Ramaphosa lauds Israel’s entrepreneurship funding

TALI FEINBERG

The African National Congress has taken the approach of disinvestment, disengagement, and downgrading relations with Israel since Cyril Ramaphosa’s election in December 2017, as it came as a surprise when the president himself lauded Israel’s economic and technological innovation at a conference in Johannesburg last week.

“They [Israel] are leading by leaps and bounds, and they are actually innovative in a number of sectors of the economy, in agriculture, in maritime, and a number of other areas. They have shown that they can lead, and we can learn a lot from what they do with challenge funds [funds that enable entrepreneurs to come up with business solutions to solve developmental issues]. I find this very interesting and would like to know more,” said Ramaphosa at the Women in Business Conference on 29 October.

‘I’m certain that Israel would be more than willing to assist South Africa should she be open to it. It’s time to upgrade relations between South Africa and Israel.’

He was responding to a question about Israel’s technology investment model in the public and private sectors. Pointing out that South Africa could learn from Israel’s leadership in creative entrepreneurship, he said, “I’m interested in this one you talk about in Israel, because one knows about what exists, say for instance in other countries like the US. But [Israel] funds enterprises in the technology space, and you call it a challenge fund," said Ramaphosa.

“For me that’s a very interesting nomenclature [classification], because it possibly could challenge the private sector, but it could also challenge the entrepreneurs themselves that come out of the woodwork. Here is money, with plans and innovative ideas which we can fund, and then we can seed your business. In many ways that [challenge funds] is what I guess has got Israel to lead in the technology space,” he added.

Israel’s trade commissioner to Southern Africa, Amit Lev, told the SA Jewish Report that assisting South Africa with challenge funds could become a reality. “We would be delighted to deploy challenge funds together with the South African government, and to stimulate cutting-edge technology in the private sector.

“We see a growing business interest between Israeli and South African companies especially in agri-tech, cyber security, fintech, mining tech, and healthcare. The trade mission assisted in facilitating more than R100 million of business deals this year in these sectors in order to strengthen technology and innovation among South African companies.”

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies said the comments were positive, with National Director Wendy Kahn remarking that “Israel has so much to offer South Africa in the area of technology, and we are encouraged by our president’s recognition of this potential for our country.”

In response to the president’s points, Israeli Ambassador Lior Keinan said, “Israel has become a world leader in innovation and entrepreneurship. We are delighted to see Israeli tech discussed by President Ramaphosa. We are also delighted to see such an amazing result in our efforts to increase economic co-operation, trade, and investment. The Israeli embassy will continue its mission to encourage avenues of co-operation between Israel and South Africa for the betterment of our countries.”

Rowan Polovin, the national chairperson of the South African Friends of Israel (SAFI), said, “We are most pleased that President Ramaphosa appreciates Israel’s remarkable economic model of funding, innovation, and entrepreneurship. We believe this model could be replicated in South Africa to the enormous benefit of our economy. “South Africa can only gain from opening up to Israel and learning from the ‘start-up nation’.

Every other BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) nation except our country has realized the impact that Israel can make on the country’s local economy. I’m certain that Israel would be more than willing to assist South Africa should she be open to it. It’s time to upgrade relations between South Africa and Israel.”

A clip of the president making these remarks was posted by SAFI on Facebook, where it was widely shared. But some South Africans saw the comments as “too little, too late”, saying they would be thrilled to help you move forward in our country with all their innovations and proven techniques. Go Cyril, go!”

Others encouraged the president to go to Israel to see innovation in action. Wrote Joan Elias, “Put your pride in your pocket. Go to Israel. You will be amazed at what you will see and they would be thrilled to help you move forward in our country with all their innovations and proven techniques. Go Cyril, go!”

Alda Schutzl said in a Facebook comment: “Is he busy opening his eyes and ears? A positive move, Mr President. Now keep moving forward. Speak to the Israeli ambassador in South Africa, visit Israel, and speak to people who can show you the right way forward. They can teach you a lot. Are we seeing our prayers answered?”

Johannesburg businessman Selwyn Trakman stopped traffic in Tokyo when he spotted Springbok rugby captain Siya Kolisi while crossing the busiest intersection in the city.

“There were zillions of people crossing the road, yet Siya didn’t hesitate to oblige when I asked him for a selfie,” said Trakman.

See World Cup stories on pages 8 and 9
Evangelist’s comments on Jews and Afrikanners causes race row

TALLI FEINBERG

Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) General Secretary Julius Malema has been called for an upcoming gathering of Christians to be “booby-trapped” after evangelist pastor Angus Buchanan was recorded as saying that only Jews and Afrikanners had a “covenant with G-d”, but both have since apologised for their comments. EFF Deputy President Floyd Shivambu posted a video of Buchanan convening a prayer meeting to be held on 1 February in Pretoria. Shivambu wrote, “A racist Boer Pastor Angus Buchanan says it’s only the Boers & Jews who have a covenant with G-d. A heinous convening a predominantly Boers meeting in Loftus Rugby Stadium in February 2020. You can wish whatever you want Afrika [sic], but these people don’t want us.”

In response, Gardee said, “That statement needs some limpet mines booby-trapped around it prior to that date. ‘G-d’s way to see what happens to the only people who have a ‘covenant with G-d’. I know of no religious fanatic is misrepresenting the Jewish people, but half the world is intelligently watched from our television screens.”

Following these comments, AfriForum Deputy Chief Executive Ernst Roets called for Gardee to be “prosecuted” for his comments. “This isn’t only hate speech, it’s incitement to violence. Godrich should be prosecuted,” he said in a tweet of his own.

Buchan apologised for his comment about Jews and Afrikanners in a Facebook post. “Having stated that the Jews and the Afrikanners were the only two nations that had a covenant with G-d is totally wrong and for that statement, I humbly ask your forgiveness,” he said.

Gardee responded on social media that he didn’t accept the apology. “This is what we are subjected to ... sttr up racial disharmony and apologise when taken to task ... the fact is that the man sees Afrikans in their own country and continent as subhuman and not worthy of G-d.” But he eventually apologised for his own inflammatory tweet. “Following the apology by evangelist Angus, I withdraw my earlier comments regarding limpet mines. Racist conduct should be ferociously confronted. It took a threat to bring him to his senses. Let’s help no one follows in his footsteps to wedge religious racial division.”

Buchan’s original comment was as follows. “Everybody is welcome to always be at our meetings but this time, the emphasis will be on the Afrikanner nation. We are going to call out to G-d remembering that only two nations in the world have ever been in covenant with the G-d of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are the Jewish people and the Afrikanners, that is fact.”

Western Cape MEC for Security and Social Stability, Ernst Roets called for these comments, “They are motivated by division and sensitive issues, it’s imperative that our words are chosen carefully.”

These types of provocative comments from all parties in this conversation serve only to polarise South Africans further. We urge all political, religious, and communal leaders to utilise speech that isn’t potentially divisive.

Israel rejects NGO director’s deportation appeal

Israel’s Supreme Court has rejected an appeal by the local director of Human Rights Watch against deportation over his involvement in the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement. Omar Shakir was ordered to leave the country within 20 days. He was expelled from the country a year ago.

“The court confirmed that while in Israel, Shakir spent his time unjustifiably vilifying Israel and promoting BDS activities,” said Maurice Hirsch, an attorney for NGO Monitor. “Despite his claims, Shakir’s work had very little, if anything, to do with protecting human rights.”

Anti-Semitism on the rise across the globe

Three German teenagers are under investigation for allegedly playing anti-Semitic music and song after visiting Buchenwald concentration camp in the centre of the country on 15 October.

German police are investigating the three 14-year-olds from Grunberg in western Germany for incitement to hatred.

Taliesin Jones, orbiting the earth, 4:52pm

Torah Thought

Go and do something you believe in

According to the Torah portion this Shabbat, Lech Lecha, “The Lord said to Abraham, ‘Go forth from your native land and from your father’s house.’” From this first journey down to the present day, Jews have maintained their character as a wandering people, to and from the land of Israel.

Abraham was commanded to go. He had to leave all that was familiar and go and make a new life, a new story, that has never been written before.

His inner voice commands him. “Go!” This voice is what drives Abraham to remove all that is “non-essential” in his life; to remove so-called social connections and beliefs. More to the point, it drives him to remove it-conceived superstitions and obstacles that can stand in the way when he enters a search for the primary source of all things, the divine spark that lay at the root of Abraham’s being (and indeed all of our beings) and is the element of our spiritual being.

Sometimes how we get to where we are going matters less than the fact that we are on our own “horizon,” to keep moving in that direction, and eventually we know that we will get there.

Leviticus 21:31 says, “The Lord said to Aaron, ‘Go forth from your native land and from your father’s house. I will show you everything I will give you.’”

Go and do something you believe in...
For weeks, I’d been dreading the phone call I got at 05:30 last Friday morning. Nobody wants to be to, but for those of us who were fortunate enough to call Xolani Gwala a friend, we knew just how much he wanted to live.

He was told by doctors in South Africa that there was nothing more they could do for him and for months, Xolani lived with the knowledge that unless a miracle happened, he was going to die. He was desperately afraid.

