

# THE JEWISH STANDARD

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# Reflections on the New Year

He would be a blind and unthinking optimist who would claim that everything was for the best in this "best of all possible worlds". We witness the pitiful streams of Yazidi refugees fleeing the blood lust of a terrorist entity for whom executions and beheadings are an integral part of their recruitment campaigns. We are haunted by the carnage inflicted by Boka Haram, all in the name of an Islamist cause that seems to resonate, too easily, with too many. We see Christians being targeted throughout Muslim countries, their right to freedom of religion denied by zealots who demand that they either subject themselves to *dhimmitude* or become refugees. We watch in disbelief as civilian aircraft are shot out of the skies by unrepentant pro Russian forces in the Ukraine. And, of course, we listen anxiously as Israel fights back against a barrage of rocket attacks and resists the obduracy of its myopic critics. Greed and hate consume our civilization and the hope that the "savagery of man" may somehow be tamed seems a forlorn one.

Then there are the internal problems facing Western Jewry. In Canada and the United States the menace of anti-Semitism has little impact on our daily lives. We must, of course, remain vigilant and make certain that those who deface our synagogues and desecrate our tombstones are brought to justice. But fears that Gilles Proulx and the few others like him reflect the views of all Canadians are, quite frankly, irrational. In Europe, however, especially in France and Great Britain, with its massive Muslim populations for

whom the concept of multiculturalism has no meaning, anti-Semitism threatens to spiral out of control. When French Jews are intimidated to the point that they believe *aliya* is their only salvation, when lunatic Muslim clerics preach the virtues of jihad in mosques across Great Britain, when Muslim punks break the windows of Jewish stores and harass innocent Jews on their way to synagogue, only the naive would approach the future without foreboding.

But anti-Semitism is not the only issue facing Jewish communities. Intermarriage is increasing and Judaism must find a way to accommodate the growing number of inter-faith couples. Jewish education barely touches the general Jewish community. There is an attenuation of a Judaism in which religion has become largely irrelevant. Jewish organizations vie amongst themselves for public attention often losing sight of the fact that they all are fighting for the same cause.

The pressure of unsolved - and perhaps insoluble - problems would justify a substantial measure of despair. Yet we Jews, who have endured the Inquisition and the Holocaust, have little choice but to continue our journey. In a world which has existed since the beginning of time and will stretch eternally into the future, a year, a generation, a lifetime are of little account. As we stand on the threshold of a New Year, we may only see dark blots on an uncertain horizon. But Jews must still hope that before they are "gathered up unto their ancestors" that our destiny will allow us to find allies who share our belief in the justice of our cause.



# THE WORLD IN REVIEW

NEWS OF THE RECENT PAST IS REVIEWED

By NOAH FREEDMAN

## Chief Rabbi Quits Amid Controversy

Karol Sidon, the long time chief rabbi of Prague and the Czech Republic, has resigned the former post after two decades serving the Jewish community. His resignation did not come without considerable controversy.

It was not so much that the political and psychological thriller novel "Altschul's Method", supposedly authored by Chaim Cigan, was, in fact, the distinguished rabbi. Most people accepted his explanation that writing about science fiction, alternate history and Jewish mysticism "does not befit a rabbi".

What likely hastened his retirement were reports that he has separated from his third wife and has become engaged to one of his former conversion students.

Karol Sidon, now 71, converted to Judaism in the early 1980s after enrolling in Jewish studies at

Heidelberg university in Germany. He returned to Prague in 1992 and became chief rabbi. "His arrival", says Charles Wiener, a former director of the Prague Jewish community, "was crucial for the community...All institutions in then Czechoslovakia were in the shadow of communism and collaboration, and suddenly someone came who had not been collaborating but was in fact thrown out of the country by communist authorities."

At the turn of the century tensions developed in Prague between Rabbi Sidon and Chabad rabbi Manis Barash. A sometimes violent struggle ensued before Sidon was returned to his post. Even today, some ten years later, the community remains divided.

Sidon's successor is Rabbi David Peter of the Jerusalem Synagogue in Prague, "My dream," he says, "is to help people embrace their Jewishness."

## Israeli Customer Turned Away - in Florida

The woman, who wishes to remain anonymous, speaks with an Israeli accent and converses in Hebrew on her cellphone. She has lived in Coral Springs, Florida for 15 years. Recently the Floridian did what she has been doing ever since she got her driver's license - she went to the nearest Shell station to fill up with gas.

But that's when the problem began. An employee of the station allegedly told her that "you guys are killers and your money is not welcome here."

The woman initially believed that the employee was the owner but that was not the case. In fact, the owner is actually Jewish and he told the Coral Springs Talk website that his employee's behaviour was "totally intolerable". Added Pam Rosen, communications manager of Shell's

corporate offices in Houston, Texas: "Shell does not condone the type of behaviour alleged to have occurred and expected that third parties selling shell-branded motor fuels to treat every customer in a fair and exclusive manner."

## Shimon Peres and Lauren Bacall

It seems implausible but apparently the late Lauren Bacall and Shimon Peres were first cousins.

The former Israeli president's birth name in Poland was Perski which was also Miss Bacall's birth name, even if she spelled it Perske. Their fathers were brothers.

Bacall never denied the report. She explained to a reporter that her parents divorced when she was six years old. Her father abandoned the family and she never had any further contact with the Perske side. Her mother went back to using her maiden name of

(Please turn to page 10)



WHILE TELEVISION SCREENS MAY HAVE FOCUSED ON THE DESTRUCTION IN GAZA AND the impact of the war on civilians there, Israeli families also suffered from the trauma of constant rocket attacks and damage from Gaza rockets was often extensive. Photo IGPO.

