achdut.

He reminded the audience of the anniversary when the plague affecting Rabbi Akiva’s students stopped.

He asked: What led to such a tragedy when Rabbi Akiva’s students were dying from a plague? The question was posed “as we don’t want it repeated”. The answer was: “They did not treat one another with respect.”

One of the founding principles of the Torah, he said, “is to love one another” (Ve ahavta le rayecha kamocho) There is a commandment to love your neighbour as you love yourself... but why is respect not mentioned? Rabbi Goldstein said “maybe those that we are closest to, for example brothers, sisters, mother and father... we don’t show enough respect to.”

Love on its own was not enough. It was

important to love AND to show one another respect. And it was important to show sensitivity, kindness and gentleness to one another “as we each have a soul, and it is ultimately from G-d”.

Let unity, and respect, make us of one heart, and together let us have love, respect and unity, the chief rabbi stressed.

Climbing walls, mechanical bull riding for children, and food kiosks were scattered around the grounds. Bright fires warmed up the evening where signs of an early winter had already become evident. People sat on, or wrapped themselves in blankets, while they enjoyed the evening’s entertainment which included music and drumming. At least 150 blankets were sold during the evening, to be donated to the disadvantaged in Alexandra township said Rabbi Hazdan.



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein and Rabbi Dovid Slavin.

“ It was an extremely precious evening where communities who would not normally be together, united to celebrate this event,” he added.

Twenty seven communities with philosophical diversities, were brought together in a unique and rare display of unity.

Rabbi Hazdan expressed hope that this sense of unity would be carried beyond Lag B’Omer. The Field Band from Dobsonville performed a variety of tunes, with brass instruments and marimbas. Their performance was sponsored for the Lag B’Omer evening by philanthropist Bertie Lubner. The band is made up of emerging musicians from rural areas.

The theme of unity was carried into a communal drumming session led by the Drum Café who encouraged the crowd to participate.



A young child riding a mechanical bull.



Sitting on blankets near the Lag B’Omer fires while enjoying the musical entertainment at the Great Park Synagogue.

Yeshiva tots have oodles of fun

LARA GREENBERG PHOTOGRAPHS: LESLIE HARRIS

LAG B’OMER for Yeshiva College Nursery School in Johannesburg, was a fun event as parents brought their children for a parade from one school entrance to another - on a fire engine.

The fire engine came from Northview Fire Station and all the children were given a chance to ride on it, alongside the firemen.

After all the excitement they went to the school hall to make music with the Drum Café before moving out to the school field for picnics around campfires.

For the picnics, blankets were on sale which were afterwards handed back to the school to be given to the Yad Aaron Foundation to hand out to needy people for winter.



Fun for all. Parents and children enjoyed themselves riding a fire engine down Louis Botha Avenue in Johannesburg during the Lag B’Omer parade on Sunday.



Pupils from the Jewish day schools in Johannesburg prepare to march in the Lag B’Omer parade on Sunday.

Pretorians celebrate Lag B’Omer in style

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY DIANE WOLFSON PRETORIA

PRETORIANS came out in force to celebrate Lag B’Omer at the Pretoria Hebrew Congregation with its usual burger braai, an enormous bonfire and entertainment by Chazzan Nachi Levin.

Earlier in the day, the Pretoria commu-

nity together with the bochrin from Yeshiva Mahon L’Hora’a, arrived en mass with their beautifully made float entitled “Mezuzah Security” at the Lag B’Omer parade in Johannesburg.

Easily visible in their blue PHC Lag B’Omer T-shirts, the large contingent also attended the opshirnis of Yisroel Medalie, son of Pretoria’s assistant rabbi, Rabbi Levi and Esti Medalie.



Lag B’Omer bonfire at Pretoria Hebrew Congregation, with Nachi Levin.



Tracy Myer, Devorale Goldman, Kayla Jacobs, with twins Eliezer and Chaya Mushke Goldman, all in their blue T-shirts during the celebrations.

COMMUNITY BUZZ

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KRUGERSDORP

MARC KOPMAN, chairman, United Hebrew Institutions, on Yom Ha’atzmaut celebrations:

“This prestigious event was again held by our 113-year-old community - on the evening of April 23 on the premises of our stunning new shul complex, only recently consecrated on February 25.

“The brocha hall was virtually filled to capacity with close on 100 people and welcomes and thank yous were ably dispensed with by President David Jankelowitz.

“The solemn prayer for Yom Hazikaron was intoned by our Rov Dani Dworcan. Immediately thereafter, Chairman Marc Kopman conducted the candle-lightning ceremony where persons who served in the Second World War or in the Israeli War of Independence in 1948, participated.

The candles were affixed to a specially constructed Magen Dovid and after each one had been lit, representing 59 years of Israel’s existence, the congregation sang Hatikvah led by Rov Dworcan.

“The sight of the Magen Dovid with the lit candles in the dark and the words of the anthem, was truly an emotional experience.

“Thereafter, supper consisting of Israeli fare - pita, falafel, tachina, humous and the like, was served and the open bar allowed all to indulge in that legendary Krugersdorp ‘chaver-shaft’!

“Brian Sneag then introduced our guest entertainer, Len Kay and his wife, Charmion. Len had entertained us in our former complex in 1992 and 1996. The crowd was in for a treat, at times clapping to the rhythm and, during well-known emotional songs, many tears were evident.

“Kay responded to requests for encores (twice) and then thanked us for our participation and support and when we invite him next we will add dancing including the hora. If he wishes, he can have a place in our shul choir!

“After the consecration of our new complex and a Pesach first night communal seder, both well attended, Yom Ha’atzmaut is the first of many events that will take place at our new facility. Daily minyamim continue with commitment and new members continue to swell our ranks.

“The mood in our kehilla is one of positivity for the future. We encourage everyone to visit us, join us and partake in that uniqueness which continues to amaze.”

VRYBURG

This town is in the Northern Cape, 150 km south-west of Mafikeng and 200 km north of Kimberley. It was founded in 1883 as the capital of the Boer-established Republic of Stellaland and the citizens said that they were now free - hence “vryburgers” hence Vryburg.

Hugh Lieberthal visited there recently:

“I have a great interest in plateland Jewry. We visited Vryburg, my home town, over the long weekend. Obviously we went to the cemetery. Although I once could find it with my eyes closed, this now turned out to be a major task. I know it sounds silly in such a small town, but when we found it eventually, we could understand why.

“The ohel which had probably been occupied by squatters, was now demolished; the grounds, once neatly cared for, was overgrown; the fence around the cemetery had been removed. I noticed, when we left, that there was no running water.

“Often it has been said: ‘The Jewish community had died out’ and in this case it is the literal truth. The first burial was in 1911 and the last in 1991. The shul is now a church. Was the community’s lifespan 80 years? My visit left me stone cold.”

PORT ELIZABETH

From Rollo Berman:

“An exciting era in the town was around 1966 when professional football was at its height. PE fielded two full-time teams - ‘PE City’ whose players were English and ‘Westview Apollon’ half of whose players were Greek and half Israeli.

“The Israeli guys who were imported were Azriel Arlandes, Yitzchak Fleshel, Michael Kadosh (goalkeeper) and the captain, Moshe (Moetsie) Leon. When the two teams played each other the enthusiasm boiled over.

“Yitzchak Fleshel came to me after a practice and said: ‘Gollo, (Rollo) look at my foot, dey kicked it to pieces, dey don’t play soccer, dey play basketball.’

Moshe Leon captained Israel at one time. He was a short, stocky guy with well-developed thighs and could thump the ball from far out into the net. I once said to him: ‘Why do you dribble so much instead of going forward with the ball?’ He replied with a huge grin: ‘I like to dribble because I make tricks for de Griks,’

“I must say, the Israeli squad

made a big hit with the girls. Moetsie and Yitzhak had steady girlfriends in the town.

“Azriel Orlandes, one time captain of ‘Appollon’ was at a party where I also happened to be. Azriel saw me sitting with a girl and I had my arm around her waist. A few days later he came to my house and was speaking to my mom. He said: ‘Misses Berman, Gollo is a best karsinova. I call him Snakes Arm - de arm goes round the gerl’s vaist so kwick, like a snake.’

“A young guy who was very friendly with Azriel was Rodney Plett, who played a few games for Appollon. Rodney and his family now live in Johannesburg. Also prominent in PE soccer was Jerusalem-born Ami Federman, who, I think, played part-time.

“To change the subject. A man who ran a wholesale business came out with a classic: ‘You know, Meester Berman, I am show excited. I hav just got a new medium size dawg. It has a vite end black sphot and itz called a Cocktail Spaniel. Vait, I am not feenished. I also bought a Bessed Hoynd. (a Basset Hound). He was very excited about those dogs.

“I chuckled quite a lot during those great days in ‘The Friendly City’.”

PIETERSBURG/ POLOKWANE

A letter from Charlotte Wiener, addressed to all Pietersburgers and former Pietersburgers:

“My Master’s thesis on ‘The History of the Pietersburg (Polokwane) Jewish Community’ has been accepted by the University of South Africa.

The thesis covers the history of the Jewish community in Pietersburg and the surrounding area. It describes the growth and demise of the community, the various religious buildings and Jewish societies in the community and the contribution of its members to the town of Pietersburg.

“Over the years many of you have asked me for copies of my thesis when completed. The university has given me permission to print copies of the thesis and to recover the cost of printing. I have decided to have only one print run. The price of each copy will depend on the number of pre-orders received, but the printers estimate the price to be approximately R150 per copy. I will advise you of the final pricing as soon as I am in a position to do so.

“As I am not in touch with all former Pietersburgers, I would appreciate it if you could spread the word to those whom you believe might be interested in acquiring a copy

Kindly advise me by return of email wienerm@13.net.il as soon as possible if you wish to order a copy.”

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There's life after PVA

SAUJS at Wits takes stand on Darfur atrocities

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY LARA GREENBERG

THE HUMANITARIAN crisis in the Sudan region of Darfur is gaining momentum as organisations worldwide take responsibility for raising awareness of the genocide and human rights abuses taking place there.

In South Africa, the South African union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) has been the first student union to take a stand on the issue and it was the force behind the founding of the Wits Darfur Awareness Committee (WDAC).

“We were the victims of the Holocaust and know what it feels like to be forced to suffer and be killed while the world just stands by. Because of this we should always be the first to speak out against humanitarian crises,” said Caylee Talpert, outgoing chairman of SAUJS Wits and chairman of WDAC.

Although the committee has been distributing flyers and putting up posters since March 13, the first major project of the WDAC was a multimedia exhibition entitled “Witnessing Darfur”, which was launched on April 23 and ran until April 30 - all to coincide with Global Darfur Awareness Week. The public were invited to attend open days in the Senate House Concourse from April 27 until April 30.

At the opening of the exhibition, Charles Kiiza, a doctoral student on Africa’s civil conflicts, including Darfur, gave the keynote address.

He gave a brief overview of the conflict before encouraging more and more education on the subject, while emphasising that forums such as those were necessary to make people aware of the situation.

Talpert noted: “We chose specifically to host the exhibition this week so that it coincides with Freedom Day. This is the ideal time to remember the students



Visitors to the “Witnessing Darfur” exhibition which was organised by the Wits Darfur Awareness Committee, a project spearheaded by SAUJS Wits.

and activists worldwide who came together to protest the apartheid regime.

“Today all South Africans have their freedom and we believe this freedom goes hand in hand with a responsibility not to turn a blind eye to those who are still suffering... we feel now is the time for South African students to add their voices to the call to end this conflict.

“Sudan is an African country and therefore, in the words of scholar Alex de Waal, it is up to African civil society to take the lead on Darfur.”

The Darfur conflict has claimed the lives of an estimated more than 400 000 people and has resulted in more than two million people being turned into refugees.

SAUJS National Chairman

Candice Rakusin, congratulated the Wits team on “an outstanding effort”, adding that SAUJS was committed to education and peace and would not stand by silently and watch more human rights violations in the world. She noted that they hoped that their work in this project would result in them contributing to a solution of the conflict.

An earlier media release put out by WDAC, said the exhibition aimed at drawing attention to the ongoing atrocities that have been occurring in Darfur for the past three years, which have been described by the United Nations as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today.

The Darfur Awareness Committee consists of individuals from different backgrounds and prominent members of a variety

of Wits societies, including SAUJS, the Model UN, SASCO, Golden Key, and Rag clubs.

Aside from their poster campaign and the exhibition, WDAC has also painted the

The release quoted WDAC member, Zaakirah Ismail, saying: “As societies of different backgrounds, we are united by the common link of upholding human rights and justice upon which our democratic country is founded.”

The Student Anti-Genocide Coalition (Stand), an international anti-genocide coalition with chapters worldwide, has recently admitted WDAC as a member.

Other planned WDAC events are a series of speakers during university lunch breaks, a petition to the South African govern-

ment and the screening of short audiovisual clips during lunch hour outside the Matrix on Wits campus.

The exhibition itself was originally created by the UK-based Aegis Trust which was originally launched in London in September 2006 to mark the Global Day for Darfur - wall-size images from the Darfur/Darfur exhibition which were projected onto the outside walls of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington during November 2006.

* For further details contact Zaakirah Ismail 083-640-6596 or Caylee Talpert 082-363-8864, or Russel Bruecon 084-519-0236 or e-mail darfurawareness@yahoo.com or visit <http://darfuraware.blogspot.com>

Islam will never accept Israel: Ronnie Mink

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLIE HARRIS

“IN THE Middle Ages I would have chosen to live in a Muslim country rather than in any Christian country,” Ronnie Mink (pictured), chairman of the SA Yad Vashem Foundation, said in Johannesburg last week when he talked on “Islamic anti-Semitism”..

Today things were different and the new threat facing the Jewish people was Islamic anti-Semitism, he told a meeting of Second Innings.

Islam was born deep in the desert and means submission to G-d. Whereas both Judaism and Christianity had undergone crises of faith and emerged more mature in their current form, Islam had not yet undergone that process.

Before Islam was founded in 622 CE the people in the region were polytheists and the focus of their worship was a large black meteorite, which was venerated as a sign from the main god, known as Allah, who existed before Islam.

Muhammad was born to a poor family in Mecca and orphaned while young. He later married a woman from a wealthy family, which afforded him some protection and gave him access to caravan routes and some power.

Muslims believe Muhammad was meditating in a cave near

Mecca when Allah contacted him through the angel Gabriel and dictated the “suras”, which were later compiled into the Qur’an, to him. Allah was also said to have instructed Muhammad to destroy all the idols apart from the black meteorite, called the Kaabah.

After his wife died Muhammad felt threatened and moved to Yatrib, the city known today as Medina. It was there that he formed a power base and developed the religion which came to be known as Islam.

There were three large Jewish clans in the area at the time who controlled all the commerce. As Muhammad imposed Islam on the region, two of the clans gave in immediately. The Koreish clan, however, refused to convert to Islam.

Muhammad made a pact with them that they would not be attacked. But he reneged on the deal and 900 men were killed and the women and children sold into slavery. Later a law was passed forbidding Jews and Christians to live in the heartland of Islam.

Mink said the geographic spread of Islam was nothing new. “It was spread by force until as late as 500 years ago and today we’re seeing the second invasion. We were shown a sign of what was to come on 9/11.”

During the Middle Ages monotheists who believed in the writings of the Old Testament

were accorded a special protected status known as dhimmi. Those in the category had to pay a special tax, but were allowed to practise their religion and maintain their own communal organisations and structures.

Those freedoms were allowed within a framework of discrimination designed to remind them of the superiority of Islam.

