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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, so 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.

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 agritech, 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 realised 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 were contradictory.

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!"

Alida Schoultz asked rhetorically, "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?"

"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, come 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,

South Africa...big in Japan



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

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Evangelist's comments on Jews and Afrikaners causes race row

TALI FEINBERG

Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) Secretary General Godrich Gardee called for an upcoming gathering of Christians to be “booby-trapped” after evangelist preacher Angus Buchan was recorded as saying that only Jews and Afrikaners had a “covenant with G-d”, but both have since apologised for their comments. EFF Deputy President Floyd Shivambu posted a video clip on Twitter of Buchan convening a prayer meeting to be held on 1 February in Pretoria. Shivambu wrote, “A racist Boer Pastor Angus Buchan says it’s only the Boers & Jews who have a



Angus Buchan

covenant with G-d, & he’s 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 stadium needs some limpet mines booby-trapped around it prior to that date. Then let’s see what happens to the only people who have a ‘covenant with G-d’. I know this Boer religious fanatic is misrepresenting the Jewish people, but he must be banned 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 Afrikaners in a Facebook post.

“Having stated that the Jews and the Afrikaans people 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 ... stir up racial disharmony and apologise when taken to task ... the fact is that the man sees Africans 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 hope no one follows in his footsteps to wedge religious racial division.”

Buchan’s original comment was as follows, “Everybody is welcome as always to our meetings but this time, the emphasis will be on the Afrikaner 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 Afrikaans people, that is fact.”

Wendy Kahn, the national director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, said, “In our fraught South African environment where race and religion can be potentially divisive 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 inflammatory. We again endorse the campaign #NoPlaceforHate.”

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-Semitic sing along lands teens in hot water

Three German teenagers are under investigation for allegedly playing anti-Semitic songs and singing along 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.

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 to the land that I will show you.’” (Genesis 12:1) Abraham got up and went.

The Hebrew people didn’t begin their life in the land of Israel, but outside it. 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 told.

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 convictions and beliefs. More to the point, it drives him to remove ill-conceived superstitions and obstacles that can stand in the way when we truly enter 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 our inner focus and determination to get to where we know, deep within ourselves, is where we need to be. We need to focus on our own “horizon”, to keep moving in that direction, and eventually we know that we will get there.

Lech Lecha starts with a powerful opening line. It’s clear that Abraham is a “ger”, he has chosen the path we know as Judaism. (Judaism didn’t yet exist, but the idea is that he was the first in the line of people who would come to be known as a Jew.) The word “ger” really means “stranger”. What makes Abraham a “ger” is that he goes on from his parent’s home.

Today, each of us is very much like Abraham. We too are “gerim”, strangers on a journey. Our journey is also one that takes us out from our parents’ homes, sometimes away from our families,

Rabbi Julia Margolis, Beit Luria Progressive Shul



and often to a new and strange land. There are so many challenges and tests during one’s journey.

We are “gerim”, all children of G-d. At the end of the day, at some time in our life, we had to pick up and leave.

Whether physically, or metaphorically, life’s journeys bind us to one another. Each life is a journey, and at some point something or someone comes along which gets us to move in a new direction.

Those who say that by going without knowing the destination, Abraham was showing his love for G-d, maybe right in their own way. I believe Abraham took what Abraham Joshua Heschel describes as a “leap of action”. This is perhaps the essence of what Judaism asks of us: not just to take a leap of faith, to believe in something just “because”, but rather to take a leap of action. To do something if you genuinely feel you should, even if you don’t initially understand 100% why.

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Xolani Gwala tribute is not the story we planned

PAULA SLIER



For weeks, I'd been dreading the phone call I got at 05:30 last Friday morning. Nobody wants to die, 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

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 Bibi* (only Bibi

"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 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 result of his 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 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 newsreader for Ram FM radio station, the brainchild of 702 founder Issie Kirsh. Based on the success of 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".

"Sheba 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 track. 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 Ronni Shapiro 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



Xolani praying at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem

friends since our early twenties, and I had always had a soft spot for him. Xolani is one of those 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'd been given the worst possible news – the cancer had returned.

A friend suggested he contact me to see if Israel 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 beat cancer.

It was experimental and hugely expensive, but for people like Xolani who had nowhere else to turn, it offered a last hope. He was one of only three being treated for free in this specific trial at Sheba Medical Center, Tel HaShomer, 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.

[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?"

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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.

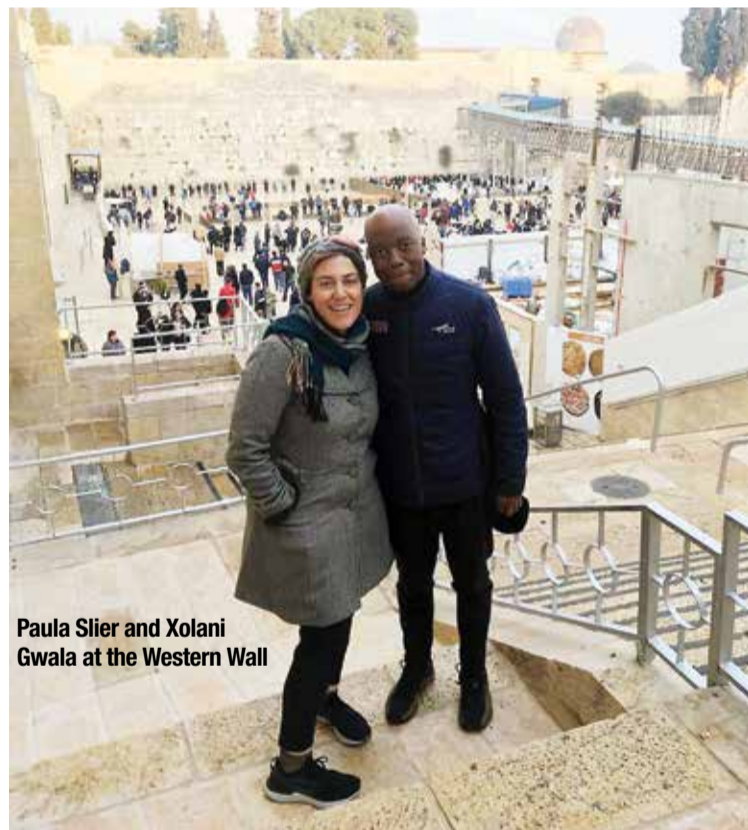
There is a piano at one of the entrances to Sheba Medical

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 you my 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.

• Paula Slir is the Middle East Bureau Chief of RT, the founder and CEO of NewshoundMedia and the inaugural Europcar Women in Leadership Award winner at the Absa Jewish Achiever Awards.



Paula Slir and Xolani Gwala at the Western Wall



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Pamensky admits to ratifying Eskom's 'dodgy' R43 million New Age deal

NICOLA MILTZ

Johannesburg 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 a sponsorship agreement in which Eskom would bankroll TNA's controversial business breakfasts every month at a cost of R1.2million a breakfast.

The Zondo commission has heard evidence that Eskom spent more than R50 million on three advertising and sponsorship contracts with TNA. This was the third of such agreements.

Pamensky said he was unaware at the time of the serious misgivings surrounding the controversial sponsorship agreement.

However, audit firm Sizwe

Ntsaluba Gobodo (SNG) had already reviewed the contract and found it to involve "reportable irregular expenditure". Also lawyers from Ledwaba Mazwai Attorneys had called for a termination clause in the contract. And SNG had found that Eskom's interim chief executive, Collin Matjila, exceeded his authority when he signed the deal (before ratification).

Also, according to testimony before the commission, Eskom's sponsorship policy requires that contracts above R3 million be properly assessed and approved by its sponsorship committee first.

The contract was concluded without the termination clause in spite of legal advice to the contrary.

Even before Pamensky ratified this contract, the TNA breakfasts being aired on SABC were being scrutinised in the media 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 asked 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 knew 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 parliament and the media.

He joined the Eskom board on 11 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 Energy Limited 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 him. "He 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 the group."

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

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



Mark Pamensky

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.

Earlier, evidence given by Peter Pretorius, Eskom's acting strategic communications and marketing manager, suggested that his take on the value of these business breakfasts was that "they made no financial sense".

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 asked to ratify.

Pamensky replied, "That is correct."

"But I would think that if you are asked to ratify a contract you must have the contract in front of you."

"Is it your evidence that you didn't think it was necessary for the board to see the agreement it was being 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

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

He said he relied, 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 backdrop."

