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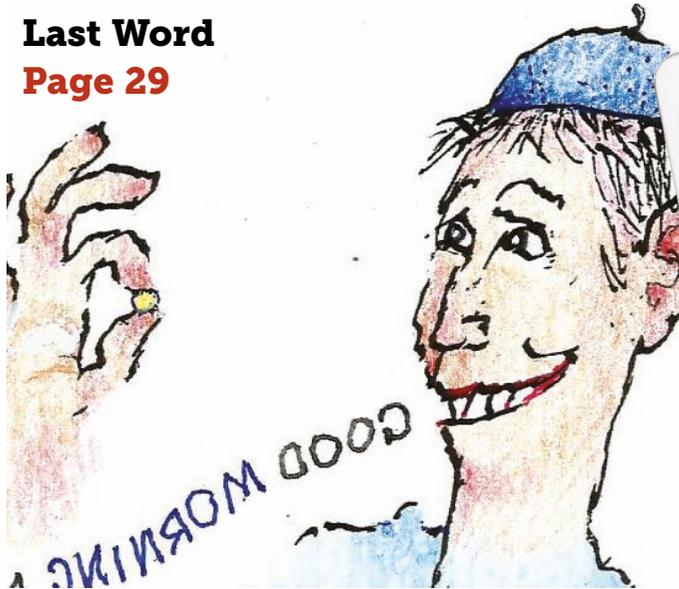
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# Letters

## Wise up to the graft, eThekweni

ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY IS TOO BUSY buying up Rainbow Chicken farms with ratepayers' money to sweat the "small" stuff, such as the growing mafia extorting payoffs from the contractors on every second construction site, as described in "KZN's growing extortion mafia", (*nose211*).

**Jenny**  
Via Twitter

## Airport bungle ANC-style

IN *NOSE211* YOU REPORT THAT ANC politicians forced the Airports Company of South Africa (Acsa) to build King Shaka International Airport without a feasibility study and against all commercial logic. Isn't that how all @MYANC planning is done?

**Herbert du Plessis**  
Via Twitter

■ AND IT'S A NIGHTMARE TO GET TO KING Shaka International Airport. I have to allow at least four hours to travel from Pietermaritzburg to get there just in time for a flight.

**Linda Barron**  
Pietermaritzburg

## Jail food emits whiff of nostalgia

IT WAS WITH A LOT OF NOSTALGIA THAT I read the article "Out to Lunch" (*nose210*). In about 1976, I played in an Under-16 inter-provincial baseball tournament in Pretoria. Our accommodation was provided at Voortrekkerhoogte – as the military base was then known – and all our meals were enjoyed at Pretoria Central Prison.

We rated the food to be of a really high standard – based on our own home-style cooking experiences. As youngsters, we all had our own take on what the prisoners who were preparing and serving the food to us, were in jail for – escalating up to the chef being a murderer! (We never got to know exactly for which crimes they were incarcerated.)

Thanks for the note, Trudie, we

will take a trip to Pollsmoor Prison's Idlanathi eatery to see if it compares with my memories of 1976.

**John Binns**  
Cape Town

## Health crippled by corruption

LAST MONTH (*NOSE211*) YOU QUOTED THE president of the Health Professions Council, Dr Kgosi Letlape, describing medical aid schemes as "a crime against humanity". No, my dear colleague, it's not "the introduction of the medical schemes" that brought the health service to its knees. It is the maladministration and corruption of the Department of Health.

The minister is hell-bent on his NHI, which he seems to think is a magic wand that will fix all health services. He doesn't seem to know that it works the other way round, namely, first fix state hospitals, clinics and medical faculties. Only then can you think of introducing something like an NHI.

While the NHI is currently at the white paper stage, it's as well to remember that the most useful white paper comes in rolls, and this one is not even double ply. His NHI plans are destined to go the same route as the nuclear deal.

Meanwhile, I must congratulate Dr Letlape on making the right choice for the care of his relative – one of those dastardly private hospitals.

**Docbarries**  
Somerset West

## Fairer mode of capitalism please

IN AUGUST 2014 *POLITICSWEB* PUBLISHED a speech delivered in Parliament by PAC member Khanyisile Tshabalala, under the headline "Together the ANC and EFF can put foreign white monopoly capital in its place". Are any journalists in South Africa pursuing some of the facts mentioned in the article, such as: "Lonmin pays rock drill operators an equivalent of R80,000 p/m in Australia, but for the same work in Marikana, Lonmin is refusing to pay a mere R12,500!"?