While South Africans at the end of last year were celebrating his recovery from stage-four colon cancer and his return to the airwaves, Xolani phoned me out of the blue. We’d been friends since our early twenties, and I had always had a soft spot for him. One rare people who, regardless of fame, never changed. He was a genuinely good and decent human being.

Unfortunately we’d lost contact over the years, and I was surprised to hear from him. He confided that he’s been given the worst possible news – the cancer had returned.

A friend suggested he contact me to see if I could help him. I promised I’d do everything I could to assist, and in March this year, he moved to Tel Aviv. He was one of less than two dozen people from around the world who’d been accepted into a clinical trial that was using different medicines that had never before been used together to treat cancer.

It was experimental and hugely expensive, but for people like Xolani who has nowhere else to turn, it offered a last hope. He was one of only three being treated for free in this specific trial at Sha’ba Medical Center, Tel HatShomer, Israel’s largest and most comprehensive medical facility.

Throughout the trial, he shared the results with his South African doctor who had encouraged his move to Israel. After the third treatment, he told me his doctor said there was a definite biochemical and clinical response. “The treatment he was receiving had controlled the cancer. ‘I’m really happy for you!’ his doctor told him.

Xolani spent a few months living in Tel Aviv. He loved walking the streets, and even toyed with the idea of buying a bicycle. One day, he was outside when a siren went off and confused, he ran into a small grocery shop where an old man told him that Iran had just attacked Israel. We later joked that he was likely to be killed by a third world war before cancer.

He learnt two words of Hebrew during this time – rak ah (only Bibi [Netanyahu]) and it delighted him to say it and watch the bemused expressions on Israeli faces. They’d either thump him on the back in agreement, or worryingly ask him who he was hanging out with.

Xolani spoke highly of his employers at Radio 702 who supported him every step of the way. They sent him radio equipment, and he was hoping that when he felt better, he could present his show from Israel. He hated not telling his listeners the real state of his health, but he was a private person and like many things in his life, he kept it to himself.

Still, it wasn’t easy. He was often tired and in a lot of pain. And there were a few times when we thought the end was near.

There was also one thing Israel couldn’t give him – his family. I remember a phone conversation between him and one of his daughters that he later shared with me.

“Daddy,” she’d asked him, “Why are you in Israel?”

“The doctors here are making me better,” he replied.

“But how did you get there,” she asked. “Your car is in the garage. Did you use Uber?”

“Yes I came here by Uber,” he grinned.

We both smiled about this for days.

This is a very different article to the one I’d planned to write. Xolani and I had thought to pen a piece together after he’d beaten the cancer in which he’d talk about how grateful he was that Israel had taken him in and given him a second chance at life.

The last time I saw Xolani was in May, when he asked me to accompany him to hear the results of the latest treatment in Israel.

On that last day, the doctors told him the cancer had stopped growing. He was so relieved. He’d hoped they’d tell him it was diminishing, but we spoke about it for a long time afterwards and he kept repeating – maybe to convince himself as much as anyone else – that it was still a good result. It was not the last time he’d ever get good news.

Xolani loved Israel. He had already lived in Ramallah in 2008 when he was an evening newscaster for Ram FM radio station, the brainchild of 702 founder Issie Kish. Based on the massive talk radio in South Africa, the idea was for this station to get Israelis and Palestinians to talk to one another in English.

Unfortunately, it never really took off, and just more than a year after it started, it closed down.

Xolani always wanted to come back to Israel – but not this way.

Naomi Hadar, the executive director of the South African Friends of Sheba Medical Center, approached the hospital and organised for Xolani to be treated there. He called her his “guardian angel.”

“Shева is a hospital with no borders, and if it can help somebody, it’s more than happy to,” Naomi told me on Monday this week with tears in her eyes.

“The hospital said, ‘We’ve helped Palestinians and people from enemy countries, for sure we’ll help someone that loves and supports Israel.’ And we were on the trial. The trial was working. Xolani promised me that as soon as he was better, he would dedicate his life to promoting Sheba and the outstanding work done in Israel. I’m heartbroken.”

The Israeli medical team headed by Dr Reemi Shapira had a soft spot for him. During his time in Israel, he’d visit them regularly for blood tests and they kept almost daily contact with him. He told me they were compassionate, and always asked about his feelings and family. Dr Talia Golan, a former South African and world-renowned specialist in pancreatic cancer, was responsible for putting him on the right trial.

At the end of May, halfway through this trial, Xolani decided to return to South Africa to see his family.

“He travelled to South Africa during the winter, and his immune system was very low,” Naomi said. “He deteriorated from then onwards.”

Within two days of returning to South Africa, he caught flu, which first needed to be treated before he could continue with the trial. He decided to receive this treatment in South Africa, and the plan was to return to Israel later. But that plan never materialised.

There is a piano at one of the entrances to Sheba Medical Center. On our first visit there, Xolani and I made a pact (actually I did – I’m silly in that way) that we would return to that piano when he’d been given a clean bill of health and play a song of gratitude. I’m not even sure Xolani knew how to play, but it was something to look forward to.

The piano is still standing there. But Xolani isn’t any longer. I miss your friend. Your music will play on for all of us who knew and loved you, and for the millions of South Africans who looked up to you. Hamba kahle.

• Paulo Siler is the Middle East Bureau Chief of RT, the founder and CEO of NewshoundMedia and the inaugural European Women in Leadership Award winner at the Alaba Jewish Achievement Awards.

Paula Siler and Xolani Gwala at the Western Wall.
Pamensky admits to ratifying Eskom’s ‘dodgy’ R43 million New Age deal

Jo hamburg chartered accountant Mark Pamensky, a former Eskom non-executive board member, has admitted to ratifying a dodgy sponsorship contract between the cash-strapped power utility and Gupta-owned newspaper The New Age (TNA).

Pamensky was testifying to the Zondo Commission of Inquiry into state capture last week. He admitted to the commission that he didn’t get a copy of the contract between Eskom and TNA before ratifying the R43 million advertising and sponsorship deal between Eskom and the newspaper in 2015.

The contract, according to evidence, bound Eskom to advertising and sponsorship deals between the Gupta-owned newspaper and in parliament. He told the commission he didn’t know about this.

The Gupta’s close relationship with former President Jacob Zuma resulted in a lack of impartiality in the newspaper’s handling of controversial stories relating to Zuma and the ruling party. Pamensky testified before inquiry chairperson, Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo, on 31 October. Evidence was led by advocate Kate Hofmeyr.

He said he didn’t know that Eskom’s previous board had found no value in the utility’s prior sponsorship agreements with TNA. He also claimed not to have known that then Public Protector Thuli Madonsela had called for a delay in the decision by the board to enter into a deal until her report into state capture was finalised.

And, he claimed no knowledge of the two prior contracts between Eskom and TNA that were concluded without the involvement of the sponsorship committee.

Hofmeyr asked whether he would maintain his decision to ratify the contract if he had known then what he knows now. Pamensky answered, “Never.”

Pamensky’s appointment as an Eskom board member allegedly coincided with meetings he held with Gupta brothers Atul and Tony at roughly the same time as the controversial advertising and sponsorship contracts were being scrutinised by the media.

He joined the Eskom board on 12 December 2014, serving on the investment and finance committee as well as the audit and risk committees. At the time, he also sat on the boards of about 25 other companies, including Gupta-owned Oakbay Resources and Shiva Uranium.

“In mid-2014, I was planning to move on from Blue Label Telecoms within about a year or two. Roughly on about 28 September, there was an advert in the Sunday Times newspaper. I duly printed it, scanned it, and applied to become a director of Eskom,” he told the commission. “I felt that my skills in relation to turnaround M&A (mergers and acquisitions) and restructuring would be ideal for this environment, especially the position that Eskom was in at that point in time.”

He described Eskom as being “in a state of financial disarray”. In September 2014 he became a director at Gupta-owned Oakbay Resources, according to advocate Hofmeyr.

“I was called to a meeting by Mr Atul Gupta, who explained to me that they were listing a subsidiary of theirs called Oakbay Resources and Energy which had a subsidiary called Shiva Uranium that was involved in the uranium and gold industry, and they were looking for independent non-executive directors to join their boards,” said Pamensky.

In June 2014, Tony Gupta contacted Pamensky and said, “Would you like to come over and have a cup of tea and a discussion?” It was a general discussion. I explained who I was. I explained what Blue Label did. He explained a little bit about Sahara Group, a little bit about Shiva Uranium, and just a general chat about group risk committees.

Pamensky said there was no talk about him becoming an Eskom board member in either of these discussions.

Hofmeyr brought up the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), and asked Pamensky if he agreed that the act placed heightened obligations on the directors of boards of state-owned enterprises compared with ordinary private companies. And, whether he accepted that the reason for this “might be that state-owned enterprises are spending public money”? He agreed, and said he became familiar with the act within the first six months of his directorship.

He said he wasn’t aware of scathing newspaper articles in October and November 2014 explaining how Matjila had allegedly disregarded internal legal advice and approved the R43 million contract, saying he didn’t know the contract was mired in controversy.

Hofmeyr said that she understood from Pamensky’s affidavit that he never actually got a copy of the third contract that was entered into which he was to ratify.

Pamensky replied, “That is correct.”

“Is it your evidence that you didn’t think it was necessary for the board to see the agreement it was asked to ratify before it took that decision?” she probed.