"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 took all the 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 a 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 Eskom information with the Guptas that assisted them in their R2.15 billion purchase of Optimum Coal Holdings, which had coal contracts with Eskom.



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Nussbaums closes – end of an era for SA Jews

JORDAN MOSHE

The iconic Nussbaums Butchery closed its doors this week.

The closure brings to an end an 83-year journey which began in Doornfontein, concluded in Glenhazel, and was consistently taken alongside the customer for three generations.

Members of the Johannesburg Jewish community were stunned on Sunday when the family company announced its immediate closure and cessation of production as of Monday in a widely-circulated press release.

“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. Nussbaums landed contracts with Jewish old-aged homes and youth movements, even supplying meat to the army for Jewish national servicemen.

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.

Over time, the business developed a flourishing network. So legendary were its deli meats, it began supplying them to non-kosher establishments. Even the Mandela family ordered its Christmas turkeys from Nussbaums for 20 years, and products have been exported as far as Hong Kong.

Ian relocated the business in 1994 to premises on Louis Botha Avenue, making kosher products more accessible. Over time, he offered cost-effective catering options, freighted products into Africa for far-flung Jewish communities, and consistently supported local community initiatives. In June 2016, the business moved to Glenhazel, placing itself literally at the community’s front door.

Given the Lurie’s involvement in the community, the reaction to the closure comes as little surprise. “This is someone who has given so much to the community,” says Ian’s daughter, Eden. “To see it come to an end shocks people, and they feel scared. Someone sent us a message to ask, ‘What am I going to feed my family tonight?’ We’ve had people crying with us because they feel the loss as much as we do.”

Multiple factors account for the decision to close the business, Ian says. They include a dwindling Jewish community, market trends, and the



The original Nussbaums owners Roch and Samuel Lurie and the *mashgiach* outside the Doornfontein butchery

increasingly tight budget constraints faced by a growing number of people.

“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.

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United we stand

There was undoubtedly a positive shift in our outlook this week. We went from being in the doldrums over Moody's taking us to the brink of junk status; the news that unemployment has risen; and there being no light at the end of the economic tunnel, to sheer joy. All this in just 80 minutes!

But what really happened? Was there really a shift for South Africans? I know that in reality, it was just a national sports team winning a world championship, which is outstanding, but it won't change our economy. Or did it change our national trajectory?

Disclaimer: before I go any further, I need to make a guilty confession that I did watch the 2019 Rugby World Cup final on Saturday, and I did drive on Shabbos. And, no, I don't feel great about admitting it.

Another confession is that I'm not the biggest rugby fan. In fact, this was the first rugby World Cup game I have watched this year.

Having said that, I was riveted, and enjoyed every second of the game, shouting for our side and yelling with pleasure at every momentous point scored. It was exhilarating! I was so proud to be a South African living in Johannesburg.

And, I got quite emotional on hearing team captain Siya Kolisi say after the win, "We have so many problems in our country but a team like this, we come from different backgrounds, different races, but we came together with one goal and we wanted to achieve it."

He went on to say that, as South Africans, "we can achieve anything if we work together as one". We so needed to hear that! This is true not only for South Africans, but for Jews. It's hard to make it happen, but when we do work together, we can make the earth move.

After the game, my boys and I went for a drive to enjoy the *gees* (spirit) out there on the streets. I wanted to share this incredible feeling with as many South Africans as possible.

So, 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 my car window, I fist pumped beggars, taxi drivers, and many others. I also did seated 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.

We then parked in the Rosebank shopping precinct and went for a walk. People weren't quite so open in their sentiments when the metal between us was gone. I guess it wasn't so easy for us 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.

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 partied until Sunday, but they clearly felt safe and comfortable with those around them. My take home from this is that most South Africans are ecstatic about this win, but we remain shell shocked with all that has and is happening around us. It isn't easy to let go of our inhibitions, fears, and problems.

Also, it didn't take long for the naysayers to find fault with this incredible international victory. Race had to be brought into the fray, as did all the other ugly barriers that we put up between us. These folk were determined not to allow us to revel in the joy.

In spite of the ugliness they brought, you and I know that the only way to create the country or community we want is by working together. The Springboks proved this once again.

It's about putting aside our differences and working together to achieve a goal. First we need the goal, then we must get together and work towards it.

It sounds so easy, but clearly it isn't.

I know I may sometimes sound like a stuck record in my repeated calls to work together, but it works. Siya Kolisi knows it works. So does Rassie Erasmus.

You just have to look at what's happening in the Israeli government right now to see how far working at cross purposes gets us. They appear to be heading towards a third election because they can't seem to work together to form a coalition government.

Yes, they all have their differences, but they all want a peaceful, successful country with good leadership. There seems to be a sense that Netanyahu has had his day, and it's time for someone new, so why can't they agree?

Same story! They can't set aside their differences. Instead they may well land up wasting fortunes in another election.

What does it take to look beyond differences? I saw it briefly while watching the Springboks against the British. I saw it again in the car, driving around Johannesburg. It's there, we just have to have the courage of our convictions.

I can't tell you how many people said they wished they could bottle the *gees* and sense of unity. The truth is, I don't want to bottle it, I want to filter it into our air so that just breathing inspires us to work together. Perhaps that's the solution.

Shabbat Shalom!

Peta Krost Maunder

Editor

Apology

In last week's newspaper, we erroneously called Yoni Moshe Raichlin, "Moshe" in the story "Tale of two Moses in miracle birth". We always do our best to avoid errors, but sometimes gremlins find their way into our copy during production. We apologise for any inconvenience!



Israeli government not the issue, occupation is, says Palestinian PM

I recently sat down with Palestinian Prime Minister Dr Mohammad Shtayyeh in Ramallah to gauge his views on a range of issues including the Israeli elections.

"We know one thing," he told me. "We know that [Benjamin] Netanyahu is no longer going to be [Israeli] prime minister. Obviously, it doesn't mean that the person to replace him is someone we are in favour of."

Would you prefer Benny Gantz, the former army chief and leader of the centrist-left Blue and White party, to Netanyahu, I ask him?

"I prefer that the prime minister of Israel is somebody who is ready to end the occupation that has occurred in Palestinian territories since 1967," is his reply.

Still trying to push him, I ask if he would support some kind of unity government – a power sharing deal between Netanyahu and Gantz.

"The issue for us is not the formation of the Israeli government," said Shtayyeh. "The issue is the content – the political content. What is it they are offering us? Israel has to say that it's ready for talks to end occupation. We aren't the ones who make offers. We aren't the ones who make compromises. Israel has to make an offer to the Palestinians, and we are ready to accept any serious offer – two states, the end of occupation, the illegality of settlements. Somebody in Israel has to stand up to abide by international law and United Nations resolutions vis-a-vis Palestine/Israel."

Born in the Palestinian city of Nablus, 61-year-old Shtayyeh replaced Rami Hamdallah as Palestinian prime minister in March this year. He holds a doctorate in economic development from the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom from where he knows former South African president Thabo Mbeki. Shtayyeh has been to South Africa numerous times, and has a soft spot for the country.

But unlike the two previous Palestinian prime ministers who were ostensibly politically independent, Shtayyeh comes from Fatah, the political party of Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas. He is a long-term politician who has spent much of his life working alongside Abbas with whom he has a close relationship.

This past Sunday, rival Palestinian faction Hamas announced that an agreement had been reached between itself and Abbas to hold Palestinian parliamentary and presidential elections in February next year. Hamas and Fatah have been at loggerheads since the Islamists seized control of the Gaza Strip in 2007 in a near civil war, a year after winning parliamentary elections there.

Shtayyeh, is in favour of such elections. "We proposed [with Hamas] that we sit down and talk. We did talk, we have been talking for 12 years. We have signed four agreements with Hamas. Unfortunately, it has never implemented any of these agreements. Now we are saying the following: our model, our paradigm for reconciliation is based on one single thing – one authority. Hamas' model for reconciliation is based on division of labour. It wants something underground, we take the above ground. We bring the money, it spends the money. We are the government, it is the ruling party. We don't accept this. Our paradigm is not acceptable to it, its paradigm is not acceptable to us, so our president has come with an idea that we refer things to the people. Let's hold elections. It's crucial for our survival to be a democratic society based on the rule of law."

The obvious follow-up question is what will happen if Hamas wins again in Gaza? "That's what democracy is about," Shtayyeh

DATELINE: MIDDLE EAST

Paula Slier



responds. "We have to respect the outcome of the ballot boxes."

But my colleagues in Gaza are sceptical. Palestinian politics have effectively been frozen since 2007, and multiple reconciliation attempts between the sides have failed.