Similarly, are any journalists looking at both the pros and cons of finance minister Malusi Gigaba's advisor, Professor Christopher Malikane's arguments?

Our training in business and our mindsets have us stuck looking at particular modes of capitalism (capital flows via stock that ends up being owned by an elite – black, white, Asian, Chinese etc – and governments not willing to "upset" these capitalists for fear of being downgraded).

But investigative journalists surely must evaluate different modes of capitalism against one another? For example, look into the Nordic mode of capitalism that has resulted in a more egalitarian society.

We seem to keep taking the same old angle with the same old underlying assumptions. It is ironic seeing Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa talking to the Black Business Council, many of whose members trained at MBA schools that follow the assumptions of particular capitalist models (eg stocks).

Are there any investigative journalists looking into how best to get the masses to share in the country's mineral wealth and land – and still have a mutually beneficial relationship with those who control the stocks and underlying minerals etc?

**Colin Reddy**  
Johannesburg

*Your faith in investigative journalists is, in this case, misplaced. Other than fact-checking, investigative journalists are, with rare exceptions, no better qualified than you are to take on the mammoth task of redesigning how the economy of the world works. It is a subject that for some time has been exercising the minds of economists and philosophers of goodwill around the globe. Many of them believe, like you, that an entirely fresh approach is required. The problem is better and better understood, but the solution remains elusive or, is resisted by vested interests. – Ed.*

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## Ideas are non-racial

**K**NOWLEDGE – SCIENCE – AND IDEAS (even the bad ones) travel, and “belong” exclusively to no race, nation or religion. Those who make scientific “discoveries” or formulate new ideas invariably find, if they bother to look, that they are standing on the shoulders of scientists and thinkers who have gone before them.

This month a contributor goes back 100 years to investigate the origins of a famous speech, still often quoted, by ANC founder-member Pixley Seme, only to find that good, worthy ideas about the liberation of black Africa were not exclusive to black people, even then.

Another contributor introduces *Noseweek* readers to a smartly produced magazine published online from Syria – in sophisticated, correct English – by ISIS. Yes, that most horrifying of terror organisations. The contrast between the slick presentation and the utterly grotesque content raised the question: Is this for real? A web search reveals that the publication’s authenticity is accepted by major, generally reputable, media.

In April, *CNN* reported that in the most recent online edition of *Rumiyah*, the name of the prior chief editor of *Rumiyah* and its predecessor *Dabiq* was revealed – and that he had been killed in Syria in January. He appears to have been a Syrian-American who grew up in Boston. Other publications that accept the status of *Rumiyah*/*Dabiq* without scepticism include *The Economist*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Atlantic*.

So if it is “black ops”, then not just *Noseweek* but many reputable major global media sources have been duped.

● The year 2017 marks a decade since Gold Fields acquired South Deep, the world’s deepest gold mine, at a cost of \$3 billion. Situated west of Johannesburg, so far, it has proved to be probably the world’s most costly – and least profitable – mine to run, yet it is sold to investors year after year with the promise of fabulous profits to come.

Back in August 2016 (*nose*192), the late Barry Sergeant wrote: “News from the 2015 annual report is that Gold Fields now plans to – finally – ‘deliver’ South Deep to cash break-even by end-2016 and communicate a long-term plan by early 2017”. Not without reason, he then posed

the question: “When this also flops will heads roll?” Sergeant rated South Deep the biggest scam in gold mining history:

“In the latest year of sham, the Gold Fields board and its top executives were remunerated to the tune of R187 million for 2015. This takes the total for the con-artist scions... to more than R1 billion since Nick Holland took the CEO seat in May 2008. For the immense pain of fanning one of the tallest stories in gold mining history, Holland has pocketed close to R200m...”

Lo and behold, at the end of April this year, Martin Creamer reported in *Mining Weekly* that: “Quarter-on-quarter gold production at the South Deep mine fell 43% in the first three months of 2017, when costs soared 56%... All-in costs at the mechanised mine rose to a high level of \$1,821 per ounce...”