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# GETTING IT WRONG

A PARENT RESPONDS TO SATMAR RABBI

By **STEPHEN M. FLATOW**

*Mr. Flatow, a New Jersey attorney, is the father of Alisa Flatow, who was murdered by Palestinian terrorists in 1995. - The Editor*

I've never been impressed by those who claim to know the "real" reason behind some tragedy--usually something along the lines of the victim not having recently checked to make sure his or her mezuzahs were still kosher. But the recent pronouncement by a prominent Hasidic rebbe about who

he blamed for the kidnap-murders of three Israeli teenagers is especially outrageous. And I'm taking it personally.

Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum, leader of the Satmar Hasidim in Kiryas Joel, New York, declared: "The parents are to blame. They caused their sons'

*(Please turn to page 11)*

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# CITY OF BOMB SHELTERS

SDEROT RESIDENTS HOPE THOSE IN TEL AVIV NOW UNDERSTAND THEIR FLIGHT

By LINDA GRADSTEIN, MEDIA LINE

Simone Mizrachi wearily follows her two-year-old grandson as he happily jumps on the bouncy castle in a large indoor playground here. A balloon pops and she jumps. The playground has four large underground bomb shelters in case of rocket attacks.

"Enough already," Mizrachi says to The Media Line about the dozens of

rockets fired at this small town over the past three days. "My grandson is the second generation already living through these rockets. When we see smoke from the rockets I try to tell him 'look at the clouds up there,' but he knows it's not clouds. At age 2, he already knows what's going on."

Mizrachi has lived in this lower middle-class

town of 24,000 for 32 years and has raised her four children here. For the past 13 years she says, Sderot has been under constant rocket fire. Because it is less than a mile to the border with the Gaza Strip, there are only 15 seconds to get to a shelter after the siren sounds. The Israeli government has spent hundreds of millions of

bomb shelters here --- at bus stops, schools and in private homes.

Now for the first time, rockets are hitting Tel Aviv, Israel's hedonistic city of sand and sun. Mizrachi says she hopes Israel can end the rocket fire all over the country. But she says there is a certain satisfaction in the idea that Israelis

*(Please turn to page 13)*

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# BLAMING RACISM

HAMAS DENIES USING "HUMAN SHIELDS"

By **MOSHE PHILLIPS AND BENYAMIN KORN**

*[Moshe Phillips and Benyamin Korn are members of the board of the Religious Zionists of America. This article is part of a series. To view previous installments, please visit <http://www.phillyreligiouszionists.org/lessons-from-the-gaza-war/>.] - The Editor*

As the war raged in Gaza, Israel repeatedly pointed to the Hamas strategy of using civilians as human shields. Palestinian spokesmen and supporters, in turn, insisted that it's "racist" to accuse Palestinian terrorists of such behavior.

Diana Buttu, a long-time legal adviser to the PLO who frequently appears in the international media, was interviewed on CNN's "The Lead with Jake Tapper," on July 10. She declared: "The idea that Palestinians use their  
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# TRAVEL TALES

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By MIKE COHEN

LONDON, ENGLAND: The history of London, England stretches back over thousands of years. For my recent family trip to the British capital ([www.visitbritain.org](http://www.visitbritain.org)), this was an exercise in authentic learning at its best. My first piece of advice is to purchase an oyster card. This is a plastic smartcard you can use instead of paper tickets as pay as you go credit for the bus, tube, tram, DLR, London Overground and most National Rail services.

WHERE TO STAY: The Kensington Hotel ([www.doylecollection.com](http://www.doylecollection.com)) at the corner of Queen's Gate and the Old Brompton Road is part of the Doyle Collection, a privately owned group of eight luxury

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*(Please turn to page 15)*

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# FROM TORONTO TO GAZA TO YESHIVA U

DANIEL GOFINE HAD QUITE THE SUMMER

Submitted by YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Several lone soldiers in the Israel Defense Force - enlistees from North America and countries around the world who come to Israel to serve in the army - recently began their studies at Yeshiva University. Among them was Daniel Gofine of Toronto, who had been on the front lines of the war in Gaza only a few weeks earlier, an experience few 19-year-old college students in North America can envision.

For Gofine, a member of the Givati Brigade, it made no sense that the Israeli friends he studied alongside in yeshiva in Israel should bear any more responsibility than he did to serve the homeland all Jews shared. "I felt it was an important way to contribute to the country," he said.

Shmuel Goldis, a sharpshooter from Hollywood, Florida, agreed. "Teens in Israel get drafted because they're citizens of Israel—but we are all citizens of Israel," he said. "Why should they put their lives on the line on a daily basis as I sit back, safe on the sidelines?"

This summer, Goldis Gofine and fellow recruit and YU student Jonathan Sidlow had the opportunity to live up to those ideals as they headed to the front lines of the war in Gaza. They were fully aware of the risks involved but that would not deter them.

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# STEVEN SOTLOFF

MURDERED JOURNALIST HAD SOUNDED ALARM

By FELICE FRIEDSON, MEDIA LINE

"As the international media is fixated on the struggle between the military and the Muslim Brotherhood, few reporters are focusing on Syria. But a spate of kidnappings of foreign journalists in Syria has made the country a mini-Iraq that few want to venture into. 'It's dangerous and getting worse by the day,' says a correspondent for a major Western publication. If no one is asking for articles, why should we risk it?" One of Steven Sotloff's final reports for The Media Line news agency, was on July 30, 2013. Sotloff was kidnapped in Syria about a week later.

