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Call to probe Sooliman's 'terror ties'

TALI FEINBERG

A prominent New York-based research organisation is calling for the United States Treasury to investigate South African humanitarian organisation Gift of the Givers (GotG) and its founder, Dr Imtiaz Sooliman, for possible ties to Hamas and a wider terrorist network.

"Sooliman appears to operate with two faces: one as a respected relief figure and the other as a key enabler of radical movements," says the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) in a new damning report.

ISGAP is an independent research institute dedicated to the study of antisemitism and its political, ideological, and institutional dimensions. In its report, "The Red Green Alliance's South African Connection: Gift of the Givers, the Coalition for Good, and Imtiaz Sooliman's Network", it alleges that Sooliman and his organisation work directly with Hamas in Gaza.

GotG's long-standing access to Gaza has never been facilitated through Israeli channels or multilateral platforms, but through Hamas-run authorities. The report says that operating in Gaza "requires Hamas's blessing and cooperation. Every major GotG initiative in Gaza effectively supports the Hamas administration."

Furthermore, "reports confirm that GotG was active inside Nasser Hospital during a period when Hamas was using it as a detention site for Israeli civilian hostages. There can be little doubt that GotG staff knew what was taking place," says the report.

"No South African authority has opened an investigation into these matters, which is why external scrutiny is required," it continues. "Sooliman's hold over the country [South Africa] and its people, through his networks and popularity, makes this even more urgent."

This isn't the first time a US think-tank has called on the US Treasury to probe GotG. In an August 2025 memo entitled "Hiding in Plain Sight: A Playbook for Combating Hamas in South Africa", the Washington, DC-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies recommended that the US Treasury investigate GotG and Sooliman's potential direct or indirect links to Hamas.

Now, one of the authors of that paper, David May, says, "Sooliman certainly warrants investigation by governments with the ability to track his money trail." He says Sooliman's "pristine image in South Africa" contrasts sharply with "his connections to extremists, proximity to terrorist groups, and openly antisemitic rhetoric".

According to the report, GotG has facilitated cash distributions in Gaza, conducted across borders without any independent oversight or accountability mechanisms. In November 2023, GotG gave cash to staff at Nasser Hospital.

The report traces Sooliman's historical links to other organisations sanctioned by the US. For example, GotG has a documented relationship with the Hayat Yolu Association of Turkey.

The US Treasury designated Hayat Yolu on 12 March 2026 as part of Hamas's international funding network.

The report says that "GotG continued to publish references to the partnership after the designation".

GotG reports delivering approximately R7 billion in aid across 47 countries over three decades, but ISGAP found no published audited accounts to verify how these funds were disbursed. Sooliman denies that GotG has financed terrorism.

But "the fact that a charity identified as part of Hamas's financing network [Hayat Yolu] is also a partner of a major South African relief organisation in Syria and Gaza is deeply troubling", says Dr Charles Asher Small, executive director of ISGAP.

The report traces Sooliman's early ties to charities later sanctioned by the US. For example, Sooliman founded the South African branch of the Al-Aqsa Foundation, which the US Treasury designated in 2003. It also identifies GotG on a 2004 membership list for the Union of Good, which the US Treasury designated in 2008 for its role in transferring funds to Hamas.

The ISGAP report maps how Sooliman founded the Coalition for Good in 2024 to directly target Israel, and recommends it be treated "as high risk" given its limited financial disclosures and "documented contacts with sanctioned individuals".

Remarks made by Sooliman invoking antisemitic tropes, and his admission that he follows only Islamic law, are also documented.

GotG has also propagated Hamas rhetoric. For example, in February 2025, when the bodies of the murdered Bibas family were returned to Israel, GotG posted a video on social media with a Gaza terrorist saying that hostage mother Shiri Bibas had been "arrested" on 7 October 2023, and blamed Israel for the deaths of her and her children. This was after forensic evidence determined that they were murdered by Palestinian terrorists.

ISGAP shows that Sooliman is a disciple of Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who established a global network of charity organisations to strengthen Hamas. The report alleges that "Sooliman's GotG and Coalition for Good do precisely the same, while protected by South Africa's leadership".

The Coalition for Good's board includes former government officials Dr Naledi Pandor, Ronnie Kasrils, and Reverend Frank Chikane. "Because of these high-level connections, the Coalition for Good and GotG have largely evaded scrutiny or regulation. This raises the risk of 'state capture' by extremist interests," the report warns. "A growing body of evidence suggests that while GotG performs genuine relief work, it simultaneously provides covert support to terror networks," it continues. "This includes channelling funds, material aid, and logistical support."

Hannes van Vuren, a financial investigations specialist and member of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, says that there are real concerns about Sooliman's network. But his "political clout" means that South African authorities will be reluctant to investigate.

As an example, Van Vuren refers to two planes of Palestinians that arrived in South Africa in October and November 2025, and how possible pressure from Sooliman may have allowed these people to enter the country without the correct documentation.

He says that Sooliman's "sphere of influence" is solidified by "political support," and he therefore operates "with impunity and freedom".

Continued on page 3>>

A force of nature



Fleur Hassan-Nahoum on a game drive at the JNF-SA Women in Leadership Retreat

See pages 3 and 6



Good Sabbath, South Africa



OPINION

STEPHEN D SMITH

South Africans know, in their bones, what it means to be oppressed because of who you are. They learned that lesson at a terrible cost, and they are not about to repeat it.

Recently, I spent two weeks in South Africa. Wherever I travel, I take the opportunity to film Jews for the new platform Our Jewish Story. There are always surprises. I wasn't ready for this one.

Since 7 October, South Africa has been in the news for all the wrong reasons. Hamas murdered around 1 200 people on that day, most of them Israelis. Less than three months later, on 29 December 2023, with Israel's ground offensive in Gaza only weeks old and its outcome far from known, South Africa brought a case of "genocide" against Israel at the International Court of Justice.

The case remains open. The court's interim orders called on Israel to prevent acts that could fall under the Genocide Convention, and a final ruling is years away. To many Jews, and to the State of Israel, the case looked pre-emptive and one-sided. South Africa brought no case against Hamas. It read as antizionist and, to many, as antisemitic.



Stephen Smith interviewing prominent art dealer Charlotte Schachat in Cape Town

So I landed in Cape Town expecting the worst. I had just come from interviewing embattled Jews in Australia. I expected a community under duress, squeezed by a government hell-bent on making Jewish life a misery. I pictured Palestinian flags waved in the faces of Jewish neighbours, synagogues fortified like Fort Knox, Stars of David tucked beneath shirts.

Nothing could have been further from the truth.

That is not to say antisemitism is absent in South Africa. It is a pernicious, persistent virus, found in most places on earth. But it is not evenly spread, and where it shows up – and doesn't – can surprise you.

To understand the government of South Africa, still led by the ANC, you have to understand its history. During the struggle against apartheid, the ANC first looked to the West for support. None came. The ANC had taken up armed struggle against the National Party's racist regime, and it stood shoulder to shoulder with the South African Communist Party (SACP). To a fiercely anti-communist West, and to Britain, the old colonial power, it was too hot to handle. Israel, meanwhile, armed and trained the apartheid state.

So the ANC looked east. The Soviets were glad to help. The Palestine Liberation Organization saw a kindred movement, one also prepared to use every means, violence included, to win. Those bonds were forged in exile and they ran deep.

Today an ANC that has lost its grip on South African voters is nevertheless repaying the Palestinian cause for its loyalty by trying to hold Israel to account. For those who equate antizionism with antisemitism, the logic seems obvious: a Jewish community under an antizionist government must be oppressed.

Not so.

South Africans know, in their bones, what it means to be oppressed because of who you are. They learned that lesson at a terrible cost, and they are not about to repeat it. Politics in The Hague is one thing. How you treat your neighbour on the street is another.

For two weeks I wore my bright silver Magen David over a black T-shirt. Everywhere I went, I was greeted with a smile and respect.

I sat with young Jewish professionals as they described their new project Relo-Cape. It's a relocation programme for Jews who want to leave the antisemitism of Europe but aren't ready to make aliya to an Israel still at war. The offer: affordable housing in Cape Town, one of the most beautiful cities on earth, help with visas, Jewish schools, vibrant Jewish life. And, they add, no antisemitism to speak of.

Think about that. While Jewish communities in London, Paris, and Sydney are hardening their doors, Jews in Cape Town are opening theirs.

None of this excuses the case in The Hague, or the way it has been used to stoke hatred elsewhere. But it should make us more careful about the story we tell ourselves: that antizionism always equates to antisemitism. South Africa complicates that story. It may even be its quiet exception, a safe haven hiding in plain sight.

On Friday afternoon I left a meeting with a former senior leader of the ANC. We had not discussed my Jewish identity, but he had seen the Magen David on my neck. As he stood to leave, he wished me, unprompted, "Have a good Sabbath."

As I walked away from this former member of the SACP, a hero of the fight against racial oppression, I held back a tear. Good Sabbath indeed, South Africa.

• *Stephen D Smith is co-Founder of StoryFile and a director of Memory Workers.*

Whose angel will you be today?

Torah Thought



Rabbi Yossi Chaikin
Oxford Shul

In May 1944, the Jews of Munkács, in then Hungary, were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Among them was a teenager named Chaim Shlomo Zalman. As he waited in the selection line, a stranger asked when he was born. "1927," he answered. The man leaned in and whispered in Yiddish, "1925. You must say 1925." The boy protested, but the stranger insisted. When Nazi doctor Josef Mengele asked him the same question, he answered 1925, as instructed. A flick of the thumb sent him to the right, to forced labour. His mother and four of his younger siblings were murdered on arrival.