“To which he replied, ‘Yes it is.’ “Do you think you should have seen the agreement that you were being asked to ratify before ratifying it?”

“No ma’am, I do not,” he replied.

At this point Zondo said, “But I would think that if you are asked to ratify a contract you must have the contract in front of you. If a board is asked to ratify anything every member would say, I need to see what I am ratifying.”

Hofmeyr said Pamensky knew at the time that TNA was owned by the Gupta family or its companies. He was asked if he wasn’t concerned about ratifying a contract relating to a Gupta entity in 2015 at a time when there was “huge concern” about the role of the Gupta family in state-owned enterprises and the running of the country.

Pamensky said, “No chair, it didn’t cross my mind at that point. And also at that point in time, the Guptas weren’t so toxic as they are now.”

Pamensky testified by that time he took up his board position, he had no knowledge of the prior Eskom-TNA contracts.

He said he relented, among other points, on Matjila’s representation to the board to explain why the contracts had value.

Hofmeyr said, “I want your comment on the proposition that it wasn’t reasonable to rely on Mr Matjila’s assessment of the value of this contract given all of this background.”

“I had no reason to disbelieve him. I felt his representations were comprehensive in the sense of explaining himself, and I didn’t at that point have a reason not to take it at face value,” Pamensky replied.

“I tend to give points into consideration when I ratified this. There was sufficient information, we received a legal opinion, we received an audit report, and in my mind, at that point in time, there was a sufficient amount of information for us to make that decision,” he said.

In August 2017, the Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse laid criminal charges against Pamensky for his conduct while he was a director at Eskom and Oakbay. He allegedly shared Gupta information with the Guptas that assisted them in their R2.15 billion purchase of Optimum Coal Holdings, which had coal contracts with Eskom.
Nussbaums closes – end of an era for SA Jews

JORDAN MOSHE

The iconic Nussbaums Butchery closed its doors this week.

"For us, it's a very sad day," admits Ian Lurie, chief executive and owner of Nussbaums. "We've been a family business and a business of family from the start." The SA Jewish Report met Ian, his children and senior members of staff on Tuesday for a difficult and heartfelt conversation, looking back on an epic odyssey.

Ian reflected on the early days of Nussbaums, founded in 1936 in Doornfontein. His parents bought the business in 1973 from the Meyers, who took it over for almost a year from the original Nussbaum family.

Ian joined his father about ten years later, quickly learning the ropes, and ran the business thereafter. Under his watch, it went to the very heart of the Jewish community.

"Looking back on an epic odyssey. Ian's father about ten years later, quickly learning the ropes, and ran the business thereafter. Under his watch, it went to the very heart of the Jewish community.

"As time has gone by, the community has diminished. Customers come in weekly to thank us for everything, and say that they're moving to America or Israel," he says. "The financial climate isn't easy, and businesses are feeling the pinch. Over the past two years, things have got tougher, and consumers are hurting." Ian's son, Baruch, says that 13 years ago, bulk buying was the norm, with customers ordering ten chickens at a time. "Today, they order only two chickens for a single meal once a week. It has become unaffordable. Jewish families are struggling to keep kosher." Eden says more Jewish consumers are becoming money conscious. "We had a customer who never asked in 22 years the price of a cut of meat, asking what it costs per kilo. More people are ordering rib eyes, and some are even asking which cut is cheaper."

In spite of all the challenges, the decision to close was not anticipated, they say. "I don't believe we ever saw it coming to this," says Baruch. "From a financial perspective, the last year has been extremely tough. As much as we know our business, we never thought it would get this bad."

"Though it's increasingly difficult to cope with the added expense of kosher production," Baruch stresses that kosher costs didn't break Nussbaums. "Nussbaums and kosher worked for 83 years," he says. "In a turbulent economy, in order to survive, you need to have everything going for you. Challenges along the way make it that much more difficult, but kosher made us who we are."

"The fact is that financially, we just couldn't carry on. I have invested my life and money in the business, and we got to a point where we just couldn't. It was a very difficult decision," Ian says.

In spite of indicating in the release that a buyer had been found for the business, Ian says negotiations are ongoing. "We thought we had a deal on the table," he says. "In principle, it seemed good. It needed to be signed, but unfortunately it didn't come to fruition. We are looking at other options."

The future is uncertain for the entire Nussbaums team, and contrary to belief, the Luries have no intention of emigrating. The welfare of shop staff remains a priority for management, which is seeking alternative employment opportunities for them.

"Unfortunately, we have no jobs nor plans," says Lurie. "We are waiting for the dust to settle before we look to the future."

The team say they will miss being at the heart of the community, and interacting with its variety of people. Poignantly, they will miss the warmth of the environment they've shared. "We've been working with family," they say. "We fight like a family, and love each other like a family."

They thanked the community for the outpouring of support, love, and positivity over the past few days, and for years of loyal patronage. "The journey has been a privilege. It has been a blessing to serve the community," says Lurie.

Ian sat on a kashrut committee at the Beth Din to advise on industry difficulties, and even helped to re-establish kosher slaughter in Poland for the first time since World War II.

"As time has gone by, the community has diminished. Customers come in weekly to thank us for everything, and say that they're moving to America or Israel," he says. "The financial climate isn't easy, and businesses are feeling the pinch. Over the past two years, things have got tougher, and consumers are hurting." Eden says more Jewish consumers are becoming money conscious. "We had a customer who never asked in 22 years the price of a cut of meat, asking what it costs per kilo. More people are ordering rib eyes, and some are even asking which cut is cheaper."

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T
There was undoubtedly a positive shift in our outlook this week. We went from being in the doldrums over Moody’s tiny rise in junk status; the news that unemployment has risen to 34%—SOUTH african sports team winning a world championship, is not only good for us as a South African, but it is a reason to share this incredible feeling with as many South Africans as possible.

With my hand on the hooter (yes, my teenage son told me I was really embarrassing) and South African flags out the open window, we drove through Johannesburg shouting “Bokke,” etc.

We got a fantastic reaction! People were so happy, and wanted to share it with us and each other.

Through car windows, I fist pumped beggars, taxi drivers, and many others. I also did seat dances with so many people in other cars.

All the barriers between us came down from the comfort of our cars, and it felt like we were united in joy and pride.

As thrilled as we are about winning, it isn’t easy to discard barriers among strangers in broad daylight. Walking through Rosebank, it was as if nothing had happened.

I know there are places in which people parted until Sunday, but they clearly felt safe and comfortable enough to come together. Take my home from this is that most South Africans are ecstatic about this win, but we remain shielded with all that has and is happening around us. It isn’t easy to let go of our inhibitions, fears, and problems.

People want to go up to strangers and pass on the joy, even if they were in Springbok jerseys. There definitely seemed to be a reticence less than an hour after the game was over.

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I know there are places in which people parted until Sunday, but they clearly felt safe and comfortable enough to come together. Take my home from this is that most South Africans are ecstatic about this win, but we remain shielded with all that has and is happening around us. It isn’t easy to let go of our inhibitions, fears, and problems.

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Pay attention to BDS’s marketing drives to the church

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) has joined the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. At its conference in September 2019, the one million strong MCSA noted “Israel’s ongoing ill-treatment and oppression of Palestinian people, and the historic perpetual role played by the church and international community in fighting apartheid and any form of discrimination and injustice.”

The MCSA directed “the Methodist people to boycott, divest, and sanction all businesses that benefit the Israeli economy.” The church has also called for a “boycott of all Israeli pilgrimage operators and tours” and is urging Christians visiting the Holy Land to rather “deliberately seek out tours that offer an alternative Palestinian” perspective. (SA Jewish Report, 1 November 2019)

Although not exactly the same wording, the resolution echoed the sentiments of the resolution adopted by the provincial Anglican synod at the end of September. (SA Jewish Report, 10 October 2019)

The tone of the MCSA’s resolution is more than a call to act. Unlike the Anglican Church, which urged its members who travel to the Holy Land to rather “deliberately seek out tours that offer an alternative Palestinian” perspective. The Methodist Church was founded by John Wesley when he broke away from the Anglican Church in England in the 18th century. Wesley was an outspoken anti-Semite.

The Methodist Church has a history of opposing Israel and demonising Jews. In 2010, the Methodists singled out Israel for boycott action and that failed to subject other ethnic groups to similar scrutiny. During its convention in 2010, it wasn’t simply Israel policy that was condemned, but an extreme form of anti-Jewish replacement theology was invoked. Jewish “chosenness” came up for debate followed by the promotion of the supersessionist idea. A delegate who spoke to these issues completed her speech by remarking that “G-d is not a racist G-d, and as such, they should be punished with boycotts. It was a reviving of the worst form of Christian anti-Semitism.

“In a response to my article about the Anglican resolution in the Daily Friend, the online newspaper of the Institute of Race Relations, Nigel Willis, an ordained non-stipendiary priest in the Anglican Church, writes that the church’s provincial resolution in support of BDS sanctions can help shape moral opinion, but are neither binding on the membership nor do they represent the view of everyone in the church. The provincial resolution can only call on every diocese to adopt a similar resolution. What matters more are the stances taken by a bishop within a particular diocese.

Willis says the resolution caused him considerable distress and embarrassment. Further, he’s concerned that it was adopted unanimously. He says several parishioners at his church have written to him to express their disquiet.