If Steven Sotloff could express his frustrations, no doubt atop the list would be that the world

that, post-mortem, is hanging on every word he wrote, failed to read his stories and heed his warnings several years before.

As a freelance journalist, Steven Sotloff was in the Middle East by choice rather than by assignment. Driven there by his fascination with the region and affection for its people, Sotloff, who was fluent in Arabic, quickly developed an uncanny sense not only of what was, but what was going to follow as well. He traced the evolution of the jihadi takeover of Syria and Iraq; the spawning by Al-Qa'ida of the Nusra Front and the Islamic State; all while chronicling the early steps toward the carving-out of the ISIS caliphate

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## **WORLD IN REVIEW**

*(Continued from page 4)*

Bacall.

According to some reports Peres and Bacall actually met in New York in the early 1950s and only then discovered that they were related. "We're from the same family", said Peres. "It was she who later said that she was my cousin, I didn't say that."

The two again met in Israel in 1987 when Bacall was there filming a movie.

### **Not a Good Choice of Name or Food**

The luxury condo is the first to be built in south Florida since the 2008 financial crisis. One and two bedroom apartments start at more than \$300,000. But the original name was a bit of a problem. Developers called the West Palm Beach development ISIS Downtown. True the name was chosen long before the Islamist terror

group came on the scene but prospective buyers seem more comfortable now that the building is called 3 Thirty Three Downtown.

Meanwhile many miles away, in New Taipei City, Taiwan, an Italian restaurant decided to name a sausage and pasta dish "Long Live the Nazis". When an outcry ensued, Chao Ya-hsin, the manager of the Rockmill restaurant apologized immediately, saying that "it never occurred to us that the word Nazi would stir up such controversy." The name, he explained, was chosen to help patrons understand the German origins of the dish. The dish now has a new name: Long Live Purity".

### **Lady Gaga Carries on**

Neil Young, The Backstreet Boys and  
*(Please turn to page 24)*

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**GETTING IT WRONG***(Continued from page 4)*

murder...Who let them go there, among known murderers? Is there no place in the Land of Israel to live and study, only inside the animal cage?"

Given the Satmar group's extreme positions, such as its fierce opposition to the existence of the State of Israel, some might dismiss the Satmar Rebbe's remark as the view of only a tiny fringe element. But sociologists estimate that the Satmar Hasidim number more than 100,000; they are, in fact, the single largest Hasidic sect in the world.

Numbers aside, Rabbi Teitelbaum was in fact voicing a sentiment not so different than what some others in the Jewish community have expressed: that the kidnap victims brought the tragedy on themselves by hitchhiking, or that their parents are to blame, either for allowing them to hitchhike or for sending them to study in a school in Gush Etzion, that is, the West Bank.

Every parent worries first and foremost about the safety of his children. No sane parent deliberately puts his children in harms

way. Every parent weighs the risk of his child living in, or studying in, or visiting, a particular neighborhood. One may assume that Rabbi Teitelbaum, as a conscientious parent, is aware of the crime statistics in Brooklyn, which is the center of the Satmar community.

At the moment, Brooklyn is less safe than 62% of cities in the United States. There are six crimes per 1,000 residents of Brooklyn each year--well above the national media of 3.9. For all residents of New York City, the odds of becoming a victim of crime are 1 in 246. If you live in Brooklyn, it's a lot higher: 1 in 167. Nationwide, 2.42 of every 1,000 people are victims of assault each year; in Brooklyn, it's 3.41. The number of victims of robberies nationwide is 1.13 per 1,000; in Brooklyn, it's more than double--2.40.

Even from the point of view of geography, the statistics should worry the Satmars: the national median of crimes per square mile is 39.3; for all of New York City, it's 47. For Brooklyn, it's 851.

Of course, it's not all  
*(Please turn to following page)*

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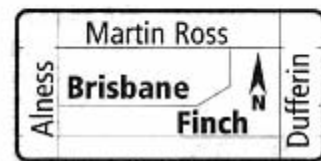
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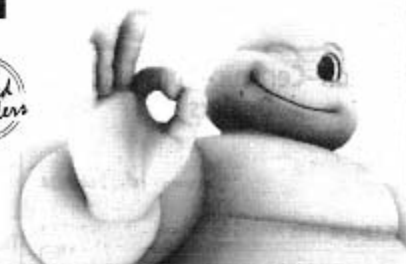
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**GETTING IT RIGHT**

(Continued from preceding page)

gloom and doom for Brooklynites. For example, the rate of motor vehicle theft in Brooklyn is less than half of the national figure, and the rate of burglary is about one-third that of the rest of the nation.

And that's my point. Every parent has to weigh a variety of factors in choosing where to live, or where their children should study or visit. How many muggings or burglaries do you suppose take place annually in the Gush Etzion communities where the three teenage boys studied? What are the odds of being kidnapped by Arab terrorists? Obviously a lot less than the odds of being assaulted in Brooklyn.

In deciding that their sons would study in Gush Etzion, the Frankels, Shaars and Yifrachs were not irresponsibly sending their children into a minefield. They were sending them into an area that is heavily protected by the Israeli army, and where the

chances of being harmed in a terrorist attack are extremely small. The only reason they seem bigger is because they receive so much news media attention--as they should.

When my daughter Alisa, who was then a 20 year-old student at Brandeis University, decided to spend her junior year in Israel, my wife and I were naturally somewhat apprehensive. On the other hand, Israel and Yasir Arafat had signed the Oslo accords. The government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin assured the Israeli public and world Jewry that a new era had dawned, that the vast majority of the Palestinians were now moderate and peace-loving. Shimon Peres insisted that Israel was now living in "a new Middle East."