After the war he made his way to America. In Los Angeles, he became known as Sol Teichman, a successful businessman and a generous supporter of Jewish causes. He never learnt the stranger's name. But he understood that encounter as Hashem's way of saving his life. To Sol, that man was an angel. He spent much of his life trying to be that angel for others.

Think back over your own life. Who said just the right thing when you were about to make a terrible mistake? Who turned up when you thought you would have to get through something on your own? How many angels did Hashem send your way? How many did you take for ordinary people who just happened to cross your path?

In this week's parsha, Vayishlach, Jacob sends *malachim* ahead to his brother, Esau. It has been years since Jacob fled after Esau threatened to kill him. He has no idea what sort of reception awaits him. Now, *malachim* can mean "messengers", or it can mean "angels". The Midrash gives both readings. One opinion says they were flesh and blood. The other, which Rashi quotes, says they were actual angels.

I wonder whether we might also read these two opinions as a question of perspective. Just before he sends them, Jacob sees angels and says, "This is G-d's camp." Perhaps Esau, looking at the same figures, would have seen a delegation from his brother. Jacob could see who had sent them to him in the first place.

A disciple once asked the Baal Shem Tov how he could see Elijah the Prophet. His Rebbe sent him to spend the first days of Pesach with a poor family in a village and told him to bring everything they would need for *yomtov*. On both Seder nights he opened the door for Elijah and waited. He went home disappointed.

The Baal Shem Tov sent him back for the last days of Pesach. As he approached the house, he heard the children crying that they were hungry. Then one of them caught sight of him. "You can stop crying," the child called out. "Elijah is here. He's brought us food again!"

The disciple had gone looking for Elijah. In that instant, he realised that, as far as those children were concerned, Elijah had just come to their door for the second time.

Now I ask you, whose angel will you be today?

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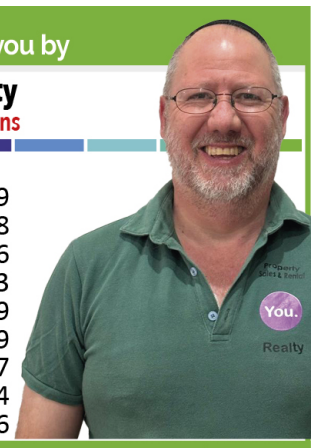

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An Israeli force to be reckoned with

PETA KROST

If former Jerusalem deputy mayor Fleur Hassan-Nahoum had had the opportunity to speak to President Cyril Ramaphosa while in South Africa this week, she would have said, "Your people are hungry, they don't have water, they don't have jobs. So, mind your own business when it comes to Israel."

This is what this no-nonsense former barrister turned politician, who recently ran for the Knesset with the Amcha Yisrael party, told the *SA Jewish Report* in an interview this week. She was in South Africa as a guest of the Jewish National Fund of South Africa (JNF-SA).

"South Africa has basically become the mouthpiece of the IRGC [Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps] in Africa. The South African government took Israel to the ICJ [International Court of Justice] because it's the Islamic Republic of Iran's useful pawn," she said. "Hopefully, we can get rid of this poisonous regime, and when South Africa doesn't have an Islamic backer, it may decide to join the real world. Then, hopefully, it will take care of its own people instead of worrying about a conflict that has nothing to do with it."

Hassan-Nahoum – now Israel's special envoy for trade and innovation – was the very first Israeli official to set foot on United Arab Emirates soil at the time of the signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020. "Prime Minister Netanyahu had given an order that nobody from the government was to go there before him, but I wasn't in national government, I was the deputy mayor of Jerusalem," she said.

It was then that she created the Gulf-Israel Women's Forum with Emirati and Jewish women. "We discovered that there's so much more that unites us than divides us. That is why I believe so much in female leadership. We bonded quickly and got to the real issues without any arrogance."

This powerful woman has worked in nongovernmental organisations and had legal and political roles, and many believe she has the potential to become prime minister one day.

If that were to happen, the first thing she would deal with is government efficiencies and deregulation. "I would create a new diplomatic vision for the country. And I would focus on the narrative lesson we have learnt in the last three years."

She believes "Israel needs a fighting unit of online warriors" to be able to put up a fair fight in the war against terrorism and antisemitism.

"We're living in a world where warfare is both military and narrative. Our enemies know they can't beat us militarily, so instead they are delegitimising us, isolating us systematically, and making our existence in the world difficult. And Israel is doing nothing about this.

"We are the country with the highest concentration of AI and cyber talent in the world, but we haven't just lost the narrative war; we haven't even shown up for the battle."

By contrast, she said, Qatar is training tens of thousands of journalists a year for free, paying influencers to put across the antizionist message, and buying favours in the world's social and traditional media.

"I would also create an AI council that is really looking into the future, ascertaining Israel's unique role in creating that future, and how we become a necessary global economy. That way, countries can't afford or won't even think about boycotting us."

She would, without question, ensure more women in power. "I'm a strong believer that decisions are better when there are both


Fleur Hassan-Nahoum

men and women in the room because we see things differently," she said. "I'm a proud feminist, and believe that diversity around a decision-making table is essential.

"As women, we strive for consensus. We know how to listen. We are very practical thinkers. Even if the decision is still the same decision, the 'how' is sometimes different when women are involved."

Hassan-Nahoum was born just before the Yom Kippur war and was asked on its 50th anniversary, in September 2023, to write an article for the *Jerusalem Post* magazine on how far Israel has come since that war.

"On 1 October, there was this big article with photographs of me and all the ladies from the Gulf in our *shmattes* talking about all our wonderful diplomacy, the Abraham Accords, and how much this world and the region have changed and improved in 50 years," she said.

On 7 October, the world changed. "The sirens went off repeatedly in Jerusalem, which was rare." She had a bad feeling. Eventually, despite keeping Shabbat, she switched on her phone and received many messages from her journalist friends in the Gulf, asking about what they were seeing on television.

With one month left as deputy mayor of Jerusalem, Hassan-Nahoum – at home with her four children – switched on the television to see what was happening down south.

Then the BBC contacted her. "They were calling because nobody else was answering the phones," she said. She realised her purpose then and there was to tell the world what was happening in Israel. "From that moment, I became an unofficial and later official spokesperson for the country. I was doing at some point 15 to 20 interviews a day."

She said she had known on 7 October that it would be just days before the world turned on Israel. "We were already accused of committing genocide before we went into Gaza."

But there was no spokesperson in the Israeli prime minister's office on 7 October and there still isn't, according to Hassan-Nahoum.

"Nobody was getting proper messaging. And when someone like Eylon Levy happened to be a fantastic spokesperson but got too famous, he lost his job," she said. "It was pure arrogance on the government's part. Arrogance that it doesn't matter what the rest of the world thinks or says, just what Israel does.

"Only we are now living in a world where warfare isn't just kinetic, but hybrid, and it's a narrative and military war."

She began putting her interviews up on social media and started a women-only podcast.

In terms of the situation in Israel that led to 7 October, Hassan-Nahoum said, "Firstly, we for some reason stupidly believed that you could pay the Jihadi fundamentalist terror group not to attack you, not to kill you, and to abandon their entire ideology for money. Really? It was such naivete to think that people who are willing to commit suicide for their cause would be deterred by money."

The second factor, she said, was the arrogance of the military leadership who believed so much in their own strategy that they ignored clear warning signs. Then add to that a little misogyny, in that it was women who warned there was a problem, and they ignored it.

"Today, Hamas is still in power in Gaza and getting stronger," she said. The way to deal with this, she believes, is to separate Hamas from the civilian population, who should be housed in a humanitarian safe space with humanitarian and food supplies but no guns allowed. "That's how you smoke Hamas out," she said.

Hassan-Nahoum is deeply upset by the young Israelis attacking Palestinians in the West Bank, saying "anybody who is attacking innocent people should be jailed and punished". However, she added, "nobody in the international media will tell you that it's a very small minority of the settler community doing this, and for every hundred attacks on Palestinians, there are a thousand attacks on settlers that never make the news. That is the disproportionate and double standard of reporting.

"I was attacked a few weeks ago when someone threw a large rock into the car I was driving," she said.

Again, it's Israel's failure to counter the narrative about the violence in foreign media.

Perhaps with more women leaders, communication might be improved, but Hassan-Nahoum said, "I am not seeing women coming through the political pipeline at the moment."

It is about good role models for young women. "When I was deputy mayor, I looked on the walls of schools and saw pictures of male leaders, which left me recognising that my daughter is getting a message that only men become leaders," she recalled. At the time, the governor of the Bank of Israel and the chief justice of the supreme court were women, so she made a plan to get their photographs up on the walls of 350 schools. This despite the education ministry making excuses not to do it.

"If I am the only woman in the room, I haven't done my job. I am always pushing women in with me," she said. "My friends joke that I empower women to lead me because I always employ talented women and help them get their next big opportunity."

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US Treasury called to probe Sooliman's 'terror ties'

>>Continued from page 1

"South Africa is being used to fund terrorism," says Van Vuren. He believes that South Africa is opening itself up to potentially being greylisted again by the Financial Action Task Force, which is concerned about charities directing funds to terrorist entities.

Van Vuren says that corporates who support GotG, as well as ordinary South Africans who donate to it, should be asking critical questions.

"I think a large portion of donations do go to a good cause, but a portion goes to Hamas and similar organisations," says Van Vuren. He believes that Hamas is losing money and may therefore need such support more than ever. Sooliman's Coalition for Good allows him to make use of money to feed that process".

He thinks the US authorities will take the ISGAP report seriously.

Senior fellow at the American Foreign Policy Council Larry Haas says the report provides new evidence that GotG and its leadership "are part of an insidious network that works with and, directly or indirectly, provides legitimacy to or support for Hamas".

The report should receive attention, and an appropriate response, "not just from the US Treasury but from other governments, the United Nations, and other global bodies", says Haas.