Jews in Muslim countries were not allowed to bear arms or ride on horses. They had to wear distinctive clothing, were not allowed to build new places of worship, and were not permitted to live in houses which blocked the view of a Muslim.

Despite these restrictions, Jews living under Islamic rule led far better lives than their co-religionists in Christian Europe, Mink pointed out.

The Jews’ “inferior status” is reinforced by the teachings of the Qur’an. Devout Muslims learn that Jews have “bad qualities” because they “fabricate things and ascribe them to Allah”.

Among other things Jews “rebel against the prophets”, “love to shed blood”, are “merciless and heartless” and they “never keep their promises”. They also “rush to sin” and are guilty of “cowardice”, “miserliness” and “distorting divine revelation”.

Mink said Islam’s attitude to Jews began to change radically



towards the end of the 19th century when classic Christian libels were taken further by the Muslims.

During the 20th century the blood libel spread throughout the Muslim world. They say the State of Israel was created over the lie that a few Jews were killed and the West was then forced to give them a state as their conscience for the Holocaust, the first step on the Jews’ path to world domination. They claim that the state was established on land stolen from innocent Muslims.

Mink said the establishment of Israel in 1948 was a tremendous shock to Islam and the Muslim psyche was still reeling under its impact.

Today Islam had taken over the worst aspects of Christian anti-Semitism, Mink said. That hatred, reinforced by historical discrimination, the imminent second invasion and the shock of 1948, meant Islam would never accept Israel because no foreign body could be allowed in land that was once conquered by Islam.

Addressing a question on fundamentalism, Mink said the form of fundamentalism emanating from Saudi Arabia was followed by members of the Wahhabi movement. They adhere to the writings of Qutb, who said Islam must go back to its roots and adhere strictly to the Qur’an, discarding all commentary.

Skills training partnership between ORT and Bidvest

LIONEL SLIER

A “UNIQUE partnership” has been established between the huge diversified Bidvest conglomerate (with 93 000 employees worldwide - South Africa 78 000) and ORT South Africa, the public benefit organisation, which focuses on life-long learning and which specialises in vocational training and technology education. Bidvest has committed R3,7 million over four years, to skills training through ORT.

Announcing the partnership at a function in Johannesburg Michael Sieff of ORT said: “We work holistically with individuals, groups and communities and we create special skills to suit the needs enabling our graduates to lead self-sufficient lives while strengthening their communities.” The emphasis in this skills training focuses basically on primary schools in the township of Alexandra next to Sandton. Last year Bidvest spent R83 million on skills development.

The fast tracking of a new generation of Bidvest managers is a priority. It is a core belief in Bidvest that while companies report growth, people create it.

In terms of the skills training partnership between ORT and Bidvest, all foundation phase educators will receive training and

classroom-based support in maths, science and technology (MST). Shortcomings in MST tuition have been identified as a key constraint to skills development and sustained economic growth.

Brian Joffe, CEO of Bidvest, had just stepped off the plane from Europe, but rushed to be at the launch of the programme. The first thing he pointed out was that his company consisted of 93 000 dedicated and talented people, not just him.

“We spend R30 million a year on social responsibility programmes and R50 million a year on training, so it is very important for us as a company to see a long-term future in South Africa and we have to invest in skills.

“I think of us living here today and how much better it would have been if we had the necessary skills to be able to develop our country even faster and better. We are very thrilled to be involved with ORT.”

Joffe told the Department of Education officials who were present that they would be getting a much better education than he had received. He was part of the first intake at Greenside High and they never had uniforms or enough teachers and the teachers that they did have, seemed to him to be very old.

“I am probably older today than they were then!” he quipped.

“From Bidvest’s point of view we really wish you well. We wish all the trainees well and I hope that one day, one of these trainees will teach my grandchildren and even their children.”

Bidvest board member, business tycoon Cyril Ramaphosa, said: “Bidvest is living proof that growth creates wealth, jobs and opportunity. We are therefore committed supporters of Government’s drive for six per cent GDP growth as a means of creating employment and combating poverty.”

Internationally, ORT has been involved in community upliftment, educational assistance and vocational training for more than 70 years. Its work in South Africa is chiefly focused on support for previously disadvantaged families and communities.

The ORT SA effort in Alexandra targets 12 local primary schools. This classroom-based support will be provided in the academic years from 2007 to 2010.

MaLlele PeTje the head of Gauteng’s Department of Education, said: “Since 2002 we have embarked on a determined effort to implement the maths, science and technology strategy. The strategy is underpinned by the development of sustainable learn-

er and educator support programmes that are aimed at breaking the cycle of underachievement and increasing the number of learners and educators in maths, science and technology and to enhance the human resource capacity to deliver quality education in MST.

“The bottom line is to raise participation and performance of learners in general, improvement in learner attainment, enhancement of participation and performance of African earners in particular, as well as improving the participation and performance of girl learners.”

He expressed his department’s gratitude to Bidvest “for giving the Department... the opportunity to implement this MST project in Alexandra where they are working with foundation phase teachers.

“It will build on the Alexandra Renewal Foundation Phase Project in science and technology which was implemented in 2004 and 2005. The Education Department acknowledges that its resources are limited and we are extremely appreciative of this huge contribution to education.

“Your generous and invaluable contribution will go a long way towards ushering in a new dawn for the previously disadvantaged communities, particularly the



MaLlele PeTje, head of the Department of Education, Gauteng.



Brian Joffe, CEO of Bidvest.

empowerment of women educators in a discipline that is by far male dominated.

“We look forward to a sustained co-operative partnership with your organisation in the futureof ORT reminded his audience of ORT’s philosophy that if you give a man a fish he will eat for a day; teach him to fish and he will always eat.

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Poking his nose into ‘delicate matters’

**STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY
MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN**

EDITOR OF *noseweek*, Martin Welz, said he had “no doubt” that the parents of Reddam and St John’s College would succeed in “buying their way out of trouble because they’re used to it (referring to incidents of violence allegedly involving learners from both schools). But we’ve made it more difficult for them by getting the car number and publishing her name,” he said referring to a mother of the former school.

Welz was recalling two stories that had appeared in his investigative magazine concerning incidents of violence in which some learners from the schools had allegedly taken part. These and other issues formed the basis of an address he gave to members of the adult education division of the Union of Jewish Women.

After initially working in mainstream journalism as an investigative journalist on the *Pretoria News*, Welz said he realised his

“edge was always in being otherwise.

“I found that newspapers were hesitant to alienate powerful people or important advertisers, which was their bread and butter.

“Increasingly, the advertising people felt that bad news was bad for marketing - readers had to feel ‘up’ to buy what was being advertised and therefore whole sections of newspapers began to be devoted to ‘lifestyle,’” he said.

Far more journalists were being employed today by PR agencies that provided copy that “looks like news”.

The quality of the media was being undermined, with critical, independent thinking disappearing.

Recalling the beginnings of *noseweek*, Welz said he “liked the idea of sticking one’s nose into other people’s business”. He was sued after two years, which he says destroyed him financially at the time.

He had published a story dealing with then-Minister of Law and Order Louis le Grange who he had said was involved in a tax evasion



Daphne Gelb, noseweek editor Martin Welz and Sara Pascall, chairman of the adult education division of the UJW.

scheme. “Officially tax affairs are secret, but we had to make a decision - we’re talking about a cabinet minister and we pushed the barrier and published in contravention of the law.”

He had received a call from a senior official in the revenue department who said that he was unable to tell Welz anything, but “tell your attorney to summons me to court, it’ll be worth your while”.

“We had given him the opportunity to do the right thing,” said Welz.

“It was so unexpected - an ordinary Afrikaner who’d come up through the ranks, destroyed the prosecution’s case.

“We take on large and small, we don’t discriminate and most of our victims end up respecting us,” he claimed. “Apart from anything else, they love helping us to get on to other people!”

Although he only employed three journalists in the office and another three out of it, he said he had the biggest reporting staff of any newspaper in terms of his readers. “They’re constantly in touch with us - I spend my days on the telephone,” he said.

Asked to what extent “noseweek” went to verify its stories, Welz said: “We gather what’s on the streets today and we tell you today or tomorrow - we’re journalists, not bible writers. But we do a lot of checking, generally asking the other side. Sometimes we don’t.”

For example, an insurance com-

pany had sold a policy which actually turned out to be something other than they had said it was. As a result, the insured wrote to them and they wrote back.

“That’s the real answer, not what the PR department tells ‘noseweek’. We give you those elements of the news that you won’t get in an ordinary newspaper,” he added.

“We sharpen the edge - us and the ‘Mail and Guardian’ - and this ensures that the ‘Sunday Times’ is forced to do this kind of thing (investigative journalism) now and again.”

Welz maintained that newspapers like the ‘Cape Times’ operated on a business model with the news being sold as a “loss leader” to get one to read the adverts. “Newspapers spend more on advertising marketing staff than on journalists.

“We try to turn this around - we employ an ad person to manage but we don’t go out looking for ads. We make you pay for it - you are our customers, not the advertisers,” he stressed.

Zille is ‘up to DA leadership challenge’

**STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY
MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN**

CAPE TOWN’S executive mayor answered the question on everyone’s lips as she addressed a meeting of the Cape committee of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD). What would make Helen Zille want to take on the daunting job of leader of the Democratic Alliance in addition to her already onerous task?

“I like pressure, tension and difficult challenges,” she replied. “I like getting my hands dirty - if I don’t have problems, I become neurotic. I don’t find (the prospect) daunting.

“I’ve always worked very hard in the party and it’s nothing unusual for senior politicians to have executive positions and combine this with party leadership. It’s going to be a challenge, but I’ve got a nice model and I think it’s going to up the performance of the mayor’s

office and the DA leader’s office.”

While conceding that there was a risk that anything that went wrong would be pinned on the DA, she said it had “already happened and is happening all the time”.

Asked how her family coped with her hectic lifestyle, Zille replied that her university professor husband “lets me be - that’s the best thing about him. He does his own thing.”

She said she had put in “an enormous amount of time” with her sons aged 17 and 22 who were now “cool and independent and getting on with their lives, with no political aspirations at all”.

Replying to a questioner who asked how the community could contribute to inter-group harmony, Zille said the Jewish community was “getting its sleeves rolled up all over the city, including the townships” tackling a range of social issues such as Aids. “The more you can do that, the better.

“Every single thing works and

functions in the Jewish community - you are playing your part,” she assured the gathering.

Lamenting the state of education in some underprivileged schools, she said there were kids graduating from primary school unable to do the fundamentals because their day was “filled with all sorts of other things. It’s a hard, hard, dedicated, disciplined slog teaching children to read and write,” she said, “and we need teachers who are not looking for every way out of the classroom at every moment - when you haven’t got the basis, you don’t do the add-ons.”

Comparing the situation to that pertaining at Herzlia (the Jewish day schools), she said it was “another world and another planet - a world you take for granted. When your children leave junior primary, they can read and write.”

On the matter of the 2010 soccer World Cup, Zille said she looked at it in investment terms. As part of

the deal, the city would be getting a “massive investment in infrastructure” from national government.

On the issue of crime, she said there “might as well not be police stations in some of the townships - many policemen don’t seem to know what their role is.” Referring to the intimidation of the DA, Zille said that many members, including herself, had been attacked and had laid charges, “but when the case comes to court, the file suddenly goes missing.

“I have experienced cases in which the basic administrative infrastructure is not available, making the entire criminal justice system dysfunctional for the people who often need it most.”

Generally speaking, the police suffered from “the wrong people” having been appointed to positions of authority. The lack of skills and training was also evident, she said.

Referring to the progressive collapse of government infrastructure in the Eastern Cape, she said this



Cape Town Executive Mayor Helen Zille (right) with Moonyeen Castle, chairman of the SAJBD’s Cape Council.

accelerated the rate of influx of people to the Western Cape. Cape Town had the highest net immigration of any city in the country, and it was “a sad irony that, having escaped ANC maladministration, people vote for the ANC once again once they are settled in Cape Town”.

Welcoming Zille, Moonyeen Castle, chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies (Cape Council), described her as a “woman extraordinaire” and a “fine role model for all women”.

Pogrund: SA govt a flawed ME mediator

STORY BY SUZANNE BELLING

SOUTH AFRICA could not be regarded as a “serious player” in terms of mediation in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, especially following Minister of Intelligence Ronnie Kasrils invitation last week to Palestinian Premier Ismail Haniyeh to visit this country, former struggle journalist Benjamin Pogrund told a meeting of the Western Province Zionist Council.

Pogrund, a former deputy editor of the now-defunct *Rand Daily Mail*, who was prosecuted during the apartheid era and lived in Britain before making aliyah, is now founding director of the Yakar Centre for Social Concern in Jerusalem.

He visited major centres in South Africa with Bassem Eid, founder and director of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, a journalist and researcher, who is viewed by fellow Palestinians as a “collaborator” because of his outspoken views, but has received several international awards for human rights and press freedom.

“South Africa’s policy (on the Middle East) is fine - it’s been stated time and again: Support for Palestinian independence, but also

support for Israel’s right to exist in peace and security,” said Pogrund.

“The words are okay - but in practice, the government doesn’t do it. How can the government, with this (country’s) background, with its history, keep silent when the president of Iran says he wants to wipe out a fellow UN member? How can your minister invite Haniyeh if South Africa wants to be a mediator?”

South Africa’s “blundering” stemmed from ignorance and relating its own situation to a totally different one. “This has put South Africa out of court.”

Pogrund, straddling the two societies, stressed that while Israelis and Palestinians could draw on lessons from South Africa, there could not be total comparisons.

“I think there’s a lot of ignorance among people here. They have the history of South Africa, which is wonderful - a miracle - and relate it to Israel-Palestine, which is a different set of circumstances, a different history and different people.”

He termed talking about a unified Israeli/Palestinian state “a South African delusion. The fact is Jews won’t agree to it. Full stop.”



From left at the top of the table, Benjamin Pogrund, David Hersch and Bassem Eid.

The gap between Jews and Palestinians was “dreadful and damaging”, with hatred, mistrust, suspicion and rejection on both sides. Palestinians had lost the world’s sympathy, unlike the African National Congress, which had built up moral authority through its non-violent approach.

Through their actions and suicide bombings, the Palestinians had pushed most Israelis to the right which had made attaining peace more difficult. In turn, the Israelis were an occupying power and had built a wall/fence which, although initially intended for security purposes, had become a land grab. He criticised the illegal settlements on the West Bank.

“Millions of dollars are being siphoned off from budgets for religious affairs, housing, education and defence to create totally illegal places,” Pogrund said, referring to findings by Talya Sasson, former criminal department head at the Attorney General’s Office in Israel. Regarding the outposts, she had said that the state was subverting its own rule of law.

Pogrund reiterated his mantra and basic lesson at Yakar - which, from a secular, but modern Orthodox base, reaches out to a diverse spectrum of people, including religious and non-religious Jews, Muslims and Christians - of making contact, creating trust and building bridges.

“In the dark days of apartheid when the government was discouraging black and white from talking to each other, people still crossed over boundaries, made friends, and created links, so, when circumstances changed, there were enough people in this country who trusted each other and started working together. That’s what we need desperately over there.”

Both speakers emphasised the weak leadership on both the Israeli

and Palestinian sides.

“We became hopeless and frustrated, not only from the occupation, but also from our leadership,” said Eid.

“We resisted and struggled to release Yasser Arafat from the Arab regime and to bring him to the occupied territories. We liberated him, but he never liberated us from the occupation.”

Arafat had considered himself a president, ruling one of the greatest countries in the world. “He started corrupting us and cheating us,” said Eid, speaking from his perspective of 33 years as a resident of the Shuaifat refugee camp, Jerusalem.