He wished to assure us that it was not unlikely that the resolution was driven by anti-Semitism. Rather, there is a pervasive view that the resolution of the conflict in the Middle East would take place in much the same way as apartheid was ended in South Africa and for much the same reasons.

As Willis notes, this is fallacious. In South Africa, by the end of the 1980s there was an across-the-board recognition that Christianity and apartheid was incomplete. However, “there is no similar compelling theology when it comes to the troubles in the Middle East”. Willis called the resolution astonishing in its naivety and ambiguity. It’s unclear whether it brings the existence of the state of Israel into question.

He holds that there should not have been room for any misunderstanding in a resolution of such importance.

Willis doesn’t see a resolution of the conflict in his lifetime. “The best that Christians can do is to pray about it, and insist in both prayer and public utterances that there should be no violence, that the shared humanity of us all should be recognised, and that adversaries should be encouraged to talk to one another so that the cause of peace may prevail in the end.”

Willis doesn’t share my view that the Anglican Church today is supersedionist. On the contrary, the whole question of religious pluralism has “received much attention within the worldwide Anglican communion since the end of World War II. We now recognise that the best theological explanation for religious pluralism is that different religions learn from one another. We also recognise that, when it comes to ‘doing’ religion, most people do what they know best.

“In other words, although there will be exceptions, we accept that most people adhere to the religious tradition into which they were born and raised, and there is nothing very wrong with that.”

Willis undertakes to take up the issue of the resolution in his own parish and diocese. The “Anglican church in Johannesburg has always been keenly sensitive to any whiff of anti-Semitism, and is hugely proud of the contribution of the Jewish community, especially in the struggle against apartheid.” Willis is emphatic that this resolution neither represents Anglicans nor binds them, and that Anglican resolutions on the Middle East in the future (if there are any) be treated with much greater care.

I stand to be convinced that supersedionism is not behind both the Anglican and Methodist resolutions.

BDS clearly went on a marketing drive to a religious community that was open to its message.

The Inkaba Venda Historia Institute of Race Relations, a think tank that promotes political and economic freedom.
Jewish supporters’ cup runneth over
TALI FEINBERG

The closest thing to being in the Yokohama Stadium when the Springboks lifted that Rugby World Cup (RWC) trophy on Saturday was hearing about it from those who were there. South African Jews were well represented, making their way across the world to witness this historic moment.

This was Ari Levy’s third Rugby World Cup, the first being in France in 2007, the second in England in 2015, and the third in Japan. He describes South African fans as heastarily hopeful in the run-up to the final.

“The atmosphere at the semi-final against Wales was particularly tense. The Boks won in the end after a tough battle. From a South African perspective, the atmosphere in the week leading up to the final was ‘it will be what it will be’. In all, I would say that the England fans were expectant of a win, while South African fans weren’t nearly as confident.”

Clive Blechman agrees that things were tense before the final. “There were way more English fans than South African fans. Many of them flew in at the last minute for the final. They really believed that after their win against New Zealand, they would win against Wales. It was a tense first half, stuck together. I always believed we would win. It was a tense first half, but after that was pure bliss! It was a dream final.”

As the final whistle blew, “people went absolutely berserk. Quite a few men were crying,” recalls Levy, whose cousin was filmed by the BBC with tears in his eyes. “The England team walked off the field looking absolutely broken. The Bok team were obviously on cloud nine.”

Ariella Kuper decided to attend the final Rugby World Cup as this is her first year of recovery after a second cancer episode. “My husband and I decided to make every day count, and to use this year to truly celebrate life and special moments. I genuinely couldn’t have asked for something more meaningful and memorable. The team raised the bar in demonstrating unity and how to turn a group of individuals into a world-class team with a unified outlook in spite of the obstacles in their path,” she says. “This was her first Rugby World Cup as well as her first time in Japan. It was fortunate to attend together with several friends and previous World Cup Springbok captain, my mentor and friend, Francois Pienaar.”

She attended both semi-finals and the bronze and final matches with premier seating positions throughout. “For the final, we literally sat one row from the actual field mid-centre. When we scored the two tries, both by players that have replaced the positions of Chester Williams and James Small, the crowd could barely contain its excitement. This is the first Rugby World Cup where we have actually scored tries. So that in itself was emotional.”

“When the final whistle blew, the elation not just of South Africans but every Japanese supporter as well as anyone from the southern hemisphere was indescribable. Hope was palpable, the sense that the impossible can be achieved, that the sum of all parts is truly greater than one! The English supporters can be commended for their gracious salute to our team, and the acknowledgement, in spite of their devastation, that we proved our grit and passion through skill and adaptation. They were simply outclassed, to quote two supporters I spoke to,” says Kuper. “The Japanese truly taught us a lesson in being gracious losers and gracious hosts. They supported the Boks from the minute their team was eliminated, and at every occasion, be it in a restaurant, train, or merely on the street. They showed South African citizens with praise and sincerity. The atmosphere was spectacular throughout the tournament, and proved that sport truly carries the power to unify if we simply put aside political agendas.”

Levy agrees that the Japanese made the event a success. “They have been extraordinary hosts. No request was too difficult, as illustrated by the World Cup volunteer who insisted on accompanying us on the train back from the stadium to the station we wanted to get to in Tokyo. Their gees (spirit) and smiles and efficiency made the experience so much more.”

“The English fans were on the whole gracious in defeat, but a small Japanese guy fearlessly took on a bunch of young English fans he felt were behaving disrespectfully to Bok fans. Honour and respect are the cornerstone of Japanese culture. We could learn a lot from them,” says Levy.

“Hopefully the Bok win in Japan is symptomatic of a new Africa in which our citizens can learn to honour and respect each other, and unite to build a better South Africa. The Boks have shown us the way.”

Levy joined Kuper’s group, which included Piemars. He describes visiting “the Japanese version of the Western Wall” with the former Springbok captain. “We spent a couple of days touring Kyoto with Francois, his wife Nerine, and a group of their friends. At the one temple we visited, there was a place where people write down their prayers, and Francois and I noticed one saying that the English will win the RWC 2019. We decided that we needed an antidote, and Francois wrote a South African prayer. It was like the Japanese version of the Western Wall!”

This was Blechman’s first Rugby World Cup, an incentive from vehicle manufacturer Isuzu. He saw its factories in Japan and enjoyed the final. “It was tense and nerve wracking but the atmosphere was amazing. Afterwards, there was an all-night party with South Africa as the hosts. Many of the locals also supported South Africa – they love and respect the rainbow nation.”

Other fans from around the world also got behind the Boks. When Blechman flew to America for a wedding after the final, he saw many Americans boarding the plane in Springbok gear. He also interacted with Jews from all over the world. Japan, he says, is "the most amazing country. They have an unbelievable work ethic, and cannot do enough for you. Things ran like clockwork, and you can eat off the street it’s so clean.”

In the words of a New York Times article that has been widely shared, Kuper believes the Boks demonstrated three key attributes which apply to business and the country if we wish to succeed: resilience, optionality (a forward-thinking executive approach), and the agility to strike when opportunity arises.
I remember the 1995 Rugby World Cup final like it was nine years ago. Matt Damon lifting the Webb Ellis Cup while Morgan Freeman smiled on benevolently, and a crowd of computer-generated extras going wild, uniting a country that had come together shortly after the fall of apartheid, will never diminish the vivid recollection I have of those days.

There are a few reasons why these memories are so indelible. First, there was some inexplicable reason, two days before the final, the Springbok team opted to hold an under-the-radar training session at my school (King Edward VII School in Houghton, Johannesburg). Classes were cancelled, kids were strung out, the stands, gawking in disbelief as these feet-footed, muscle-bound superheroes-made-flesh—the talk of the town, the hope of the nation—we went about their routines. Second, the atmosphere in the country really was different. Black and white, rich and poor, the walls between us did seem to come down as we found common cause in a group of 15 hulking brutes (14 of whom were white) running around a field chasing an oval ball. And, once again, we won—beating superior opponents into submission through sheer force of will, through a hunger, a desperate, wild-eyed need, to win. Borne aloft on a tide of irresistible, national destiny.

A lot has changed in the interim. Seven of those fifteen, including the captain, were black guys. The country is more divided, and we now know experience that the outcry from high that comes with a national sporting triumph, however intense, can only ever be short-lived. And, I have started keeping Shabbat. I didn't watch the rugby at its appointed time. Nobody tuned on the TV for me. Instead, I gathered with friends, roughly seven hours after the final whistle, to watch a delayed rebroadcast of the game. I spent Shabbat with a super-frum (observant) community, people unaware of the score, unaware there was a Rugby World Cup on the go, unaware there is a sport called rugby. And, after the game, I made a sizeable anonymous donation to charity, as I do every four years when the Rugby World Cup comes along.

• Simon Apell is a writer who claims his love of writing has always outshone his ability by a humbling margin.

Reeva gets highest Zionist accolade

JORDAN MOSHE

Community leader and makeup icon Reeva Forman was honoured last week for her commitment to the Jewish people and Jewish state.

She and four other recipients were awarded the title of Honorary Fellow of the World Zionist Organization (WZO) at a gala event held in Be’er Sheva, Israel, last Thursday.