Gush Katif, the Jewish communities of Gaza, were not considered to be some kind of dangerous no-man's-land. This was long before Israel with-

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drew from Gaza, long before Hamas took over, long before the first rocket had been fired into Sderot. Israelis and Jews from around the world visited Gush Katif all the time, without incident. When Alisa mentioned that she was going there for a few days in the sun before Passover and that she was following my travel rules, we

saw no reason for alarm--any more than Rabbi Teitelbaum feels alarm about his children spending a Shabbat in Brooklyn.

Rabbi Teitelbaum is fortunate that he has not experienced the pain of losing a child in a terrorist attack. He should count his blessings, and remember that his first obligation, as a rabbi, as a Jew, is to feel the pain of his fellow Jew, not to exacerbate that pain with crude blame-slinging. He owes an apology to the families of every victim of Palestinian terrorism.

### CITY OF SHELTERS

(Continued from page 5)

in bourgeois Tel Aviv now understand what Sderot has been living with all this time.

"Where have they been for the past thirteen years?" she asks angrily. "Now they are finally getting a taste of what it is like to live here. There are times that we get sixty rockets a day. Maybe now that they feel it, the government will finally do something."

One or two rockets hit Tel Aviv during the last round of fighting between Israel and Hamas in 2012. Now that rocket fire has become a daily occurrence. Most of the rockets are shot down by the Iron Dome anti-missile system.

Sderot, however, is too close to the border with Gaza for the Iron Dome to be effective. By the time the system identifies a missile launch, it has already landed. Israelis of all ages here have learned to live under rocket fire. Children in these areas near Gaza already know exactly what to do.

"Every time the siren goes off I get a chill and it's scary," Roni Tarnavski, 12, who lives on a kibbutz near Sderot told The Media Line. "I know I only have 15 sec-

(Please turn to following page)

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## CITY OF SHELTERS

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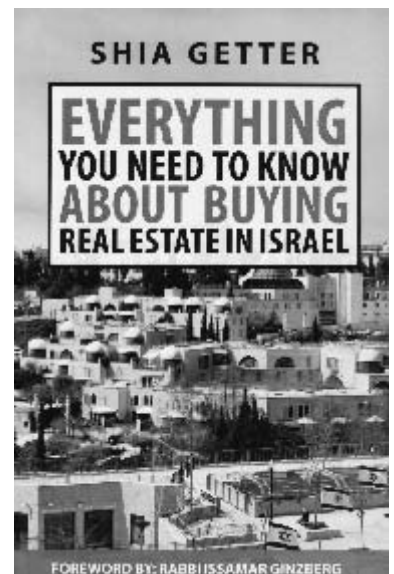
onds to get inside. We can barely go outside because it's really dangerous."

She said the kibbutz swimming pool has been closed down because it would not be possible to get out of the water and into a bomb shelter within 15 seconds. In Sderot, too, the pool has been closed and roads are almost deserted. While most nursery schools

are open because they have built-in bomb shelters, colleges have postponed exams.

"I'm finding it very hard to sleep at night," Dov Trachtman, 22, who is studying sociology and film told The Media Line. "I'm so tired that I fall asleep for an hour or so during the day and then at night I just lie awake waiting for the rockets. I can't concentrate so I'm glad the exams are being postponed."

In the course of the past nine years, at least 20,000 rockets have been fired at Sderot and the surrounding area. Most fall in open areas but dozens



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have scored direct hits. During the war, a rocket hit the Denbar paint factory here causing a large blaze when the chemicals caught fire.

The facility was empty at the time, but several workers in the factory next door were wounded. Today, a few weeks later, the debris has been cleared, although a burnt smell still hangs in the air. Owner Baruch Kogan says the total damage is about \$4 million, most of which he will get back from the government.

"We are already cleaning up and we will rebuild within three months," Kogan said. "We have no intention of going anywhere."

When it comes to a longer-term solution, Kogan makes a distinction between Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority, and the Islamist Hamas

which is behind the rocket fire.

"Abbas is trying to talk to Israel without any rockets and that's the way it should be," he said. "But Hamas doesn't want peace – they just want to destroy us."

Sderot Mayor Alon Davidi likes to take visitors to a hill on the western edge of the town with a clear view of Gaza. Among the Palestinians killed in the past few days by Israel's relentless air bombardment of targets in the Gaza Strip were dozens of civilians. Davidi says he regrets any loss of life but blames the Palestinians of Gaza for choosing Hamas.

"Look at my city," he says. "Hamas is trying to kill my children. I didn't do anything to them. Are there weapons in Sderot that they are trying to hit?"

## TRAVEL TALES

(Continued from page 7)

excellent for families to spread out and not be on top of each other. There are in-room safes. The 150 room hotel is situated only a few blocks from the South Kensington tube station and close by different restaurants and a couple of grocery stores. The ground

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(Please turn to page 17)

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**TRAVEL TALES***(Continued from page 15)*

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We enjoyed a daily buffet breakfast in the main restaurant, called Aubrey, and returned there twice for absolutely fabulous dinners. Their fish and chips and sea bass are terrific. The hotel welcomes many Jewish guests. Upon request they are able to cater for any dietary requirements. The closest synagogue (Westminster Synagogue) is one stop away at Knightsbridge on the Piccadilly tube Line.