What's more, the Palestinian Authority (PA) is effectively bankrupt. A decision no longer to accept tax money that Israel collects on its behalf means that the largest resource in the Palestinian treasury has run dry. According to Palestinian officials, Israel collects and transfers about \$200 million (nearly R300 billion) to the PA every month. But a decision to withhold more than \$12 million (R177 million) monthly because it is given to the families of prisoners caused Abbas to reject all the money outright.

Why is it important for you to pay the families of those who have killed Israelis, I ask Shtayyeh.

"The 7 662 people who are in Israeli prisons, they have not all killed Israelis," he points out. "There are kids who are there because they threw a stone. There are kids who are there because of raising a Palestinian flag. There are people in jail because they protected their land, their water rights, and so on. What do we do as responsible people? We have to take care of these people. More than that, this issue of payments

to prisoners, it's a social allowance. Yigal Amir who killed [former Israeli Prime Minister] Yitzhak Rabin is getting social allowance from Israel. If Israel doesn't want us to pay for the prisoners, release all of them."

But some of those prisoners did kill Israelis, I counter. By supporting their families aren't you condoning violence?

"Not at all. On the contrary. When we take care of the kids whose father was killed by Israelis, we are accommodating them to be in the peace camp, in tolerance. There are three million Palestinians in the West Bank and two million in Gaza. From 1967 until today, one million Palestinians have been in Israeli prisons, so the issue touches the heart of every Palestinian household. There is a huge difference between supporting violence and accommodating the families of people who are victims of violence."

I ask him what he thinks about individual attacks against Israel, such as if a person picks up a knife and stabs an Israeli? Israelis argue that the PA encourages such acts through hate speech and incitement?

He is angry, replying, "What about Israeli incitement? What about the settlers who are uprooting our trees? What about the settlers who are killing our kids? What about the checkpoints that are everywhere? What about all these aggressions [from] Israel against our land? This is the real incitement for violence. We have to look at the root and not the symptoms. The root of all these problems is occupation. If Israel isn't happy about what is happening here, let it leave us alone."

The million dollar question is what needs to happen for there to be peace between Israelis and Palestinians?

"There are five issues. One: clear terms of reference which have never been there. Two: good intentions – they have never been there. Three: confidence building measures to stop settlements – they have never been there. Four: an honest broker – that hasn't been there. The United States isn't an honest broker. Five: the time frame – that hasn't been there."



Palestinian PM Dr Mohammad Shtayyeh

Pay attention to BDS's marketing drives to the church

OPINION

SARA GON



The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) has joined the Boycott Divestment 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 prophetic 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 strident and specific. Unlike the Anglican Church, which urged its members who travel on pilgrimages to Israel to include Palestinian Christians in their itineraries, the MCSA calls 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.

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, but it has failed to subject other ethnic groups to similar scrutiny.

During its convention in 2010, it wasn't simply Israeli 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, with favourites." The implication was that Jews and their religion are racist, with belief in a racist G-d, and as such, they should be punished with boycotts. It was a revisiting of the worst form of Christian anti-Semitism.

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

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 dismay.

He wished to assure us that it was most 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 were incompatible. However, "there is no similar congealing theology when it comes to the troubles in the Middle East".

Willis called the resolution astonishing in its naïveté 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 supersessionist. 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 best 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 supersessionism 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. Neither church sought a Jewish view on the matter before their resolutions were passed.

Church men and women often see the conflict as similar to apartheid partly because of innate sympathy with the Palestinians as "victims". But I suggest that there is at least a latent anti-Semitism that would allow resolutions of this nature to be passed without investigation and balance.

Sara Gon is a policy fellow at the Institute of Race Relations, a think tank that promotes political and economic freedom.



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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 is 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 Avi 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 hesitantly 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 pulverize us. But there were also swarms of South African fans who stuck together. I always believed we would win. It was a tense first half,



Avi Levy with Springbok supporters in Japan



Ariella Kuper at the final

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 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. "I 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 tears that flowed from literally every South African present reminded us how proud we are as citizens of a country that has so much potential."

"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 showered 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



Breyton Paule and Clive Blechman

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



Adrienne Cohen was on the same flight home as Siya Kolisi

cornerstone of Japanese culture. We could learn a lot from them," says Levy.

"Hopefully the Bok win in Japan is symbolic of a new chapter in South 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 Pienaar. 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

Springbok supporters in Japan



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 scenario analysis), and the agility to strike when opportunity arises.

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Remembering 1995

OPINION

SIMON APFEL



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 nation, and signalling the beginning of Clint Eastwood's inevitable decline.

The truth is, *Invictus*, Eastwood's slightly overcooked film about how South Africa's World Cup win brought the country together shortly after the fall of apartheid, will never dislodge the vivid recollection I have of those days.

There are a few reasons why these memories are so indelible. First, for 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 abandoned, and the entire school relocated to the stands, gawking in disbelief as these fleet-footed, muscle-bound superheroes-made-flesh – the talk of the town, the hope of the nation – went about their routines.

Second, the atmosphere in the country really was

that day so vividly. I wasn't going to say anything about it, but I've been so specific in recounting these memories, I feel it would be in bad faith to leave it out. And also, frankly, it's something I've been carrying around for a long time, and I need to unburden myself...

Later that afternoon, with car hooters still honking, South African flags waving everywhere, and people still spilling onto the streets in joy and celebration, my friend and I devised a plan to swing this collective goodwill and camaraderie to our advantage. We drew up makeshift forms and went around collecting money for a fake Rugby World Cup charity fundraiser for our school.

In less than an hour, we had signed up more than 250 people for a cause we had just concocted, handing out cut-up pieces of paper with a random number for a raffle that would never be held to win a rugby ball, signed by the Springbok squad, that didn't exist. We raised more money than we'd ever seen in our lives.

I know, I know, terrible right? And it was Shabbat!

I later told my parents the money was from Barmitzvah

presents. It was invested in a mutual fund that has performed pretty well over the past 24 years, and last week I cashed out and bought myself a Ferrari.

Or rather, my father found out about our scheme that evening, and gave it all to the Salvation Army.

This past Saturday, the Springboks once again contested a World Cup final. Once again, the eyes of a nation were on 15 hulking brutes chasing around an egg-shaped bag of leather.

And, once again, we won – battering 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 from experience that the oxytocin 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 turned 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 Apfel is a writer who claims his love of writing has always outshone his ability by a humiliating margin.*

The Springboks lifting the Webb Ellis Cup in 1995



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. Unfortunately, the spell didn't last as long as we hoped it might.

Third, the final was held a week before my Barmitzvah (my speech was replete with gratuitous rugby references) so it was a momentous time for me in more ways than one.

And, finally there was the match itself. Diminutive winger James Small tackling the monstrous Jonah Lomu. Joel Stransky's last-gasp drop goal to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. Mandela in a Springbok jersey, hand on Francois Pienaar's shoulder, handing the captain the trophy – the great iconic moment, a snapshot that changed the country or at least our conception of the country – in an instant.

I had a friend over who kept Shabbat. He'd come to my house after shul so he could watch the game, evidently unaware that by benefiting from someone else breaking Shabbat, he was as complicit as the person who turned on the TV.

This brings me to another reason why I remember

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 individuals received 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 Kavod award. The award was given in recognition of Forman's tireless efforts in combatting 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 (WIZO); and WZO chairperson Avraham Duvdevani.

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 would like to thank 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 continued service of the Jewish community, the wider community, and Israel."



Reeva Forman

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LATE ISAAC REZNIK נ"ה

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.

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SA expat helps Arab-Israeli family after daughter's murder in Australia

TALI FEINBERG

Arab-Israeli exchange student Aiiia Maasarwe was walking down the street in one of the safest cities on earth – Melbourne – in January this year, when she was attacked, brutally raped, and murdered by a homeless man with a troubled past.

The legacy she left behind was evident last week as former South African Gary Samowitz helped her family to launch a scholarship in her name.

Although Samowitz has lived in Australia for decades, he says his career working in Jewish causes is directly related to his time in Habonim in South Africa. “The values I learnt at Onrus [the Habonim campsite], of leading by example and welcoming the stranger, are the reasons I’m doing this work today.”

Speaking to the *SA Jewish Report* after an intense week hosting the Maasarwe family in Melbourne, Samowitz said that Maasarwe was a 21-year-old student doing a business degree in Shanghai, China, and was in Australia to complete the exchange element of the programme with La Trobe University in Melbourne. “She was walking back to her accommodation after a night out when she was brutally raped, attacked, and set on fire.”