“Former De Beers Consolidated Mines executive Martin Preece, who has had extensive experience in massive mechanised underground mining, has been appointed Gold Fields executive VP South Africa, effective from May 2.

“We believe his experience will help drive South Deep to become an efficient, sustainable mechanised mine,” said Holland in a release to *Mining Weekly Online*. Hope springs eternal... or is it simply a case of “Why stop a good scam that still works?”

● The contingency fee agreements in terms of which attorney A L “Tony” Mostert and his law firm earned an estimated R250m as curator and legal advisor of all the pension funds stripped of “surpluses” by means of the notorious “Gavalas option” scheme, were ruled illegal by Judge Neil Tuchten in the High Court, Pretoria, in May.

The case involved only the contingency agreement Mostert concluded with the Financial Services Board in 2006 in relation to the Sable Pension Fund.

Mostert has been given three months to account for his fees “in accordance with the norms of the attorneys profession”, and to refund to the pension fund the excess above that fee rate which he has collected as a “contingency” fee-plus-interest. At a rough calculation, it is estimated that he could be required to refund as much as R40m. More about this next month. – **The Editor.**

## Durban town planning 'captured'

**T**HE FATE OF THE GARGANTUAN multi-million-rand luxury apartment block on Durban's Berea that was ordered to be torn down by the KwaZulu-Natal High Court in June 2015 (*nose190*) still hangs in the balance. The demolition order for the part-built nine-storey structure has been taken on appeal to the Supreme Court of Appeal by the developer, Serengeti Rise Industries, supported by the eThekwin Metro Council which irregularly granted permission. The Council faces a huge damages claim should the building have to be demolished.

The appeal was argued in the SCA on 10 May, with lawyers for the neighbouring residents opposing.

In their heads of argument the applicants admitted that the building was constructed illegally but claim the demolition order was unfair and unjust – while the neighbours on the other hand were just short of wanting to provide the dynamite sticks to reclaim their views of the cityscape, ocean and Greyville Racecourse.

In the respondents' heads of argument presented by Nazeer Cassim SC they maintained that "the conduct of both appellants is highly irregular and may well warrant criminal investigation".

"The town planning section of this Municipality has been captured... The court cannot countenance unlawful and deceptive conduct [*by Serengeti*] and thereafter furnish it with an opportunity to remedy the difficulties in which it finds itself by referring the issue of rezoning back to the Municipality. [*Serengeti*] is the architect of its own misfortune and must bear the consequences," said Cassim.

The half-built nine-storey building was supposed to comprise 12 luxury apartments complete with a car lift. Serengeti claims it has already spent R61m on the project.

However since the Durban court ruling in 2015 all work has stopped

at 347 Currie Rd, Musgrave.

The aggrieved neighbours to the "monstrosity" had successfully convinced Judge Esther Steyn that they were deceived by both the city and the developer who, instead of making information available to them, went to extraordinary lengths to keep their plans secret.

At the heart of the dispute is that the site's zoning was changed from a GR1 code covering 1,860m<sup>2</sup> to a GR5 which allowed the building's footprint to cover 9,786m<sup>2</sup> without proper consultation. A further deviation to the plans was also approved without neighbours being served any notice.

In August 2010 Serengeti's four-storey plans were approved by council. Then in December 2011 the ANC-led majority council approved a zone-change for the same development, to GR5. The developer then submitted a deviation plan, seeking to increase the building's bulk as approved on 6 March 2014. In the interim, it had gone ahead without approved plans. By 18 March a two-storey structure, with foundations to support eight storeys, had been completed.

Judge Steyn found that the manner in which the city handled the development's irregular construction was no error and that the rezoning was "not achieved by due process, nor was the rezoning in accordance with the applicable law". She said the Durban municipality was compromised and therefore they couldn't be trusted to fix their mess without bias. Judge Steyn said this had left her no choice but to order the building be torn down.

Acting for Serengeti on appeal, Chris Loxton SC said the judge had erred and usurped the city's authority.

Loxton said even though Serengeti had informed the Durban court of proposals to "remedy the illegal structures", Serengeti maintained that they did "not act in contravention of any law or approval" as the "approvals... were valid at the time".