Forman, honorary life-vice president of the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF), received the esteemed Amit Klau Award. The award was given in recognition of Forman’s tireless efforts in combating anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment, and her long-term service to Israel and the Jewish people.

The award was conferred by Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman, WZO head of the Centre for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora; Helena Glaser, the president of the World Women’s International Zionist Organization (WZO); and WZO chairperson Avraham Duvelevi.

Forman says she was notified that she was to receive some type of recognition before leaving for Israel, but she didn’t know what it would be.

“I didn’t think it would be in the league it was,” she says. “It was overwhelming then, and still is. I haven’t fully integrated it into my mind as it is the highest award any Jew working for Israel as a Zionist can receive.”

She says it was amazing to be part of a tradition started at the first Zionist conference in Basel in 1897. “It’s awe-inspiring to be today a part of an international Jewish leadership, discussing and influencing the future of this great nation,” she says.

“I’m humbled to be in the category of current day leadership representing Jews worldwide of all political persuasions and all religious streams. To be one of those selected by my own people to thank me for my work is such an incredible moment in my life.”

She concludes that she is thrilled to be part of a Jewish community that really cares about Israel. “We believe Jews have a right to have Israel,” she says. “I’m particularly proud to be part of a special Jewish community in South Africa. I envy the way we treat our community and the national Jewish organisations that have always supported me in all I have done for Israel and the Jewish people. I look forward to continue serving the Jewish community of the wider community, and Israel.”

The Chevrah Kadisha extends heartfelt condolences to the family of the late Isaac Reznik, of blessed memory, who passed away 25 October 2019 corresponding to 26 Tishrei 5780.

Isaac served the Chevrah Kadisha and the community with selfless devotion for over 40 years at Westpark Cemetery.

He was committed to the community and worked with dedication and compassion wherever he could offer help.

Isaac was buried in the Section of Honour at Westpark Cemetery, reserved for those who have displayed exceptional commitment to our community.

May his memory be blessed.
**Sky's the limit for Captain Scully**

**C**aptain Selwyn “Scully” Levin, 73, is arguably the best known pilot in South Africa, his name synonymous with flying in the country. Levin was recently awarded a Master Air Pilot Certificate by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots in recognition of long service and consistently high standards in professional flying.

Interestingly, he is probably most famous for being the pilot that flew over the World Cup final between Brazil and Argentina. He said he didn’t do it on purpose. He was part of the team behind it, and the person who gave the pilot, the late Laurie Kay, his first flying lessons, but he was not on the board plane.

Levin is no stranger to flying at special events and air shows. On flying a small 40-seater plane in recent years, and have no intention of stopping! During the 1970s, Levin was a three-time winner of the South African National Aerobatic Championship title. He has pioneered displays, which have been emulated by only a handful of pilots worldwide, one of which is his famous feat of landing a Piper’s aircrafts, at the end of a moving truck. After completing in 1982, he has done this act more than 120 times.

Levin has played an active role in the selection, mentorship, and development of trainee cadets from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. Part of this responsibility included the selection of flight-training facilities for the SAA Cadet Pilot’s Programme, which involved an exhaustive international search.

Although he has retired from airline flying to spend more time with his wife and six grandchildren, Captain Levin is still very active as a display pilot. “It’s my passion – the most exciting part of flying for me,” he said.

Levin was born in Botswana, an engine caught fire. “It was a massive fire. We had to land safely and use the engine of the other aircraft. That has been my major emergency, but it was enough for me!” He says all pilots face malfunctions but are trained to deal with them, “unless it’s something seriously outside of the ordinary.”

To young people thinking of going into the aviation industry, Levin says, “The sky’s the limit. The aviation industry is growing and growing. If you think of the number of people flying these days compared to 30 years ago. It’s a great opportunity for youngsters, and it’s a disciplined life. You need to be physically and mentally fit and stay on the ball so your brain is being put to good use.”

Levin has received in 2009.

In congratulating Levin and awarding him his certificate, he said, “It is such an honour.”

Levin’s achievements in aviation have long been recognised in South Africa and in 2012, he was awarded The Order of the Bushman in Bronze by the South African Government for his contribution to and achievement in aviation, as a pilot and trainer, in South Africa and internationally. He is also the sole winner thus far of SA Flyer Magazine’s Lifetime Achievement Award, which he received in 2009.
Robert Sobukwe is South African history’s forgotten man. A deeply ethical, principled, selfless leader of the Pan-Africanist Congress, he has been airbrushed out of the liberation narrative, especially since 1994. Veteran journalist, author, and activist, Benjamin Pogrund, one of Sobukwe’s closest friends, has produced a book that seeks to recapture his ideas and ideals.

Pogrund and some fellow contributors – Claudelle von Eck, Professor Nyameko Barpetryana, and Thandeka Gqubule-Mbeki – spoke about the man and his message at the launch of *Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe: New reflections* at Exclusive Books in Rosebank on Monday night.

The book’s introduction says it is “a collection of viewpoints from significant and interesting people about Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, his life and work, and/or his current and possible future relevance”.

Said Pogrund, “This book is written by the writers, it’s their voices. They are people I chose. I hope it will lead to more discussion and more books. Sobukwe should become an exemplar of leadership.”

A devout Methodist born in the Karoo town of Graaff-Reinet, Sobukwe broke away from the African National Congress (ANC) in 1955 over ideological differences and founded the PAC (Pan-Africanist Congress). In 1960, the PAC led protests against the carrying of pass books by black South Africans. One ended in the Sharpeville Massacre, where 69 people were shot dead by police. Sobukwe was arrested that year, and jailed until 1969, including six years spent in solitary confinement on Robben Island. He was banned and confined to Kimberley, where he died of lung cancer in 1978.

Pogrund formed a remarkable relationship with Sobukwe. They met in 1957, when Pogrund was a journalist at the *Rand Daily Mail*. Friendship across the colour line in apartheid South Africa was a rare and risky endeavour. They couldn’t even have a cup of coffee together in public in most places. “Thank G-d that time is gone,” said Pogrund, who also wrote *How Can Man Die Better: The Life of Robert Sobukwe* in 1990.

“I get to watch South Africa from afar, from my home in Jerusalem, and I get angry and upset,” Pogrund said. “Then I come here, and I get even angrier when I see what has and hasn’t happened.”

“I yearn for the type of leadership Robert Sobukwe provided. He had honesty, integrity, commitment. It wasn’t about jobs, perks, and getting rich. He believed in freedom.”

“I believe it’s the right time for this book. The University of the Witwatersrand has renamed its central block after Sobukwe.”

Gqubule-Mbeki, economics editor at the South African Broadcasting Corporation, said the book provided an opportunity to “rewrite ourselves into history”. She said Sobukwe, a towering Pan-Africanist, had been ignored and maligned by the ANC and “besides a few streets named after him... he can quietly be forgotten”. She characterised Pogrund and Sobukwe’s friendship as “bittersweet”.

Piyana, a founder of the black consciousness movement and former vice-chancellor of the University of South Africa, said the Pogrund-Sobukwe friendship was remarkable given the suspicion with which Sobukwe regarded white communists in the ANC. He also noted that besides Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, no politicians had contributed to the book. Many contributors are younger South Africans who never even knew Sobukwe. This, in his view, made it fresh, exposing deep thinking about the country often not heard.

For Piyana, Sobukwe’s essence was daring to be different, refusing to be part of the herd. He nurtured diverse thinking and opinions in his comrades, to spark new and better ideas.

Von Eck, the former chief executive of the Institute of Internal Auditors South Africa, said, “I hope we all find a gem in this book to stimulate thought, spark healthy debate and greater consciousness for deep conversations, even if we all don’t agree.”

When asked why this book should interest Jewish readers, Pogrund said, “It provides greater understanding of what leadership should be about in this country, and a reminder about a great South African. Sobukwe has had hardly any recognition – the ANC has deliberately downplayed his role.”

This book seeks to restore Sobukwe’s legacy and legitimacy.
Memories from the 2018 Shabbos Project

"A Friday night community dinner. Walking to shul and back. A quiet family hadbashal at home. No driving, no cell phones, no screens. It was a beautiful opportunity to talk to each other instead of walking past each other in the passage while looking at our phones. We played a board game – I can’t even remember the last time we did that.”

Martine Vogelman, Cape Town

"The project has been inspiring. I have a better understanding of what the project means, and what it means to love yourself. It has been the start of an amazing spiritual journey.”

Tamryn Scheepers, Johannesburg

"We came downstairs on Shabbos morning, our kids were playing a board game instead of watching TV. We walked home from shul with special friends and hung out as a family all day, really engaging with each other because there were no electronics to distract us. The sense of peace I experienced from the minutest I woke up until Saturday night was like being away for the weekend.”

Lisa Morris, Johannesburg

"The thought of our family walking together to shul, embracing a Shabbat experience and spending time together without interference from the outside world was what enticed us to take part. After a beautiful, leisurely Shabbat as a family, we decided to conclude Shabbat at home. We stood outside the door simply sitting enjoying the first stars to appear and recite hadbashal together.”

Geoff Cohen, Cape Town

Shabbos Project – what’s on at shul?