“Some people believe that suicide bombings are G-d’s gift to the Muslims in their struggle against godless people, not only Israelis. As I know, Islam totally prohibits the killing of innocent people.

“The problems of the international community today are the fanatic, fundamentalist Muslims, rather than Islam itself. They are trying to make their own religious and political analysis on the situation. Some people are saying that Islamism is growing because of world aggression. I say it might be because of the Muslims themselves against themselves.”

David Hersch, chairman of the WPZC, praised the courage of Pogrund and Eid and their efforts in working towards peace.

AROUND THE WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

LEBANON ARMS SMUGGLING WORRIES BAN

JERUSALEM - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has expressed alarm over evidence of arms smuggling from Syria to Hezbollah.

"Such transfers are alleged to be taking place on a regular basis," Ban wrote in a report on Lebanon issued this week, referring to intelligence provided by Israel and other sources.

"I am deeply worried that the political crisis in Lebanon might be deepened and exacerbated."

Ban called for the UN, which boosted a peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon following last year's war between Hezbollah and Israel, to come up with proposals for monitoring the Lebanese-Syrian border. Ban's report also criticised Israeli Air Force surveillance flights over Lebanon, which have continued since the war, despite international objections. (JTA)

RICE 'BEGS TO DIFFER' WITH PELOSI

WASHINGTON - Condoleezza Rice said her meeting with a top Syrian official differed from that of top Democrats because she limited discussion to Iraq and no photographers were present.

"OK, it's one thing to go to Damascus and to have those pictures that suggest a relationship that doesn't exist with Syria," the US secretary of state told CNN last week Thursday when asked why her meeting in Egypt this week with Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Moaellem differed from the visit to Syria last month by Representative Nancy Pelosi (Democrat California), speaker of the US House of Representatives, who met with Syrian President Bashar Assad.

"This was really very, very limited to Iraq."

Pelosi delivered a message to Assad from Israel saying that the Jewish state harboured no plans to launch a war against Syria, and also made enquiries about captive Israeli soldiers. (JTA)

TUNISIAN JEWS MARK ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE

DJERBA - Some 5 000 Jews on Sunday celebrated the annual Ghriba pilgrimage in Tunisia.

Celebrants paraded through the streets of Djerba to the Ghriba synagogue, the oldest in North Africa.

The procession recalls the memory of a woman named La Ghriba who lived on the island centuries ago and is hailed as a saint.

Thousands of pilgrims visit Djerba every Lag B'Omer to ask for her aid. They parade a huge candelabrum called the Grande Menara down the street as women reach out to touch the multicoloured silk scarves adorning the candelabrum.

The gathering was heavily secured by police five years after a 2002 terrorist attack against the synagogue that killed 21 German tourists. Al-Qaida was suspected of perpetrating the attack.

Among those attending this year's celebration, were Israeli lawmaker David Tal and Tunisian Tourism Minister Tijani Haddad.

Fewer than 2 000 of Tunisia's 10,8 million inhabitants are Jewish. (JTA)

GOP CONTENDERS: NUKE THREAT JUSTIFIES STRIKE

WASHINGTON - The threat of a nuclear strike against Israel would justify a military strike on Iran, three Republican candidates for president have said.

"The tripwire is that if they acquire these weapons and our intelligence tells us that this is a real threat to the State of Israel, to other states in the region," Senator John McCain (Republican Arizona) said last week Thursday evening on MSNBC in the first debate of the 10 candidates seeking the Republican presidential nomination.

McCain cited a scenario where Iran was ready to hand a nuclear weapon to a terrorist group.

Two candidates, former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani and US Representative Tom Tancredo (Republican Colorado), were asked what they would do

if the Israeli prime minister called to say that Israel was about to strike Iran and wanted American help.

Both candidates said they'd say "yes", provided they knew Iran was ready to strike Israel. "If there is a threat to the existence of the State of Israel, which is by the way I think a potential threat to the existence of the United States, then you have to come to the aid of Israel," Tancredo said.

Giuliani said he would seek to confirm the claim with US intelligence. "It really depends on what our intelligence says," he said.

"The reality is, the use of military force against Iran would be very dangerous, very provocative; the only thing worse would be Iran being a nuclear power." (JTA)

RUSSIAN SHUL FIREBOMBED

MOSCOW - A Russian synagogue was fire-bombed last Saturday night.

A homemade explosive device went off near a synagogue in Saratov, a city in the Volga region.

Security was able to quickly extinguish the fire, which caused minor damage to the building.

"The community is in shock," Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, Moscow's chief rabbi and a leader of KEROOR, an Orthodox Jewish umbrella organisation to which the Saratov shul belongs, told JTA.

"There is no doubt in the community that the intention was to burn the synagogue down."

As of Sunday afternoon, it was not known yet whether police had opened an investigation into the incident. (JTA)

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OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS



What if Hamas comes to South Africa?

GIVEN HIS history of virulent anti-Israel statements in the past, the mere mention of Intelligence Minister Ronnie Kasrils' name is like a red flag to many in the Jewish community. And the recent brouhaha surrounding statements attributed to him during his recent trips to Iran and the Palestinian territories has further cemented that reality, even if he has denied or "clarified" what he was reported to have said.

But while Kasrils' remarks - which must implicitly have approval from the government, whether they admit it or not - may be a legitimate rallying point for the defence of Israel by organisations such as the SAJBD and SAZF, there is a constant dilemma faced by similar Jewish bodies all over the world in how to respond to such issues.

Defenders of Israel must take care not to be seen as acting in a simplistic knee-jerk fashion, of "crying wolf" too often at every anti-Israel act or statement, otherwise they will not be taken seriously by the people who matter.

On the other hand, not reacting is equally problematic, since it gives the field over to Israel's enemies to say and do what they like.

Striking the most effective balance between not reacting and over-reacting is not easy. The maintenance of a sense of dignity and responsibility, however, is very important.

There is another serious dilemma underlying the current spat about the "invitation" to Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas - which was not really an invitation, since Kasrils does not have the authority to issue such a thing - to visit South Africa: under what conditions should one talk to one's enemies?

The approach touted by Kasrils and shared by others in this country is that those who "myopically object to such invitations" showed they had learnt nothing from South Africa's successful transition, in which P W Botha met with the imprisoned Nelson Mandela and F W de Klerk released him, helping to pave the way for peaceful change in South Africa.

The problem, of course, is that Hamas does not want to talk to Israel and continues to hold to its basic policy of destroying Israel, promoting anti-Semitism and engaging in terrorism, which is why the United States and European countries continue to reject it.

Since coming into office in March 2006, Haniyeh has visited Arab states, Gulf states and Iran, but has not travelled elsewhere. A visit to South Africa would be a major symbolic victory for him.

Whatever local Jewish bodies say, the truth is that Haniyeh and other Hamas representatives will in all likelihood end up visiting South Africa, either at the invitation of the government or the ANC, who continually point to the fact that Hamas was democratically elected by the Palestinians and should be treated with the appropriate respect flowing from this.

If and when he comes, pro-Israel lobbyists will have to decide how to respond - to unequivocally condemn the visit and the invitation which produced it and confront him and our government with protests and placards (which Muslim organisations will counter with pro-Hamas placards), or to look for opportunities the visit might produce for advancing the cause of Mideast peace, using any influence South Africa might have over Hamas.

The South African government has repeatedly affirmed its basic policy of support for a two-state solution - which Kasrils himself pointed to in his statements, referring to the "commitment of the South African government toward the achievement, through peaceful negotiations, of a two-state solution based on a viable Palestinian state on the 1967 borders and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions".

(The details of what such a policy and the "relevant UN resolutions" imply are, of course, a minefield and may not necessarily conform to the two-state solution as envisioned by supporters of Israel - for example, regarding how the refugee issue is to be resolved.)

During a visit to South Africa, Haniyeh would have to deal in some way with this policy platform. Taking a positive view, his visit could potentially produce opportunities for the Israel lobby to confront him openly on our own turf in our own media (including the *Jewish Report*) and political forums, which is very different from talking about a place thousands of kilometres away - the Mideast - which most South Africans know very little about.

SAIPAC with SA ethos, may just work

DAVID ABEL

CLEARLY ANY public debate - as suggested in Doron Isaacs' interesting analysis (*SAJR* April 20 2007 "The case for and against SAIPAC") - would require authoritative inputs from those leaders of our community who have had recent first-hand experience in such matters.

Jonathan Silke, national president of the SA Zionist Federation, has indicated that "should a pro-Israel lobby be established in this country, it will have its own ethos and mission statement adapted to the needs, conditions and aspirations of our South African community and will certainly not be a copy of any overseas lobby".

However, one would expect that a South African Israel Public Affairs Committee (SAIPAC), in "presenting Israel's case fairly and effectively through the written and spoken word" - would, and should, make a political impact in favour of Israel more effectively than our present communal organisations are able to do at present.

As the official representatives of a fairly diverse Jewish community, they have to take into consideration many issues other than dedication to a single objective: strengthening SA-Israel relations. Even the Israel Embassy has its diplomatic constraints.

An unapologetic, unabashed, private voluntary association like SAIPAC - as a pro-Israel lobby responsible only to itself - could go where official bodies cannot go, using all the legal means at its disposal to achieve its objectives.

SAIPAC, in fact, could take the heat off Jewish representative bodies and the community itself, by openly asserting its independent nature. This aspect could be greatly enhanced if such a committee forged strong alliances with all the many pro-Israel elements in the country - including religious, professional, commercial, industrial and political interests.

One should not underestimate the power of such alliances - particularly if one considers that, for example, more Christians worldwide support Israel (15 million) than there are Jews in the world (14,5 million).

Any debate should take into consideration this huge, largely untapped, potential resource and the benefits that could be derived by providing a practical political channel

for such overwhelming Jewish and Christian Zionist support.

It could be argued, of course, that it would not be in our best interests to "import the Middle East conflict into South Africa" - as the SAJBD has consistently warned.

But, equally, it could be argued that such a situation already exists - considering the attitude and actions of Cosatu, the SA Council of Churches, the Palestine Solidarity Committee, the Media Review Network and various NGOs which oppose Israel on every level, not even being willing to participate in discussions with Jewish organisations on the subject of the Jewish State.

Of course, one would like to see SAIPAC as a powerful lobbyist and as such it would, and should, impact positively on the South African government's attitude to Israel. And a quality leadership would know how best to handle such situations.

In the year 2007, it would have to take into consideration:

- * South Africa's view of itself as a world player in the promotion of the "Non-Aligned Movement" at the UN;
- * This country's perceptions of its own self-interests in accessing various markets, both as an exporter and importer (which influence its international relationships, positively or negatively);
- * South Africa utilising its reputation as a "peacemaker" to exert its influence on the African continent - as well as further afield in areas such as the Middle East;
- * South Africa's attitude towards Israel in international forums, and
- * The strengths and weaknesses of a pro-Israel lobby.

During South Africa's recent rocky presidency of the UN Security Council, the country was criticised severely - internally and externally - on several issues involving Iran, Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Sudan and even climate change.

Political commentators believe the country's diplomats may have been chastened and perhaps, they say, South Africa may be more conciliatory in future.

And, if that happens, our young inexperienced democracy may yet be open to influences persuading it to look at reality from a broader perspective than only the needs of the Third World as it attempts to punch above its weight in the international arena.

Indeed, one should not rule out even the most unlikely scenarios -

like, for example, the odd pairing of India (the world's second most populated country) with Israel (the 100th smallest country in the world) who enjoy an unusual relationship - sharing security problems; India with Muslim Pakistan and Israel with the Hamas-led Palestine government.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union which had been that country's supplier of weapons and military technology, the two nations drifted into a friendly relationship, resulting in Israel being today India's second largest defence supplier - purchasing airborne warning and control system planes (AWACS) for \$1,1 billion the largest single arms sale ever achieved by Israel.

As Prof Efraim Inbar of the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies at Bar Ilan University, has noted: "A mutual fear of radical Islam, both at home and in their immediate neighbourhoods, has cemented Indo-Israel ties." Nor, for that matter, should one rule out the possibility of more Middle Eastern Muslim nations recognising and co-operating with Israel as the fear of aggressive radical Islamists begins to threaten them as well.

Although Aziz Pahad and Ronnie Kasrils have implied that South Africa's support of the Palestinians had made this country virtually immune to the type of terrorism which manifested itself elsewhere in the world, indiscriminate violence such as the bombings that took place in Cape Town during the late 1990s, remain a threat to our country.

But should the momentum move towards a stabilisation of the Middle East, with moderate Arab states backing a peace deal with Israel in their own self-interest, South Africa could well change its attitude towards Israel in the UN and other international forums - showing greater diplomatic skill, sensitivity and even-handedness.

Israel's ambassador to South Africa, Ilan Baruch, told *SAJR* correspondent Moira Schneider in Cape Town that during the testing times of the Hezbollah war, "the Jewish support was of prime importance in our ability to present our own position and to achieve our objectives in the contest over public opinion".

So, the fundamental question is: Can a focussed, independent broad-based pro-Israel united front in South Africa be an even more effective instrument of support for the Jewish State, both in war conditions as well as in peacetime?

Ultimately, the setting up of such a proactive lobby may well depend on the political will of our community to embark on an even more bold approach to public affairs than hitherto, allowing the established representative organisations to get on with their normal work in aid of Israel.

Mendel Kaplan may succeed Bronfman at WJC

LISA HOSTEIN AND JACOB BERKMAN
NEW YORK

EDGAR BRONFMAN'S resignation this week as president of the World Jewish Congress put a sudden end to a 30-year reign at one of the world's best-known Jewish organisations.

Philanthropist and businessman Mendel Kaplan of South Africa, chairman of the WJC executive, appears to be the leading contender at least as interim president, according to sources. Ronald Lauder, a philanthropist and president of the Jewish National Fund, also could be

a candidate.

Bronfman's resignation on Monday, at a WJC steering committee meeting, capped weeks of turmoil in the organisation following the firing of Rabbi Israel Singer, a longtime senior official, in March.

Bronfman's departure closes a long and fabled era for the organisation - an era that included both accomplishment and aggravation.

The WJC governing board would elect a new president on June 10 in New York, officials said. The steering committee would convene a nominations committee to consider candidates.



Mendel Kaplan.



Edgar Bronfman in a file photo. (CREDIT: RICHARD LOBELL PHOTOGRAPHY)

JTA could not reach Kaplan for comment. Lauder would not comment, but his special assistant, Warren Kozak, told JTA that it was "way too premature to have this conversation".

Continued on page 13

OPINION AND ANALYSIS

FORUM FOR DIVERSE VIEWS

Sarkozy won strong Jewish backing

RINA BASSIST
PARIS

THE 53 per cent support for Nicolas Sarkozy in the second round of France’s presidential election, was the strongest showing by a right-wing candidate since Charles de Gaulle - perhaps because he was the man who finally cut down far-right extremist Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Nonna Mayer, a professor at the prestigious Institute for Political Studies in Paris, noted that in the first round of voting on April 23, Sarkozy took more than one-third of far-right voters. In the May 6 runoff it jumped to two-thirds, as well as 40 per cent of centrist votes.

“His victory is so convincing in the sense that only a quarter of his voters chose him just in order to prevent Royal from the presidency,” Mayer said, referring to Sarkozy’s Socialist Party opponent, Ségolène Royal.

“Among Royal voters, some 47 per cent voted not for her but against her rival - anyone but Sarkozy.”

Sammy Ghozlan, president of the Union of Jewish Communities in the Paris region, congratulated Sarkozy for “his brilliant election as president of the republic”. Ghozlan also heads an agency that fights anti-Semitism and has commended Sarkozy’s firm stance on the issue.