Legal adviser for NGO Monitor Anne Herzberg isn't surprised by the revelations and thinks they warrant further investigation by the US and South Africa.

"We see many organisations claiming a humanitarian mandate but abetting Hamas, whether with intent or because they don't have procedures in place to prevent it," she says.

Terrorist financing "is something that South Africa needs to start taking seriously, if it doesn't want to be held accountable", she adds.

The *SA Jewish Report* asked Sooliman for comment but didn't receive a response.

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Medication shortages compromising people's health

CLAUDIA GROSS

Massive shortages of high-schedule medicines are threatening the health of South Africans who depend on prescribed medicines to manage serious and chronic conditions.

A Cape Town woman's chemotherapy was delayed by 18 days after a hospital pharmacy ran out of her medication. A Johannesburg man with bipolar disorder has struggled to obtain the pills that help keep him on an even keel. And a woman on hormone replacement therapy (HRT) says interrupted doses leave her suffering severe migraines.

Their experiences show how medicine shortages are affecting patients with medical aid across South Africa, and the situation is far worse for those who rely on public hospitals.

The shortages involve a range of medicines, from psychiatric treatments to antiretrovirals. More than 50 critical drugs have been affected, with national stock availability standing at 83% at the time of writing, below the recommended target of between 85% and 95%.

A pharmacist working in pharmaceutical manufacturing, who asked not to be identified, said the causes of the shortages vary and include manufacturing problems, overseas supply disruptions, regulatory delays, and shortages of active pharmaceutical ingredients.

She said the shortages are worse in the public system because of the volumes it needs to supply.

Disruptions at overseas manufacturing sites, failed quality inspections, and changes in where medicines are produced can all delay supply, she said. When a company moves production to another country, it may have to submit a new application to the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA), a process that can take years.

The specialist cautioned against attributing every shortage to the Durban port delays. She said global shortages and local regulatory or manufacturing problems can be separate issues.

For patients, however, the cause matters less than whether they can get the drugs they need.

Miriam*, 64, a retired primary school teacher from Cape Town, has stage three ovarian cancer. Her chemotherapy cycle was postponed by 18 days after the hospital pharmacy ran out of her infusion medicine. Her oncology team is trying to source it through a Section 21 exemption, which allows the temporary importation of an unregistered medicine. Customs and testing delays have held up delivery.

Miriam has limited oncology cover through her medical aid and receives specialised infusions through Groote Schuur Hospital. She cannot afford to pay privately for an imported alternative, which could cost tens of thousands of rand per cycle. She has also had to ration prescribed painkillers because of local stock-outs. "When you have cancer, time isn't abstract," she said. "Every week on a calendar means something."

Friends from Miriam's shul have been calling pharmacies around Cape Town to help her find medication. "It's deeply moving, honestly, but you shouldn't need a community task force just to get a standard chemo drip," she said.



Ari*, 29, a Johannesburg graphic designer with bipolar disorder, has been stable for four years on a combination of medication. He receives his chronic prescription through the public outpatient psychiatric clinic at Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital.

Over two months, he arrived at the clinic pharmacy three times to find his main antipsychotic out of stock. A substitute caused severe daytime sedation and tremors, and that alternative later became scarce too.

Ari said missing four or five days of medication can disrupt his sleep and trigger early signs of hypomania. He said people sometimes assume someone experiencing a mental health crisis has chosen to stop taking medication. "I want people to know I am standing in clinic queues at 06:00 trying to get my pills," he said. "The shelves are just empty."

Professor Rael Strous, a South African-born Israeli psychiatrist and academic, said abruptly stopping psychiatric medication can cause withdrawal symptoms and, in some cases, a relapse of the condition being treated. He said the effects vary by medicine and may include severe distress, agitation, or a return of psychosis, mania, or depression.

Strous said patients who are running low should speak to their doctor before their supply runs out. Doctors may be able to recommend an alternative, although a substitute doesn't necessarily work in the same way for every patient. He said doctors have a responsibility to advocate for patients and raise concerns about medicine availability with manufacturers, importers, and authorities.

The shortage isn't limited to public healthcare. David*, 52, who lives in Sandton and has comprehensive private medical aid, was told in October that his specific antidepressant formulation was on national backorder.

He experienced dizziness, "brain zaps", and acute anxiety when he missed doses. Over three days, he drove between pharmacies in Sandton, Craighall, and Linksfield, collecting small quantities to keep his treatment going.

Heidi Brauer, who has a nursing background, said she has experienced intermittent shortages of HRT over the past year. She takes oestrogen and progesterone, and said even a small interruption in her dose can trigger severe migraines.

She said the effects of menopause extend beyond commonly recognised symptoms such as hot flushes and mood swings. Brain fog and other symptoms can also affect daily life, while finding the right hormone treatment can require adjustments to the dose or combination.

Brauer said she has sometimes managed to find her medication by contacting pharmacies and exploring options with her doctor. But she is concerned about the lack of information patients receive when a medicine is unavailable. "Sometimes they [pharmacy staff] tell you it's out of stock and then look at you blankly," she said. "They don't suggest alternatives or advise you to consult with your doctor."

She said patients are often left to phone pharmacies themselves, with no clear information about when supplies might return. Brauer said the search takes time and money, and can be difficult for people balancing work and family responsibilities.

The manufacturing specialist said patients can face serious consequences when treatment for chronic conditions is interrupted. For people taking antiretroviral medication, missed doses can affect viral suppression and increase the risk of resistance. Interruptions to cancer treatment can also affect the course of care and cause the cancer to spread and worsen.

In Brauer's view, the shortages reflect a wider failure to communicate about women's health. She said she has struggled to get guidance from her own doctor about alternatives and has resorted to using expired HRT patches left over from a previous dosage, despite not knowing whether they remain effective. She also discovered that patches can be cut, as the dose is distributed evenly throughout.

She said patients need clearer information from healthcare providers and the companies responsible for supplying their medication. She is also concerned about the lack of media coverage of this issue. "Why are we not reading about this so that we can be informed and take good care of our health?"

Across the accounts, the causes of shortages differ, but the consequences are immediate: patients are left trying to keep essential treatment going while doctors and pharmacies search for supplies or suitable alternatives. As Brauer's experience shows, the uncertainty can be as difficult as the shortage itself.

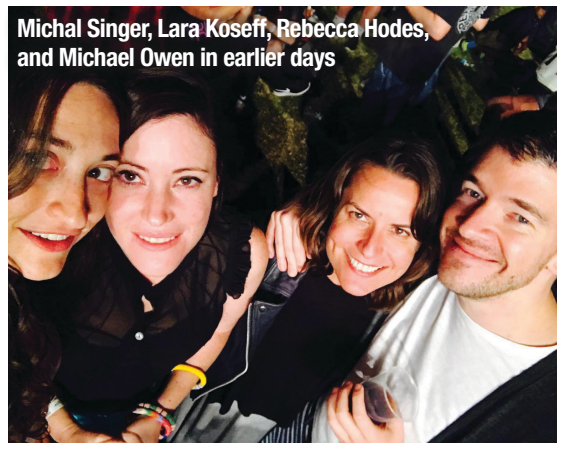
* Not their real names.

Hodes was as committed to her friends as to HIV activism

GILANA LAB

When Abigail Smith got married, her childhood friend Professor Rebecca Hodes found a way to bring Smith's late mother into the celebration. During the bedeken, Hodes read aloud from the very copy of Dr Seuss's *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* that Smith's mother had given her when she was nine years old.

It was this thoughtfulness, coupled with an extraordinary intellect, an insatiable curiosity about the world, and a commitment to improving the lives of others, that characterised Hodes, an internationally respected medical historian, academic, and HIV activist who passed away on 1 November at the age of 44.



Michal Singer, Lara Koseff, Rebecca Hodes, and Michael Owen in earlier days

While her research helped shape South African healthcare policy and advance understanding of the experiences of young people living with HIV, those closest to her remember a woman whose appetite for life was as remarkable as her academic accomplishments.

"She was funny and she was fun, but she thought incredibly deeply about the world," said Lara Koseff, who had been friends with Hodes for about 30 years. "As special as she was, she made all of her friends feel incredibly special, like they were the centre of the world. She was incredibly loyal to her friends. She would do anything for them."

Hodes' commitment to HIV activism began during her undergraduate studies in history at Rhodes University, where she co-founded the Students HIV/AIDS Resistance Campaign in 2000. A scholarship took her to the University of Oxford, where she obtained her master's degree and doctorate before returning to South Africa to head the Treatment Action Campaign's policy, communications, and research department.

Smith, who met Hodes when they were five-year-old tennis partners, worked alongside her in HIV awareness through the Community Media Trust. She recalled how conscious Hodes was of her privileged upbringing and the responsibility that came with it.

"She would always say to me, 'Abzie, we have to make peace with our privilege,'" Smith said. "Generally speaking, Rebecca was the smartest person in the room." What distinguished Hodes was her ability to share her knowledge without making others feel inferior. "She always had the most amazing way of speaking to people in a way that they understood, but didn't feel belittled."

Hodes served as director of the University of Cape Town (UCT) AIDS and Society Research Unit from 2015 to 2021, leading Mzantsi Wakho, the world's largest community-based study of adolescents living with HIV. She was the principal author of South Africa's National Adolescent and Youth Health Policy and received UCT's Social Responsiveness Award.

An accomplished author and researcher whose work spanned medical history, gender, and sexual and reproductive health, Hodes went on to lead the University of Pretoria's Centre for Sexualities, AIDS & Gender before joining its Department of Anthropology, Archaeology and Development Studies.