**JEWISH COMMUNITY:** There are more than 260,000 Jews residing in England and Wales. Visit Jewish London and the London Jewish Forum([www.visitjewishlondon.com](http://www.visitjewishlondon.com)), your "go to" site to get a pulse on what is going on here. It will provide you with all the information you need about Jewish sites, services and events going on around the UK. There are listings of synagogues of all denominations, kosher or Jewish-style restaurants and accommodation, places of Jewish cultural interest and listings of events hosted by these various places and organizations. Check out the London Jewish Museum of Art, the London Jewish Military Museum and the London Jewish Cultural Centre (LJCC). In January 2011, the LJCC launched a unique new Holocaust education website, [www.the-holocaustexplained.org](http://www.the-holocaustexplained.org) which provides 11 to 14 year olds with everything they need to know about the Holocaust. Designed and written to support the National Curriculum in an appropriate and accessible way, the site broke new ground in providing young people with online information, timelines, maps.

*(Please turn to following page)*

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## TRAVEL TALES

(Continued from preceding page)

images, a glossary of over 600 words, and, most importantly, films of survivors telling their stories. Jewish walking tours of London are also available.

London has always been the center of Jewish life in this country and is the oldest place of Jewish settlement in England. The Jews of England first arrived in London in the wake of William of Normandy's conquest of England. It is thought they arrived shortly afterwards, though the first documented reference to a Jewish quarter in London, only comes in c.1127, when they had arguably been there for some 50 years or more. Initially they were just a small group, only reinforced in numbers with Jews fleeing from the Rouen pogrom in 1096.

Historically the British royal family has had a very friendly relationship with the Jewish community. Members of the royal family routinely attend Jewish events and support Jewish causes and charities. When Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her diamond jubilee, many synagogues throughout the Commonwealth read out a prayer for the monarch.

Mike Cohen's email address is [info@mikecohen.ca](mailto:info@mikecohen.ca). Follow his travels at [www.sandboxworld.com/travel](http://www.sandboxworld.com/travel) and on Twitter @mikecohen.ca

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**FROM TORONTO TO GAZA***(Continued from page 8)*

"When we were going in, it looked like a thunderstorm," said Sidlow, of North Woodmere, New York. "I wondered when I'd see my family again or if I'd make it out, but at the same time, I didn't want to be anywhere else. We are in the same place that the Maccabees were, the same place that Jewish warriors have been in every era."

For Goldis, too, the war has been both surreal and deeply spiritual. "At night it's pitch dark—all you hear is the whistle of mortars going past and sirens going off, all you see is the flashes of artillery fire," he said. "It's a sight I'll never forget. But you also really see the hand of God, the open miracles, and you realize He has to be with you every step of the way or you would never make it."

In particular, Goldis remembered a town where, again and again, he and his unit narrowly missed setting off underground explosive devices in the area they were working on, each time by the smallest of margins, before entering a house that

they didn't realize was also rigged with explosives—which, for reasons Goldis still doesn't understand, never went off. "It's really something that will take awhile to fully grasp—both that I was in there, that I had the honor to be able to undertake this for my country and people, and that I was in a war zone where things could have gone south at any moment."

YU Vice President for University and Community Life Rabbi Kenneth Brander, who has a son currently serving in the IDF, noted that "one of the most emotional experiences I had this summer was going to Bach Golani, the Golani training base in Northern Israel, to drop off our son Yosef after a weekend he had spent with us in Jerusalem. To my amazement, the soldier that opened the gate was a YU student on a leave of absence to serve in Tzahal [IDF]. I soon realized that on this Golani base there was a minyan [quorum] of YU

*(Please turn to following page)*

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## TORONTO TO GAZA

*(Continued from preceding page)*

students."

For many of these students, transitioning from a life of 24/7 training and danger in enemy territory to taking notes in an air-conditioned classroom alongside their friends is a mixed blessing. "I spend a lot of time still thinking about my friends and my commanders and asking them to update me," said Sidlow. "Knowing what they're up against, I don't know if I could handle them going back in and not being there."

However, they're still excited to learn and grow in an atmosphere that embodies the Torah values and passion for Israel that have shaped their journey. "I was attracted to the opportunity that YU presents to study both Jewish and general studies in a great city," said Gofine, whose two sisters gave him rave reviews of their time at Stern College for Women. "I'm also looking forward to developing close relationships with faculty since the classes here are small and allow for a more intimate class setting."

Meanwhile as Gofine reflects on his summer in Israel he realizes that joining his friends on the front line was something he had to do. "I wasn't there when it all broke out...it was difficult not being part of it...I felt like if my friends were going to be doing it, why shouldn't I as well".

Gofine and his fellow soldiers from the Yeshiva know that coming back from the army and going to class is always a transition. But they are confident that they will make the adjustment. They are looking forward to hanging out with friends, playing some sports and just taking advantage of all YU has to offer.

It's something Gofine, Godis, Sitlow and the others surely deserve.

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**STEVEN SOTLOFF***(Continued from page 9)*

and the dangers it presented to the Western world. When the media world was focused on Libya, Steve was there, writing about Darna, calling it "the Jihadi capital," and already admonishing that "the Libyan dilemma will impact the Syrian crisis." He warned in a personal email that "voices of support for intervention will be drowned out."

Sotloff first came to The Media Line – an

American news agency covering the Middle East – in 2009. His pitch for full-time employment didn't work out because I felt his need to travel throughout the region and not be assigned to a single beat. But in 2012, Sotloff reached-out again after he had spent time living in Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Qatar and Yemen; and became a freelancer for The Media Line, report-

*(Please turn to following page)*



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## STEVEN SOTLOFF

(Continued from preceding page)

ing from Egypt, Libya, Turkey and Syria; filing insightful stories that eerily predict today's headlines.