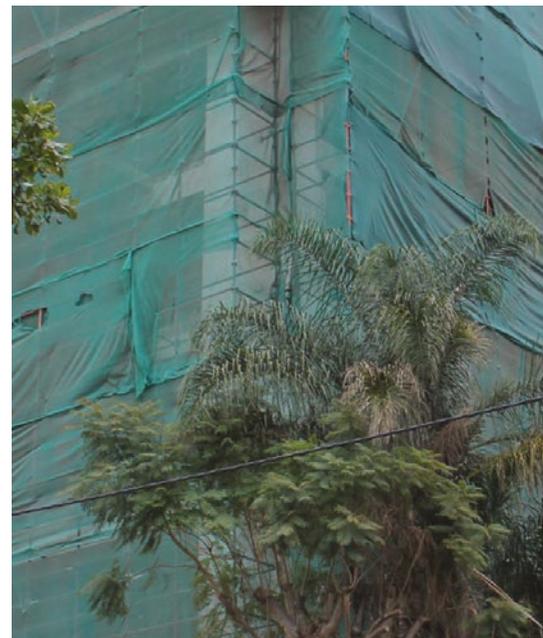
"In consequence, the construction of the building on the properties was prima facie lawful when undertaken", said Loxton.

Loxton said if the court still believed the approvals were irregular then the city should start the process again for approval to be obtained.

Loxton said Judge Steyn had failed to prove why the building must be demolished.

eThekwin Metro described Judge Steyn's ruling as "fundamentally mistaken". While the city admitted that proper notice of the rezoning was not given and sections of the Building Standards Act were not complied with, Judge Steyn "ought to have referred the matter back to eThekwin for reconsideration and proper notice as required by the Ordinance".

eThekwin counsel Gilbert Marcus SC said the respondents had been aware of the rezoning in May 2010 and, in any event, as of April 2013 should have seen that the building "going up before their eyes was... clearly outside the constraints of a prior GR1 zoning approval."



Calling the demolition order “draconian” Marcus said even if the deviation order and rezoning decision were invalid the court “failed to pay any regard to the rights and interests of the parties who had purchased units in the building”, contractors, and the extent of the work done.

The city asked for the appeal to be upheld and for the court to allow the city to review the approval of the building plans.

But Cassim said the city’s hands were “tainted” for failing “to exercise supervision over the development”. He said city officials had “perpetuated the illusion that a four-storey development was contemplated” and frustrated access to plans and to the documents required by the respondents.

“[The developer] even before making the application for rezoning attempted to sell apartments off-plan the size and extent of which were clearly not possible on a GR1 zoning. The spectre of collusion is a very real one.

“The prejudice to residents of the surrounding area and the broader environmental impact of a monstrous development far outweighs the limited prejudice which twelve affluent owners of these over-extravagant units stand to suffer,” said Cassim.

Besides asking the court to uphold the High Court order, Cassim asked that a time frame be mandated for the building to be torn down. – **Jonathan Erasmus ■**



## Feel the value

**I**N NOSE211 IT WAS REPORTED THAT the DA-led City of Johannesburg appeared to have embraced a company they once labelled an ANC “crony” business by generously awarding them a R99-million contract just two months after taking office.

eValuations Enhanced Property Appraisals (*noses202&203*) won the tender contest to value the city’s 900,000- plus properties for the 2018 General Valuation Roll. These valuations are used to determine the monthly municipal rates payable by property owners.

Information on just how the contract came to be awarded is hard to come by. The city denied *Noseweek’s* Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) application to review the bidding process. Yet when asked for comment, the city’s communications office suggested *Noseweek* submit a PAIA application!

*Noseweek* has since successfully appealed their refusal.

In a letter received on Freedom Day from the office of Council Speaker Vasco da Gama, he said the city’s refusal had been “overruled and set aside” and that *Noseweek* would be granted access to “the information requested”. *Noseweek* will report on the contents in due course.

The first tender, for which eValuations provided the third-lowest bid, was mysteriously canned and when a second tender invitation was issued (which was in no material way different to the first) eValuations managed to shave R67 million off their price to come in with the lowest bids. The tender closed two days before the 2016 local elections – which the ANC in Johannesburg lost. The tender was still to be awarded.

Despite being offered ample time, the City failed to reply to *Noseweek’s* questions before our last article, only responding after our print deadline.