Despite her own accomplishments, Hodes derived enormous joy from celebrating the successes of those she loved. "She brought her parents so much *nachas* in terms of what she achieved academically," Koseff said. "But I think what was amazing about her was that her friends brought her so much *nachas*. She was constantly proud of all of them."

Koseff and Hodes met through Habonim as teenagers, went on to live together while studying at Rhodes, and travelled extensively together. "She was just an incredible conduit to everything that was wonderful about the world," Koseff said. "She had an inbuilt way of navigating the world and finding the most wonderful parts of it and introducing them to the people in her life."

Michal Singer, who met Hodes at a Netzer summer camp in Pringle Bay when they were about 11 years old, also remembers an adventurous friend who never needed an excuse to celebrate life. For her 30th birthday, Hodes threw an extravagant lunch, determined to experience the joy of a wedding celebration without needing to get married.

"She lived really large, but in a very caring, kind, thoughtful kind of way," Singer said. "Aside from her humanitarian qualities, which have been spoken about a lot, she cared about the people in her day-to-day life just as much."

Hodes' friendships were filled with practical jokes, handwritten postcards, shared books, and poetry. Smith recalled how the pair would play pranks on each other throughout their lives, sometimes waiting years to get their revenge. "I would set my alarm to wake up to go to gym, and it drove her so mad that she changed my cellphone to be in German. I didn't understand what the phone was saying, so I wasn't able to set my alarm," she said.

Behind that mischievous sense of humour was an incredibly thoughtful and generous friend. "She loved a postcard, loved a photocopy. You would go to her and receive a photocopy with a cool poem on it and a little note from Bex," Smith said. "If she was eating a sandwich, she would share it with you irrespective of how hungry she was."

For Singer, who affectionately teased Hodes about being the "voice of a generation", honouring her friend's legacy means carrying forward the qualities that made her so extraordinary.

"The best way to remember her is to embody the qualities that she had, which was kindness and joy, just this mirth, the sense of unconditional love that she had," Singer said. "And that's what I'll take with me.

Myanmar genocide ruling's impact on SA's ICJ case

PAULA SLIER

A landmark genocide ruling against Myanmar has given South Africa new legal arguments in its case against Israel, but has also reaffirmed the high standard required to prove genocide.

At the centre of the debate is genocidal intent: the specific intention to destroy a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, in whole or in part. The killing of civilians, even on a large scale, doesn't automatically constitute genocide. That particular intention must also be established.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled by nine votes to six on 19 November that Myanmar committed genocide against its Rohingya Muslim minority during military operations in 2017. It was the first time the court had found a state directly responsible for committing genocide.

The ruling has divided legal experts and the court's own judges over how genocidal intent should be proved, with potentially important consequences for South Africa's case against Israel. The court maintained that genocidal intent must be the only reasonable inference from the evidence. But it also found that such intent can exist alongside other objectives, including military ones. That distinction matters for Israel, which maintains that its military campaign in Gaza was directed against Hamas following the 7 October attacks, rather than against Palestinians as a group.

South Africa has welcomed the judgment. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation said it would study the implications for other cases under the Genocide Convention, including ongoing proceedings.

But international law expert Professor André Thomashausen believes the ruling could work in Israel's favour. He pointed to the court's finding that Myanmar had acted with the specific intention of physically destroying the Rohingya, in whole or in part, as an ethnic or religious group. "The only reasonable inference that can explain Myanmar's actions is an intention to destroy a substantial part of the group," he said, quoting ICJ president Yuji Iwasawa's reading of the judgment. "I doubt that such a finding can be made against Israel."

Thomashausen stressed that the court hadn't abandoned the requirement to prove specific genocidal intent. "The central element of manifest genocidal intent was confirmed, not conditioned or taken as implied."

The judges were sharply divided over whether that requirement had been met in Myanmar. Six of the 15 judges, led by ICJ vice-president Julia Sebutinde, issued a joint dissenting opinion. They acknowledged the suffering inflicted on the Rohingya, including killings, sexual violence, displacement, and the destruction of homes, but concluded that the evidence hadn't established genocidal intent to the required standard.

Their objection went beyond disagreement over the facts. They argued that the majority had given too much weight to discrimination, forced displacement, and attacks on the foundations of Rohingya community life without adequately explaining how these established an intention to physically or biologically destroy the group.

They also challenged the majority's method of examining whether genocide was a reasonable inference before considering whether it was the only reasonable one. They warned that this could effectively shift the burden towards Myanmar to demonstrate another explanation for its conduct. In their view, the court risked blurring the distinction between genocide and other serious international crimes. That distinction is important. War crimes and crimes against humanity can involve widespread killings and terrible suffering without necessarily meeting the legal definition of genocide.

For South Africa, the question is whether the evidence from Gaza, including civilian deaths, destruction, restrictions on humanitarian aid, statements by Israeli officials, and the conduct of military operations, establishes the specific intention to destroy Palestinians in Gaza as a protected group.

Anne Herzberg, legal adviser and UN representative for NGO Monitor, rejects the suggestion that the Myanmar judgment strengthens South Africa's case.

She argues that the circumstances in Gaza were fundamentally different, citing Hamas's 7 October attacks, rocket fire against Israeli civilians, hostages taken into Gaza, and Hamas's extensive tunnel network. She also challenged the court's interpretation of genocidal intent. "The court was somewhat incoherent in its interpretation of the special intent standard for genocide."



Photo: UN / Frank van Beek

Myanmar's Ko Ko Hlaing addresses judges at the International Court of Justice

Herzberg questioned how a state could comply with international humanitarian law governing armed conflict and nevertheless be found to possess genocidal intent. She also argued that judges had substituted their own assessments of military decisions for those of military experts.

An analysis published on 23 November by Israeli international law scholars Yuval Shany and Amichai Cohen suggests that the implications for Israel may be more complicated. Writing in the legal publication *Just Security*, they argued that the Myanmar judgment has made genocide law less predictable by giving judges greater scope to assess the overall pattern of conduct. They identified several issues that could affect South Africa's case, including how the court considers civilian displacement, damage to religious and cultural sites, statements by officials, and evidence from UN investigations. They also said that compliance with the laws of armed conflict would not, on its own, defeat an allegation of genocide.

But Shany and Cohen stressed that there are important differences between Myanmar and Gaza. Myanmar's operations followed attacks by a relatively lightly armed insurgent group. Israel, by contrast, faced a heavily armed and organised force following the 7 October attacks, when 1 200 people were killed and 250 taken hostage. They also noted Israel's warnings to Gazans, evacuation orders, humanitarian arrangements, and ceasefire negotiations, although the effectiveness and adequacy of those measures have been disputed.

The Myanmar case was brought by The Gambia in 2019 following military operations that forced hundreds of thousands of Rohingya to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh. The ICJ examined evidence of killings, serious bodily and mental harm, sexual violence, and measures intended to prevent births within the Rohingya population. Myanmar maintained that its operations were directed against insurgents. But the majority of ICJ judges concluded that the only reasonable inference from Myanmar's conduct was an intention to destroy a substantial part of the Rohingya group.

The Myanmar ruling doesn't determine the outcome of South Africa's case against Israel, brought in December 2023. But it gives South Africa and Israel a new judgment to draw upon, with arguments that could be used by both sides. What remains to be seen is how the ICJ will apply those principles to the very different circumstances of the war in Gaza.

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south african Jewish Report

Women's place at the table



Spending a weekend with 25 powerful, inspiring Jewish women of all ages was a wake-up call for me. It reminded me what women contribute, just how much we do for this community, and how essential our roles are.

The other women at the Jewish National Fund South Africa (JNF-SA) Women in Leadership Retreat may have known a few people. I only really knew one woman well, a good friend. The rest were either people I knew vaguely but liked, or people I had never met before. When we boarded the bus at the beginning of our journey on Friday, I wondered if I would remember their names and if I would integrate easily. You never know.

By Sunday, I think I knew everyone by name and had got to know some of the most incredible, inspiring women. Some I had only seen or heard of before but perhaps knew their husbands or partners. Of those I had seen as part of a couple, I knew their partners were forces to be reckoned with, but I may not have paid much heed to the women. More fool me!

What astonishing women, each with their own powerful story. It seemed JNF-SA had thought long and hard about whom they chose to come along, but the reality is there are thousands of other women who have so much to contribute.

The participants came from different areas of expertise, or so it seemed. There was a powerhouse rebbetzin who gave me a new take on what it means to be married to a rabbi. It is not that I don't know powerful rebbetzins, I certainly do, but if this woman's husband, the rabbi, is as much of a dynamo as she is, and as wise and spiritual as she is, he would have to be amazing.

I don't want to name names because I am not sure everyone would want that. Suffice to say it was a phenomenal experience feeling the female energy as we shared ideas from our own knowledge bases, be they Jewish history, fundraising, media, environmental issues, spiritual prowess, and so much more.

Very often women don't seek the limelight. They take responsibility for a great deal but get on with it quietly and efficiently. Because of this, their achievements are often overlooked.

I have to say, although it isn't always naturally easy for us, women should be stepping forward into power, not hiding our light under a bushel. As our distinguished guest of honour, Israeli politician and women's rights activist Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, said on the weekend, "Nobody gives you power willingly. You have to take it. Women have to make it happen for themselves."

Someone like the veteran South African Zionist warrior and champion Isla Feldman, who was with us this weekend, has done so much for this community over the past 40 years. And she has certainly not lost any of her awesome sheen. She is a true Jewish lioness. Isla is the former national director of the South African Zionist Federation and president of JNF-SA. There are so many vital projects she has initiated and made happen.

In truth, many among us mentioned we are a little intimidated by this formidable woman. For good reason! Isla calls a spade a shovel and doesn't back down for anyone. She's been known to give a tongue-lashing to antisemites who perhaps think they are dealing with a frail senior citizen. A year ago, Isla wrote a piece in our National Jewish Dialogue, making it clear that communal organisations aren't working well together or creating succession plans, and that they should be doing both. We are a small community and we need to "work together, strategically, united, and with purpose".