“We are persuaded that the new president will continue eradicating anti-Semitism the way he has begun doing,” Ghozlan said. “We will remain his partners in his efforts to construct civil peace



Nicolas Sarkozy campaigns for the French presidency. (Credit: Sarkozy campaign)

here in France, and we assure him of our total confidence and support in his actions to establish peace between Israel and its neighbours.”

Sarkozy could hardly ask for more. Despite the French Republic’s official discouragement of sectoral politics, the Jewish community strongly supported Sarkozy.

Jewish voters saw the former interior minister as a friend to Israel and an important figure in the fight against anti-Semitism. Soon after Royal conceded, Jewish groups came out with their good wishes.

Sarkozy, the grandson of a Greek Jew and the son of a Hungarian aristocrat,

has pledged to make it tougher for immigrants to bring their extended families to France.

Among the economic reforms he has pledged are the abolition of a tax on overtime, a cut in the inheritance tax and measures to force the unemployed to take whatever work is offered.

Considered a law-and-order politician in the American mould, Sarkozy earned points in the Jewish community for his hard line against Muslim unrest in France, including riots and anti-Semitic attacks.

Sarkozy was one of the first French politicians to react strongly to a spike in anti-Semitic attacks in France after the Palestinian intifada began in 2000 at a time when other French officials did not seem to take the problem seriously.

The Jewish community’s respect for Sarkozy was demonstrated by absentee voting results from French Jews living in Israel. Sarkozy received 5 655 of the votes cast at the French Embassy in Tel Aviv - more than 90 per cent - compared to just 580 for Royal.

That’s even greater support than the 87 per cent Sarkozy received in his hometown of Neuilly-sur-Seine, where he has served as mayor. The Tel Aviv figures reportedly top those voting for Sarkozy in any other French voting bureau around the world.

The victory may well reflect a change in French political life. The phenomenon of right-wing extremist Le Pen making the runoff, as he did in 2002, is over, and France has returned to its traditional left-

right balance. Royal’s Socialists lost the presidential election for the third time in a row, and the internal battle over the party’s leadership is yet to begin.

Sources in the Jewish community say the shift back to a right-left balance is due in part to Sarkozy’s obstinate fight against anti-Semitism and racism. In April 2002 elections, 18 per cent of French voters chose Le Pen, sending his anti-immigrant message - which in the past has included anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial - into the second round.

This year, in contrast, French voters elected a candidate whose father was an immigrant. Even most female voters chose Sarkozy, polls showed, despite Royal’s blatant plea for women to show gender solidarity.

Jews traditionally have supported the Socialists, but this year several Jews interviewed said no Socialist leader, including former President Francois Mitterrand, had succeeded in bringing Le Pen to his knees as Sarkozy did, perhaps ending Le Pen’s political career.

Sarkozy told of a difficult childhood in which he was hassled because of his unusual family name. In his inauguration speech he spoke of building a new France where no one would feel excluded regardless of his or her origins or beliefs.

Sarkozy’s tactics may not have been to the liking of some Jews - Simone Veil, a Holocaust survivor and former Cabinet minister backed Sarkozy even though she deplored his call for a “national identity and immigration ministry” - but the results can’t be contested. (JTA)

Mendel Kaplan to succeed Bronfman at WJC?

Continued from page 12

Lauder had said that “until he is sure that there is going to be a fair and transparent election, he is not going to commit one way or the other,” Kozak said.

Edgar Bronfman declined requests for interviews on Monday. But his closest associate, WJC Secretary-General Stephen Herbits, told JTA that Bronfman had decided to leave because the issue with Singer had been resolved.

“Bronfman has been trying to leave for six years; now he is free to retire because the matter with Singer is closed,” said Herbits, adding that he had been informed of Bronfman’s decision only half an hour before Monday’s meeting.

Pierre Besnainou, head of the European Jewish Congress, said he backed Kaplan to take over the organisation.

“We support Mendel Kaplan,” said Besnainou, who had been the fiercest critic of the way Singer’s firing had been handled.

Founded in Geneva in 1936, the WJC is the umbrella organisation for more than 100 local communities and the putative representative of world Jewry.

Under the leadership of Bronfman and Singer, the WJC played a major role in winning billions of dollars from European banks and governments in restitution for victims of the Holocaust. It also helped to uncover the Nazi past of Kurt Waldheim, a former Austrian president and United Nations secretary-general.

The group had been under a cloud since the revelation several years ago that Singer secretly transferred \$1.2 million of WJC money to a Swiss bank account. The money subsequently was returned, but critics say the transfer

was never fully explained.

A number of investigations were launched in the wake of that revelation. A 2006 report by the New York State Attorney General’s Office found no evidence of criminality on Singer’s part, but assailed the organisation for lax record keeping and said Singer had violated his fiduciary duties by moving money around without proper authorisation.

In 2005, a report by the accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers sought to analyse a decade’s worth of financial documentation from the WJC office in Geneva but was unable to account for \$3.8 million of WJC money. A separate Internal Revenue Service investigation into the organisation’s finances is under way.

In harshly criticising the March firing of Israel Singer, Besnainou wrote in a memo to EJC board members: “The decision to brutally dismiss Israel Singer is one of the last elements in this long list of unilateral and non-democratic decisions.”

Besnainou said he wasn’t surprised by Bronfman’s resignation; Bronfman had talked about resigning in November, he said.

“The only question was who would succeed him,” Besnainou said.

Another question is where the WJC will head in a post-Bronfman era. While the organisation is focused on the threat from Iran, by many accounts it has been searching for the kind of motivating issue it once had in Holocaust restitution and the fight for Soviet Jewry.

The WJC “is in search of a rallying cry to galvanise its constituents,” said Rabbi Marc Schneier, chairman of its American section.

“If there had been that kind of issue,” Schneier said, “there wouldn’t have been all this internecine struggle.” (JTA)

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Civic Theatre, Braamfontein: “Soweto Story”, until May 13 in the Nelson Mandela. From May 18, “Tango Fire” with Estampas Portenas. (011) 877-6800.

Goodman Gallery, Rosebank: “Sentient Beings”, new work by sculptor Peter Schütz, until May 19. (011) 788-1113.

Johannesburg Art Gallery, Joubert Park: Roger Ballen’s mid-career retrospective until May 13. “Dungamanzi: Stirring Waters” an exhibition of Tsonga and Shangaan art from southern Africa, curated by Nessa Leibhammer, Natalie Liknaitzky and Billy Makubele, opens May 13. (011) 725-3130.

Liberty Theatre on the Square, Sandton: “Tom, Dick or Harry”, by Gretha Brazelle, directed by Helen Iskander, until May 19. On Sundays in May, Harry Sideropoulos in “Three Minutes Past Love”, with eight-piece band Nu Cool. At lunch hour on May 11, Malane Hofmeyr-Burger (flute), Susan Mouton (cello) and Annika Burger, perform trios by Martinu and Mendelssohn and on May 18 Serge Cuca (violin) performs work by Brahms. (011) 883-8606.

Market, Newtown: In the Main Theatre, Chris van Wyk’s “Shirley, Goodness and Mercy”, directed by Janice Honeyman until May 13. From May 16 in the Barney Simon, Yael Farber’s “Molora”. (011) 832-1641.

Montecasino, Fourways: “Hair” in the Main Theatre until May 20. In the Studio, “Defending the Caveman” with Alan Committie until July 1. (011) 511-1988.

RCHCC, Oaklands: A 10-year retrospective of paintings by Joan Abrahams, until May 16. (011) 728-8088.

Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg: “Lost Light: Fugitive Images from Deep Space” by Karel Nel, until May 26. (011) 631-1889.

State Theatre, Pretoria: In the Drama, Black Tie Ensemble performs a Mother’s Day concert on May 13. (012) 322-7944.

Wits Theatre Complex, Braamfontein: In the Atrium on May 19, “A Celebrity Chamber Music Concert” featuring works by Beethoven and Mendelssohn by Marc Uys (violin), Marian Lewin (cello) and Malcolm Nay (piano). 082-497-2159.

Wolmarans Gallery, Braamfontein: “Collaborations: An exhibition of young artists” curated by senior Wits fine art students, until May 16. 082-497-2159.

Sher’s performance in Primo is heart-wrenching

REVIEWED BY ROBYN SASSEN

THE ACTOR Sir Antony Sher needs no formal introduction to local audiences. Born and educated in Cape Town, he rose to phenomenal critical acclaim internationally; the integrity and passion he invests in his work attest to this.

In late April, the Chief Rabbi Cyril Harris Community Centre in Oaklands, Johannesburg, hosted an unusual event - a filmed version of Sher in his one-hander “Primo”, from his 2004 season at the National Theatre in London.

One might believe that the screening of a filming of a live performance might lose some of its power, but Sher’s utterly riveting interpretation belies this.

In collaboration with director Richard Wilson, Sher conceived of and wrote this play, based on “If this is a Man” (1958) the powerful

autobiographical memories of Primo Levi (1919-1987), the Jewish Italian chemist who spent a year in Auschwitz in 1944, tragically committing suicide some 40 years later.

In “Primo”, you do not see Holocaust images. The words are denuded of florid or emotional references. There is no anger or hate. “How can one man hit another without anger?” he incredulously ponders.

These are the gentle words chosen by a man of science to describe something utterly barbaric, something that contradicted anything and everything he had ever known; a man denuded of his values, his personal possessions, his family and friends; a man renamed “174517” by the Nazis.

In depicting this man, who recalls being “swamped by shame” in the ghastly experiences he endured, Sher wears ordinary

pants and a shirt, a knitted, sleeveless waistcoat, a tie, a jacket, a pair of steel-rimmed glasses, shoes and socks. His only prop is a wooden chair.

Designed by Hildegard Bechtler, with lighting by Paul Pyant, the stage is bare of set - the space is like a rough-hewn cement cube, with a single arched entry.

Other than well-placed sound, designed by Rich Walsh and music by Jonathan Goldstein, the play is stripped of effects: the text is its central core, and this is what makes it utterly unforgettable.

As audience members, we respond to Sher’s vulnerable honest sense of aloneness, to his sensitive embodiment of Primo Levi. “Primo” will engage your emotions and wrench your heart.

* The centre will be hosting “Primo” again on May 13, 20 and 30. Tel (011) 728-8088.



Sir Antony Sher in “Primo”.



Primo Levi. (PHOTOGRAPH: JILLIAN EDELSTEIN)

Comedy and pathos in brilliant 2-hander

Play: *Tom, Dick or Harry*
Cast: *Gretha Brazelle and Ben Voss*
Conceptualisation: *Andrew Wilson and Gretha Brazelle*
Director: *Helen Iskander*
Venue: *Liberty Life Theatre on the Square, Nelson Mandela Square*
Until May 19

REVIEWED BY PETER FELDMAN

BEN VOSS, the tall man with the madly expressive features, is perhaps best recognised for his fine work with business partner John van de Ruit and especially their two hit productions, “Black Mamba” and “Green Mamba”.

It’s a joy once again to see the actor on stage, but this time around he explores something fresh and different in a two-hander which gives him scope to manifest his particular style of physical comedy and pathos in several roles.

Voss plays opposite Gretha Brazelle and together they conjure up a masterful slice of theatre that skilfully explores the fragile existence of a woman and her determination to survive some lean times.

The woman, Hester, is portrayed by Brazelle, who shapes her role

with such sensitivity that you feel you know the character and her yearning to break free from poverty and carve something for herself in life.

The period is 1937 and Hester, we soon learn, had left her drought-stricken farm two years previously to move to the big city. She lives with her husband Bertie in a small house in Turffontein. Life is tough, especially with a baby on the way, and she has to think of ways of supplementing their small income.

So she becomes a prostitute and, unbeknown to Bertie, manages to ply her trade on the Pretoria-bound train as well as in hotels. Business is booming and Hester, who is known to her clients as Kitty, begins building a nice little nest egg.

Hester is concerned about her little baby and deceiving her husband, but she fervently believes that she’s on the right track, so to speak.

However, her little piece of paradise begins to crack when she falls in love with one of her clients, Jack, a charming and wealthy auctioneer, who takes advantage of her.

Voss, who also inhabits the character of Innocence, her

African ally at the station, gives Jack just the right nuances to be a credible entity.

The play, which was conceptualised by Brazelle and Andrew Wislon, from a true story, is only an hour in length, but one becomes so involved in Hester’s fate that this period flies by very quickly. Its strengths lie not only in the cogent writing but in the abilities of these two superb performers.

Director Helen Iskander, who has produced a number of gems over the years, including the wonderful “Baobabs Don’t Grow Here”, is adept at using her space well, allowing the movement of the characters to flow unhindered.

She also introduces an ingenious way of utilising an array of different size suitcases to create the sets; a train, a railway platform, a hotel room and home. Her adroit use of sound effects to create the era is another important contribution to the play’s effectiveness.

While “Tom, Dick or Harry” has something to say about prostitution, an issue that still plagues society today, it is never preachy in its approach.

This is a highly commendable production.



Ben Voss and Gretha Brazelle in “Tom, Dick or Harry”. (PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY LIBERTY THEATRE ON THE SQUARE)

2 top Israeli soloists with JPO in 2007 season

PAUL BOECKKOOI

TWO OF Israel’s greatest present day instrumentalists, the violinist Sergey Ostrovsky, who is also leader of the Aviv String Quartet and pianist Dror Biran, who often performs with them, will be two of the soloists spotlighted during the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra’s second symphony season of 2007.

The JPO, who is in the process of restructuring to become a state-funded entity with members who are paid a monthly salary and thus experiencing some security after being freelance musicians for years, have put together an adventurous programme for their winter season.

Two conductors who always secured inspiring results with the ensemble, the German-born Bernhard Gueller and the South African-born Conrad van Alphen, will lead the five concerts.

Apart from Ostrovsky and Biran, the remaining two soloists will be the pianist Ingrid Jacoby who travels on a British passport and the Korean violinist Min-Jin Kim. She is considered one of the greatest violinists of that country since Kyung-Wha Chung broke through to the West some 35 years ago.

Music spanning a quarter of a millennium, from Haydn to Arvo Pärt, will be presented.

The music presented at each of the concerts:

May 16 & 17 - Conductor: Gueller. Soloist: Biran. Programme: *Fratres* (Pärt); Piano Concerto No 2 in G minor, opus 16 (Prokofiev); Symphony No 7 in D minor, opus 70 (Dvor-k).

May 23 & 24 - Conductor: Gueller. Soloist: Ostrovsky. Programme: Siegfried’s Rhine Journey and Death and Funeral Music from *Götterdämmerung* (Wagner); Violin Concerto in A minor, opus 82 (Glazunov); Fountains of Rome; Pines of Rome (Respighi).

May 30 & 31 - Conductor: Gueller. No soloist. Programme: Symphony No 40 in F minor - La Passione (Haydn); Symphony No 4 in E-flat major - Romantic (Bruckner).

June 6 & 7 - Conductor: Van Alphen. Soloist: Jacoby. Programme: Valley of a Thousand Hills (Malcolm Forsyth); Piano Concerto in A minor, opus 16; Peer Gynt Suites Nos. 1 & 2 (Grieg).

June 13 & 14 - Conductor: Van Alphen. Soloist: Min-Jin Kym. Programme: Leonora No 3 Overture; Symphony No 1 in C major, opus 21; Violin Concerto in D major, opus 61 (all Beethoven).

Concerts are presented in the Linder Auditorium, Wits Education Campus, 27 St Andrews Road in Parktown. They all commence at 20:00. For season tickets, phone Neville Pritchard at (011) 789 2733. Tickets from Computicket.