He said she was about the fifth woman to be raped in Melbourne over the past few years, and although we shouldn’t compare crime levels, South Africans should know that Australia isn’t perfect.

Maasarwe was buried in Israel in her hometown of Baqa al-Gharbiyye. Her killer, Codey Hermann, was identified soon after the attack. Last week, he was sentenced to 36 years in prison. Samowitz had been helping the Maasarwe family to set up a scholarship in Maasarwe’s name, and he organised their trip to Australia to coincide with the sentencing.

“Her father, Saeed, and sister, Noor, came to Melbourne and Sydney to launch several initiatives to remember Aiiia. This time was to focus less on how she died, and more on how she lived. I have learnt so much about Aiiia and what a remarkable young woman she was ... full of positivity, happiness, hope, and love. She was a kind, friendly, open-hearted person whose life was stolen from her,” said Samowitz.

“Noor wanted to retrace Aiiia’s steps, and visit all the places she had told her sister about when she lived in Melbourne. She would Facetime her sister wherever she was, and now Noor had the chance to visit those places herself. So it was also a time for grieving and getting closure.”

In fact, Noor was on the phone with Aiiia when she was attacked, and heard it happening.

Samowitz is passionate about interfaith work, and he gladly took on the role of working with the Arab-Israelis. “Aiiia’s family has been in Israel for many generations. It was fascinating to interact with them. It’s been a privilege to be by their side all week as they have mourned Aiiia. It’s a real stain on Australian society that so many women don’t feel safe in our public places. The Maasarwe family came to Australia to focus

on launching programmes that will bring more light into the world and to honour Aiiia’s memory and the values she lived by,” he said.

The family are creating a memorial garden close to where she was murdered, and La Trobe University and the Victorian government have funded a PhD scholarship in her name to study violence against women. Samowitz also helped launch the Aiiia Maasarwe Memorial Medical Fellowship to train Palestinian doctors in Israeli hospitals, giving them the skills to save lives and better serve the Palestinian population.

“This will help take the strain off Israeli doctors and will allow Palestinian doctors to upskill themselves and train others. Aiiia believed in peace, and this will empower people at grassroots level. Healthcare is one of the only environments in Israel where Jews and Arabs work together and see each other as equals, so this can really make an impact,” he said.

The inaugural fellowship will be awarded to Dr Khadra Salami, a senior paediatrician in haematological-oncology. Salami will undertake a two-year paediatric bone-marrow-transplantation training programme at Hadassah Hospital,



Jerusalem. The aim is to enable complex transplantation surgery to be undertaken at the Augusta Victoria Hospital in East Jerusalem, where she is based.

Salami joined Samowitz and the Maasarwe family for the week. He found it amazing how they became close friends in spite of their different backgrounds.

Samowitz said that the young woman’s murder had been widely covered in the Australian media, as were the initiatives launched over this past week.

“Her killer is a homeless Aboriginal man who came from a background of neglect, and that needs to be addressed”, he said, while not excusing his horrific actions. “The Aboriginals are very disadvantaged, and I’ve worked with many young people like him.”

Turning back to his own path, Samowitz said he started the organisation Stand Up: Jewish Commitment to a Better World to continue what he learnt at Habonim Dror Southern Africa.

“I never wanted to stop being

a madrich. Even after I moved to Australia, I would come to South Africa for Habonim machaneh [camp]. So I founded this organisation that allowed me to work with marginalised members of society. We have about 200 volunteers and 15 staff members. I wanted to encourage Jews to have an impact on the world,” he said. After ten years, he has stepped down from the organisation to make space for new leadership, and is now a freelance consultant on projects like working with the Maasarwe family.

He said he noticed how many of his former countrymen are leading the way in Jewish nongovernmental organisations across the globe, and that many donors to Stand Up were ex-South African Jews. He believes this is because “South Africans have a strong sense of social justice”, and he hopes that we will continue to back causes that have an impact on marginalised people wherever we find them. Meanwhile, he’ll stay in close contact with the Maasarwe family as the mourn their unthinkable loss and create a meaningful legacy for their daughter and sister.

Sky’s the limit for Captain Scully

TALI FEINBERG

Captain 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 at Ellis Park in 1995 – something he didn’t do. 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 board the plane.

Levin chuckled when he told the *SA Jewish Report* that he has become tired of having to correct people about this over the past 24 years. This week, when the Springboks once again took the Rugby World Cup, was no different.

But Levin is deeply moved by winning the Honourable Company of Air Pilots award, which holds much weight in his industry. “I feel special and humbled by it. I’m only the second South African ever to receive it,” he told the *SA Jewish Report*.

“I’m one of those fortunate guys to be able to say that my entire career of about 56 years has been one highlight after another. The types of planes I have flown, the places I’ve been to, the special events and air shows I have flown at, ‘my cup runneth over’. It’s been a fantastic ride.”

Levin was born to fly. His grand uncle and father both flew in the Royal Air Force in World War I and II. “When they were getting rid of aeroplanes after the war, my father bought one and put it in our garden! So I didn’t have a sandpit to play in, I had an aeroplane,” he recalls with delight. As a child, he would look in wonder at his father’s wartime photos and uniform, which “left an indelible mark on my psyche. It was a foregone conclusion that I would become pilot.”

He went on to qualify as a pilot in the South African Air Force in 1964, and has since amassed more than 29 600 hours of flying time in more than 180 different types of aircraft, a feat met by few in the aviation industry globally. This is

equivalent to almost three years of continuous flight in the air.

He was a pilot on South African Airways’ (SAA’s) local, regional, and international routes for more than 38 years, and since his retirement from SAA, has continued to make a valuable contribution to the South African airline industry as consultant and display pilot. “I flew for SAA for 38 years and another nine years with Mango, so that is about 47 years in the airline industry,” says Levin.

He says flying always came easily to him, and he never tired of the studying and mental fitness required by the job. Although it was difficult being away from home for long stretches of time, “My incredibly capable wife, Sandra, raised our three kids, and when I was home, we did so much



Malcolm White OBE presents Captain Scully Levin with his certificate in London

together as a family, and I appreciated them so much more.”

Levin has had only one harrowing moment in the skies. On flying a small 40-seater plane in Botswana, an engine caught fire. “It was a massive fire, but we managed to put it out and land safely with the use of the other engine. That has been my only 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 out 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. It’s a great career.”

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 flying you will ever do! I’ve been doing it for 35 years, and have no intention of stopping!”

During the 1970s, Levin was a three-time winner of the South African National Aerobatic Champion 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 Cub aeroplane on top of a moving truck. First accomplished in 1982, he has done this act more than 120 times.

He feels great pride in being a Jewish pilot. “I’ve not only done this for myself, I’ve done it for my people!” he says.

Levin’s nomination as Master Air Pilot was unanimously accepted by the board of trophies and awards committee as meeting the standards of excellence required for this most deserved accolade.

In congratulating Levin and awarding him his certificate, Malcolm White, Master of the Honourable Company of Air Pilots, said that it was recognition for his splendid record as a pilot, reflecting an aviation career of achievement and distinction.

Levin’s achievements in aviation have long been recognised in South Africa and in 2012, he was awarded The Order of the Baobab in Bronze by the presidency for his immense 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 Aviation Achievement Award, which he received in 2009.

Sobukwe book recognises maverick leader, lost to history

STEVEN GRUZD

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 Barney Pityana, 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 1959 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. Millions of dreams are unfulfilled."

"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".

Pityana, 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.

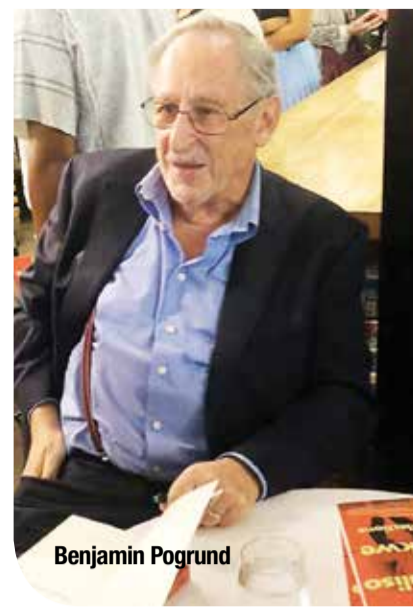
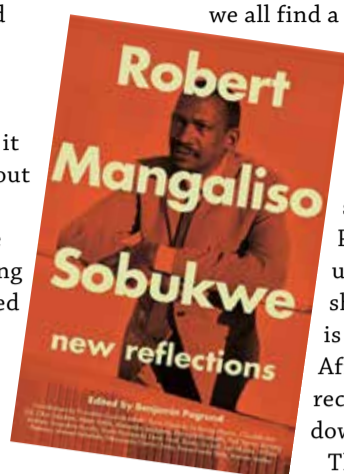
For Pityana, Sobukwe's essence was daring to be different, refusing to be part of the herd. He nurtured diverse thinking and opinions in his comrades, to spark new and better ideas.