Fleur, our guest of honour, is also an awe-inspiring tigress. Isla apparently met her in Israel and told her it was imperative she come to South Africa to attend this weekend, and other events. Isla is hard to turn down, even if you are a fearless feminist.

Fleur's story deserves telling. Born in London and raised in Gibraltar, the daughter of its first chief minister, she qualified as a barrister, and in 2001, at the height of the Second Intifada, made aliya. Hardly an easy time to move.

In Israel, she initially worked in the nongovernmental sector before walking into politics, one of the most male-dominated arenas there is. Elected to the Jerusalem City Council in 2016, she was leading the opposition within a year. In 2018, she became deputy mayor, in charge of foreign relations, economic development, and tourism. She was effectively the city's foreign minister.

A woman, an immigrant, a Brit by way of Gibraltar, holding her own in rooms full of men. In 2020, after the signing of the Abraham Accords, she co-founded the UAE-Israel Business Council and the Gulf-Israel Women's Forum, as well as FemForward, which supports women in tech.

Fleur didn't just earn a seat at the table. She makes sure other women have one too.

She believes that until women hold half of all decision-making positions, our world will remain unbalanced, and that decisions are simply better when women are around the table. I couldn't agree more.

Fleur is not alone. Israel has, in fact, been shaped by formidable women. Tzipi Livni served as foreign minister and sat at the table in delicate negotiations. Esther Hayut led the Supreme Court as its president from 2017 to 2023. Different fields, same refusal to be told what is possible.

And long before any of them, there were the pioneers. Henrietta Szold helped build the human, medical, educational, and social foundations of the Jewish homeland. Hannah Szenes, a young poet and paratrooper, parachuted into occupied Europe in 1944 to help rescue Jews and paid with her life. Women have always been at the heart of the Zionist story, even if the history books gave them only a footnote.

That is what stayed with me. It's not about ticking boxes or being the token woman. It's about what happens when women show up, speak up, and support each other. We spent the weekend talking about antisemitism, which touches each of us in our own way, and about how women can uplift this community and help it through these times. We saw how women working together simply get things done, without the ego and the posturing.

We often say the Jewish people have survived because of our resilience. I would add that we have survived because of our women, who have always kept homes, communities, schools, and charities going, often unseen. This weekend, those women were seen. I came home grateful to JNF-SA, its national director, Bev Schneider, and her team, and to Fleur for reminding us what is possible. Now it's up to the rest of us to stop admiring formidable women and start becoming them.

Shabbat shalom!
Peta Krost
Editor

Can SA afford to waste another five years?



OPINION DAVID SHAPIRO

I remember the anticipation surrounding PW Botha's Rubicon speech in August 1985. South Africa was in turmoil. The economy was under pressure, the country increasingly isolated, and there was growing recognition that the political status quo could not continue. Yet there was also hope. We had been led to believe that Botha was finally going to acknowledge the inevitable and announce meaningful reform.

The world listened. And then came the disappointment.

Instead of the breakthrough many expected, Botha dug in. Ironically, he declared that South Africa was "crossing the Rubicon", but the speech came to symbolise precisely the opposite – a government unwilling to take the decisive step the moment demanded. The speech fell far short of the major reforms widely anticipated.

The economic consequences were severe. Isolation and financial pressure intensified, and confidence in South Africa deteriorated. It would take almost another five years before FW de Klerk, Botha's successor, changed course and began the process that ultimately led to democracy.

I have been thinking about that speech again. Not because South Africa today resembles South Africa of 1985. It does not. We live in a constitutional democracy. But there is an uncomfortable similarity. Once again, expectations of a change in direction have risen, only for politics to threaten to squander the opportunity.

The municipal elections delivered a remarkable verdict. The ANC's national support fell to 31%, while the DA received 25%. More significantly for Gauteng, the DA emerged as the largest party in Johannesburg, Tshwane, and Ekurhuleni, although without a majority in any of them. The electorate might not have delivered a clear governing majority, but it delivered a remarkably clear message that the status quo is no longer acceptable.

Yet the emerging coalition arrangements appear set to exclude the DA from all three Gauteng metros in which it emerged as the largest party. There is nothing undemocratic about this. The largest party has no automatic right to govern if others can construct a majority. Nor is the failure to reach an alternative coalition agreement the ANC's responsibility alone. Disagreements between the DA and ActionSA, particularly over mayoral candidates, contributed materially to the breakdown in their talks.



What disappoints me is what the negotiations say about priorities. At a moment when voters were demanding change, politics appears again to be dominated by personalities, ideology, and party advantage. The opportunity wasn't simply to put the DA into government. It was to show that political parties had heard the electorate and were prepared to put competent government and economic reconstruction ahead of political interest.

Financial markets have noticed. The rand fell sharply in the week after the elections and breached R17 to the dollar. But it would be wrong to attribute every movement in the currency to politics. The dollar, US interest-rate expectations, and global risk appetite also matter enormously.

The ANC is correct that financial markets have no right to dictate coalition negotiations. They don't. But markets have their own ballot box. Investors decide whether to buy our bonds, hold our currency, build a factory, expand a business, or take their capital elsewhere. Governments are free to make political choices. They are not free to choose the economic consequences.

And this is where the comparison with 1985 becomes more troubling. When political reform finally came in the early 1990s, the incoming democratic government would eventually inherit a deeply divided and unequal society. But it also inherited a sophisticated economy and substantial physical and institutional infrastructure. Much of it served South Africans unequally. But the machinery existed.

Today the challenge is different. We are no longer simply trying to change political direction. We are trying to repair the machinery itself. Anyone living in Johannesburg hardly needs an economist to explain this. It is visible in potholes, broken traffic lights, water interruptions, sewage spills, and deteriorating public infrastructure. These things may sound mundane beside our great political debates. They aren't. A functioning sewerage system is economic policy. Municipal competence sits at the foundation of economic growth.

South Africa knows broadly what needs to be done: reliable electricity, better logistics, functioning water infrastructure, capable municipalities, and an environment in which businesses have enough confidence to employ people and invest. The question is whether politics accelerates that process or once again gets in its way.

Which brings me back to the Rubicon. South Africa eventually changed course after 1985. De Klerk did what Botha had failed to do. Political organisations were unbanned, Nelson Mandela was released, and negotiations began. History moved forward. But almost five years had been lost.

That is what troubles me most. Does today's South Africa have another five years to waste?

Another five years of municipal deterioration, inadequate investment, and skilled South Africans deciding that their children's futures lie elsewhere? Another five years in an economy unable to create enough opportunities for millions of young people who desperately need work?

The municipal elections offered our political leaders an opportunity to demonstrate that they understood the urgency of the moment. Perhaps the new coalitions will surprise us. I sincerely hope they do. But hope is not an economic strategy.

The electorate has sent its message. The markets are sending theirs. The question is whether our political leaders are present.

• *David Shapiro is a veteran stockbroker and market commentator.*

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SA artist brings Holocaust survivor and Israeli mother together

CLAUDIA GROSS

A South African artist's work has been instrumental in bringing together a Holocaust survivor, an Israeli mother who lost her son in Gaza, and a former hostage.

Kim Lieberman's photographic series *Still Life with Essential Objects* connected Iris Haim with psychologist and Holocaust survivor Edith Eger. And their meeting became part of *The Choice*, a documentary directed by American John David Coles that also features former hostage Sapir Cohen.

The film is launching internationally, sharing the women's stories of trauma, loss, and the choices they have made afterwards.

"I think that's a brilliant story, that I was the hinge to make it happen," Lieberman told the *SA Jewish Report*.

She began *Still Life with Essential Objects* in 2020 with a self-portrait featuring objects from her own life. The series developed into photographic diptychs, pairing portraits with images of personal possessions chosen by each subject.

Her subjects have included former Constitutional Court judges Albie Sachs and Yvonne Mokgoro.

Handmade lace in the works represents the invisible connections between people. "I'm very interested in who influences and how things influence and the ripple effect," she said.

After 7 October, Lieberman wanted to create an artwork in Israel. She chose Haim, whose response to her son's death had affected her deeply. Yotam Haim was killed accidentally by Israeli soldiers while escaping captivity in Gaza.

Lieberman was struck by Haim's compassion towards the soldiers involved. She wanted to understand the woman behind that response, rather than focus only on the tragedy. "I wasn't focused on her son. I was focused on who is this woman? What gave her the qualities to do what she did?"

Lieberman works with the concept of "Wild Integrity": people who cannot be controlled or told what to do, but who remain guided by their morals, values, and ethics. She felt Haim embodied that idea. Haim agreed to take part in the artwork and Lieberman asked her to choose objects that reflected her life. One was a sewing kit that belonged to Haim's grandmother.

Born in Transylvania, now part of Romania, Haim's grandmother arrived in what was then British Mandate Palestine in 1934, aged 17. Her parents and brother were murdered in the Holocaust.

Haim said she loved her grandmother deeply, despite losing her when she was young. Her grandmother's embroidery connected her to her family's history and Jewish identity. "My roots and my family, my history, my Jewish history," she said.

Haim found the process of choosing and discussing the objects therapeutic. "I had to figure out what is the deeper meaning for me."

Another object she chose was Eger's book *The Choice: Embrace the Possible*. It had helped Haim during Yotam's captivity and after his death. Lieberman realised that bringing the two women together could be significant, and asked Eger to become the next subject in her series.

She arranged for Eger and Haim to meet in San Diego. The documentary crew was filming Eger's activities and recognised the importance of their encounter. The film's focus expanded to include Haim and Cohen.