Events are happening at more than 50 shuls around the country. Here’s a taste of some highlights:

**Ohr Somayach Savoy**
After-dinner tisch (festive Friday night Shabbos gathering) with neo-Hasidic reggae rockers, Zuchu

**Ohr Somayach Gallo Manor**
African-style Friday night dinner – braai and biltong, malva and gelatissimo.

**Chabad of Greensate**
“A Night in China” Shabbos dinner.

**Sandton Central**
Candle-lighting meditation workshop.

**Aish HaTorah**
Host a stay-over in Sandton.

**Linksfield shul**
 Families shares his incredible journey to Judaism.

**Sydenham shul**
Musical hadbashal with a trio of guitar maestros.

**Victory Park shul**
Picnic on the field.

**Greenside shul**
“Astrology, omens, and magic in Judaism” shul.

**Marais Road shul**
Cholent competition adjudicated by celebrated caterer Merle Rubin.

**Gardens shul**
Friday night dinner for residents of Highlands House, and gala dinner under the stars event.

**Ohr Somayach Sea Point**
Lunch with world-renowned paediatric oncologist Professor Cyril Karabas, who will share his extraordinary life story.

For more information on these and other great events next weekend, contact the shuls directly.
Ritalin not always the answer to ADHD

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

Traditional treatment for children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) must be reassessed, says Ilana Gerschlowitz, the founding director of the Star Academy for Autism and Catch Up Kids which caters for the needs of students with ADHD or learning challenges.

While Ritalin has been a miracle drug for some, medication should not be the first port of call, argues Gerschlowitz. She’s concerned about the high number of children in our schools who are on the drug.

“Many kids don’t want to eat solid food in the morning, so give them a protein shake instead,” she says. “Parents also often tell Gerschlowitz that their children don’t eat what’s in their lunchbox, meaning that they eat for the first time only around 15:00. It’s therefore unsurprising that they battle to sustain attention, she says. “My recommendation to parents is to see a nutritionist qualified to guide them in a proper protocol.”

Autism and ADHD overlap, says Gerschlowitz. By way of explanation, she uses the analogy of a car accident. “The kids are in the same car and a bus collides with them. The kid in the driver’s seat where the bus hits gets a severe autism diagnosis. The child who has ADHD is sitting in the backseat. He hurts his ankle and ribs, goes to hospital, but isn’t on life support in ICU. Then, there’s a kid who walks out without a scratch. Yet, they were all in that same car accident.”

Through this analogy, Gerschlowitz explains how autism and ADHD manifest. She argues that ADHD is prevalent because we live in a toxic environment and toxins cause inflammation in the body. “For the kids in the car, the trigger is that bus. For autism and ADHD, there’s a genetic vulnerability plus an environmental trigger. The food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe have toxins which contribute to expressing the genetics. Autism and ADHD can be treated in similar ways because they’re part of the same car accident. The injuries sustained just differ in severity. We treat them through a special diet, nutrition, and detoxification.”

Removing offensive foods is key to detoxification, says Gerschlowitz. “That’s why food allergy testing is so important for children with ADHD. ‘Many ADHD kids are allergic to gluten, sugar, or dairy.’ Testing your child’s D3 and B vitamin levels is also key. Many kids with ADHD are deficient in vitamin D3, which means they’ll struggle to sustain attention. So, too, if they’re deficient in the B vitamins – B1, B3, B6, B9, or B12 – they’ll run out of fuel more quickly. A third of children with ADHD are low in cholesteral, which is important for fat metabolism in their brain. The correct supplementation can help address these issues.”

ADHD is also associated with high levels of histamine, she says. “If the child presenting with ADHD is making too much histamine, when they encounter seasonal changes in the environment, they’re not coping well. I consult a paediatrician in New York who prescribes antihistamines to treat ADHD.”

Investigating the gut-brain connection is a focus for autism and ADHD, says Gerschlowitz. “Children who seem spaced out or hyperactive can have a bacterial or fungal infection in their bowel which requires investigation and prescription medication. Ultimately my message is healing without medication.”

“The right educational approach is also key to treating ADHD. Catch Up Kids has been instrumental in helping students catch up, especially between Grades 0 to 3, so they can stay in mainstream schools.”

“ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis) is a specific teaching methodology we use to address each learner’s skills deficits. We also focus on anxiety and emotional coping skills. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends ABA before psychiatric medication.”

What’s more, Gerschlowitz believes inclusive education is a valuable and viable option for students with ADHD and learning challenges. “South Africa tends to box children,” she says. “That’s not common practice around the world. Inclusive education is a reality in Australia and America. Our Jewish schools need to take the lead and open their minds to inclusive education. That doesn’t mean a bridging class, but rather including the learner in a mainstream classroom.”

Inclusive education is a constitutional, legal right,” Gerschlowitz says. “At Catch Up Kids, we provide the infrastructure to make it a reality. We tailor the child to the environment, not the environment to the child. We offer one-on-one classes after school, where necessary, we provide a trained facilitator in the mainstream classroom to assist the learner. Facilitators blend into the classroom and provide necessary support.

“Ultimately, we won’t put a child in the classroom who doesn’t have the prerequisite skills to be there,” she says. “Once they have these skills though, not putting them in a mainstream setting denies them the opportunity to model from their peers. We’ve successfully helped numerous kids this way at schools around South Africa.”
Fire and a half years ago, Johannesburg property developer David Mayer arrived at August House in End Street, Doornfontein, to buy a painting from the then relatively unknown family, Nelson Makamo. This was years before Makamo would have published a successful magazine and become the darling of American late-night TV talk shows. “The area was derelict,” says Mayer, “the original building was to be hijacked, and this was one of the most dangerous parts of town.” August House had been the home of African Sales, the French perfume and fashion empire started 82 years ago by the Priebatsch family, but had long since been deserted.

When Mayer arrived at Makamo’s studio, he discovered that Makamo was in the process of being evicted. The then owners, August House residents, had been desperate to sell the building and flee the dangers of the inner-city, were attempting to evict the tenants as a prerequisite for that. Realising that there were already a number of talented emerging artist studios in the building, Mayer decided to buy the property and turn it into a vibrant artist colony. It was the continuation of the vision of Brie Venter and Maria Steyn, who had conceptualised the idea in 2006. Today, August House hosts 50 of the most successful emerging artistic talents in South Africa. Foreign dignitaries and the embassy crowd dot the hallways and carry away, under their arms, some of the best artwork produced on the African continent.

Many of the most successful artists in the building are graduates of Kim Berman’s Artist Proof Studios (APS). More than anyone else in the country, Berman has supported emerging artists to make the leap from their studios to sell their work and get them noticed. “Our mission fulfilled. It’s a mark of successful careers. It’s a sign of our success and a mission fulfilled,” says Berman.

Many of these artists have now left the nest and are building really successful careers. It’s a sign of our success and a mission fulfilled. If they come back and print for us at APS, we get the benefit and they pay it forward, it’s a cycle of benefit.

Many of these artists, says Berman “are making a living, in fact, making much more than a living.” Berman refuses to be drawn on his favourite graduates resident in the commune. She first met Makamo when he was a “shy, lost young man and today he is an example to so many.” When pushed, Berman describes Ngobeni as potentially the “next hot young artist”.

Ngobeni produces emotive pieces like no other artist in South Africa. His stark charcoal and pastel drawings of deformed things and the exhalation of youth haunt the viewer. Karen Moyal and her husband Patrick are already regularly visiting August House for the past three years. “I was taken to August House by my mom for the first time in 2016. I was introduced to Solomon Omogboye and we ended up buying our very first piece of art from Solomon that weekend. From then on, we’ve been hooked,” she says. “Solomon Omogboye produces some of the best large-scale portrait work ever seen in the country.”

The Moyals have collected more than 50 artworks from different African artists, mainly from August House. “For me, what makes August House such a special place is that the prospecive buyer is introduced not only to the artwork, but to the artist him/herself. In so doing, this creates an interaction and a connection that doesn’t exist when buying art from a gallery,” says Moyal. “It’s my connection with the artist that makes the piece I am buying from them that much more meaningful.”

Her favourite artists include Omogboye, Ngobeni, Andrew Ntshabele, Axel Lang, Greatjoy Nkouo, and Arlindo Maunde. “We have bought many of their works. But we’ve just discovered Cromwell Ngobeni, Petrus Mwegwa, and Jan Thikhutshana, who are also amazing. All these artists produce work that, for me, conjures up real emotion and feeling.”

Khumalo’s new series of African women at prayer and his moody dark charcoal drawing of cars on a highway at night are nothing short of breathtaking. Thikhutshana, who is signed with the Eveready Read Gallery, produces dramatic landscape images replete with colour-filled trees, dancing windmills, and brooding skies. Among the flecks of spilled paint and the pungent smell of glue, other talented artists to look out for are Nigerian Samuail Olatunji, who conjures up magnificent works using a mosaic tapestry of colourful cloth, and the majestic oversized windmills, and brooding skies.

The little-known Jewish link to Fawlty Towers

JORDAN MOSHE

A first glance, a Torquay hotel, a cantankerous British couple, and a Spanish waiter whose English is almost non-existent don’t seem to have anything remotely to do with being Jewish. However, the iconic British comedy series Fawlty Towers possesses a uniquely Jewish connection, one which may elicit a loud “Oui!” of incredulity.

The legendary British television sitcom Fawlty Towers needs little introduction. Broadcast on the BBC in 1975 and 1979, the show was conceived and written by acclaimed British comedy actor John Cleese, and Connie Booth. They both starred in the show, and were married at the time of the first series.