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 is 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.



Benjamin Pogrund

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If my steak could talk

JORDAN MOSHE



With a linen napkin draped across my lap and a glass of fruit infused water in hand, I sat and wondered what the steak on the plate in front of me would say if it could speak.

It was no ordinary steak, it was a masterpiece of haute cuisine, a serving of tender slivers of beef atop a bed of *al dente* lentils, and I could feel it judging me. After what I had put it through, it had every right to.

It may be thrilling to dine on gourmet food, but preparing it yourself beforehand has the potential to make you anxious about eating it. I learned this on Monday evening at the Healthy Shabbos Cooking event held at Discovery's headquarters in Sandton.

An initiative of the Shabbos Project this year, the evening offered a hands-on cooking experience under the guidance of renowned Israeli chef Tali Friedman. Together with 25 others, and following her instructions, I was eager to cook up a storm at the Discovery Vitality HealthyFood Studio.

The state-of-the-art kitchen (kashered for the occasion) on the ninth floor had a view of the Sandton evening skyline and boasted rows of gleaming cooking stations. Their marbled tops sported induction stoves, an array of pots and pans, utensils, and recipe cards at the ready.

Nearby, tables set for dinner stood waiting to receive our culinary creations. To get us in the mood, staff served us an entrée of Jerusalem artichoke soup and ceviche with cherries.

We were then given the task of creating fish fillet in Mediterranean sauce, eggplant Baladi with chickpeas and tahina, and ribeye with tomato and peppers served with frikeh. Now, I'm no stranger to the kitchen, but my



Tali Friedman

vocabulary turned up blank with "Baladi" and "frikeh". The best it could do was render them amusing by altering them into "baldy freak" for my personal amusement.

Things didn't look promising as the cooking got underway. Friedman's description of the dishes and basic outline of the recipes sounded simple enough, but that was before she left us all to our own devices. I tried to look casual as I sipped my water and gazed around the room in feigned interest, feeling the perspiration on my brow as I thought to myself, "Jordan, you should just stick to boiling water. Live off microwavable meals for the rest of your life, and tell no one what

happened here tonight."

To my immense surprise, the evening that unfolded proved far more entertaining and less nerve-wracking than I'd expected. I also discovered I wasn't the only lost soul in the room. Concerned expressions, requests for help, and repeated calls of, "What did she say we must do now?" weren't only commonplace, but proved that we were all in the same boat, collectively unsure whether to throw our oars overboard or set it on fire.

Sailing certainly wasn't easy, and I believe that the assistant chefs will wake up screaming for weeks to come because they can still hear my voice asking for guidance.

When I wasn't asking the staff for help, I was unintentionally reinventing the recipes. A loose lid on a grinder left me with enough pepper in my pan to season dishes for years to come, forcing me to start from scratch after an already inauspicious start. What started as a compliment for my creativity became a look of unbridled horror when an assisting chef realised that the black spheres weren't lentils but peppercorns. She looked as though she wanted to weep as I began afresh. Whether for me or herself, I'll never know.

After almost two hours of labour, we sat down at last to sample our handiwork. We'd sautéed and seared, grilled and grinded, perspired and *platzed* (cracked). Our cohort had even suffered a casualty along the way, bringing Hatzolah responders to the scene with a stretcher to attend to a chef who'd been burned by an exploding eggplant.

From beginning to end, it was certainly an eventful evening, and the fact that we could conclude it all by eating the dishes certainly felt fitting.

The evening taught me many things. I developed newfound respect for the culinary arts and learned that there's no shame in asking for help when pepper overruns your pan. I discovered that gourmet kosher food isn't only a possibility, but less daunting than I'd imagined. However, it demands some effort, patience, and a willingness to feel hopeless at times.

Perhaps most importantly, I learned that "frikeh" refers to the lentils, but I'm sorry to say that "Baladi" remains beyond me and will remain synonymous with baldy for some time.

Memories from the 2018 Shabbos Project

"A Friday night community dinner. Walking to shul and back. A quiet family havdalah 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 Vogelmann, Cape Town

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

Tamryn Scheepers, Johannesburg

"When 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 minute I woke up until Saturday night was like being away for the weekend."

Lisa Mervis, 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 as the sun slowly set waiting for the first stars to appear and recited havdalah 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-Hassidic reggae rockers, Zusha.

Ohr Somayach Gallo Manor

African-style Friday night dinner – braai and biltong, malva and gelatissimo.

Chabad of Greenstone

"A Night in China" Shabbos dinner.

Sandton Central

Candle-lighting meditation workshop.

Aish HaTorah

After-dinner tequila, whiskey, and biltong get-together (at the Pilatowsky residence).

OhrSom Student

Hotel stay-over in Sandton.

Linkfield shul

Former Franciscan monk Pinchas Shiel shares his incredible journey to Judaism.

Sydenham shul

Musical havdallah with a trio of guitar maestros.

Victory Park shul

Picnic on the field.

Greenside shul

"Astrology, omens, and magic in Judaism" shiur.

Marais Road shul

Cholent competition adjudicated by celebrated caterer Merle Rubin.

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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.

"I want to open people's minds to thinking about the underlying causes of the way their child's ADHD is presenting," she says. "Every individual child's specific circumstances should be examined."

"I'm not a medical doctor or a nutritionist, but I'm sharing this as a parent who's done an enormous amount of research on this. I've been exposed to and trained by top medical professionals in the United States. They've taught me how to tackle the symptoms of ADHD instead of making Ritalin the immediate go-to method." People want a quick fix, but Ritalin isn't always the answer.

Gerschlowitz, the author of *Saving my Sons - A Journey with Autism* addressed these and other issues in conversation with her co-author, journalist Marion Scher, at a PJ Library event recently hosted at the Saltzman Family Community Centre at Linksfield Shul.

While Gerschlowitz's journey to founding the Star Academy began with her older son, David's, autism diagnosis, her organisation Catch Up Kids also helps learners overcome ADHD and learning difficulties. Gerschlowitz stresses the importance of nutrition in the treatment of ADHD.

"Picky eating is a common symptom for some children with ADHD, which is indicative of bowel inflammation. First look at the child's nutrition, something with which many parents of children with ADHD battle. In order to sustain attention and attain optimal brain function, the child requires enough protein.

Many kids don't want to eat solid food in the morning, so give them a protein shake instead."

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 as well as their cholesterol through simple blood tests is also key. "Many ADHD kids

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 cholesterol, 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

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, and 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 do 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."



Aaron Gerschlowitz

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 in 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 hurting," says Gerschlowitz. "Ritalin has its place, but only once you've exhausted investigation into all these other factors."



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The August House of artistic possibility

HOWARD SACKSTEIN

Five and a half years ago, Johannesburg property developer David Mayers arrived at August House in End Street, Doornfontein, to buy a painting from the then relatively unknown artist, Nelson Makamo.

This was years before Makamo would grace the cover of *Time* magazine and become the darling of American late-night TV talk shows. “The area was derelict,” says Mayers, “the building opposite was hijacked, and this was one of the most dangerous parts of town.”

August House had been the original 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 Mayers arrived at Makamo’s studio, he discovered that Makamo was in the process

of being evicted. The then owners of August House, desperate to sell the building and flee the dangers of the inner-city, were attempting to evict the tenants as a prerequisite for its sale.

Realising that there were already a number of talented emerging artist studios in the building, Mayers decided to buy the property and turn it into a vibrant artist colony. It was the continuation of the vision of Bie Venter and Maria Svane who initially 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 devoted her life to training young artists to be self-sufficient and successful in the professional, cut-throat world of drying paint. Berman’s protégés in the art deco building include Makamo, Cromwell Ngobeni, Themba Khumalo, Lindo Zwane, and Solomon Omogboye.

“These artists are flying,” says Berman. “At APS, we give them a four-year scholarship, we pay for them to do a two-year internship, and we buy them materials and supplies.

“Many of these artists have now left the nest and are building really successful careers. It’s a mark 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 beneficence.