Haim had wanted to meet Eger before 7 October. After Yotam was killed, she read *The Choice* again. "I reminded myself a lot of things about choosing," she said. "That I can choose how to look at reality."

During their first meeting, Eger encouraged Haim to focus on the years she had shared with her son. "She said to me, 'You had 28 years with him and you can focus on that. You can choose to focus on what you had, not what you will not have.'"

The two women met again about six months later, when the psychologist's health had deteriorated. Haim, who had worked as a palliative care nurse, felt her role had changed. "I felt that I'm already coming not in the position of the mother that lost her son, but in the position of the nurse or the spiritual caregiver." Eger died in April this year.



Kim Lieberman, Edith Eger, and Iris Haim

The meetings also revealed a connection through music. Yotam's brother, Tuval, is a musician. Eger had been a dancer, and the two connected through their shared interest in music. Lieberman described the moment as "magical and alive".

The documentary follows Eger, Haim, and Cohen as they confront trauma and consider how to live afterwards. Haim hopes it will change how people respond to pain, anger, and loss. "People react very fast, are getting very angry, and want to blame and to [take] revenge," she said.

Haim doesn't hold the soldiers responsible for what happened to Yotam; she places responsibility on Hamas, which kidnapped him and started the war. She described the soldiers as young people caught in the conflict. "They are like our children," she said. "That's what I felt."

Haim wants people to know more about Yotam than the circumstances of his death. She said he had faced difficulties throughout his life but had never given up. She has since established a non-profit organisation aiming to create a music school for people experiencing depression.

For Lieberman, the artwork has become a way to connect lives and help their stories reach a wider audience. Haim believes the connections that led to the documentary weren't accidental. "Everything that happens to us has a meaning," she said. "It's a way to spread what I believe."

Can first love become lasting love?

GILLIAN KLAWANSKY

"Growing up together has given us a shared history that is quite unique," says Gabriela Demby, who has been with her husband, Rael, since they were both 13. "We've watched each other become the people we are today."



Craig and Desiree Gaddie

Family friends, the two frequently socialised and went through every phase of their school years together. "Even from early on, we both remember feeling a little shy around each other and noticing one another in a way that was different from our other friends of the opposite gender," Gabriela recalls. "There was almost a sense of recognition that neither of us could quite explain at the time."

Although they've been together for 23 of their 36 years, the two have never felt like they were missing out by not experiencing other romantic relationships. "Of course, we were young and had a lot of growing up to do, but we were fortunate to be able to do that alongside each other," says Gabriela. "Our relationship always felt natural, steady, and supportive."

Now raising their three children, the couple has naturally changed over the years. "One of the things we've always valued is how we make space for each other's growth. There's something very special about being loved by someone who has known you through so many different versions of yourself."

The Dembys have faced challenges common to most married couples, especially the exhaustion and shifting attention and priorities that come with parenthood. "We've had to learn that our relationship also needs care and attention, and that we can't simply assume the other person always knows what we're feeling or needing," says Gabriela. "Honest conversations, understanding, and making an effort to find our way back to each other have been important."



Gabriela and Rael Demby

It's not about perfection, she adds, but rather about being best friends who genuinely like each other. "What makes our relationship stronger with time is that we continue to choose each other, respect each other, and find joy in the life we're building together."

Desiree Gaddie was 13 when she first met her now-husband, Craig. Since he was 18 at the time, her parents didn't allow her to go out with him alone, so her friend became their third wheel for many years. It was this friend who convinced Desiree to give Craig another chance when doubts crept in. "She was there for our first date – when he was three hours late – our first kiss, and practically every romantic outing in between," Desiree recalls.

"We went through so many different stages of life side by side, from being teenagers discovering young love to becoming adults, building a home, and raising a family. I think those years of friendship and dating gave us a wonderful foundation. By the time we got married, we weren't just in love; we genuinely knew each other."



Amanda Ballen and Jaron Meyerson at their wedding

In their early days, the two did break up briefly and Desiree dated someone else. "I was very young when we first got together, and I think I needed to understand myself, what I wanted, and what really mattered in a relationship. I don't regret that break because it taught me a great deal about what I had with Craig."

After 13 years of dating, 26 years of marriage, and two children, it is still Craig's gentle nature, kindness, and the way he treats her and his loved ones that Desiree loves most. "Craig fixes everything. If my world feels like it's falling apart, he will fix it," she says. He supported her through a Comrades Marathon just after she'd had a flare-up of her autoinflammatory skin condition, standing on the sidelines with bandages and administering wound care.

"We've learnt that marriage isn't about everything always being equal or easy. It's about recognising when the other person needs you and stepping up. The young boy I met at 13 has become the man I still choose every single day. And I think that's one of the most beautiful things about growing up together."

Amanda Ballen and Jaron Meyerson were born a day apart in the same hospital after their parents met at antenatal classes. "We call ourselves 'The Great Park Lane Romance'," Amanda says. "We used to have long playdates in the garden as kids." After losing touch, the two reconnected at high school, and after Jaron shared his maths expertise with Amanda, romance blossomed. "We started dating in 2006, when we were 16, and have been together ever since."

After moving in together in their mid-20s, they built a strong foundation while navigating early adulthood, and ultimately married in 2022. While Jaron is more analytical, Amanda is philosophical, yet their personalities complement one another. "Twenty years later, we remain fascinated by one another and the lens through which each of us sees the world," Amanda says.

She feels like she and Jaron almost raised one another. "We've accompanied each other through the formative years of discovering our identities, developing careers, establishing independence, and, eventually, becoming parents. We've changed enormously over 20 years – and encountered a multitude of versions of one another – but have retained a deep friendship."

Kaela Sussman, a registered counsellor working with individuals and couples, says that there's a level of familiarity and understanding that comes from having someone who has witnessed different versions of you. Yet the challenge comes with allowing one another to grow as individuals, often at different paces. "There's a risk of holding onto an older version of your partner or becoming so comfortable that you stop making an effort to get to know each other," she says.

To keep a long relationship fresh and interesting, Sussman suggests being intentional. "Continue dating each other, trying new things, and creating new experiences together. Remain curious about each other. Just because you've known someone for 15 or 20 years doesn't mean there's nothing left to discover. You both continue changing, and it's important to keep making time for emotional and physical intimacy, friendship, and connection."

"Couples who understand that a relationship needs ongoing maintenance, rather than only attention when something goes wrong, give themselves a much better opportunity to build something lasting."

Krug joins World Jewish Congress to develop future leaders

CLAUDIA GROSS

A South African-born businessman who became increasingly involved in Jewish communal affairs after 7 October has joined the World Jewish Congress's (WJC) American Section board. His priority is to prepare younger Jews to take up leadership positions around the world.

Sherwin Krug, who grew up in Johannesburg before moving to the United States in 1993, hopes to equip the next generation of Jewish leaders to address the challenges facing Jewish communities internationally. "I want to develop new young Jewish leadership," he told the *SA Jewish Report*. "The idea is to get the new crop of leaders and meet the challenges of the future."


Sherwin Krug

Krug's involvement with the WJC began in May this year, when he was invited to attend a governing board event in Geneva, Switzerland. The gathering brought together prominent individuals, politicians, and diplomats from around the world.

Initially attending as an observer, he used the opportunity to learn more about the organisation and meet its representatives. "They were evaluating me and what I potentially bring to the table," he said. "Later on in the year, they asked me to join. I felt pretty honoured to be asked to join such a great organisation."

The WJC represents Jewish communities and organisations in more than 100 countries. It works to represent Jewish interests internationally, engage with governments and institutions, and address issues affecting Jewish communities.

He compared the organisation's international advocacy role to that of a country's foreign affairs department. Its work involves understanding the needs of different communities and helping address them.

"Sometimes we think it's all the same for Jews everywhere, but it's not." While antisemitism is a major concern in countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, France, and the United States, in parts of South America, for example, access to kosher food and local legislation can present challenges. The WJC helps communities raise these concerns and seek solutions.

For Krug, however, developing future leadership is his central ambition. The organisation already has a NextGen programme through its youth initiatives. He hopes to expand its work and identify young people with the potential to take on leadership positions in their communities.

Bringing young people together for meetings is only the beginning, he said. "If they go into leadership roles, then I would consider that a huge success," he said. "It's really leadership that I'm passionate about right now, getting more younger people involved in their communities wherever they are."

Krug's own journey began in Johannesburg, where he grew up and attended school. He also met and married his wife in South Africa. The couple have been married for more than 30 years. They moved to the United States about a year after their wedding, when Krug had an opportunity to transfer with his employer.

He credits his parents, who ran a garage on Louis Botha Avenue in Johannesburg, with instilling the work ethic that shaped his career. "I came with a pretty strong work ethic, which I modelled after my parents," he said. "They really helped me develop that."

He believes his professional success came from being willing to work hard, embrace challenges, and take on new responsibilities. "The harder I worked, the luckier I got," he said.

A qualified accountant, Krug built a career in finance and operations, eventually taking on senior executive responsibilities. He semi-retired last year after running a substantial New York-based company.

He believes his professional experience has prepared him for communal leadership. He describes himself as someone who prefers getting things done rather than simply occupying a position. "They always say, if you want to get something done, you give it to a busy person. I don't see obstacles. I just get things over the line and bring people with me."

His involvement in Jewish communal affairs grew significantly over the past decade. Following the 2018 shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, he became head of security at his synagogue in Atlanta.

However, he describes himself as becoming particularly active after the Hamas attacks on Israel on 7 October. Since then, he has become involved with several Jewish and Israeli organisations, including Friends of the Israel Defense Forces and Magen David Adom. He has helped sponsor support for former Israeli soldiers and participated in a Friends of the Israel Defense Forces visit to military bases in 2024. Together with friends, he also helped arrange funding for an ambulance for Israel. Krug said meeting people working to support Jewish communities has further motivated him to become involved.