Sotloff was fearless to the point where he appeared to believe he would not be harmed because potential foes would somehow sense his attachment to the Arab world and its people. In January 2013, in answer to a query regarding women's involvement, Sotloff wrote from Aleppo, "Movement in general is becoming more difficult. Three Spanish journalists were kidnapped out of the media center. The situation is now hostile to Westerners since our governments are not involving themselves. We are now restricting movement only with fighters we trust. They certainly won't be taking us to any weddings and women's gatherings. Just having an Aleppo byline these days is a luxury. Open to suggestions, though. Imams are do-able."

In true journalistic fashion, Sotloff eschewed the desk for the street. Syrians returning from Turkey were reporting that the US was prepared to fund anti-Assad rebels, but Sotloff was quoting Syrians who were asserting that, "We don't need food; we need weapons. Where are our weapons?"

In May 2013, Sotloff wrote that, "Syria's peaceful revolution has become a military inferno." Two months before he went missing, he wrote a story about Syrian activists and their Friday demonstrations. "With the rebel-led Free Syrian Army locked in a stalemate with regime forces, Al-Qa'ida jihadists pouring in from neighboring countries, and lootings and kidnappings prevalent, Syrians are trying to figure out what went wrong with their pristine revolution."

He quoted 28-year old Mazin Al-Masri lamenting, "We had so much hope when we began protesting."

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but today we feel our peaceful revolution has been hijacked by gangsters and jihadists."

In one of Sotloff's final stories written for The Media Line, he wrote about a four-day Syrian-American medical conference in Gaziantep, Turkey, where American physicians conducted a workshop for Syrian doctors training them in the use of computerized equipment in trauma cases and cases of limb-loss. He struggled successfully to obtain video, and had difficulty transmitting quality film due to intermittent Internet.

On August 2, Sotloff communicated with me for the last time from the Turkish border-town of Kilis, discussing the dangers of going into Syria. I warned him not to trust his "fixer" (the local making the introductions and guiding his way), but Sotloff insisted that he did. Sotloff said a few journalists were still going in and that it was his hope to return and write a book about his experiences.

Shortly thereafter, Sotloff dropped off the radar. Threatening to go

public to whomever might be receiving Steven's emails, I finally heard from an anonymous organization seeking his release who told us of the abduction and that a gag order (of unexplained jurisdiction) was in place. Subsequent conversations with parents Arthur and Shirley Sotloff confirmed the worst of fears even though it is still not known what group originally pulled-off the kidnapping. What is certain is that Sotloff eventually wound up in the hands of ISIS, perfectly-time to be used in its ghastly anti-American demonstration.

For more than one year, our utmost concern beyond Steven's ultimate safety was that it not be discovered that he held dual US-Israeli citizenship. The consequences, all concerned agreed, would be a windfall for his captors that would prove irresistible.

Sotloff grew up in south Florida and after attending University of Central Florida, moved to Israel in 2008 where he enrolled in the Interdisciplinary Center at

(Please turn to following page)

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**STEVEN SOTLOFF***(Continued from preceding page)*

Herzliya.

Many months were to pass before Art Sotloff confirmed that Steven was still alive. But only two weeks ago, when the world

weeks ago, when the world witnessed the horrific spectacle of James Foley's beheading and saw Sotloff displayed as the "next victim" did concern that his

Israeli connections become known skyrocket.

Steven Sotloff was a courageous journalist whose insights were clearly "on-the-mark." His readings of events-at-hand and events-in-the-making con-

stitute a sounding of the alarm that no one answered. Perhaps the mass outpouring over his barbaric slaying will prompt the sort of action that would be worthy of Steven Sotloff's contribution to civil society.

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**WORLD IN REVIEW***(Continued from page 10)*

Lana Del Ray all cancelled concerts in Israel this past summer because of the conflict with Gaza. But not Lady Gaga. She was called "disgusting" and "devilish" by some of her Arab "fans" when she released a video featuring a "Shalom" greeting. But Lady Gaga performed on schedule on Sept. 13. The night before she performed in Dubai, her first ever concert in the Arab world.

It's not the first time the pop star has been targeted for her views. In 2009 she ignored calls from the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement to cancel her show in Tel Aviv. This time the BDS movement managed to gather a total of 1399 signatures on a petition demanding the singer cancel her concert. Also resisting the BDS movement was legendary singer Tony Bennett, who

performed in Tel Aviv the day after Lady Gaga.

**Where Were Dearborn's Muslims?**

Muslim leaders, both Sunni and Shi'ite called ISIS "crazy animals". "You're a bunch of gangsters...you're not Islam", said Imam Mohammed Elahi of the Islamic House of Wisdom in Dearborn, Michigan. "The beheading of James Foley", added Mustapha Elturk, co-chairman of the Imams Council of the Council, "is a clear violation of the holy Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed".

It all sounds good. The problem is that only 50 Muslims bothered to show up at the protest. That's about .02 percent of the states estimated Muslim population. Not exactly a "crowd".

*(See World in Review, page 25)*



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## Greek Mayor Deserves Praise

Yiannis Boutaris is the mayor of the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki. The twice elected mayor, like many others, is concerned over the rise of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party. In the May local elections Golden Dawn lawmaker Artemiss Matthaopoulos and his Golden Dawn party won 7.7 percent of the vote, enough for them to have two seats on the council.

And so Boutaris, who won 58.1 percent of the vote, decided to show his solidarity with Thessaloniki's dwindling Jewish community, now numbering only about 1000, and his opposition to the policies of Golden Dawn. At his inauguration Boutaris wore a yellow Star of David which was pinned to his jacket. "Your gesture", said the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, "sends a strong and clear message to those nostalgic for Nazism and fascism that under your leadership your city will continue to fight against any phenomena of racism, intolerance and anti-Semitism".