“Many of these artists”, says

Cromwell Ngobeni



Photos: Howard Sackstein



Themba Khumalo

Berman “are making a living, in fact, making much more than a living.” Berman refuses to be drawn on her 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 dehorned rhinos and the exhilaration of youth haunt the viewer.

Karen Moyal and her husband Patrice have been 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 prospective 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, Khumalo, Andrew Ntshabele, Azael Langa, Greatjoy Ndlovu, and Arlindo Maunde. “We have many of their works. But we’ve just discovered Cromwell Ngobeni, Petros Mwenga, and Jan

Tshikhuthula, 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. Tshikhuthula, who is signed with the Everard 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 Sanusi Olatunji, who conjures up magnificent works using a mosaic tapestry of colourful cloth, and the majestic oversized canvasses of the enormously talented Bambolwami Sibiyi.

Lauren Woolf, the former marketing director of Ogilvy & Mather and present-day entrepreneur, mentors four artists

including the incredible Zwane. She describes herself as Zwane’s “champion” mentoring him in business, marketing, negotiation, and looking for commissions for his work.

“I am there,” says Woolf, “because so many of these young artists haven’t had the benefit of the type of education that prepares them to be self-sufficient artists in the real world. I consider it a privilege to work with them and offer whatever skills I have, particularly through the lens of marketing. I help to get their stories out there. My life is enriched by my involvement in theirs”.

In the Renaissance period, the Medici family became patrons to some of the most famous artists and thinkers western civilization has ever produced. Without the patronage of this Florentine banking and ruling family, we may never have known the names of Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Machiavelli, or Galileo.

One has to wonder who the Medicis of the Johannesburg art scene will be in the future.

• Look out for August House’s open day in the first few months of 2020.

The little-known Jewish link to *Fawlty Towers*

JORDAN MOSHE

At 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 of *Fawlty Towers* possesses a uniquely Jewish connection, one which may elicit a loud “Que?!” 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.

Annie Robinson and Mark Mulder played the roles of the quarrelsome couple with aplomb, re-enacting 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 addition to the show’s producer, Daphne Kuhn, being Jewish, another tie connects the timeless comedy classic to the Jewish people. Manuel, the ill-treated yet determined waiter of Spanish origin, the show’s most memorable comedic personality, was played by German-born Andrew Sachs who escaped the tyranny of 1930s Europe.

According to a report by the Association of Jewish Refugees, Andreas Siegfried Sachs was born in Berlin in 1930. His father, Hans, was a Jewish insurance broker, while his mother, Katharina, was a Catholic. Although not strictly born Jewish, it seems that Sachs’ identity was strongly defined by his Judaism from the start.

“My father didn’t talk much about Hitler,” Sachs told *The Guardian* in 2014, “but all my friends were Aryan and our

teacher was fond of Hitler, and would tell us to do what Hitler said. I had one friend who came up to me one day – and he was a bit stumbling – and said, ‘I’m not allowed to play with you because my parents said that your father is Jewish.’ That was the moment I realised something was wrong.”

Sachs’ father was arrested for being Jewish, but his mother’s family’s good relations with the police earned him a temporary reprieve. The family later fled to London in 1938 to escape persecution and what would eventually unfold into the Holocaust.

They were among the tens of thousands of people who fled Nazi-occupied Europe who were supported by World Jewish Relief’s predecessor organisation, the Central British Fund for German Jewry.

In an interview with the *Jewish Chronicle* in 2007, Sachs said, “Half of me is Jewish. Sometimes I think it might be the better half.”

In the 1950s, Sachs worked on radio productions, and began his acting career on the West End. He rose to prominence and in the 1970s, secured his legacy when he was cast as hapless waiter Manuel and became a household name. Sachs married Melody Lang, who actually appeared in an episode of *Fawlty Towers*.

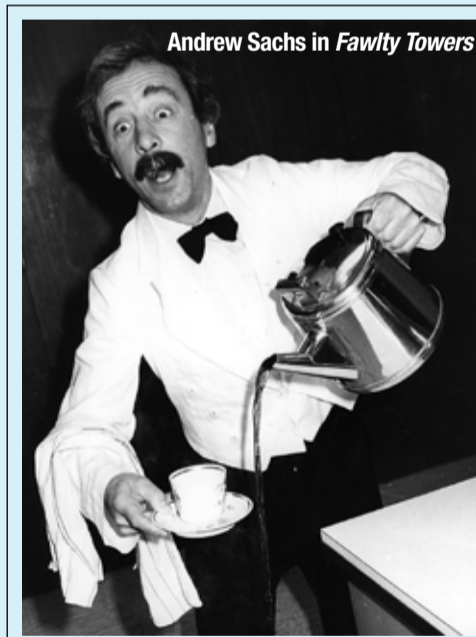
After a prolific acting career, he was tragically diagnosed with

vascular dementia in 2012, a condition which eventually left him unable to speak and forced him to use a wheelchair. Sachs passed away in November 2016 at the age of 86.

The lasting legacy of the proudly half-Jewish actor is certainly apparent. In the wake of his passing, the BBC stated that Sachs’ performance on *Fawlty Towers* was one of the most widely imitated from that era.

Among the tributes paid to Sachs, Rafi Cooper, the World Jewish Relief’s director of communications, said of the acclaimed actor, “Andrew Sachs was loved and admired. Like so many who fled Nazi Germany and settled in the United Kingdom, he made a significant contribution to British society. He certainly qualifies as a national treasure.”

So though they may appear removed from yiddishkeit, it would seem that there is a distinctly Jewish streak in the Fawltys and their lasting success.



Andrew Sachs in *Fawlty Towers*

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An extraordinary play about two remarkable women

PETER FELDMAN

Gertrude Stein helped to change the literary and artistic landscape at a time when American conservative attitudes prevailed. She was an extraordinarily creative Jewish soul.

Actresses Shirley Johnston and Lynita Crofford bring this unique personality's life, love, and creativity to the fore in *Gertrude Stein and a Companion* at the Auto & General Theatre on the Square in Sandton, co-produced with Daphne Kuhn.

Being gay, Stein chose to leave her native country to settle in more liberal minded Paris, where she met Alice B. Toklas, fell in love, and embarked on a relationship that lasted her entire life.

Stein was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1874 to wealthy German-Jewish immigrants. At the age of three, her family moved first to Vienna and then Paris. They returned to America in 1878, and settled in Oakland, California.

Stein and Toklas were beacons of enlightenment in an age when lesbianism was frowned upon and during a period when they bravely faced the Nazi's Vichy occupation of the country.

She hosted a Paris salon where the leading figures of modernism in literature and art, such as Pablo Picasso, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, Ezra Pound, Sherwood Anderson, and Henri Matisse, would meet.

Gertrude Stein and a Companion is evocative and witty, exploring the extraordinary relationship between Stein, the American modernist author and poet, and Toklas.

Their relationship is brought vividly to life

Lynita Crofford and Shirley Johnston in *Gertrude Stein and a Companion*



Photo: Philip Kuhn

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 Faÿ. After the war ended, Stein expressed admiration for another Nazi collaborator, Vichy leader Marshal Pétain.

Her many books include *Q.E.D.* (1903), about a lesbian romantic affair involving several of Stein's friends; *Fernhurst*, 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.

"Lynita 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

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."

Preparing 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 interesting 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 character. 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 well-written script. She hopes her portrayal captures some of Gertrude's eccentricity, her keen intelligence, her egotism, artistic genius, and her very human flaws.

Crofford is one of Johnston's closest friends, and they have worked together on several occasions. "It's wonderful to play opposite someone you feel completely safe with," she said.

• *Gertrude Stein and a Companion* runs until 16 November.

JJMC sings praises of long-time chazzan

JORDAN MOSHE

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 doyen Professor Russel Lurie, the chairperson of the JJMC, joined forces with Sea Point Hebrew Congregation chazzan Ivor Joffe, and acclaimed Jewish singer Marc Shapiro. Together, these 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. Verdi gave way to vodka with a performance of famed Russian folk-song *Kalinka*, for which Lurie donned appropriate Russian-style headwear, much to the audience's delight.

There were also many Yiddish tunes which were sung with aplomb, leaving many feeling nostalgic. Few eyes were dry during a moving performance of *My Yiddish Mama*, and the lively beat of *Roumania* had many fingers drumming on armrests. A rousing chorus

of hits from *Fiddler on the Roof* transported audiences from tradition to Times Square, setting the stage for the subsequent tunes of Freddie Mercury, Rodgers and Hammerstein, and finally Leonard Cohen, whose *Hallelujah* proved fitting for bringing the afternoon's programme to a satisfying close.