At a WJC gathering in Geneva, he met individuals working internationally to combat antisemitism and support Jewish communities, including people who are not Jewish themselves. He said their commitment demonstrated the importance of building relationships and encouraging more people to contribute.

Despite having lived in the United States for more than three decades, Krug maintains close connections with South Africa. He has family in Johannesburg, including his brother, and plans to return next year for his niece's Batmitzvah.

He also remains connected to the South African community in Atlanta, where he and his family enjoy access to South African restaurants, shops, and familiar food. "You will always find Nando's sauce in my pantry," Krug said.

As he takes up his new position, he hopes his greatest contribution will be helping young Jews recognise their potential to lead. For Krug, the appointment isn't simply about representing Jewish communities at an international level. It's about ensuring that those communities have capable leaders ready to take responsibility for their future.

Time to Rage a little awareness



OPINION STASIA BEHR

With 12 long years of school and the final exams coming to an end, matrics can taste their freedom. They're planning for parties, holidays, and, of course, the all-important Rage Festival.

This year, Rage is taking place from 28 November to 5 December in Ballito.

It's all part of growing up, so let's keep them safe, preparing them for possible situations and how to handle them when parents aren't around.

There will be drinking and drugs, and these substances can pose dangers. Teens must be aware of who gives them drinks if they don't open their own bottle. Is it someone new who suggests they try a pill?

Parents should empower youngsters to know their limits. It is okay to say "no" at any point, whether they don't want to drink anymore or feel uncomfortable about an unwanted advance or friendly smile. Being under the influence makes people more vulnerable to exploitation.

They need to know what to do and who to call if a friend passes out. Or worse, if a friend reacts badly to something they have taken.

I don't say this to scare anyone, but to create awareness. Don't be too anxious to have difficult conversations with your children.

As someone whose work brings me into contact

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They found their *bashert* at *machaneh*

CLAUDIA GROSS

For some South African Jewish couples, the most important person they ever met was assigned to the same activity group, singing around a bonfire, or arriving at a summer camp from another city. Decades later, those first encounters have become marriages, families, and lives shaped by shared memories of Jewish youth movements.

Janet Gelgor met her husband, Sion, at a Jewish summer camp in 1988. Kelli and Benji Lunsky married at the Habonim campsite where they'd first met. And Ros Halliday met André at a camp in her teens, beginning a relationship that lasted 36 years. Their stories reflect the lasting connections that can form when young people come together through a shared Jewish experience.



Benji and Kelli Lunsky at their son's Barmitzvah

For Gelgor, it was meetings that seemed to happen by chance, again and again. She was 16 and from Cape Town when she met Sion, who was 19 and from Johannesburg. A mutual friend introduced them, and they enjoyed chatting. One of her favourite memories is talking with him late at night around the campfire.

The relationship didn't immediately develop into a romance. After camp ended, they stayed in touch, although not frequently. Sion went overseas after completing his accounting degree and articles, while Gelgor finished matric and studied at the University of Cape Town.

But fate apparently had other plans. "We feel our relationship has been *bashert*," Gelgor said, using the Yiddish word for "destined". The two kept encountering each other unexpectedly. They bumped into one another at a supermarket in Cape Town and later at an airport. Gelgor was returning from Israel, while Sion was arriving from Europe.

About eight years after they first met, Sion returned from the United States. The two began chatting again, and Gelgor decided to transfer her job to Johannesburg. They have now been happily married for 27 years and have three sons, Erez, 25, Liad, 23, and Amir, 19. Their children know the story of how their parents met.

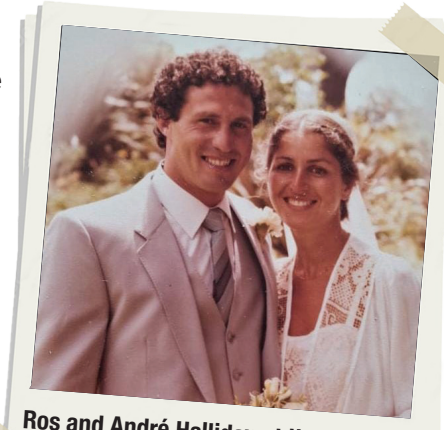
Gelgor said meeting at a Jewish youth camp gave them a foundation of shared Jewish values. She and Sion also became *shomrei Shabbos*, observing the Sabbath, a commitment for which they are grateful.

For Lunsky, the camp connection became central to her relationship with her husband. They met through Habonim when they were teenagers. Both were already involved in its leadership. Lunsky, from Cape Town, was a year older than Benji, who was from Johannesburg. They knew of each other before reconnecting at a national seminar during the June and July school holidays in 2002.

They spent six months chatting by phone and email before getting together at the end of that year. Lunsky remembers the last night of camp, when the oldest campers traditionally gather for a ceremony involving large, illuminated structures spelling out Hebrew words and the camp's name, with sad music playing, such as Coldplay's *Fix You*.

As she prepared to return to Cape Town, she knew Benji would be going back to Johannesburg. Yet she never doubted their relationship would last. "There was no part of me that ever questioned for one second if this would be forever," she said.

She believes their shared values helped make their relationship feel natural. "We've never had to discuss where we stand on Israel, where we stand on traditional Judaism, how we're going to raise our children."



Ros and André Halliday at their wedding in October 1981

The couple married on the Habonim campsite in 2009 because the movement had been such a significant part of their lives. "It's our sacred turf," she said.

The couple spent several days preparing and decorating the venue themselves, and guests stayed in the huts and cabins. "It was magical."

The Lunskys remain involved in Habonim. Their children attend camp, while the couple work as staff. The family continues to return to the place where it all began.

Halliday's story, meanwhile, began with an unexpected attraction at camp. She was 17 and attending her fifth camp when she met André, who was four years older and from Durban. He had come to the camp to work as a lifeguard. Halliday remembers being immediately attracted to him when he addressed the campers in Hebrew. She had grown up in a traditional Jewish family and assumed he was Jewish.



Sion and Janet Gelgor on their wedding day

At the end of camp, André stayed in Cape Town for another two weeks. They saw each other daily before he returned to Durban. He later returned to Cape Town for work, and the relationship developed.

Halliday remembers their early days as a time of innocence and joy. One of her favourite early memories is trying to flirt with André by pretending to be drowning and asking him to save her. She said it was unlike her to flirt, making the memory particularly funny in retrospect.

The relationship faced challenges, including differences in their religious backgrounds. André wasn't Jewish, and Halliday said her family initially struggled with the prospect of their marrying. But her mind was made up. "Even at the age of 17, I knew what I wanted," she said. "And I knew that I was in love, that I wasn't going to give it up."

The two were together for 36 years before André's passing. Halliday said their relationship wasn't without difficulties, but she considered it a good one.

While her late husband would sometimes question certain things, such as the need for lifecycle events, their children were exposed to a Jewish upbringing. Halliday's three children have all been to Israel, including volunteering on a kibbutz and in the Israel Defense Forces, and two of them attended Jewish summer camps.

For all three women, camp offered more than a summer away. Whether through a chance reunion, a shared commitment to a youth movement, or an unexpected first attraction, their relationships began in a setting where Jewish identity and community were already part of the experience.

And years later, the memories of those early days remain part of the stories they tell about the lives they built together.



Time to Rage a little awareness

>>Continued from page 9

with people of all ages, in various drug and alcohol-related situations, I have learnt never to be too afraid to call something in or get assistance if something doesn't feel right. Whether it's medical intervention, or adult guidance, even as a child.

By asking for help, you could be saving a friend's life.

If you see them acting out of character or looking unwell, dizzy or disorientated, do something about it.

According to people who have attended Rage previously, not all bouncers and bartenders have the best intentions. Bartenders can spike drinks. "Some bouncers aren't interested in assisting when kids are passed out and some are left lying alone on the ground," one girl said.

Another commented, "When going home at the end of the night, ensure that you get into the right transport" as there have been instances of people herded into the wrong taxis and not allowed out. Frightening, but these things happen.

The Rage Festival puts a great amount of effort into keeping things safe. It provides medical assistance, the Red Frogs peer assistance service, and the Rage Rides Emergency line. Both parents and children must equip themselves with the relevant information on the festival website.

As a founder and representative of Dan's Tribe, a social support group for Jews in recovery, my message is that experimentation is nothing new. It is age appropriate. The biggest tool we have is educating children and giving them the skills to deal with difficult or dangerous situations.

My key tips for youngsters going on Rage are:

- Never go anywhere alone.
- Protect your drinks.
- Know the warning signs of being drugged – what you might feel.
- Understand the dangers of mixing drugs and alcohol (and this includes psychiatric meds) – one can even have a seizure or become unconscious.
- Never leave an intoxicated friend alone.
- Be careful whom you trust.
- Understand consent. No means no!
- Always keep your phone charged, accessible, and safe.
- Arrange all transport in advance and ensure your driver is sober.
- Be mindful of social media and what you post.
- Don't feel pressured into doing something – under the influence, one is easily impressionable.
- Know when to ask for help.
- Always have a meeting spot with your friends.
- Save all the relevant emergency numbers.
- Try to ensure that there is always a responsible friend.
- Have a safe word with your friends!

Other tips which I believe are essential:

- Never leave a friend behind, especially if they are in a vulnerable state.
- Never accept a drink or substance from someone you don't know.
- Never get in the car with someone you don't know. Stranger Danger awareness.
- If at any point something doesn't feel right, leave!
- Always call for help if something goes wrong.
- Remember: getting help is always more important than getting into trouble.