Mayor Herman Mashaba’s press officer Luyanda Mfeka said in the statement:

“Please note that the service provider appointed to compile the General Valuation (GV) Roll 2018 is eValuations Enhanced Property Appraisals (Pty) Ltd. They were appointed through a competitive bidding process. The tender number for this work was A683, which was a replacement of tender A654. A654 was cancelled due to its validity period having expired.

“Indeed we were not comfortable with the work done by the service provider in compiling the GV Roll 2013. When the new administration took office, the tender process had already begun...

“The Executive Adjudication Committee approved the appointment on 4 October 2016 upon receiving the Bid Evaluation Committee recommendations which were based on functionality and pricing.

“It is also worth noting that the quality of the GV Roll 2013 was also compromised due to the late appointment of a service provider. This was exacerbated by the capacity constraints within the Valuations Department to perform adequate quality assurances. The service provider was given only eight months to compile GV Roll 2013.

“We had to put the interests of residents first by allowing the process to stay on track in terms of the timelines. We are also putting in place adequate risk mitigating interventions to ensure that deliverables of adequate quality are produced. We are improving the capacity of the Valuations Department and also putting together a supplementary valuations panel.

“Forensic investigations have been conducted in the Property Unit, some of which were reported on in the media. All these interventions are aimed at addressing the concerns that we had.” – **Jonathan Erasmus ■**

# JCI now the most corrupt private sector company in SA

## Rapacious, financially illiterate lawyers clean out Randgold's war chest

**O**N NUMEROUS PREVIOUS OCCASIONS *Noseweek* has reported on how Randgold & Exploration Company (Randgold), a simple investment holding company listed on the JSE and formerly on the Nasdaq in New York, was pillaged of billions of rands over 1999 to 2005 by JCI (Brett Kebble's mothership), without detection by the then board of directors, who were wilfully blind to the destruction in value, and its careless independent auditors, who had easily been hoodwinked.

Once discovered, Randgold – had it been under independent control – would surely, as a matter of extreme urgency, have completed a forensic investigation and then immediately issued summons against the thief (JCI), the recipients of the proceeds of the thefts and other wrongdoers. If JCI was unable to pay the claims, it would have been liquidated and an inquiry in terms of Section 417 of the Companies Act would have ensued.

The liquidation of JCI would have been too ghastly to contemplate for Investec because it had received and sold 5.46 million Randgold Resources shares that JCI had stolen from Randgold and the bank needed JCI to carry on funding Western Areas. Hence it provided a R460 million loan to JCI in August 2005. Obviously the loan could have been made to Randgold, but that would not have buried the claims against Investec, arising from the receipt of the stolen shares.

The Randgold forensic team, which was appointed with a limited mandate by way of an unsigned appointment letter, completed their initial investigations between 14

October 2005 and 14 March 2006. In June 2006 the forensic team formulated Randgold's claims against JCI for presentation to the mediators who had been appointed in April 2006. This provided Randgold's management and the legal team with a complete foundation to pursue litigation against JCI, the recipients of the proceeds of the thefts and other wrongdoers.

The cornerstone action, the issuing of the summons against JCI, was never taken, albeit that it was prepared prior to August 2008 – being the date when the claims would prescribe if no summons had been issued.

Instead, Investec reconstituted and thereby took control of the boards of both the thief (JCI) and the victim (Randgold) – by appointing an Investec executive as chairman of both companies, Kebble's stockbroker as CEO of both companies, and Western Areas' former FD as FD of both companies. This conflicted control persisted until July 2008 by which time Randgold's ef-

forts to recover its damages had been irretrievably compromised.

During this period, when Randgold's board was controlled by Investec appointees, it not only agreed to an absurd pseudo mediation process (how could Randgold mediate with the party that had robbed it almost into extinction?) but proposed an absurd merger between Randgold and JCI, whereby the insolvent thief (JCI) would walk away with 22% of the enlarged Randgold. The mediators wrote on 27 February 2007: "Having considered the various Randgold claims and taking account the areas of agreement and disagreement in relation to the underlying cash flows, it appears to us that the value of sustainable Randgold claims might well exceed the net asset value of JCI."

In March 2008 whilst the Randgold board was still controlled by Investec, and thereafter until April 2014, the Randgold legal team have pursued the deep pockets of the insurers of the hoodwinked auditors of Randgold. The cheek of this is almost incomprehensible considering the claims Randgold's board has failed to pursue, but it did generate millions in fees for the very nasty lawyers, whose sole objective appears to be to transfer the remaining resources of Randgold to their own bank accounts.