Boutaris, 72, was chosen "Best Mayor of the World" by the UK based City of Mayors Foundation.

## Mumbai Jewish Center Re-Opens

Twenty five rabbis from across Asia gathered recently for the re-opening of the Jewish Center in Mumbai, almost six years after it was attacked by gunmen in a terror attack on the center, the railway station and luxury hotels. Six Jews, including Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife Rivkah, who ran the house, were killed. At the hotels and railway station 166 people were killed in the three day attack.

The refurbished cultural center has a synagogue, kitchen and security rooms. Plans have also been announced for a 2.5 million museum in the building. "We're not moving into a new building - we are returning to our original building", says Rabbi Israel Kozlovsky, new co-ordinator of the center.

In 2012 India executed Mohammed Ajmal Amir Qasab, the sole surviving gunman of the ten terrorists. Qasab and his nine terrorists arrived in Mumbai by sea and split into groups to carry out their attacks. Their assault on the Jewish center, the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Oberoi Trident Hotel and the railway station lasted for two days before Indian forces regained control.



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## **Rabbi Not Sure He Was Right**

Rabbi Haskal Lookstein is the principal of Ramaz, an Orthodox day school in Manhattan's Upper East Side. Readers may recall that a few weeks ago a Jewish couple was attacked by a mob waving Palestinian flags. Lookstein was so concerned about the incident and the welfare of his students that he sent an e-mail to his supervisor, Paul Shaviv, suggesting that the school might ask parents to think about having their kids wear baseball caps instead of yarmulkes..

But then Lookstein had second thoughts about his letter. After thinking about what he had suggested, he concluded that he actually did not agree with himself. "I think that is giving the lunatics and terrorists a real victory" he concluded.

Rabbi Lookstein, however, kept his "new" thoughts to himself and Shaviv contacted the school's parents regarding the principal's concerns. He told them that the school was not advocating that students conceal their kippas or tuck the ritual fringes of their tzitzit. He was merely relaying Lookstein's view for their consideration.

Rabbi Lookstein, who grew up in the 1930s and 40s in Yorkville's Upper East Side, once a hotbed of anti-Semitism, believes that "our answer to anti-Semitism has to be that we stand up like exclamation points and not bend over like question marks".

## **Rabbi Robin Williams?**

He wasn't actually Jewish, having been born and raised Episcopalian.



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But the late Robin Williams always regarded himself as a 'honorary Jew'. He played Jewish characters in Jakob the Liar, The Birdcage, and in an adaptation of Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day*. He was one of the keynote entertainers at Steven Spielberg's annual USC Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation in 2005 and last March tweeted a photo of himself on the set of *The Crazy Ones* wearing a yarmulke. He asked whether it was "too late for a career change".

Perhaps Williams most memorable exchange came in 2008 on a German TV show. He was asked if he could explain why there was so little humour in Germany. "Did you ever think", he told the interviewer, "it's because you killed all the funny people".

### **Dieudonne M'Bala M'Bala At It Again**

Dieudonne M'Bala M'Bala, the not so funny French comedian, is in trouble with the law again. Dieudonne mocked the killing of U.S. journalist James Foley and showed footage of it in a video. In the video, labelled "Foley That Was", Dieudonne

maintained that the "killing of Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein never angered people the way Foley's execution did."

"The Rothschild Mafia says no, that's ok, but James Foley, that's too much." Dieudonne did not explain exactly how the Rothschild family was involved in the toppling of the two dictators. For M'Bala M'Bala somehow "decapitation symbolizes before anything else progress, access to civilization".

Dieudonne claims he is not anti-Semitic although fines of 65,000 euros for past convictions seem to suggest otherwise.

Meanwhile, French authorities have now opened an investigation into Dieudonne's latest rant.

### **Scrabble Adds Jewish Words**

A number of new Yiddish words have been added to Merriam-Webster's "Official Scrabble Players' Dictionary" released in August. Common words such as "schmutz", "schtum" and "tuchus" are words that can now be used without fear of a challenge. Even "tuchuses" is acceptable.

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**MICHAEL MOSTYN HAS** been appointed the new CEO of B'nai Brith Canada and its affiliated agencies. He replaces Frank Dimant who retired after a 36-year tenure with the organization. Mostyn has deep roots in the Jewish community, having attended both Associated Hebrew Day Schools and the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto. A graduate of the University of Western Ontario, Mostyn is a lawyer in good standing with the Law Society of Upper Canada and was a senior law firm partner for several years, practising in the areas of criminal law, family law, business law and civil litigation. He went on to develop an exceptional reputation in government relations and human rights advocacy while serving as the National Director of Public Affairs for B'nai Brith Canada, directing its Ottawa office from 2006-2010. Most recently, Mostyn focused his knowledge and talents within the private sector.

## WORLD IN REVIEW

(Continued from preceding page)  
shadchan, mitzvah, aliyah and tallis are also accepted. Words such as shlub, shlep and shmuck are fine and can be spelled with or without the "c".

The word "Jew" is not permitted because it is the capitalization of a proper noun. Scrabble also forbids its use in the lower case because of its anti-Semitic connotations.

## No Jews Welcome Here

In 2014 the Turkish Parliament made revisions to a penal code that defines hate crimes in Turkish law for the first time and outlines the penalties for those who violate the law. The amended article reads: "A person who bars the selling, turning over or rental of movable goods or real property to a person; who prevents a person from using certain services offered to the public; who bars employment; and who prevents a person from running

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a regular economic activity because of hatred stemming from a difference in language, race, nationality, color, gender, disability, political views, philosophical belief, religion or sect will be sentenced to prison for a period of one to three years."