Although it ran for just 12 episodes across two seasons, the hit show was still ranked first by the British Film Institute on a list of the 100 Greatest British Television Programmes. The show’s legacy lives on, including in South Africa, where the Auto & General Theatre on the Square recently staged a production based on Cleese’s original series, bringing the personalities of Basil and Sybil Fawlty to the Johannesburg stage.

Anne Robinson and Mark Mulder played the roles of the quarellsome couple with aplomb, re-creating the classic scenes familiar to all. Even the Jewish Women’s Benevolent Society got in on the nostalgia, booking out an entire performance as a community fundraiser.

In an interview with the Jewish Chronicle in 2007, Sachs said, “Half of me is Jewish. Sometimes I feel I could be the Jewish Dr. Schlesinger.”

So though they may appear removed from yiddishkeit, it would seem that there is a distinctly Jewish streak in the Fawlty’s lasting success.
The perception exists that it is expensive and onerous to realise a Plan B in Europe. In Cyprus, a former British colony and full member of the European Union (EU), this couldn’t be further from the truth.

Cyprus was voted the safest country in the world last year. This year, property sales to overseas buyers rose 65%. Investment is pouring into the economy with its infrastructural development and enormous natural gas fields.

There’s never been a better time to explore investing in Cyprus.

Cyprus was also recently voted as having the best permanent residency and second-citizenship programme in Europe.

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In both programmes, property ownership gives you a solid investment, good rental returns, a superlative lifestyle in the Mediterranean, and easy access to Europe.

Securing a Plan B overseas is a financial and emotional commitment, but the decision can be made easier with the advice and assistance from professionals.

An astute offshore property investment that works for you in the short, medium, and long term is the achievement of a lifetime. In Cyprus, investing in the “citizenship through investment” or “fast-track residency programme” will reap financial rewards and lifelong benefits. Can you afford not to take advantage of this while both programmes are still open?

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Contact us for a confidential meeting to help you realise your and your family’s future in Europe. We will guide you every step of the way to realise your plan B.

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**Cyprus was also recently voted as having the best permanent residency and second-citizenship programme in Europe.**

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An extraordinary play about two remarkable women

GERTRUDE STEIN

Jewish choirs are considered by some to be old-fashioned and... acclaimed conferences and exclusive events. Professor Russel Lurie and the choir singing Kalinka. Photo: Trevor Sachs

Peter Feldman

An extraordinary play about two remarkable women

JORDAN MOSHE

A further boost was the staging of the play at the Johannesburg Theatre Festival in May this year, where both Johnston and Crofford were nominated for best actress. Crofford scooped the award as Toklas. 'Johnston said she first saw the play in Cape Town in 1996, and was mesmerised. "This is a fascinating story of two remarkable women who abandoned their middle-class American lives and found refuge in the Bohemian decadence of Paris in the early 1900s and in each other," Johnston recounts. "Stein drew artistic genius to her salon like a magnet, and they inspired each other to create art. The play captures all of this beautifully." Prepared for the role, Johnston read everything she could lay her hands on. "I fell in love with both of them. I had coincidentally been to an exhibition at the Met (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) in New York in 2012 called the 'Stein Collection' where much of the art Gertrude and her brother Leo had owned was exhibited. There were also numerous black and white photographs of the Stein siblings which told the story of their sibling rivalry and privilege. I was captivated by the romance and gossip of their lives, never dreaming at that time that I would later play Gertrude." Asked whether she considers the role challenging, she reflected, "I have been in about 50 odd plays ranging from Shakespeare to Stoppard to Chekhov to obscure experimental and protest theatre. Gertrude is challenging, but an exciting and delicious challenge. I never tire of the role. I think perhaps the most challenging thing I've done is a children's play at the Johannesburg Zoo in the 80s." What inspired her about the play was the way she and her character found her way to portraying Stein. "Stein was an extraordinarily creative and witty, exploring the extraordinary relationship between Stein, the American modernist author and poet, and Toklas. Their relationship is brought vividly to life on stage. The play was written by Win Wells, an American playwright, screenwriter, and actor, and it is directed by Chris Weare. Stein's activities during World War II have been the subject of analysis and commentary over the years. As a Jew living in Nazi-occupied France, Stein may have been able to sustain her lifestyle as an art collector – and indeed her physical safety – only through the protection of powerful Vichy government official and Nazi collaborator Bernard Fay. After the war ended, Stein expressed admiration for another Nazi collaborator, Vichy leader Marshal Petain. Her many books include: Q.E.D., published in 1929; Tender Buttons, a fictional story about a love triangle; and Tender Buttons, published in 1914, in which Stein commented on lesbian sexuality. In an interview, Johnston explained how she found her way to portraying Stein. "Lynta secured the rights to the play last year, and invited me to play Gertrude Stein opposite her Alice B. Toklas. Then, award-winning director Chris Weare agreed to direct." Weare's production was staged in Cape Town last year, and was nominated for a Fleur du Cap Theatre Award in the best ensemble category. A further boost was the staging of the play at the International Dublin Gay Theatre Festival in May this year, where both Johnston and Crofford were nominated for best actress. Crofford scooped the award as Toklas. Johnston said she first saw the play in Cape Town in 1996, and was mesmerised. "This is a fascinating story of two remarkable women who

JJMC sings praises of long-time chazzan

Jewish choirs are considered by some to be old-fashioned and uninspiring. However, the Johannesburg Jewish Male Choir (JJMC) this week proved that choral music continues to inspire cheering and toe-tapping, even a tear or two. Notable Jewish vocal talent took to the stage at the Auto & General Theatre on the Square in Sandton on Sunday afternoon in the JJMC's 34th annual musical showcase. Musical director Professor Russel Lurie, the chairperson of the JJMC, joined forces with Sea Point Hebrew Congregation chazzan Ivo Joffe, and acclaimed singer Marc Shapiro. Together, their personalities paid tribute to and shared the stage with Ezra Sher, Pine Street chazzan of about 20 years. These talented soloists were accompanied by eleven supporting choristers and a musical ensemble directed by venerated virtuosa and pianist extraordinaire, Evelyn Green. Collectively, this capable cadre presented a memorable musical spectacle which transported audience members from Johannesburg to Israel, shifting seamlessly from English to Italian and even Yiddish along the way. Under Green's masterful guidance, instruments and voices worked their magic in harmony, and delivered a performance which celebrated musical masterpieces, Israeli spirit, and above all, genuine Jewish joy. Timeless Jewish classics based on psalms and prayers blended into contemporary Israeli tunes made popular at Eurovision concerts over the past few years. Verde gardens way to Yodica with a performance of famed Russian folk-song Kolia, for which Lurie donned appropriate Russian-style headwear, much to the audience's delight. There were also many Yiddish tunes which were sung with ambleg, leaving many feeling nostalgic. Few eyes were dry during a moving performance of My Yiddish Mama, and the lively beat of Rozchna had many fingers drumming on armpits. A roaring chorus of hits from Fiddler-on-the-Roof transported audiences from tradition from Times Square, setting the stage for the subsequent tunes of Frankie Mercury, Rodgers and Hammerstein, and finally Leonard Cohen, whose Hallelujah proved fitting for bringing the afternoon's programme to a satisfying close.

JORDAN MOSHE

From start to finish, the JJMC delivered a fitting homage to Jewish musical prowess, proving that no song is beyond the capabilities of choral talent. Rather than end with a crescendo, the memorable performance maintained a high note throughout the show, leaving audience members humming tunes for weeks to come.

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Are the phoenixes rising?

Geoff Sifrin

perception, culture as a whole, whether white or black, was something the apartheid government took seriously. But it forcefully kept black and white cultures separated, and exploited this separation for its racist political agenda.

Seats at venues showing high-quality European ballet, opera, theatre, and fine art were traditionally occupied by Jews and the Africans-speaking community. Today, Jews are few, but Africanans are still present. And a phoenix is rising in Pretoria. Once the heart of apartheid, where ideologists plotted their reprehensible deeds, this city hosts an opposite concept.

A multimillion rand art centre of world-class standard opened in September with several exhibitions of South African works from the past century of such high quality, the Museum of Modern Art in New York could just as proudly have hosted them.

The Javett Art Centre is a green shoot in the cultural sphere, as important as a world-class rugby, which particular is its location and inclusive approach to who will be showcased.

Current collections show signature works from 1912, including the cream of the crop – the likes of Walter van Rhyn, Gerhard Sekoto, Irma Stern, Steven Cohen, David Goldblatt, Jackson Hewitt, and more.

We cannot be naive about the effect of these examples. They will not solve the mass poverty, crime, and corruption which pull this country down. The pitiable beggars who stand at street corners in Johannesburg will never see them. Yet, many black Springboks came from impoverished backgrounds and fought their way to the top. Is hope again possible?

SA JEWISH REPORT

March of the Living 2020

The March of the Living is a two-part, unique, educational experience, which brings together teens and adults from over 40 countries, first to Poland for a week, followed by a week in Israel.

In POLAND, the rich cultural heritage that once existed there, will be explored, culminating in a march from Auschwitz to Auschwitz Birkenau, on Yom Hazikaron, Holocaust remembrance day.