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REVIEWED BY GWEN PODBREY

The Classics at the Movies: Drama (various artists) - (Naxos, R69,95)

Movie themes have become the most important and enduring forum for contemporary classical composers, and this CD features some of the best-loved and most memorable ones of recent decades. John Williams' haunting theme to "Schindler's List"



(performed by the Razumovsky Symphony Orchestra), Offenbach's "Barcarole" from "The Tales of Hoffmann" - used as the theme to another Holocaust movie, "Life is Beautiful" and performed by the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, the poignant "Romance D'Amour" from the movie "Forbidden Games" and Barber's "Adagio for Strings" (which featured in "The Elephant Man", performed by Capella Istropolitana) are some of its highlights.

This is one of a new Naxos series of "Classics at the Movies", including comedies, thrillers and action.

Opera Arias by Anna Netrebko and the Vienna Philharmonic (conductor: Gianandrea Noseda) (Deutsche Grammophon, R189,95)

Soprana Anna Netrebko has taken the world by storm and in this, her first solo album, she performs some of the best-loved works in the operatic reper-



toire. A pure coloratura with a near-flawless technique and superb dramatic skills, she brings warmth, dignity and passion to each piece.

The CD includes "Quando Avran Fine Omai" from Mozart's "Idomeneo", the

"Jewel Song" from Gounod's "Faust", "Musetta's Waltz" from Puccini's "La Boheme" and "Ancor Non Giunse!" from Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor".

However, pride of place goes to a sublime rendition of Dvorak's exquisite "Song to the Moon" (from "Rusalka"). A superb album from one of the most exciting artists to have appeared in many years.

Call Me Irresponsible by Michael Bublé (Reprise Records, R149,95)

The return to the era of crooners has seen Michael Bublé



claim a unique place in the sun. With a velvety-smooth voice, an accomplished technique and just enough chutzpah to keep listeners alert, he has produced an album which ranges from golden R&B (such as the title track, as well as the Sinatra classic "That's Life" and "The Best is Yet to Come") to the bluesy "Wonderful Tonight" (performed with Ivan Lins), "I've Got the World on a String" and "Me and Mrs Jones".

And, to prove his versatility, Bublé also performs the upbeat "Comin' Home Baby" with Boyz II Men. A schmaltzy, laid-back, thoroughly sexy album from

one of the coolest dudes in the industry - guaranteed to melt Mom's heart.

Long Walk to Freedom by Ladysmith Black Mambazo (Gallo, R109,95)

It has been 20 years since this group first shot to stardom in Paul Simon's "Graceland"



album (two songs of which are included here), and they have continued to enchant the world

with their superbly refined a cappella artistry, winning a Grammy in the process. On this album, they showcase not only their skills, but a wide spectrum of South African music, including the traditional favourite, "Shosholoz", performed with Hugh Masakela, Lucky Dube, Vusi Mahlasela, Thandiswa Mazwai, Bhekumuzi Luthuli, Nokukhanya and Phuzekhemisi.

The more upbeat "Hello My Baby" and "Mbube" are great reminders of what this country means to us, while the group's wonderful rendition of the national anthem, "Nkosi Sikelel i'Afrika" - simple, but powerful and poignant - can bring tears to the eyes. The album is guaranteed to move moods, touch hearts and lift spirits. Very highly recommended.

* All CDs available from PLUM in The Mall of Rosebank, Johannesburg.
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Blades of Glory

Cast: Will Ferrell, Jon Heder, Will Arnett, Amy Poehler, Craig T Nelson
Directors: Josh Gordon, Will Speck

"Blades of Glory" brings together two of the screen's most irritating personalities, Will Ferrell and Jon Heder, in a film that is nothing more than "Talladega Night" on skates.

This painful production, with its isolated moments of gross-out, infantile humour, does for figure skating what the earlier film did for NASCAR racing.

Passing as a satirical look at the competitive world of figure skating, this film lacks bite and inventiveness and is a long, tedious affair.

Chazz Michael Michaels (Farrell) and Jimmy MacElroy (Heder) are rival champion figure skaters whose careers are in the toilet after coming to blows at a competition. They have both been banned for life as solo performers.

At the instigation of a former trainer (Craig T Nelson), they bury the hatchet and decide to compete as a team, which they



FELDMAN ON FILM
Peter Feldman

are allowed to do. It doesn't take a genius to work out what unfolds here. This is no winner.

Fracture

Cast: Anthony Hopkins, Ryan Gosling, David Strathairn, Rosamund Pike, Embeth Davidtz, Billy Burke
Director: Gregory Hoblit

Anthony Hopkins is in deadly mood again playing a cunning millionaire psychopath, Ted Crawford, who shoots his wife Jennifer (Embeth Davidtz) after discovering she is having an affair. Jennifer doesn't die but is left in a coma.

Ted is then put on trial for attempted murder and a tense court room duel of intellect and strategy ensues between him and hotshot young Assistant District Attorney Will Beachum (Ryan Gosling), who thinks it an open-and-shut case because of a con-

fession and a weapon.

Gosling, giving another commanding performance, paints a character more interested in taking up a lucrative job in high-stakes corporate law than giving his full attention to the Crawford case.

It's a move that could prove his undoing. Also, his mind is on matters more sexual as he engages in a brief liaison with an ambitious attorney (Rosamund Pike).

South Africa's Embeth Davidtz spends most of her screen time in a coma, and this she does very well.

There are no shocking twists or surprise turns in Gregory Hoblit's dramatic thriller, but it's precisely this element that makes it refreshingly different.

On the surface it's a courtroom drama between two protagonists, but on a deeper level it's a contest of wills between two men who share a primary trait: one of Shakespeare's favourite tragic flaws - hubris. It's like observing a classy chess match between two skilled opponents.

The ending may be weak, but the acting and the narrative thrust more than make up for it. A rewarding slice of cinema!

LETTERS

The Editor, Suite 175, Postnet X10039, Randburg, 2125 email: carro@global.co.za

Disclaimer
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

Guidelines for letters
Letters up to 400 words will get preference. Please provide your full first name and surname, place of residence, and a daytime contact number. We do not publish letters under noms de plume. Letters should preferably be e-mailed. Letters may be edited or shortened.

Awaiting the Beth Din’s response

THERE WAS an apology last week in the community notice from McCain selling broccoli with the Beth Din logo, which was not kosher. What I would like to know is where is the Beth Din’s apology? After all, they get paid to supervise these things and the Jewish community believe in them.
So, my question is: are they competent enough, or do we now need a mashgiach over the Beth Din, and does McCain have a

permanent mashgiach or just an inspector once in a while?
I personally hold the Beth Din responsible and not McCain; the Beth Din obviously weren’t doing their job and brushed the blame off on McCain.
**Jeff Nathan
Glenhazel
Johannesburg**

Memorabilia, pics of Abel wanted

I JUST came back from Lithuania in late April. The town I visted was Obeliai (Abel). In 2003 we restored the cemetery there. All seems to be well there, with the current situation. We also visited the massacre site outside of Abel called Antinoshe.
I’m looking for pictures and memorabilia descendants might have of the town. Thanking all of your readers in advance for

their assistance to perpetuate the memory of Abel, Lithuania.
I can be contacted at: 156 Goffe Ter, New Haven, CT 06511, USA. Tel and fax 203-752-1988, stolnitzarchives@webtv.net
**Mayer S Abramowitz
New Haven
USA**

Yes, but what about the evidence?

THE JURY might be out but has the judge carefully evaluated the evidence?
Dennis Davis appears to believe George Soros when the multi-billionaire states: “I have a great deal of sympathy for my fellow Jews and a deep concern for the survival of Israel. I do not want to provide fodder to the enemies of Israel.”
Unfortunately the judge chose to excise the following words: “I am not a Zionist” from the beginning of the prior *New York Review of Books* quotation. Perhaps it puts Soros’s “deep concern for the survival of Israel” into question. It is a most unfortunate omission!
The truth is that Soros is providing more than “fodder” to the enemies of Israel. He is actually providing cash... and lots of it. The financial accounts of The Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI) in South Africa reveal that it is mainly funded by “The Open

Society” which is actually a George Soros charity.
Not only has The FXI attacked The SAJR, but it also has close links to The Palestine Solidarity Committee. The latter, as we all know, is not an organisation that has “a deep concern for the survival of Israel”.
Moreover, Soros as philanthropist, has given scant funds to Jewish charities and it seems unlikely that he has “a great deal of his sympathy” for his fellow Jews; his actions certainly do not speak as loudly as his words.
In my summing up to your readers, I have to conclude that the judge appears to have misled the jury, because he should have said: “George Soros is a very unreliable witness!”
**Anthony Posner
Johannesburg**

Why a boy needs a Shalom Zachor

A LETTER by Yossi Bogacz in last week’s *Jewish Report* on “Shalom Zachor” refers.
The Midrash (Rabbah, Shmos 30:12) tells of an encounter between the Emperor Hadrian and his nephew, Unkelos. Unkelos was the author of the translation of the Torah into Aramaic, a text of such primary importance that it is found in most all printed versions of the Torah to this day.
Unkelos told his uncle Hadrian that he wished to convert and become a member of the nation of Israel. Although Hadrian attempted to dissuade Unkelos from pursuing this action, Unkelos insisted. Hadrian said to his nephe: “Go and study their law, but do not undergo circumcision.”
Unkelos responded “Even the wisest in your kingdom and the elders, 100 years of age, are not able to learn the Torah if not circumcised.”
The central point to this Midrash between Unkelos and Hadrian is that it is difficult and sometimes impossible to learn Torah and retain it on any meaningful level unless the person learning Torah has undergone circumcision. The circumcision, an action performed on a person’s body, has a major impact on the person’s soul, on the person’s spiritual existence.
Women, however, are never faced with this impediment to the study of Torah. The Talmud (Avodah Zarah 27a) states that “a woman is considered as if she is circumcised”.
A girl, from the day she is born, is prepared to accept the words of Torah and retain them. She is on the proper spiritual level to study the Torah. She is considered, from birth, as if she has undergone the process that brings a male to a level of spiritual perfection that allows him to study the Torah.
Now let us get back to the Shalom Zachor. Why is there a custom to make this meal? The Talmud (Niddah 20b) states that when a baby is in the womb, “he is taught the entire Torah. However, as soon as he enters the air of this world, an angel comes and strikes him on his mouth, causing him to forget the entire Torah”.

statement, writes that this passage in the Talmud is the source for the custom. One of the points of the Shalom Zachor is to remind the newborn boy of the Torah that he learned while in the womb, so that he will be inspired to continue on the path of the Torah throughout his life.
Why is this reminder needed? When a boy is born, not only has he forgotten the Torah he learned, but he can not even begin to study the Torah or be truly affected by the study of Torah because he is not circumcised. Because the young boy has this lapse in time between when he is born and when he can first study Torah, chances increase that the boy will forget that he has learned Torah.
Chances of recapturing that knowledge at the later date when it becomes possible (after circumcision) are lessened.
Therefore, we have a custom to remind the child at some point before the circumcision about what he did while in the womb. We remind the boy about his prior study of Torah, and point out to him that soon, in a short period of time, he will be able to continue that study which was previously concluded at the time of his birth.
By a girl, however, there is no lapse of time between the cessation of Torah study and the girl’s ability to be impacted by the study of Torah.
She is capable of receiving the Torah immediately. She needs no prior spiritual improvement before she can study the Torah. Therefore, she is not presented with an opportunity to forget the importance of what occurred while in the womb.
Because she is impacted by Torah immediately, there is no need to give her any special reminder about what Torah is and its importance. Hence, there is no need for a Se’udas Zachor for a girl.
The Torah is not chauvinistic; it knows the potential and beauty of each of its followers.
**Rabbi Daniel Rabin
Johannesburg**

Let the shofar replace the alarm

IN PORT Elizabeth the community celebrated Israel’s independence in grand style. There were 420 people attending the festivities; the food was super, the décor good, the entertainment excellent and the price was unbelievable - we paid R25 per head.
It really was a night to remember. Well done to the organisers!
I have only one criticism, and I hope that it will be taken in the way it is meant, in a constructive way. When we remembered the Six Million the week before, an alarm was brought down from Cape Town for the event and it was sounded for two minutes.
This same alarm was sounded at Yom Ha’atzmaut as we stood in silence. I will admit that it sounded impressive at the time but on further consideration I think that we Jews have a better alarm to sound than an electric alarm screaming in our ears. We have the great shofar of freedom.

For Yom Hashoah I could be persuaded that because this happened during war time the alarm was appropriate, but for Yom Ha’atzmaut I feel the blast of the shofar would have been better.
I recall that when we were given independence, and when we eventually reached the Wall for the first time in 2 000 years, the first thing that was heard was the shofar blast that announced to the world that we were FREE AND INDEPENDENT once more. I was then a young boy but it has been something I remembered ever since.
I believe the alarm was sounded in other places at these two events and I hope that next year the more conventional, the more traditional alarm, will be used. I do have a strong feel for traditional things, like the shofar.

**Howard Segal
Port Elizabeth**

All about Jews and intelligence

JOCELYN HELLIG and David Saks (in last week’s *Jewish Report*) bring to our attention Jewish genius.
In 1985 The *Economist’s* science and technology section reported that Dr Gregory Cochran and his co-workers had a possible reason for this: They postulated that Ashkenazi Jews, through their common past marked extensively by persecution, had experienced circumstances that favoured the spread of genes, by a process

of natural selection, that enhanced intelligence. As reported by your columnists, this “intelligence” promotes anti-Semitism and possibly genocide. The other downside is that these genes may be responsible for the inherited disorders that affect Ashkenazi Jews - Tay-Sachs, Gauchers and Nieman-Pick diseases. You just cannot win!

**Irving Lisssoo
Johannesburg**

Kosher food: SA is very privileged

IN RESPONSE to Aubrey Lampert’s letter in last week’s *Jewish Report*, titled “Butchers, delis and kosher prices”, the following:
I recently returned from a trip to Argentina, a country with similar economic conditions as South Africa but with a Jewish community more than double the size of the South African community.
The Argentinean Jewish community totals well over 200 000. Surely a community with that magnificent number should have kosher food more readily available and at much cheaper prices?
Our Jewish community of about 75 000 offers more in kosher food than an Argentinean Jewish community more than double ours.
Although kosher food was found, it was very often not readily available. Another problem was that once kosher food was found, there were many different hechsharot. Us privileged SA Jews have one Beth Din offering one hechsher to all locally produced kosher products.
When I mentioned this to fellow Jews in Argentina, they could not believe what I was saying. Not only is this the case in Argentina but it is the case in many other countries, where Jewish populations are also great in numbers, for example Israel.
The many different hechsharot can leave you in confusion as to which products are actually kosher. We do not realise how lucky we are to have a Beth Din like ours. In South Africa we need only walk in to our local supermarket’s and fill up our trolleys with great kosher food and goodies.
I learnt a great lesson while in Argentina, namely that you don’t know what you’ve got till its gone. When you struggle to eat because of kashrut, you realise that you have so much to be grateful for and now that it is temporarily gone, you don’t know how much you really have back home and what a

great kashrut system we have in SA.
We really are a privileged community with a hard working Beth Din and we also have great butchers, delis and yes, kosher prices. The prices in Argentina did not differ that much from our very own.
I often hear the cry of many people about the roaring price of kosher food. If you go to an upmarket non-kosher steakhouse, I am sure, that the prices do not differ that much from our upmarket kosher steakhouses.
A higher standard of living in SA and all over the world, is a very big problem and instead of only attacking kosher food, that (issue) should be addressed. To keep up with technology and the ever-changing prices of necessities such as petrol, milk and bread, presents also a very big problem and the prices are also becoming outrageous.
Yes, non-kosher bread costs a lot of money and petrol takes a lot of our pockets every month. What about lights and water? What about payments on luxury houses and cars? People do not realise that they are blinded by the cliché of kosher food being expensive. They do not seem to mind paying fortunes for new electronics or for the latest clothes.
I feel that if the topic of kosher food is one that needs to be addressed, we need to, as a community, discuss (these other issues) until a solution is found.
This is a more constructive way of change rather than publicly humiliating our community’s hard working butcheries, delis and kosher food outlets.
We are a very strong community with a world-renowned Beth Din and also many other important organisations. Let’s not wait till what we have is all gone; let’s realise how lucky and fortunate we are and act now as a community to create a better and happier Jewish and kosher environment for us all.