Well, the law did not stop a shop in downtown Istanbul from posting a sign on its window front announcing that "Jew Dogs" are banned from entering. The store front also features an image of an Israel tank. The store is located in Tahtakale, an area where many Jewish business are located. It sells mobile phones.

There is at this point no indication of whether the Turkish authorities will do anything about the sign. And that has worried Turkey's Jewish community. "If a sign like this was hung against any other population aside from Jews, the world would be expressing shock and the sign would be removed immediately," local Jews said in a statement. "But when it's Jews, no one opens their mouths, and this could bring serious results."

## Jack The Ripper - A Jewish Barber?

Aaron Kosminski came to England with his family from Poland in 1881. In Poland Kosminski had been a barber supposedly simply trying to earn a living for his family



AT KIBBUTZ KAREM Shalom at the southern end of Gaza a combination of walls and electronic devices are used to protect residents against infiltrators from Gaza. Yet it was just 300 meters from where this photo was taken that Hamas terrorists entered the kibbutz by tunnel and captured Gilad Shalit. While Israel is working on new technologies to identify deep infiltration tunnels, and indeed has begun laboratory tests, the implementation of any system is still at least a year away.

But according to a new book Kosminski was anything but a hard working barber. Businessman Russell Edwards, an amateur Jack the Ripper sleuth, maintains that Kosminski was, in fact, the notorious Jack the Ripper. He says he made the discovery through DNA traces found on a shawl which he bought at a 2007 auction. The shawl apparently came from the murder scene of the killer's

fourth victim, Catherine Eddowes and still contained bloodstains that molecular biologist Dr. Jari Louhelainen of Liverpool John Moores University was able to link to Kosminski.

Kosminski lived near the scene of the five murders committed in 1888 and was actually brought in by police as a potential witness but was not considered a suspect. He died in an insane asylum in 1919.

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## **BLAMING RACISM**

*(Continued from page 6)*

children as human shields is racist and reprehensible."

Part of the reason that these Palestinian propagandists have been able to sow seeds of doubt concerning the human shields is that Hamas does such an effective job of intimidating journalists trying to find out the truth.

For example, the *Wall Street Journal* published a photograph by Nick Casey of Hamas spokesman Mushir Al Masri using a local hospital as a backdrop to give interviews. The hospital and its patients served, in effect, as a shield for Masri to speak to reporters without being targeted by Israel. A few days after it was posted, the *Journal* had removed Casey's photo from its website without explanation.

Meanwhile, a French journalist in Gaza, Radjaa Abu Dagga, published an article in the French newspaper *Liberation*, describing how when he was taken in for questioning by Hamas, the interrogators used a room in the Al Shifa hospital--absolute proof that Hamas is using the hospital as a shield. But that article, too, was deleted from the *Liberation* web site after a short time.

But the story come out, and there was nothing that the Palestinian truth-deniers could do but yell "racist."

Sreenivasan Jain, a courageous reporter for New Delhi Television (NDTV), posted a detailed expose on August 5, showing Hamas terrorists assembling, and then firing, a rocket right in the middle of a neighborhood filled with residential buildings and hotels. His amazing report can be seen on the NDTV website at <http://www.ndtv.com/video/player/news/watch-ndtv-Exclusive-how-hamas-assembles-and-fires-rock>

ets/332910. It's the most graphic evidence yet of Hamas deliberately acting in, and from, civilian areas in the hope of drawing Israeli fire that will cause civilian casualties and increase international criticism of Israel.

But then came the most damning evidence of all -- in Hamas's own handwriting.

On August 5, the Israeli Army released copies of an official Hamas manual that it discovered in the Shuja'iya neighborhood of Gaza, where one of the fiercest battles of the war was fought.

It's titled "Urban Warfare," and it was produced by Hamas's Shuja'iya Brigade. The manual includes detailed instructions on how to use the civilians of Gaza against Israel. It explains how because of Israel's concern

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about civilian casualties, Hamas can use the "presence of civilians" to its military advantage. Having civilians nearby causes the Israelis "(1) Problems with opening fire; (2) Problems in controlling the civilian population during operations and afterward; (3) Assurance of supplying medical care to civilians who need it."

The "Urban Warfare" manual also emphasizes the

benefits of damage to civilian property: "The destruction of civilian homes: This increases the hatred of the citizens towards the attackers [the IDF] and increases their gathering [support] around the city defenders (resistance forces[i.e. Hamas])."

Lesson twenty of the Gaza war: The "racism" lie spouted by the likes of Diana Buttu and Yousef Munayyer cannot change the inescapable truth that Hamas deliberately uses Palestinian civilians as human shields, and therefore bears complete responsibility for the harm that has come to them.



*FOR TWENTY YEARS Gary Bettman has been NHL commissioner. His term has not been without controversy. There have been three lock-outs and he has been accused of being "anti-Canadian" and "forcing the Americanization of the game" Still, revenues have grown eightfold under his leadership and players' salary caps have gone up fourfold. For the moment three major sports have Jewish commissioners, Bettman, Adam Silver (NBA) and until January 2015, Bud Selig of Major League baseball.*

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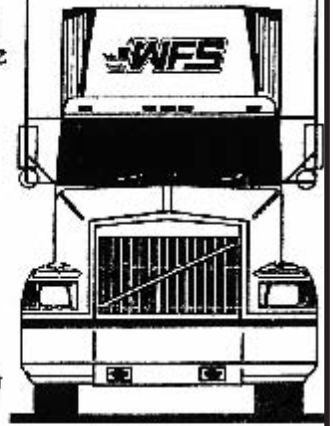
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