In ISRAEL, we will commemorate Yom Ha’atzmaut, Israel Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers, and Yom Ha’atzmaut, Israel’s Day of Independence.

Please be aware that the Youth Delegation will only be taking one bus for the whole of South Africa. Please pay special attention to the details of the location of your transport. It is no guarantee that your application will be successful after that date. There is limited money for part subsidies.

For all information, please refer to the website: www.motsa.com. All applications can be made online.

Should you require more information, please refer to one of the following contacts:

For MOTL Youth Delegation: motsouthafrica@gmail.com and speak to Kim.

For MOTL Young Adult and International Adults Delegations: Shirley@hkhlozic.co.za

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Super Springbokgs show the way forward

One didn’t have to be a rugby fan to be thrilled by the Springboks’ memorable victory in the 2019 Rugby World Cup final. In pure sporting terms, winning rugby’s premier crown for the third time was itself a great achievement, but there was a great deal more to it than that. What we and the world saw at all was huge was an epic display of pride, passion, commitment and, above all, unifying teamwork on the part of 15 South Africans totally focused on achieving their common goal. And, who could not be deeply moved by how the Springbok emblem, once the reviled symbol of exclusive white supremacy, has become so embraces every race and creed. Contrary to common

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

March of the Living 2020

YOUTH DELEGATION

Full house for national conference

Such has been the interest in our national conference that we have found ourselves booked out with more than a week to go. However, for those unable to attend, we will be livestreaming the proceedings from our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/SABJD/). This will be the 50th national conference of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies since the Transvaal and Cape Boards of Deputies amalgamated to form a national body in 1912.

In marking this significant milestone, we remember the previous generations of leaders who gave so generously of their time and energy to help ensure safety and well-being of South African Jewry. The continued resilience and vibrancy of our community, which I will emphasise in my chairman’s report on Sunday, is a tribute to their self-sacrifice of those who preceded us. We can do no better than to emulate their example and strive to build on their accomplishments.

• Listen to Chasidic Zefirat on Jewish Board Talk 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday from 12:00 to 13:00.内文

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TAKING ISSUE

Geoff Sifrin

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Torah Academy Izedakah
Torah Academy Primary School raised Izedakah (charity) for six charitable organisations at its special match day last term. The organisations were Yad Aharon, the Community Security Organisation, Chevrah Kadisha, DL Link, Maat Chitimah, and Eummah.

Representatives of these organisations attended an assembly on 31 October to receive the funds and thank the school.

Torah Academy Grade 6 pupil Yael Willemse holds up a ‘thank you’ plaque with Galit Joseph from DL Link.

Bersohn bokkies get in gear
Students at Minnie Bersohn Pre-Primary School donated their South African-themed bokkie uniform support for the Bokkie prior to Saturday’s Rugby World Cup final against England. Go Bokkie!

Letters

ZILLE DIDN’T SAY COLONIALISM WAS POSITIVE

The article on the future of the Democratic Alliance by Steven Grund in the 3 November edition of the SA Jewish Report is excellent, but it must be pointed out that Helen Zille never said that colonialism was positive. What she did say was that “the legacy is not negative.”

It must be understood that this is a big difference to what was written in the article. We must all remember that we are entitled to our own opinion, but not our own facts.

South Africa used to leave behind all the colonial power to build a country which is enormously functional and solvent.

In chatting to Helen Zille about the article, she said it was analysed sensibly but for a factual error. She also pointed out that if you think about the Rugby World Cup final, we took on the former colonial power to win its own game, and beat them: “We look forward to South Africa, where the apartheid government gave us mixed messages while the present government is giving mixed signals about Israel.”

CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE ON YOM TOV DEFIES THE MORNINGSIDE JEWISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH holds a Succos Festival. Venue: 27 Aintree Avenue, Savoy Estate.

Active, strong and independent at 100!

Mina Girnun turned 100 on 10 October at Golden Acres in Sandringham in the company of family and friends from around the world. Included among her guests was Dutch Ambassador Han Peters and his wife, Alessandra, who attended Girnun’s tea party, bringing with them wishes from her country of birth. Girnun was born in Amsterdam, and came to South Africa by boat when she was 18.

In a letter, Peters wrote, “It gives me great pleasure also on behalf of my wife, Alessandra to congratulate you on your 100th birthday. We send our congratulations and very best wishes on such a special occasion.”

Girnun has four children, 11 grandchildren, and 22 great grandchildren. According to who know her, she is no ordinary 100-year-old. She still drives, cooks and bakes, plays bridge five days a week, and lives happily independent. Her family says she lives life to the full.

Ruger builders at KDL

Grade 11 students at King David Pre-Primary Liffeldt get into the 2019 Rugby World Cup spirit while showing some building creativity.

Jacob Brittan, Elhan Kooner, Benjamin Boyer, and Nathan Miller

ATHESM AND MORAL BANKRUPTCY

From time to time, questions arise about atheism. One of the most prominent of these was a letter printed in our 29 September edition, which questioned whether anyone who isn’t religious can nevertheless look forward to a “very happy years to come.”

Iffered, “No more than there is for the colour-blind man?” Russell replied, “There’s no objective criterion outside feeling, then, for condemning the atheism. One of the most prominent of these was a letter printed in our 29 September edition, which questioned whether anyone who isn’t religious can nevertheless look forward to a “very happy years to come.”

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Terms and Conditions Apply
Derbyshire signing puts Cohen on fast track

Michael Cohen, the left-arm fast-bowler from the Western Province Cricket Club, is the latest in a steady trickle of young cricketers heading for foreign fields. Cohen, a former South African under-19 player and occasional Cobras performer, will be leaving home in late March next year to take up a two-year stint with Derbyshire in the English Midlands.

Cohen was offered a minor contract extension by the Western Province Cricket Association (WPCA) for the current season but preferred to pass it up. When approached, he politely declined the opportunity to be interviewed by the SA Jewish Report, but explained his decision to overlook the WP contract to the SA Club Cricket website as follows, "The recent [fast-bowler] signings by the Cobras almost represent a block to my progression. Not being contracted facilitates a lot of freedom. I turned my progression. Not being contracted would have limited the contract down on good terms."

When he was interviewed by SA Club Cricket, the move to Derbyshire hadn’t been finalised but was probably in the wings, with the move to England being facilitated by Derbyshire’s director of cricket, former Zimbabwe middle-order batsman Dave Houghton. Apparently, Houghton noticed Cohen playing for the nearby Nottinghamshire second XI and was so impressed, he offered him terms at a neighbouring county, where he will join another South African, Free State’s Leus du Plooy, on the playing staff.

Cohen’s story is an interesting one, and a salutary lesson for all those who might feel disadvantaged by not going to what is perceived to be the ‘right’ school. He, for instance, matriculated from Reddam House in Constantia, rather than one of Cape Town’s traditional cricket schools such as SACS, Bishops, or Wynberg, opting for a good matric rather than staying on to do a degree in management accounting from Unisa. "They ordered me so.”

Thirteen months later, he had dropped out of university to pursue his cricket career. "I joined a smaller club than I had expected and..." Cohen told SA Club Cricket. "... where I would have a good chance at playing first-class cricket."

"I turned my progression. Not being contracted would have limited the contract down on good terms.”

Two – or even three – jerseys are advisable. "I need to find an environment in which I can develop," Cohen told SA Club Cricket. "... in which I can develop.”

Cohen was one of the players who learned quickly and has great variation and potential as a fast bowler. Left-arm pace bowlers (like the Aussies Mitchell Starc and Mitchell Johnson) are rarities because they are able to exploit unusual angles of delivery that can trouble right and left-handed batsmen.

Cohen’s coaches have said that if he does have a problem, it is a welcome one – he tends to over-think things rather than keeping them relatively simple and straightforward – as fast-bowlers should.

"Derbyshire has attracted its fair share of southern Africans in the past thirty or so years, with Cohen being just the latest. Others include the famous "Bunter" Barlow, who captained the side and resuscitated Derby’s fortunes. Then there was Peter Kirsten, nicknamed "old soft hands" and, more recently, former Dolphins wicketkeeper Daryn Smit. Of them all, Houghton’s story is the most romantic. People have forgotten..."

"... that along with former England coach Duncan Fletcher, he played in newly-independent Zimbabwe’s first-ever World Cup in 1983. Zimbabwe’s cricketers were all amateurs in those days, and they raised funds for the tournament in England by having their wives bake for cake sales. They also raffled tickets and memorabilia, and sold bales of tobacco at well-attended tobacco auctions.

In the tournament itself, Zimbabwe caused one of the greatest upsets in World Cup history by narrowly beating Australia in the early rounds. At the time, with Dennis Lillee, Kim Hughes, and Rod Marsh in their midst, the "baggy greens" were considered to be one of the strongest sides in world cricket. Cohen has already said that one of the reasons for playing abroad is that he’s looking forward to playing in different conditions and being coached by different coaches. He will find England soggy in April, with the accumulated rain of winter leading to slow pitches and muddy outfields. Two – or even three – jerseys are advisable. "I need to find an environment in which I can develop," Cohen told SA Club Cricket. "... in which I can develop.”

Such are the words of a keenly ambitious young cricketer. Many in South Africa and the Jewish community at large will be watching Cohen’s progress with a similarly keen eye.