**Joshua Gavronsky
Johannesburg**

A very intelligent question

I HAVE been following the debate on whether it is good or bad for Jews to have it known that they as a group have an average IQ over 100.
I attribute the above-average performance of secular Jews in academia, business and the creative arts to the peer effect, in other words, my observations are that secular Jews are, on average, sensitive to peer pressure etc. They try to outperform each other leading to an ever-increasing upward spiral of performance.

This in turns often leads to resentment by the host country, especially if that host country in undergoing economic difficulties.
I’ve heard that the Japanese have high average IQs. If this would be widely broadcast, possibly it would take some of the heat off us!

**J Brenner
Cyrildene
Johannesburg**

Helping people move forward ‘on their Jewish journey’

MOIRA SCHNEIDER
CAPE TOWN

CLOSE TO 100 Capetonians from all walks of life have signed up for the internationally franchised Florence Melton Adult Mini-School started here last year. The idea of the inclusive education programme, according to director Viv Anstey, is to “tap into where people are at and to help them move forward on their Jewish journey”.

Eighty-six-year-old Hannah Blacher is in the second year of the two-year course. “I never really knew very much about Judaism,” she says explaining her participation, “and certainly the religious part always seemed to be so convoluted and not particularly relevant.

“This came up at just the right moment for me - I’d used lots of other things to compensate in my life and I thought maybe there is a way of understanding Judaism in a form other than the religious stereotyped way.”

Blacher had dabbled in Hinduism and Buddhism and thought that she should try and discover the “real” meaning of Judaism.

“I went along and, to my amazement, found that we were to study the rhythms and purposes of Jewish life - those two words were very relevant for me because I wanted to know what was the purpose of Judaism and what is the historical significance of all these Yomtavim that we practise - it opened it up for me, it was tremendously interesting.

“Suddenly Judaism came alive for

me,” she says.

First-year student Irene Berman says she is “absolutely loving” the course which she feels is remedying a lack in her Jewish education. She considers it “a perfect opportunity to stretch and grow and be part of a group where there’s interesting discussion and input.

“It’s very interactive and terribly respectful,” she adds. “Whatever contribution is made by anyone participating is validated and used and I like that style.”

The rhythms, purposes, dramas and ethics of Jewish living constitute the four modules of the two-year programme. “Rhythms” deals with aspects of the Jewish calendar including the festivals and special milestones, while “Purposes” encompasses philosophical discussions on concepts like G-d and the Chosen People.

“Dramas” is a historical narrative that includes aspects from the biblical period through to modern Jewish history. “Ethics” deals with issues around equality and justice, including topics like lashon horah, organ donation, honouring parents, homosexuality, ethics in divorce and marriage, abortion and euthanasia.

Classes meet once a week for a two-hour session. Due to demand, a morning class for first-years has been added this year.

Interest has been expressed in bringing the programme to Johannesburg, with the possibility of presenting a mock lesson there being mooted.

Kadimah: giving self-respect to disabled people

EDWIN VAN ANDEL

KADIMAH OCCUPATIONAL Centre in the suburb of Berea in Johannesburg, provides sheltered employment for the Jewish mentally disabled and operates like an oasis of stability and hope.

Every day 90 workers come from various suburbs by bus, car and taxi to their fulltime jobs.

Kadimah has “inner” strengths many people don’t know about. Even its supporters are not always up to date on its progress. That’s why Kadimah has set up a website, www.kadimahgoforward.co.za to strengthen its communication with the community.

Its workers are successfully doing more and more simple routine jobs for companies, enabling these companies to avoid mechanising certain functions.

Kadimah virtually broke even last year thanks to its wide range of income sources - and that despite a 63 per cent drop in donations received. It is a shining example of a private sector initiative helping to meet the need for sheltered employment where the public sector is unable to do so.

Even though Government is reducing direct funding to welfare organisations such as Kadimah, Government has recognised the importance of public benefit organisations (PBOs) that meet its standards.

In his recent budget speech, Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel, increased the tax concession on donations to PBOs from five per cent of taxable income to 10 per cent.

Kadimah:

- * Provides a secure, non-discriminatory environment where workers with disabilities maintain their self-respect by doing useful tasks that contribute to society;
- * Has a friendly, non-stressful workshop atmosphere despite the quality control standards in place to satisfy business customers wanting an efficient service at a market-related price;
- * Has a lovely garden where workers can enjoy their lunch and tea breaks;
- * Has an administration that keeps the Centre running smoothly;
- * Offers South Africans with a social conscience the opportunity to support a worthy cause without having to worry about funds being misdirected.

Social responsibility investors may at any time make a donation to approved PBOs such as Kadimah. Workers currently receive a salary of R70 per week. Greater income will enable Kadimah to pay their people more.

Anyone making a donation will, of course, receive a receipt entitling the donor to tax relief.

For more information, contact Dinky Oddes on (011) 643-2789 for Kadimah’s banking details.

AROUND THE WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

SARKOZY PLEDGES ISRAEL SUPPORT

JERUSALEM - France's president-elect has vowed to support Israel.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's office said on Tuesday that he had spoken by phone with Nicolas Sarkozy to congratulate him on his victory in Sunday's second round of voting to succeed Jacques Chirac.

The statement added that the conservative Sarkozy "thanked Prime Minister

Olmert and said: 'I am a friend of Israel and Israel can always rely on my friendship.'"

The two leaders expected to meet and discuss Middle East issues after Sarkozy was inaugurated, Olmert's office said.

Many Israelis see Sarkozy's election as a chance for France to redress foreign policies that are considered strongly pro-Arab. (JTA)

COMMUNITY COLUMNS



ABOVE BOARD

Michael Bagraim,
National Chairman

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Govt’s mixed messages worrying

aimed at promoting Holocaust denial, but South Africa was not among them, nor had it spoken out against the Iranian president’s previous calls for the destruction of Israel.

In January this year, South Africa was conspicuous by its absence at the United Nations General Assembly vote on a resolution condemning Holocaust denial. These are only a few of the examples that could be cited.

Expressing support for an organisation whose very founding charter describes the Jewish people as fundamentally evil enemies of humanity and calls for their total annihilation, fundamentally contradicts not just the ethos of our country but of the ruling ANC itself.

Throughout its history, the ANC has firmly adhered to the principles of non-racialism. For most of its history, it sought to pursue its goals in a lawful, peaceful manner, only turning to armed struggle as a last resort. Even then, with rare exceptions, it carefully avoided the targeting of civilians.

To an extent, mixed messages are coming from the government. Also last week, South Africa’s ambassador to Israel, Major-General Fumanekile Gqiba, strongly rebuked the Palestinians for the manner in which they were waging their struggle, saying that its military aspect could not become an end in itself, but had to be a means to a political goal.

South Africa, he said, was the only country that, on moral grounds, was able to say to the Palestinians: “We don’t think your strategy of using suicide bombers is justified. It is terrorism. It is not accepted by international law. It has nothing to do with the military code.”

Ambassador Gqiba’s unqualified rejection of terrorism is to be applauded. However, the statements and actions of senior government leaders have been telling a very different story. As Jews and as South African citizens, we cannot but view these developments with the deepest unhappiness.

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YOUTH TALK

Lara Greenberg jewishreport@yahoo.com

‘Six Million’ ring top project at KDVP

ELINOR SHKLAZ

INSPIRED by the film “Paperclips”, the Judaica committee of King David High School Victory Park has initiated a student project, “The Six Million”.

The learners aim to collect six million cold drink ring tops. The project was launched in January 2007 and will continue until the six million tops have been collected.

The project is in honour and remembrance of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust between 1933 and 1945 in Europe.

Elinor Shklaz, head of the committee explains: “We are taught never to forget the Holocaust, yet it is challenging to remember something so incomprehensible.

“Six million is a number impossible to visualise; however the journey of collecting six million ring tops will encourage Holocaust awareness, tolerance as well as a realisation of the magnitude of the number, six million.”

The six million tabs, once collected, will be displayed in a monument of six glass pillars. The location of the monument is still to be confirmed.

The South African community, through private and public schools, organisations and restaurants,



have been involved in collecting ring tops and posting the tops to King David High School Victory Park.

Furthermore, the collection has evolved into a competition. Collectors who hand in the most tops win prizes ranging from television sets to Ipods sponsored by the Israel Centre.

Members of the community are invited to join “our project for this worthy cause. Every single cold drink ring top counts.”

* For further information contact Elinor Shklaz at the 6million@gmail.co.za or KDVP at (011) 446-7860.

Young minds meet on Mibereshit Yom Yerushalayim 40

CARMEN EMANUEL
EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR,
MIBERESHIT SA

THE ATMOSPHERE in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town was electric as Jewish pupils from across the country from grade 4 - 6 vied for the first prize of a ticket to Israel to participate in the International Mibereshit Yom Yerushalayim 40, the anniversary of the unification of the city of Jerusalem Quiz.

In all centres the competition was fierce with the youngsters being well versed in the prepared material on the history of the City of Jerusalem, the gates of Jerusalem and the suburbs of the city.

The contestants did their schools proud - in Durban Amy Aranoff won the coveted prize while Johannesburg and Cape Town had a tie with Efrat Jacobs (Hirsch Lyons) and Ariyeh Chipkin (Yeshiva College Primary School) and Jordan Levin and Joshua Stein (both from the United Herzlia Schools, Highlands) winning the final round.

The contestants had all passed through two other prior elimination quizzes.

The final “International Quiz” will be held on Yom Yerushalayim at the Jerusalem Theatre, with participants from Europe, North America, South America as well as 20 contestants from Israel, battling it out.

South Africa is sending the biggest contingent to the quiz from outside Israel. The quiz will be held in front of Rabbi Mordechai Elon and Marc Belzberg the founding members of Mibereshit



Cape Town shaliach Moshe Lederman, director of the aliyah department for the Jewish Agency Yair Redl, Rabbi Yehuda Rosenberg, the Bnei Akiva Cape Town shaliach and Herzlia teacher, David Hersch, chairman of the Western Province Zionist Council, Jordan Levin and Karen Fig.



Prof Dan Stein and Joshua Stein.

worldwide. An internet link will be available through the Mibereshit website during the quiz.

Mibereshit is an educational organisation committed to the spiritual renaissance of the Jewish family. Close on 4 000 children and parents from grade R through primary school, receive the weekly Parsha sheets throughout South Africa. Mibereshit impacts on the lives of more than 250 000 children worldwide on a weekly basis.

Mibereshit is run in South Africa under the leadership of Rabbi Laurence Perez. It looks for opportunities to bring parents and children together in a meaningful Jewish way through fun educational projects.

Mibereshit recently ran an educational programme for Yom Hashoah where 5 000 books were distributed among adults and high school pupils called “60 days for 6 million”.

Each book contained the name of a person who died in the Holocaust and the readers are committed to learning short meaningful essays for 60 days in the name of the deceased. It is 60 years since the Holocaust. Members of the public were phoning the office off the hook to obtain more books, but demand exceeded the supply.

Lotsa pap, no gravy train

OWN CORRESPONDENT

THE CHILDREN of Minnie Bersohn Nursery School in Johannesburg, have been busy learning all about our country - South Africa.

This has been a most relevant and interesting theme for the young learners. A variety of experiences and activi-

ties have been offered to all the children, from play school right up to grade R.

Celebrating in true South African style, children enjoyed delicious pap and gravy which they were allowed to eat with their fingers!

Pictured here is Lia Solomon devouring her second bowl of pap and gravy.



UNHRC rife with institutionalised bias

CAYLEE TALPERT

I HAVE always been aware of the clear bias in the media against Israel and I have long ago abandoned the idealistic view that the United Nations will achieve world peace. However I have always defended the institution and held onto the belief that it is better than nothing and that its intentions are altruistic.

However, after recently spending a week in Geneva at the United Nations Human Rights Council I feel somewhat disillusioned. In fact the organisation is so politicised and rife with institutionalised bias I have come to understand the media’s stance on Israel and perhaps even commiserate with them.

When the organisation that supposedly is the moral pillar for the international system and at the forefront of human rights, repeatedly condemns one state, you cannot help but begin to understand why the world has such a pejorative stance on Israel.

Each year approximately 19 resolutions are passed against Israel and none against most other member states, including the world’s most repressive regimes.

In the 61st session of the General Assembly alone (2006-2007), 22 anti-Israel resolutions were passed. (The time spent enacting these resolutions was time not spent on passing a single resolution on Sudan’s genocide in Darfur.)

Furthermore, there are three special UN entities dedicated to the Palestinian cause: The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

The Division for Palestinian Rights alone has a budget of millions, which it devotes to the constant promotion of anti-Israel propaganda throughout the world.

One cannot deny that Israel like any other state is not perfect and has made and continues to make mistakes. However, to judge it on a level to which no other state has been subjected, defies all sense of justice and objectivity.

So what can be done? This is what was discussed at the week-long European Union of Jewish

Students (EUJS) seminar in Geneva during which we met with ambassadors, were educated on the situation and tried to come to some sort of understanding as to why Israel is being treated so disproportionately while Darfur receives minimal attention.

Being one of the only non-Europeans at the seminar and someone who is usually proud to call myself South African, I was not impressed when I learned about my country’s voting record.

Regarding Israel, our government has supported all the previous resolutions while the resolution concerning Darfur was rejected. Ours is a country that prides itself on impartiality, justice and most of all upholding human rights and I believe as Jewish South Africans we need to question why our government is not living up to these core values.

I am not naïve (or at least less so than before; I know there are various political and economic pressures at stake and that South Africa will always prioritise its national interest. However, we can at least come together as a community and make our voices heard.

In the US, the Jewish community has done a sterling job of this; The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) manages to place great pressure on the US government and has been instrumental in lobbying for a vast amount of pro-Israel legislation.

We have enough successful, influential people in our community who like myself pride themselves in being proudly South African. Is it not time to come together to lobby the government and make our concerns heard?

We need to speak out not only as Zionists to defend the state of Israel, but also as Jews committed to the humanitarian issues and the concept of tikkun olam.

We have suffered during the Holocaust and proclaimed the mantra: “Never again” should such atrocities take place, even while thousands were murdered in the Rwandan genocide.

It is time to start putting words into action and create an environment where I can confidently call myself a Jew, a Zionist and a proud South African.

(Caylee Talpert is the outgoing chair of SAUJS Wits)

Things done the Netzer way

MEGHAN FINN

NETZERNIKS from across the country gathered for our two mini-machanot in Cape Town and in Gauteng. Minimach Otzar (treasure), from March 30 to April 1, was held for our Capetonian chaverim (members) on our beautiful Glen Cairn campsite.

The weekend was jam-packed with fun, excellent peulot (activities) and fantastic experience for our new madrichim. A special feature was an uplifting Shabbat - coming together as a community with ruach, song and togetherness, is always done in our signature Netzer style!

Three weeks later, Minimach Chofesh (freedom) was held at Camp Nelu, an amazing site near

Britz (in Northwest Province), for our Gauteng and Durban chaverim.