Reach out to any of the following numbers should you need help:

Dan's Tribe 24-hour hotline: 010 140 9910 /
WhatsApp: 083 303 1271
Hatzolah Helpline: 0800 233 711
Hatzolah: 0860 100 101
Netcare 911: 082 911
Police: 10111
CSO emergency: 086 1800 018
Red Frogs: 060 733 3764
Rage Medical Emergency: 087 330 3911
Rage Rides Emergency: 072 363 8780

- *Stasia Behr is a founder of Dan's Tribe, the Jewish addiction recovery programme.*

A column of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies

Seventy reasons for optimism



ABOVE BOARD
Karen Milner

There's a familiar refrain in communal life that young people are less involved than they used to be, that leadership is thinning out, and that the next generation will be harder to reach. This is not our experience.

Together with South African Jewish Board of Deputies (SAJBD) national director Wendy Kahn and our political and university liaison, Gabi Farber Cohen, I attended a session of the South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS) as it began planning and setting its strategy for next year. Students came from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), the University of Johannesburg, the University of Pretoria, and several private institutions. The room was full of ideas, passion, and a good deal of humour.

The new SAUJS chair, Jodan Sweidan, told us that more than 70 students have volunteered this year. That is 70 young people who, on top of lectures, exams, and in many cases part-time jobs, want to help organise Jewish student life for next year. It's easy to question young leadership in this country, but this tells a different story. Community, giving, volunteerism, leadership, and service are alive and well in the people who will shape South African Jewry in the years ahead.

Ruby Ichikowitz, one of the leaders of the SAJBD Gauteng Council, spoke about his own path from Wits and SAUJS into the working world. It was a good reminder that campuses are often where communal leaders are made. Sitting in on the students' strategic planning was just as instructive. They understand Jewish students and what they need, and they understand the broader university community they live and study in.

SAUJS rests on three pillars: Judaism, Zionism, and South Africa. These students don't want to look only inward. They want to engage with Jewish students and with the wider student body, and to be part of campus life rather than apart from it. After the past few years on our campuses, that takes confidence.

Education was also at the heart of another milestone. Last week, Wendy attended ORT's 90th anniversary gala dinner. The SAJBD has a long history with ORT, a remarkable organisation whose projects have made a real difference to education in our country and, more recently, within our own community through the ORT Jet initiatives. Wendy tells me the highlight of the evening was hearing directly from people who have benefited from ORT's programmes over the years. Five young students presented their robotics project with a confidence and knowledge that would put many adults to shame. Happy birthday to ORT. May you continue this wonderful contribution for many years to come.

Next week, *machanot* begin. Over the past year we've had the privilege of working closely with the leadership of our youth movements, and I have seen in them the same seriousness and sense of responsibility that filled the SAUJS room. To every *madrich* and *madricha* giving up their summer to look after our children, thank you. We wish you a safe and memorable *machaneh*.

I am so proud that our young people are showing up and our organisations like SAUJS, ORT, and our youth movements give them somewhere to do it. Additionally, SAUJS has a seat on our national executive council and our regional boards, and attends our council meetings. We have reason to be positive, and to look toward the future with a sense of excitement.

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

Please send POP



INNER VOICE
Howard Feldman

I didn't realise that being an adult meant spending half your day sending proof of payment and the other half turning perfectly good documents into PDFs for people who need them that way. I thought there would be more driving around, wind in my hair, with the radio on. Occasionally there is. Usually I'm on my way to a place where I have to leave the car and work out how to get home.

There's a lovely moment just after you've paid for something when you think you've paid for it. It's brief, but I enjoy it. Then comes the WhatsApp. "Please send POP."

The "please" suggests I have a choice. I know how much I've paid. They know how much they've asked me to pay. Somewhere between us is a bank that knows both things. And somehow I'm the one who has to introduce everybody.

PDFing is a different skill. You can send a photograph of a document in which every word is legible, and someone will ask for it as a PDF. So you put the photograph inside a PDF and send it back. The same words are legible. The same bit of kitchen counter is visible in the corner. At this point I feel the kitchen counter should also sign. Everyone is happy. Until they ask you to make it smaller.

And then there's proof of residence. It's one thing to know where you live. It's another to find a document that knows where you live and was printed recently enough to be believed.

That's usually when my computer asks if now would be a good time to install an update. I've been telling it "later" for so long that I'm starting to take its persistence personally. Although I have to admire its optimism. It seems to think I'm about to find myself at my desk with nothing to do for 20 minutes.

Then there are passwords. I have run out of children, birth dates, and anniversaries. I could cancel a subscription, but to do that I'd have to remember which email address I was using in 2019. And the worst thing about clicking "Forgot password" is coming up with something you're absolutely certain you've never used before, only to be told it's your current password.

Adulthood is also knowing where we are in our medical aid payment gap, how we got there, and what has to happen before we're out of it. I'd quite like a little map. "You are here", with a red dot somewhere between the pharmacy and the dentist.

Then there are my friends who seem to fly to Cape Town for the price of a toasted cheese because they walked briskly in August. I walk too. Somehow I still pay more for the flight than the person sitting next to me, and he looks like he has at least two toasted cheeses.

As a child, I was particularly taken with the idea that nobody could make adults do homework. I see now why they were so insistent that I write my name at the top of every page. They knew what was coming.

Just before lunch, a WhatsApp comes in. "Please resend POP." I've already sent it, so I scroll up to find it. While I'm there, I notice that the previous message is from me.

"Please resend invoice."

Between us, we could keep this going until one of us dies. At which point the other will need a copy of the death certificate. In PDF, please. Proof of residence no longer required.



Levin still shepherding cricketing talent

LUKE ALFRED

There can be precious few in the Johannesburg cricket fraternity who don't know of Jeff Levin. Maybe they've played against him, or possibly their son (or daughter) has been coached by him; he could just be a familiar face you see wherever cricket is played and watched. Whichever way you look at it, Levin is indispensably a feature of Joburg cricket life. An institution.

Born in Middelburg in Mpumalanga, Levin spent time at Johannesburg's King Edward VII School before finally matriculating from Greenside High in 1986. After school he drifted to Pirates and, although he was a fine squash player, he also enjoyed playing and watching cricket.

It was the time of good Pirates teams, with players like Steven Jack, Grant Elliott, and Michael Lumb in the saddle. The first team was coached by Michael's dad, Richard, Geoff Boycott's former opening partner at Yorkshire, and the sport pulled Levin into its gravitational field.

"I remember watching the Pirates first team playing in the early 1990s and thinking I'd like to get involved more and maybe get a few of my coaching badges," he says. "There were some really good players there at the time, including the England swing bowler Matthew Hoggard. It really started happening for me when I closed down my electrical business in 2002 and that coincided with me being chosen as a liaison officer for the touring Sri Lankans to South Africa that season."

The Sri Lankans were back for the World Cup the following year and Levin was getting regular gigs as either a liaison officer or baggage master. The Sri Lankans were scandalously talented, including Mahela Jayawardene, Kumar Sangakkara, Sanath Jayasuriya, and Muttiah Muralitharan.

"Murali always used to wind me up about the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the food poisoning incident with the All Blacks on the eve of the final," he says. "He always wanted to know if 'Suzie' would come into the picture if the Sri Lankans ever got into the cricket final." "Suzie" was the alleged waitress said to have poisoned the rugby players' drinks.

It transpired that Sri Lanka's match with South Africa was fatally dramatic – but not perhaps in the ways that Murali might have envisaged. South Africa played Sri Lanka at Kingsmead in a rain-affected must-win encounter, with twelfth man Nicky Boje being prevented from smuggling a message onto the field to tell Mark Boucher he needed to score one extra run on the Duckworth-Lewis table.

"I remember Boucher blocking and Russel Arnold immediately grabbing the ball and putting it into his pocket – all the Sri Lankan boys knew they needed one extra run."

Sri Lanka reached the semi-finals of the 2003 competition, facing Australia. They lost, but Levin has fond memories of that – and later – Aussie sides to South Africa. "They were the team that I really enjoyed travelling with," says Levin. "They knew what they wanted and they knew how to take care of themselves. I was always included in team meetings from the very beginning. David Warner was one of my favourites. He could be a bit of a hooligan off the field but when you got to know him, he couldn't have been more generous."

Levin understands the current bloodletting over "Sandpapergate" at Newlands in 2018 in simple terms. "I just think some guys have split and that some guys are trying to protect the sanctity of the changeroom," he says. "This has just snowballed with the publication of Usman Khawaja's autobiography. They should have dealt with this properly in the first place."

He played the liaison and baggage master role from 2002 to 2013, but also had time to concentrate on his coaching, which is characterised more than anything else by calm, steady encouragement. He says no one goes out to do badly and it's best to remain non-judgemental without appearing to be too easy-going.

So, what did he learn from all the touring teams he got close to? "There's no trick," he says. "I just realised that the really good players do the basics for longer and at a higher intensity."

After being first team coach at a happy Wanderers for 11 years, he resigned in 2022 to take up the position of College Professional under Dave Nosworthy at St David's


Jeff Levin and former Australian opening batter and coach Justin Langer

Marist Inanda. The job has brought him into contact with the young left-handed batter Jason Rowles, who wrote his last matric exam on the day this interview was being conducted.

"There's no doubt that Jason is one of the most talented young players I've ever seen and I've seen a few. He works hard for it. I can only hope that now Albie Morkel has spotted him for the Joburg Super Kings in the SA20 he's well taken care of and he kicks on after school. We don't want a Lhuan-dre Pretorius situation where he's lost to the province."

We tend to think of schools in terms of the talent they produce but that's not the beginning and end of Levin's brief. He says that St David's now regularly puts out 13 teams, which can cause headaches as far as arranging fixtures with similarly sized schools are concerned. Then again, it's a good position to be in. Cricket at the school is in rude health. It means Levin is doing a good job.

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