During the period when Randgold's board was controlled by Investec appointees no summonses were issued against the recipients. Shortly after the resignation in July 2008 of the then-chairman and the then-CEO of Randgold, summonses were issued, just in time to interrupt prescription, against Investec and Western Areas –

**THE FIRST RULE OF FIGHT CLUB IS:  
YOU DO NOT TALK ABOUT FIGHT CLUB.  
THE SECOND RULE OF FIGHT CLUB IS:  
YOU DO NOT TALK ABOUT FIGHT CLUB.**



but not against JCI which clearly was royal game.

The absurd merger proposal failed in April 2009, some three years after Randgold's forensic reports had become available.

Randgold's legal team have spent in excess of ten years at huge cost investigating what had happened to Randgold over 1999 to 2005. This after Randgold's forensic team completed their investigations by March 2006, the findings of which have never been disputed, and had thus provided the legal team with a complete foundation to pursue litigation against JCI, the recipients of the proceeds of the thefts and other wrongdoers.

Overreaching lawyers in South Africa have a penchant for duplicating preparation time for litigation primarily due to (1) rabid greed, and (2) an inability to grasp even the most simple financial transactions, let alone a complex maze of irregular/fraudulent transactions. They are helpless without the support of Chartered Accountants who they actually despise and consider bottom feeders.

A significant portion of the 2008 legal and forensic fees was spent on preparing huge claims against the thief (JCI) that never saw the light of day as no summons was ever issued. The unconverted-to-a-summons-claims against JCI were settled in 2010 for an amount determined by what JCI could pay without going insolvent. The settlement was for <4% of the amount claimed.

Randgold's most valuable claim, that against Gold Fields Operations (formerly Western Areas), has been slow-tracked and was only resuscitated in April 2014 after the multi-billion-rand claim against PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) issued six years earlier in March 2008, had been settled for R150 million. However, as part of the 2010 settlement between JCI and Randgold an indemnity was issued to protect JCI, which has reduced the value of Randgold's claim against Gold Fields Operations significantly if not completely.

The other valuable claims – those against Investec and Investec UK – were squashed in 2010 as part of an unfavourable JCI settlement that triggered bonuses to Randgold's CEO and FD.

RANDGOLD'S LEGAL AND FORENSIC FEES				
	Legal fees	Forensic*	Total	Main legal activities
2006	R11 341 000	R12 637 000	R23 978 000	Claims vs Kebble; arbitration
2007	R11 716 000	R5 635 000	R17 351 000	Fruitless arbitration; merger
2008	R20 729 000	R9 190 000	R29 919 000	Merger; summonses vs auditors, WAR (now Gold Fields Ops), Investec
2009	R17 430 000	R7 415 000	R24 845 000	Merger abandoned; claim vs auditors
2010	R14 017 000	R8 184 000	R22 201 000	Settlement with JCI
2011	R8 463 000	R2 062 000	R10 525 000	Claim against auditors
2012	R14 798 000	R4 592 000	R19 390 000	Claim against auditors
2013	R17 946 000	R2 628 000	R20 574 000	Claim against auditors
2014	R11 385 000	R2 793 000	R14 178 000	Auditors settled; 2008 claim vs GFO
2015	R9 089 000	R2 486 000	R11 575 000	Claim against GFO
2016	R15 536 000	R2 795 000	R18 331 000	Claim against GFO
	<b>R152 450 000</b>	<b>R60 417 000</b>	<b>R212 867 000</b>	
* includes fees paid to the mediators				

Over the period 2005 to 2016 four executives have received compensation totalling R141m from JCI and Randgold: the conflicted Peter Gray R55m (from JCI over 2005 to 2016 and from Randgold over 2005 to 2008), Marais Steyn R42m (from Randgold over 2006 to 2016), Les Maxwell R25m (from JCI over 2008 to 2013) and the conflicted Chris Lamprecht R19m (over 2005 and 2006, from both JCI and Randgold). In spite of this exorbitant remuneration, the shareholders of the victim and the thief have been left high and dry.