While, of course, Minimach Chofesh also featured our distinct Netzer spirit, we also had the advantage of sharing the game reserve with ostriches, baboons and crocodiles. Along with the wildlife, we were very lucky to have three madrichim from the Israeli tsolim (scouts) movement join us, and their brilliant activities enhanced our tzevet (staff) and strengthened our ever-present Zionist expression.

On both weekends a great time was had by all. Shekoach to all involved and we hope that Netzer will only go from strength to strength for the rest of the year.

Nilmad V’Na’aseh! We will learn and we will do!

WHAT’S ON

Lara Greenberg <i>jewishreport@yahoo.com</i>	
09:30. Cost R75 for members, R80 for non-members. Booking essential.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second Innings is hosting an outing to the Wonder Caves in the Kromdraai area. Meet at the parking area of Oxford Shul at 08:45. Cost R55 includes bus fare and tour, but excludes lunch. Contact Helen Wolfson tel (011) 440-8236.• UJW Johannesburg is hosting Yossi Vissoker speaking on “Understanding yourself through your handwriting”, at 09:30.• Bnoth Zion Association WIZO Yom Yerushalayim celebration at the Albow Piazza.• RCHCC is hosting a mini-symposium on “Breast Cancer” at 19:30 with a panel of top specialists: Dr Paul Sneider - mammographic examinations and diagnosis; Dr Elgar Rogaly - surgical modalities; Dr Alan Widgerow - cosmetic reconstruction modalities; Dr Daniel Vorobiof - medical treatment of early breast cancer; and Dr Edna Retter - radiation treatment and “A Survivor’s Tale” by Molobatsi Ann Pooe-Shongwe. Cost R50.• UJW Cape Town is hosting Rebbetzin Avi Popack speakin on “Shavuot” at Stonehaven, 7 Albany Road, Sea Point from 10:00. Cost R12. Contact (021) 434-9555.	
Thursday (May 17)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beyachad Library is hosting “Wall”, a documentary on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in the Auditorium, 2 Elray Street, Raedene, at 19:30. Refreshments will be served and a donation of R20 is suggested. Contact Norma (011) 645-2567.• Chabad Umhlanga - Rabbi Yossy Goldman will be conducting a series of talks. Contact Shirley (031) 561-2487.	
Friday (May 18)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chabad Umhlanga hosts Minyanairies with Rabbi Yossy Goldman. Contact Shirley on (031) 561-2487.• UZLC is hosting Jack Zlotnick and Mo Skikne doing “The Jewish Humour Show”.• Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society is hosting book sales at Click’s Rosebank and Pick ‘n Pay Hypermarket Norwood from 09:00. Contact (011) 485-5232.	
Sunday (May 20)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second Innings is hosting Digby Ricci speaking on “A bedside selection - some worthwhile popular novels” at the Gerald Horwitz Lounge, Golden Acres at 10:00.• RCHCC will be rescreening The National Theatre Production “Primo” with Antony Sher at 19:30. Cost R50.• WIZO Rishon branch has organised a cooking demonstration by Cynthia Duchen at Temple Emanuel. Tickets cost R 70 and all proceeds to go to battered women and children. For details and bookings, phone Evie on 083 455 6691.• Jewish Genealogical Society of SA is hosting Elaine Gavshon with an introduction by Maurice Gavshon speaking on “Cuba - the Jewish community” at 19:00 at Beyachad, 2 Elray street Raedene. Cost R15. Contact Judy on (011) 884-3126.	
Monday (May 21)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UJW Johannesburg is hosting Lance Gewer speaking on “The road to Oscar” at 09:30.	
Tuesday (May 22)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chabad Umhlanga - Annual “Nations of the World Shavuos dinner”. RSVP Shirley on (031) 561-2487.• UJW Johannesburg is hosting a morning of music with Estelle Sher at 10:00 at 301 Eton Place, Kernick Ave Melrose North. Cost R20.	
Friday (May 25)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UZLC is hosting Herby Rosenberg speaking on “Tzedakah and Ubuntu”.	
Saturday night (May 26)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bnoth Zion Association WIZO premiere of “Hair” at Theatre on the Bay 20:30. Aviv Shoshana branch. Tickets R220 each available from Lara Derman 082-787-8706 or the BZA office (021) 464-6729.	
Sunday (May 27)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second Innings is hosting Natalie Knight speaking on “Dunga Manzi - stirring water” at Beyachad at 10:00.• Bnoth Zion Association WIZO Hadar branch: “Cruising Life” with Daniel Silke. Light supper. Cost R50. Phone Dorothy (021) 674-4578.• WIZO Tzabar Family Fun Day. Have some fun at the Ullman Park, Minto Rd, Morningside Manor. From 09:30 to 16:30. Kosher food, entertainment and a variety of interesting offers. Contact Sandy at (011) 645-2515.	
Wednesday (May 16)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SFCC is hosting David Batzofin speaking on “To the highest point in Africa - Kilimanjaro”, at 10:00.• WIZO Fortnightly Forum is hosting a Yom Yerushalayim ceremony combined with the SAZF, introduced by Rabbi Laurence Perez, followed by a variety show at the Killarney Country Club from	

Cream of Israeli films on show

CINEMA NOUVEAU in Rosebank, Johannesburg, in conjunction with the Embassy of Israel and Tararam, (The South Africa Israel Culture Fund), will once again be hosting the 2007 Israeli Film Festival.

Opening in Cinema Nouveau June 1 and moving through to Brooklyn in Pretoria from June 8 before being shown at the Gateway in Durban from June 15 and Cavendish Square in Cape Town from June 22, the 2007 Israeli Film Festival promises to bring varied, intelligently-explored and sensitively portrayed dimensions of Israeli life and experiences to South African audiences.

In a media release the Embassy of Israel says entry is free to all screenings which will be held daily at 17:30 and 20:00. More information will be available at the cinemas nearer the time or from the Embassy of Israel on e-mail publicaffairs@pretoria.mfa.gov.il

From the conflicts and drama of the modern urban environment that characterise much of Israeli life through the tensions created by the confrontation of an essentially secular existence with tradition and traditional values, the choices that challenge a society involved in a continual process of self-appraisal, are reflected in a series of films.

Short synopsis of films:

Three Mothers (106 min, family drama)
Director: Dina Zvi-Riklis

“Three Mothers” is a poignant tale of the lives of triplet sisters, born in Alexandria to the palace midwife and raised in Israel. The Hakim sisters, Rose, Yasmin, and Flora were born in Alexandria in 1942.

In 1958 Jews became unwelcome and the family fled to Israel. The film which follows the lives of the three sisters and their families in Israel, with many twists and turns, challenges the meaning of marital loyalties and sibling relationships. Stars Gila Almagor

Awards: Best Cinematography, Best Wardrobe Design - Israeli Academy Awards, 2006; International FFs: Hoff, Germany 2006, Bankok, 2007, Sao Paulo, 2006.

“Pesya’s Necklace” (to be screened with “Like A Fish Out Of Water”, 35 min)
Director: Jorge Gurvich

On her 80th birthday, Pesya Goldfarb is determined to return to her parents’ house located in Poland. Travelling with her teenage granddaughter, she intends to find a golden necklace, which was hidden by her and her sister on the day they were taken to Auschwitz.

In returning to her childhood home, Pesya must confront years of shame and decide whether or not to reveal her secrets.

“Like Fish Out Of Water” (screened with “Pesya’s Necklace”, 50 min)
Director: Leon Prudovsky

A romantic comedy about Marcelo, a new immigrant from Argentina, and Anat, his Hebrew teacher at the Ra’anana Absorption Centre. Marcelo is trying to improve his Hebrew accent so he can get an acting role in an Israeli soap opera.

Anat, who could help him, is not too fond of her pupil and has her own issues...

Awards: Jewry citation, Gerona International Film Festival, Besalu competition 2006 Audience Favourite, Hong Kong Jewish Film Festival 2006. Screened at 21 International Festivals 2006 - 2007

“Dear Mr Waldman” (90 min: drama)
Director: Hanan Peled

In the early sixties, Hilik, a 10-yea-old boy who lives in Tel Aviv, knows he and his brother’s goal in life is: to make his parents happy and compensate for the grief and loss they had suffered in the Holocaust.

Moishe, Hilik’s father, chooses to believe that his lost son, from his first marriage, didn’t die in Auschwitz as he thought, and somehow escaped to America to become President John F Kennedy’s assistant.

As he has never really accepted the fact that he is the only survivor from his family, Moishe is sinking back to his past. Torn between his

fear that his father would abandon him, and the wish to make him happy, Hilik chooses to test his father’s love to him, while accepting the risk of loosing him.

2007 Palm Springs International Film Festival; Atlanta Jewish Film Festival 2007; 2006 Jerusalem Film Festival; 2006 Ophir Awards Competition - The Israeli Oscar 3 nomination.

“Wasserman - The Rain Man” (58 min, drama)
Director: Idit Shechori

Seventy-three-year-old Wasserman swore never to pray again. He blames G-d for his family’s annihilation during the Holocaust. He is unwilling to forgive. But a dire situation forces Wasserman to reconsider.

He needs money; his creditors are knocking on his door. The only way his religious neighbours will help him out is if he agrees to join them in the synagogue for a communal prayer to end the devastating drought that is plaguing their region.

Now Wasserman has to confront his two daughters and grandson in a final attempt to hold on to his family and his land. He has 24 hours to make a decision. Screened at 14+ international film festivals.

“A Green Chariot” (48 min, drama)
Director: Gilad Goldschmidt

Twenty two-year-old Sasha’s greatest wish is to become an Israeli. He has become religious, changed his name to Yair and speaks only in Hebrew - even when he is addressed in Russian.

He has completely cut himself off from his Russian past, including his father and his Russian friends.

Now, Yair is about to marry his Israeli girlfriend. Then Yair receives a package from his aunt in the Ukraine. His world is shaken. Something inside challenges everything Yair believes about himself and the person he’s tried to become.

The revelation forces him to confront his religious beliefs and journey back to the Russian identity he has fought to suppress.

Awards: Silver, Houston Worldfest International Film Festival 2006 * Nomination for Best Actor, Shanghai International TV Festival 2006. * Religion Today Film Festival, Italy, 2006.

Screened at 36 international film festivals.

“Something Sweet” (96 min, romantic drama)
Director: Dan Turgeman

A heart-warming romantic tale of inopportune love between Tamar, a witty, beautiful pastry baker and the oldest of three daughters in a Jewish-Moroccan family and her youngest sister’s fiancé.

It is set against the backdrop of a small moshav (agricultural village) in northern Israel, on the day of the middle-sister’s wedding.

Maya, the youngest, arrives at the celebration with Alon, a sharp Israeli businessman living in London. Alon’s enchantment with the close-knit family, the simplicity of village life and serene landscape, opens his heart to an almost unattainable closeness with Tamar, and re-acquaintance with his alienated father.

Mysterious superstitions, Jewish-Moroccan ethnic music and sweet delicacies are intricately knotted into the triangle love affair and the tightly woven relationships.

“Out of Sight” (86 min, mystery drama)
Director: Daniel Syrkin

Ya’ara, the young heroine of this gripping psychological mystery, is lovely-looking, brilliant, brusquely independent and (almost incidentally) totally blind.

The latter in no way hampers her from investigating the shocking suicide of Talia, her cousin and inseparable childhood best friend, boldly dragging to light what the sighted around her chose not to “see”.

Director Daniel Syrkin won the Israeli equivalent of the Academy Award for his work. Starring Assi Dayan.

Tomb of King Herod discovered at Herodium

JERUSALEM - The long search for Herod the Great's tomb has ended with the exposure of the remains of his grave, sarcophagus and mausoleum on Mount Herodium's northeastern slope, Prof Ehud Netzer of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Institute of Archaeology, has announced.

Herod was the Roman-appointed king of Judea from 37 to 4 BCE, who was renowned for his many monumental building projects, including the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the palace at Masada, as well as the complex at Herodium, 15 kilometres south of Jerusalem.

Herodium was the most outstanding among King Herod's building projects. This was the only site that carried his name and the site where he had chosen to be buried and to memorialise himself - all of this with the integration of a huge, unique palace at the fringe of the desert, said Prof. Netzer. Therefore, he said, the exposure of his tomb became the climax of this site's research.

The approach to the burial site - which has been described by the archaeologists involved as one of the most striking finds in Israel in recent years - was via a monumental flight of stairs (6,5 metres wide) leading to the hillside that were especially constructed for the funeral procession.

The excavations on the slope of the mountain, at whose top is the famed structure comprising a palace, a fortress and a monument, commenced in August 2006. The expedition, on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was conducted by Prof Netzer, together with Yaakov Kalman and Roi Porath and with the participation of local Bedouins.

The location and unique nature of the findings, as well as the historical record, leave no doubt that this was Herod's burial site, said Prof Netzer.

The mausoleum itself had been almost totally dismantled in ancient times. In its place remained only part of its well-built podium, or base, built of large white ashlar (dressed stone) in a manner and size not



A man inspects the recently discovered tomb site of King Herod, on May 8, on the hilltop fortress of Herodium near the West Bank town of Bethlehem. (CREDIT: BRIAN HENDLER/JTA)

previously revealed at Herodium.

Among the many high quality architectural elements, mostly well decorated, which were spread among the ruins, is a group of decorated urns (made in the form of special jars that were used to store body ashes).

Similar ones are to be found on the top of burial monuments in the Nabatean world. The urns had a triangular cover and were decorated on the sides.

Spread among the ruins are pieces of a large, unique sarcophagus (close to 2,5 metres long), made of a Jerusalemite reddish limestone, which was decorated by rosettes. The sarcophagus had a triangular cover, which was decorated on its sides.

This is assumed with certainty to be the sarcophagus of Herod. Only very few similar sarcophagi are known in the country and can be found only in elaborate tombs such as the famous one at the King's Tomb on Selah a-Din Street in East Jerusalem.

Although no inscriptions have been found yet at Herodium, neither on the sarcophagus nor in the building remains, these still might be found during the continuation of the dig.

Worthy of note is the fact that the sarcophagus was broken into hundreds of pieces, no doubt deliberately. This activity, including the destruction of the monument, apparently took place in the years 66-72 CE during the first Jewish revolt against the Romans, while Jewish rebels took hold of the site, according to

Josephus and the archaeological evidence.

The rebels were known for their hatred of Herod and all that he stood for, as a "puppet ruler" for the Romans.

The search for Herod's tomb, which actively began 30 years ago, focused until the middle of 2006 at Lower Herodium, in an area which was, no doubt, especially built for the funeral and burial of the king - the "Tomb Estate".

In order to reveal there the remains from Herod's days, the expedition was "forced" to first expose a large complex of Byzantine structures (including a church), an effort that demanded many years of digging.

The Tomb Estate included two monumental buildings and a large ritual bath (mikveh) as well as the large route (350 metres long and 30 metres wide) which was prepared for the funeral.

When no sign of the burial place itself was found within the Tomb Estate, the expedition started to search for it on the slope of the hill, although there seems to be no doubt that the initial intention of the king was to be buried in the estate and that only in a later stage of his life - apparently when he grew old - did he change his mind and asked to be buried within the artificial cone which gave the hill of Herodium its current volcano-shape.