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.



Professor Russel Lurie and the choir singing *Kalinka*

Photo: Trevor Sachs



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INNER VOICE

Howard Feldman

Ever since the security guard at our complex drew his weapon and pointed it at Fred, we haven't been friends. It's not to say that he was completely without justification, and not to say that there haven't been times that I too could have acted aggressively towards him. But I was bothered by the incident nevertheless, primarily because being a Yorkshire Terrier, Fred had no idea what a weapon was. Which meant that it wasn't a smart thing to do.

It ended with an apology, a new pair of trousers, and the assurance that Fred would stick to chasing hadedas, which we all agreed he would never catch.

In spite of the truce, things haven't been easy. As a serial greeter, I find it hard to handle it when my cheery "good morning!" is met with a grunt. There is no doubt that I am still being held vicariously responsible for Fred's rude behaviour and that as a result, I will be the last person saved in the event of a real incident occurring. And yet still, day after day after day, I smile and greet without success.

Until Saturday around 12:40. As an observant Jew, I observe the Sabbath as a day of rest. One of the prohibitions is the use of electronics. This meant I wasn't able to watch the Rugby World Cup final on TV or computer or anywhere else.

Although I was at peace with my decision, it wasn't easy to avoid knowing the score. By the time the game was nearing its end, I had become anxious to hear how we had done. And so, I left my house and walked to the guard house where I was hoping to find another security officer on duty. No such luck – the non-greeter was on duty.

The sound of the radio confirmed that he was listening to the game. "Hey," I said, "how are

we doing?" "Thirty two-12!" he replied, "with two minutes to go!" His grin was broad, and the surly sulk I had expected was nowhere to be seen.

Mine matched his, and for that moment at least, Fred was forgotten. We were just two South Africans overjoyed that we had achieved the impossible.

I floated home joyous about the news of South Africa's success, and the fact that sport had the power to unite us. If sport could do this in our complex, imagine what it could do in the streets of Johannesburg.

Saturday night confirmed this. The power of the positivity that I observed after Shabbat was immense. Aside from a few negative tweets (the Economic Freedom Fighters trying to remain relevant), it was evident that the 2019 Rugby World Cup had united the country.

We laughed about Faf's Speedo, we shed a tear when we heard Kolisi's story, and we even became fans of Prince Harry who showed real warmth and grace when he paid a visit to the boys in the changing room.

As Jews, we are taught that in the height of our joy, we need to still remember the destruction of the temple. We need not have worried: the "realists" told us to be cautious, the racists reminded us to hate, and the miserable took comfort in the fact that things would never be this perfect.

But in truth, we didn't for one minute forget that Moody's had placed us on notice and that the mid-term budget was horrible. We didn't forget about Zuma or the Guptas or Bosasa, and we certainly didn't think that Eskom had pulled itself together. We simply made a decision to suspend negativity for the weekend, and just enjoy being a success.

In doing so, we wore our joy with pride, and it suited us.

And so, I wasn't at all surprised on Sunday morning, that when I waved a cheery "good morning" to the security guard, all I received was a grunt in return. We both knew that we had shared a moment. Even if we pretended we hadn't.

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Super Springboks 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 purely 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 at large saw was an epic display of pride, passion, commitment and, above all, unstinting 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 powerful a uniting force? It's a timely reminder of how far our country has progressed since those bleak times, even if much work still needs to be done to recapture the spirit of national unity and optimism that characterised the years immediately following the democratic transition.

More than merely winning a sporting tournament, the Boks reminded us what we as a nation are capable of when we stand united. Here, I can do no better than cite the words of Springbok captain Siya Kolisi, who in his stirring post-match speech said, "We know we come from different backgrounds, different races, yet we came together with one goal and wanted to achieve it. We showed that we can pull together when we want to achieve something, and I hope that we've done that for South Africa." This is a clarion call that all of us, with our political leaders necessarily leading the way, should strive to take to heart.

This column is paid for by the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

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



ABOVE BOARD

Shaun Zagnoev



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 on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SAJBD/>). 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 expertise to help ensure the 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 to a considerable degree due to the foresight and 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 Charisse Zeifert on Jewish Board Talk, 101.9 ChaiFM every Friday from 12:00 to 13:00.

Are the phoenixes rising?

Can we yet be bold enough to celebrate South Africa? Amidst our thirst for good news after the depressing news of the past decade, green shoots are visible. Not yet on the economic front, which remains dire, as finance minister Tito Mboweni outlined in his mid-term budget, but elsewhere, vigour is gingerly starting to show itself.

The obvious big event of the past week, which gave a gigantic boost to South Africans, is the Springboks' win over England in the 2019 Rugby World Cup under the captainship of Siya Kolisi. The image of him holding the golden cup aloft amidst ecstatic celebration will resonate forever as a triumphant moment.

Sport is often a measure of a country's mood. Joburgers of all colours and classes, and many others from elsewhere, joined together in another celebration last Sunday in the 42km Soweto Marathon, nicknamed The People's Race, whose route can be compared to a lesson in South Africa's history. The marathon, which attracted about 40 000 runners from across the globe, takes participants past heritage sites that were key in the fight against apartheid. This includes Vilakazi Street and the one-time homes of former President Nelson Mandela and his neighbour, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. The former has become a site visited by tourists worldwide.

The race passes the brightly painted Orlando Towers, and is within eyesight of everything from the colossal Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, reputedly the third-largest in the world, to the colourful Walter Sisulu Square in Kliptown, where the African National Congress Freedom Charter was adopted in 1955 as the ideological cornerstone of the liberation movements. The marathon provides a glimpse into the possibilities of this country. Can it be a counterpoint to the gloom?

Sport is a culture which thrived during apartheid in spite of racial separation, and now freely embraces every race and creed. Contrary to common

TAKING ISSUE

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 separate, 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 Afrikaans-speaking community. Today, Jews are fewer, but Afrikaners are still present. And a phoenix is rising in Pretoria. Once the heart of apartheid, where ideologues 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 win, particularly for its location and inclusive approach to who is showcased.

Current collections show signature works from 1912, including the cream of the crop – the likes of Helen Mmakgabo Sebidi, Irma Stern, Steven Cohen, David Koloane, Jackson Hlungwani, 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?



March of the Living 2020

YOUTH DELEGATION
All those currently in grade 10
Dates:
April 18 – May 4

YOUNG ADULT DELEGATION
Ages 21 – 35
Dates:
April 20 – 26
(Poland only)

INTERNATIONAL ADULT DELEGATION
Dates:
April 20 – May 3

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 Ha'Shoah, Holocaust memorial day.

In **ISRAEL**, we will commemorate Yom Ha'Zikaron, Israel's 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 closing date of the application forms, as there is no guarantee that your application will be successful after that date. There is limited donor money for part subsidies.

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

Should you require more information, please refer to one of the following contacts:
For MOTL Youth Delegation: motlsouthafrica@gmail.com and speak to Kim.
For MOTL Young Adult and International Adults Delegations: Shirley@jhbholocaust.co.za

Torah Academy *tzedakah*

Torah Academy Primary School raised *tzedakah* (charity) for six charitable organisations at its special market day last term. The organisations were Yad Aharon, the Community Security Organisation, Chevrah Kadisha, DL Link, Maot Chitim, and Emunah.

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 Gabi Joseph from DL Link



Bersohn bokkies get in gear

Students at Minnie Bersohn Pre-Primary School donned their South African rugby gear to show their support for the Bokke prior to Saturday's Rugby World Cup final against England. Go Bokke!



Saturday (9 November)

- Bet David hosts a Yoga minyan led by Carine, singing of the morning liturgy, and a drosh on parashat *Lech Lecha*. Time: 10:30. Venue: Bet David, Middle Road, Morningside. Contact: 011 783 7117.
- Bet David hosts a Shabbat talk by Rabbi Adrian Schell, *Thirty years after the fall of the wall – Germany today*. Time: 12:00. Venue: Bet David, Middle Road, Morningside. Contact 011 783 7117.

Sunday (10 November)

- Second Innings hosts the Jewish National Fund choir on *When you believe*. Time: 09:45 for tea; 10:30 for the speaker. Venue: The Gerald Horwitz Lounge, second floor, Golden Acres, 85 George Avenue, Sandringham. Cost: R20 members, R40 visitors, includes tea/coffee and refreshments. Contact: 011 483 7425.
- The Big Band Music Appreciation Society hosts a programme presented by Jack Mink. Due to the length of the movie, there won't be any audio. Movie: *Guys and Dolls* starring Marlon Brando, Jean Simmons, Frank Sinatra, and Vivian Blaine. Time: 14:15 sharp. Venue: Beit Emanuel Slome Auditorium, 38 Oxford Road, Parktown (entrance in Third Avenue). Contact: Marilyn 072 243 7436 or Jack 082 450 7622.