The main historical source of the Second Temple's days, the historian Josephus Flavius, has described the site of Herodium in



Professor Ehud Netzer speaks to the press at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem on May 8, about the discovery of the Tomb of Herod. (CREDIT: BRIAN HENDLER/JTA)

detail, as well as the funeral in the year 4 BCE, but not the tomb proper. He wrote as follows:

"The king's funeral next occupied his attention. Archelaus, omitting nothing that could contribute to its magnificence, brought forth all the royal ornaments to accompany the procession in honour of the deceased. The bier was of solid gold, studded with precious stones, and had a covering of purple, embroidered with various colours; on this lay the body enveloped in purple robe, a diadem encircling the head and surmounted by a crown of gold, the sceptre beside his right hand.

"Around the bier were Herod's sons and a large group of his relations; these were followed by the guards, the Thracian contingent, Germans and Gauls, all equipped as for war. The remainder of the troops marched in front, armed and in orderly array, led by their commanders and subordinate officers; behind these came five hundred of Herod's servants and freedmen, carrying spices.

"The body was thus conveyed for a distance of two hundred furlongs to Herodium, where, in

accordance with the directions of the deceased, it was interred. So ended Herod's reign."

Prof Netzer started his archaeological activity at Herodium in 1972, at first on a small scale. The scope of his work widened with the decision to turn Herodium (the mount together with Lower Herodium) into a national park which was due to occupy 125 acres. (Until that stage only the mount was proclaimed as a national park and was operated by the Nature and Parks Authority.)

The enlargement of the park started in 1980; unfortunately the activity at the site stopped as a result of the first Intifada, but not before the complex of tunnels from the days of Bar-Kokhba, within the mount, were opened to the public.

The archaeological excavations at the site, which also stopped in 1987, were renewed 10 years later and continued until 2000, and after a second break, were renewed at the end of 2005.

Prof Netzer gained his first "intimate" acknowledgement of Herodian architecture while joining Prof Yigael Yadin (in 1963-'66), in his expedition at Masada.

Netzer's Ph D dissertation in archaeology, guided by Prof Yadin, brought him to initiate excavations both at Lower Herodium and at Jericho - at the complex of Hasmonean and Herodian Winter Palaces. (The site at Jericho, following Netzer's excavations, includes three palaces of Herod and a hitherto unknown large complex of Hasmonean winter palaces).

Additional Herodian structures in other parts of the country were also uncovered by him. He has written various books and articles on the topic of Herodian architecture.

Come on brides, it's photo time again!

THE WIZO/SA *Jewish Report* bridal competition to select our Jewish Bride of the Year, is raring to go for 2006/2007, with the culminating function to be held in March 2008. Again, as in the past, there will be a host of delectable prizes.

Our competition for 2007 follows last year's highly successful format. The rules are as follows:

1. Entries close at the end of December 2007. All brides married from July 2006 until then, are eligible for entry.

2. Bride must be present in Johannesburg at the time of judging.

3.The top 25 finalists must be in Johannesburg for the final interview judging, at their own expense or they will be disqualified.

4.The winner must become an active member of WIZO for one year following the competition.

5. No photographers are permitted to send in photographs. The only photographs permitted for entry are those submitted by the bride herself. All entries MUST be signed by the bride herself.

6. Photographs will be printed

within the time frame and discretion of the *Jewish Report*.

7. All photographs submitted will be judged with the original photograph, so no digital images are permitted.

8. Brides must specify whether they would like their photographs returned to them following the competition. The photographs will be available from the WIZO office at Beyachad in Johannesburg after the culminating function.

9. Very importantly: Please note, all photographs MUST be submitted to WIZO and NOT to the *SA Jewish Report*.

Send the photos to:

Sheila Levine
WIZO/SAJR Bridal Competition
PO Box 29216
Sandringham
Johannesburg, 2131

or hand-deliver to:

(WIZO at) Beyachad
2 Elray Street
Raedene
Johannesburg
2192

Please send in your photograph with:

Bride's first and maiden names

Place of chupah

Date of wedding

Name of photographer

Contact telephone number

E-mail address

Cell number

Signature, consenting to the printing of this photograph

Would you like to get your photographs back? YES / NO



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Knowledge of the Jewish culture would be an advantage.

Interested candidates to forward a comprehensive c.v. to hr@jhbchev.co.za, fax 0866327774 or Attention HR Department, Private Bag X1, Sandringham, 2131

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Our organization is looking for a Music therapist with relevant formal qualifications and prior experience in using music as a therapeutic medium. Our client population caters for geriatrics and residents with mental, physical and intellectual disabilities in a variety of settings. The ideal candidate must be people oriented, creative, dynamic and a team player that enables residents to use this medium therapeutically. Knowledge of the Jewish culture would be an advantage.

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KASHRUT ALERT

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THE BRIDGE LOUNGE by Jeff Sapire

COLUMN 21

LAST NIGHT I was watching a friendly match of world-class players on the internet when this interesting hand arose.

East dealer, both vul

WEST

♠ A
♥ AQ5
♦ Q1074
♣ J10742

NORTH

♠ 1063
♥ 98
♦ K853
♣ AKQ6

EAST

♠ 82
♥ KJ1076432
♦ J9
♣ 3

SOUTH

♠ KQJ9754
♥ -
♦ A62
♣ 985

At table 1, East opened 4H over which South bid 4S. West competed with 5H and North pressed on to 5S, which became the final contract. The ace of hearts lead was ruffed, and declarer played a trump, ruffed the heart continuation and then ran the spades. There were eleven tricks on top, but West was squeezed in the minors for an overtrick, for +680.

At table 2, where the Italian World Champions, Lauria/Versace were sitting East/West, the bidding was quite different.

East	South	West	North
4H	4S	4NT	5S
Pass	Pass	6H	Dbl
All pass			Opening lead: SK

I'm not quite sure what West's 4NT meant (it certainly wasn't Blackwood) - I suspect it was a specialised convention to show a good hand with heart support. But when 5S came back to West he had no hesitation in bidding again. 6H doubled went two down, with declarer losing three tricks in the minors, for -500. This gave the Italian team a net gain of +180, translating to 5imps.

What was interesting was West's decision not to sell out at the five level. He followed the sound principle of bidding one more in high level competitive auctions where there are long suits flying around, and lots of distribution.

It won't always work, of course, but it's a winning philosophy to "bid one more" in these situations.

CROSSWORD No 24

BY LEAH SIMON

ACROSS:

1. We return from Port Elizabeth - and cry (4)

3. Money just for this wool (8)

8. Slurps up liquid on trips around the circuit (4)

9. Creeping - and with very taking movements! (8)

11. Swept me off my feet at the Cricket World Cup! (6, 2, 4)

13. Rosen finds learner and joins up (6)

14. Young lion encircles her - the angel! (6)

17. Moment of weakness? We're in the dark about it (5, 7)

20. Double act for children to imagine (4, 4)

21. Lump of earth gets a mineral drink (4)

22. I try real hard, relating to books (8)

23. Chislehurst contains sea-locked land patch (4)

4. Time for a fall! (6)

5. Chief locksmith? Certainly above the crown! (4, 2, 4)

6. Beethoven was all for her (5)

7. Therefore the Latin (4)

10. Vegetable that takes its toll, being hot (4, 6)

12. Sailor to cancel - and renounce (8)

15. Our accountant and union leader making a loud noise (7)

16. A very loud melody for illicit romance! (6)

18. Surgical skill? Only by design (2, 3)

19. Pablo loses bulkhead to the stone (4)

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD NO 23

ACROSS: 1. Pick; 3. Stiffens; 8. Rant; 9. Appeared; 11. Break a record; 13. Toting; 14. Cobalt; 17. Board meeting; 20. Curtails; 21. Coda; 22. West Side; 23. Beta.

DOWN: 1. Parabats; 2. Connect; 4. Tapers; 5. French Open; 6. Error; 7. Side; 10. Skin creams; 12. Stigmata; 15. Adipose; 16. Ambled; 18. Ogres; 19. Scow.

1		2			3	4		5		6		7
8					9							
				10								
11												
												12
13								14			15	
						16						
	17	18										
19												
20									21			
22										23		

AROUND THE WORLD

NEWS IN BRIEF

FILM ABOUT RABBI WINS AWARD

NEW YORK - A film about an Orthodox rabbi struggling with his faith, has won an award at the Tribeca Film Festival.
"My Father My Lord," directed by David Volach, won the Founders Award for best narrative feature last week Thursday at the festival in downtown New York City.
Robert De Niro is a cofounder of the six-year-old festival. (JTA)

LIBERAL MIDDLE EAST BRIEFING LAUNCHED

WASHINGTON - A liberal think tank is launching a daily e-mail bulletin on Arab-Israeli relations.
The Washington-based Centre for American Progress, launched its Middle East Bulletin on Monday, saying in a release that it was "dedicated to addressing America's interests in pursuing sustainable peace agreements between Israel and the Arab world".
The bulletin will go out three times a week and primarily feature news and opinion pieces from the Internet.

Israel supporters march in NY

NEW YORK - Thousands of Israel supporters on Sunday marched in New York City.
Organisers estimated that some 100 000 people marched with floats and flags up Fifth Avenue through the city's midtown, celebrating the anniversary of Israel's founding in 1948.

PRO-PALESTINIANS RALLY IN ROTTERDAM

NEW YORK - Thousands of Palestinian supporters last Saturday rallied against Israel on the Netherlands' Liberation Day.
Ha'aretz reported that the protesters sought to equate Israeli policy in the West Bank with the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands.
Former Dutch Prime Minister Dries Van Agt at the gathering criticised Holland's "biased" pro-Israeli stance

PRO-ISRAEL STUDENT REFUSED SERVICE

NEW YORK - A Maryland food co-op is discussing its customer service policy after a pro-Israel student was refused service in late April.
A checkout person at the Maryland Food Collective told a student at the time that her "I Stand With Israel" T-shirt was offensive, and refused to serve her, according to diamondbackonline.com, the University of Maryland newspaper.
The student found another worker to help her but left the store "emotionally distraught", said Avi Mayer, president of the Pro-Israel Terrapin Alliance.
"To my understanding, it was done openly and in front of others, and in a mildly humiliating manner, and that

and its boycott of Hamas, the terrorist group that took over the Palestinian Authority government after winning elections last year.
Holland is part of a Western boycott on direct aid to Hamas until the group accepts Israel's right to exist and renounces violence. PA Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas, who had intended to address the rally, was denied a visa to the Netherlands. (JTA)

really is something that is not acceptable," Mayer told the paper after speaking with the student.
The student "really does want to resolve this, but I think it goes way beyond her individual experience because we can't allow this... to be an epidemic."
Jewish students attended the collective's weekly meeting on April 30, where workers asserted their right to deny service to anyone they chose.
However, one worker said the co-op's policy on service would be discussed and possibly amended.
An official statement from the co-op would be available this week, she told the paper. (JTA)

AJCOMMITTEE ELECTS PRESIDENT

NEW YORK - Richard Sideman has been elected president of the American Jewish Committee.
Sideman succeeds E Robert Goodkind, whose three-year term ended last week with the group's annual meeting in Washington.
"These turbulent times pose enormous challenges to the Jewish people," said

Sideman, who added that he was "deeply honoured" to have been elected.
"With AJC's emphasis upon reason and tolerance, we will confront these problems with measured determination and AJC's trademark diplomacy."
Sideman has been an AJCommittee member since 1982. (JTA)



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Marcus sits easy on Commagomma

JACK MILNER

ANTON MARCUS showed why he is rated among the best jockeys in the country when winning the R3 million Gommagomma Challenge at Turffontein last Saturday. Marcus captured Africa's richest race on 33-10 second favourite Pick Six, who is trained by Charles Laird.

Emperor Napoleon, trained by Mike de Kock, was sent out a 22-10 favourite but the relatively inexperienced Randall Simons fell prey to Marcus's magnificent strategy.

"We really didn't have a game plan," explained Marcus. "I discussed it with Charles (Laird) in the ring and said I was just going to ride the race according to Pick Six. I knew we couldn't sprint with Biarritz and I wanted Elusive Fort to carry his weight. So I went for it and was very fortunate I had a very good horse under me."

It was more than just "fortunate", as he described it. After the field had gone just 200m, Marcus, from his outside draw, raced Pick Six through the field and into the lead, making full use of his light weight of 51.5kg.

That proved to be the winning move. While Pick Six motored along in front, Simons was content to leave Emperor Napoleon five lengths back. Only jockey Piere Strydom was shrewd enough to work out what Marcus was doing and he raced his horse, Rippling Ring, right on Pick Six's haunches.

However, his runner was not good enough to win the race over a distance short of his best, and once they came into the straight, Marcus set sail for home.

Emperor Napoleon closed in on the rails but he had too much work to do and could only manage second spot, one length back.

De Kock was quite magnanimous in



Jockey Anton Marcus relaxes after winning the R3 million Gommagomma Challenge on Pick Six at Turffontein last Saturday. (PHOTOGRAPH: JC PHOTOS)

defeat. "Anton Marcus rode a brilliant race. Perhaps if Emperor Napoleon had raced handier early we could have gone closer, but on the day the best horse won and congratulations to the connections."

For Laird it was the end of a most frustrating run that saw his charges finish fourth in last year's July and second in the J&B Met (Lion Tamer) as well as second in the Steinhoff International Summer Cup (Likeithot).

"This one is for Charles and Anton," said co-owner Markus Jooste. "They're a great team and they're doing a great job for us. It is a privilege for me to stand here today."

Captain Dean's double vision

JACK MILNER

ONE THING we at the *Jewish Report* can always rely on is input and information from our readers. Last week's story on Jewish British-born soccer star Joe Jacobson, evoked a lot of interest and also resulted on more information coming through on Cape Town-born Dean Furman, who is now playing for Glasgow Rangers and is captain of their youth team.

Furman led the team to a 5-0 victory over archrivals Celtic in the final of the Scottish Cup. He is clearly a highly rated and talented midfielder and here is an update from this week's *Jewish Chronicle* on Furman's search for "the double":

Rangers' South African captain Dean Furman, hopes to cap a memorable week by leading the Gers to the Scottish Youth League and cup double.

Leading archrivals Celtic on goal difference at the top of the league, the midfielder knows that victory in the final game of the season against third-placed Hibernian would cement the title.

"A double would be a great way to round off the season and we go into the game in confident mood," Furman told JC Sport.

The 18-year-old, who netted in last week's 5-0 Scottish Youth Cup final win over their Auld Firm rivals,

described his strike as an "unforgettable moment".

Furman scored the final goal in the 5-0 win in front of nearly 11 500 spectators at Hampden Park, slotting home after Celtic keeper Paul Skinner parried an effort from hat-trick hero Steve Lennon.

Signed from Chelsea by former boss Paul Le Guen, Furman said: "It was a great feeling to score in front of my family and friends and I ran over to the fans and punched the air in delight. All the lads are still buzzing as it was great to do so well against our rivals."

Furman, whose family live in Edgware, revealed an element of calm before and during the match.

"Hampden is a fantastic stadium and to see so many fans in the ground was absolutely amazing. Some players can freeze in such an environment, but all our lads rose to the occasion and were brilliant throughout."

He also played down his role as captain in front of watching first team manager Walter Smith.

"Whether I am skipper or not, I am always vocal on the pitch and try to lead by example. I'm constantly trying to impress and hope I managed to boost my chances of a first team place."

"The SPL season is drawing to a close, but if I get a chance in any of the remaining games I will grab it with both hands."

Four out of four for SAUJS

LAST WEEK Wednesday saw Metzuyan On the Square SAUJS complete their fourth consecutive win of the season, beating the Commerce side by 13 points to 10.

The SAUJS team dominated in large periods of the game, winning the oppositions line-out ball as well as control-

ling the scrums.

This win puts SAUJS on top of the interfaculty log and they should be in line for a semi-final placing.

SAUJS play their next game on Wednesday, May 16, against the Miners on Wits' bottom rugby fields at 19:30.

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