Monday (11 November)

- The Union of Jewish Women (UJW) hosts James Lomborg, a historian with a particular interest in the

Rothschild family and its role in the global economy over the past 250 years. Time: 10:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Donation: R40. Contact: UJW office 011 648 1053.

- Chabad Senior Club: enhance brain functioning and have a fun morning with occupational therapist Cynthia Liptz. Time: 09:45. Venue: Chabad Seniors Club, 27 Aintree Avenue, Savoy Estate. Contact: 011 440 6600 rak@chabad.org.za

Tuesday (12 November)

- Women's International Zionist Organisation (WIZO) forum. Meet Edna Freinkel, the winner of the Absa Jewish Achiever Award for women in leadership and her daughter, Corinne Ossendryver. Hear about their dedication to the field of education. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Venue: Beyachad, 2 Elray Street, Raedene. Cost: R45 – includes tea and refreshments. Bookings: Lauren 011 645 2515/wizojhb@beyachad.co.za

Wednesday (13 November)

- Second Innings hosts a movie morning at the military museum. Movie: *African newsreel of royal tour 1947*. Time: 09:30 for 10:00. Venue: the South African National Museum of Military History, 22 Erlswold Way, Saxonwold. Cost: R110. Book with Ivy Grushkin and

Jewel Gold 011 483 7425.

- ORT SA's CareerHub presents Lorraine Silverman on *Demystifying the world of work*. Time: 18:00. Venue: ORT SA Academy, 44 Central Street, Houghton, corner 10th Avenue. Donations welcome. A light dinner is served. Contact: 011 728 7154.
- Jewish Learning Institute course, *Warrior to warrior – wrestling with feeling overwhelmed, procrastination, or general not-enough-ness? Learn how to transform them from adversary to ally*. Time: 19:15. Venue: Sandton Central Shul, 8 Stella Street, Sandton (opposite Gautrain) Info: 011 440 6600, www.jli.org.za or jli@chabad.org.za

Thursday (14 November)

- Join WIZO every Thursday for a *Lunch & Learn shiur* with Rabbi Michael Katz. Time: 13:00 at Beyachad. Contact: WIZO office: 011 645 2515.
- Learn Yiddish every Thursday with Tamar Olswang and the (UJW). Time: 10:00 to 11:00. Venue: 1 Oak Street, Houghton. Cost: R100 per person, R80 for pensioners and UJW members. Includes tea/coffee and refreshments. Contact: 011 648 1053.

Friday (15 November)

- Sandton Central Shul hosts an exquisite Shabbos Project dinner. Venue: 8 Stella Street, Sandton. Time: 19:30. Cost: R360 per adult. Contact: 079 434 1293, www.jli.org.za or rak@chabad.org.za

King David comes up trumps in Israel Quiz



Amira Karstaedt, Benjamin Shmukler, and Jacob Boner

Benjamin Shmukler from King David Linksfield took first prize in this year's Shimon Peres Israel Quiz, with Jacob Boner from King David Linksfield coming close second, and Amira Karstaedt from King David Victory Park coming in third.

They were part of more than 50 Jewish school pupils who took part in the annual quiz sponsored by the South African Zionist Federation

and Israel Centre. Held at Beyachad in Joburg on 30 October, the quiz included three rigorous and nail biting rounds for the top ten students, at which they

were questioned on Israel's history, politics, arts, and culture.

The final three contestants were then given two minutes in which to answer "rapid fire" questions, which determined the winners.

Finalists included students from King David Linksfield, Victory Park, and Torah Academy Girls High school. Prizes were sponsored by EL AL SA, The Core Group, and Think Ahead.

Active, strong and independent at 100!

Mina Girnun turned 100 on 13 October at Golden Acres in Sandringham in the company of family and friends from around the world. Included among her guest were Dutch Ambassador Hans 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 to you on such a special occasion. I hope that you will celebrate with family and friends, and that you will have a lovely time being together on this very special day. I wish you many happy years to come."



Mirna Girnun with Ambassador Hans Peters and his wife Alessandra

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

Rugger builders at KDL



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

Jacob Brittany, Ethan Kusner, Benjamin Boyer, and Nathan Milner

Letters

ZILLE DIDN'T SAY COLONIALISM WAS POSITIVE

The article on the future of the Democratic Alliance by Steven Gruzid in the 1 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 "its legacy is not only 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 all entitled to our own opinion, but not our own facts.

Singapore used what was left behind by 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 a sensible analysis but for the factual error. She also pointed out that if you think about the Rugby World Cup final, we took on the former colonial power at its own game, and beat them. We look forward to South Africa growing from strength to strength using the infrastructure left behind by the incredibly negative former masters. – **Michael Bagraim, Deputy shadow minister for employment and labour**

CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE ON YOM TOV DEFIES THE NAYSAYERS

The Torah says we are a stiff-necked people who complain a lot. Furthermore, our often difficult history has influenced many of us to believe that it was virtually always bad, even though there were also good times – even golden eras.

It's hardly surprising then that there is a high incidence of anxiety and depression among Jews. This is especially the case in South Africa, where the apartheid government gave us mixed messages while the present government is giving mixed signals about Israel.

In spite of the pessimism which abounds, I was struck by the almost carnival atmosphere on the streets on Simchat Torah. It reminded me of the gees (excitement) we enjoyed

when South Africa hosted the Soccer World Cup in 2010.

A senior manager of a security company based near Glenhazel once told me that Jews were scared. If this is true, it comes in part from past difficulties and the present threat of crime and terrorism. Fortunately, CAP and the Community Security Organisation have drastically reduced these threats.

We live behind walls in the Glenhazel ghetto and the Sandton shtetl, which can't be healthy.

Nevertheless, if you walk or drive through greater Glenhazel on Shabbos or Yom Tov, you will see many people walking around, dressed in their Shabbos best, greeting each other in a relaxed and friendly way. Even late at night. This

is healthy. (An overseas visitor might think that he was in Jerusalem.) And almost all of them are *baalei teshuva*, whose parents or grandparents aren't religious. Those of us who aren't religious can nevertheless look forward to keeping the Shabbos Project, when a tremendous sense of peace and unity descends on us. This international project is a proudly South African initiative of our chief rabbi, and it has inspired Jews around the world.

– **Martin Zagnoev, Johannesburg**

ATHEISM AND MORAL BANKRUPTCY

From time to time, questions arise about atheism. One of the most prominent attackers of religion, particularly Christianity, was Bertrand Russell.

In 1948, the BBC broadcast a debate on the existence of G-d between philosopher Jesuit Frederick Copleston and Russell. Whether you are an atheist or not, Russell didn't fare well in that debate, particularly the moral debate.

Russell said he could distinguish between good and evil by his feelings. As Copleston remarked, "There's no objective criterion outside feeling, then, for condemning the commandant of Belsen, in your view?" Russell replied, "No more than there is for the colour-blind person. Why do we condemn the colour-blind man?"

It shows how morally bankrupt Russell was. – **Peter Onesta, Johannesburg**



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Derbyshire signing puts Cohen on fast track

LUKE ALFRED

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 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,

Province Cricket Club, though, and will be playing club cricket for it this summer as he attempts to complete a Bachelor of Accounting Sciences degree in management accounting from Unisa. "They've afforded me so many great opportunities over the years," says Cohen, who is nothing if

for Wellington in New Zealand. Conway is hoping to qualify to play for the Black Caps ahead of the World T20 in Australia next October, another player whom the South African authorities did very little to encourage to stay as they pursued their obsession with quotas.

Cohen, though, is no Conway – at least not yet. His coaches do, however, talk of a bright young kid who learns 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's 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 ties 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 outfield. Two – or even three – jerseys are advisable. "I need to find an environment in which I can develop," Cohen told SA Club Cricket. "You need to be with supportive coaches in the right environment to speed up the process."

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.



Photo: Peter Heeger (Gallo)

Michael Cohen

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 a colours blazer with infinite badges and scrolls.

He has always played for Western

not loyal to the club which gave him his first opportunities as a junior provincial player while still at school.

Cohen and Du Plooy are not alone in seeking out playing fields abroad. Just this week, a former Lions and Strikers left-handed batsman called Devon Conway scored a triple century

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