Massive frauds against the JSE and the Nasdaq have not been pursued by either the Financial Services Board (FSB) or the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) in the USA. The toothless FSB in South Africa has simply buried the matter, probably due to a combination of sheer incompetence and political machinations. The SEC chairman simply said it was primarily a local (South African) matter and that the authorities in SA should deal with it. The SA stockbroking member of the JSE that facilitated the massive sale of a major part of Randgold's valuable portfolio of listed assets with the full knowledge of the fraud being committed, wasn't even censured by the FSB or the JSE. Inexplicably they continued to be a member of the JSE.

Legal fees spent by Randgold to date in pursuing incidental "wrongdoers" could have (and should have) been more wisely expended on pursuing the

true wrongdoers, including liquidating JCI in 2006.

A significant part of the legal expenses over 2006 to 2016 of both Randgold and JCI (estimated at more than R100m), would probably have been saved. The cost of the mediators, estimated at more than R10m would also not have been incurred. Not only would the liquidation of JCI have resulted in huge cost savings, it would also have ensured the equitable treatment of Randgold. The processes followed resulted in a huge transfer of value from Randgold to JCI, Investec and Western Areas.

Randgold has since settled with JCI and Investec on hugely unfavourable terms and has effectively neutered its multi-billion-rand claims against Western Areas by issuing an indemnity (to JCI).

JCI, a once venerable mining house, is today a non-operational company with dirty hands. It is without a doubt the most corrupt company in the private sector of South Africa and should simply not be in existence today. It is incapable of producing audited group financial statements, having not published full annual financial statements after 2010. It simply exists to protect the true wrongdoers in this saga, fully supported by the blood-sucking legal fraternity.

Is this how business, at the highest level, operates in South Africa today? And we complain about a criminal government? ■

# Anti-fracking forces triumph again

**V**ICTORIES ARE ROLLING IN FOR THE anti-fracking lobby in KwaZulu-Natal. State entities along with murky prospectors have attempted to bulldoze through exploration rights, deliberately breaking the law and making it difficult for the public to object.

Despite the revolving door access to the state mining authority enjoyed by corporate miners, they have repeatedly been defeated by activists and farmers who know their rights and in May won yet another round in the Western Cape High Court.

Judge DV Dlodlo was persuaded by Normandien Farms – which runs both timber operations and a R40-million water-bottling plant on its farm near Newcastle – to stop all exploration in an 800,000-hectare area, conducted by Cape-based Rhino Oil and Gas Exploration South Africa (Pty) Ltd.

The relief was sought against the Petroleum Agency of South Africa (Pasa), responsible for the promotion of petroleum exploration and exploitation, the Minister of Mineral Resources, and Rhino Oil and Gas, because Pasa ignored key components of the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA).

The interdict means Pasa and Rhino will need to restart the application process, setting back Rhino's projected timetable by at least six months.

The exploration right sought by Rhino would allow the company to drill for hydro-carbon deposits which could, years later, lead to mining.

Pasa had accepted Rhino's right to explore on 15 April 2016. The agency was then required to inform the affected landowners within 14 days of this acceptance to give them the opportunity to raise any objections. Instead, Pasa took 20 days to do so. Pasa then claimed it had faxed notices to be displayed at the magistrates' courts in all

**By Jonathan Erasmus**

six affected districts. But this was a lie. Some areas received the documents but lacked key documentation identifying the affected properties. Others got nothing at all.

When Normandien Farms challenged Pasa to prove they had informed the landowners, on 21 December 2016 they quietly published a notice of acceptance in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Gazette.

"This publication was clearly an after-thought on the part of Pasa itself [and] constitutes an illegality. [The act] states... that the publication must take place within 14 days after the acceptance of the application for an Exploration Right. Pasa has therefore committed an illegal act," said Dlodlo.

"I am of the view that a clear right for the interdict has been established by virtue of the undisputed failure to comply with [the act]," said Dlodlo.

This is the third victory for the KwaZulu-Natal farming community, winning purely on the basis that the prospective frackers and state officials had not played by the rules. In November 2016 legal action by farmers brought the ambitions of SunguSungu Gas to a standstill. As a result, the company withdrew its bid entirely to explore 565,000ha. This was followed by Motuane Energy, which applied to explore 77,490ha, but withdrew after legal action by farmers.

The structures of the exploratory companies are usually murky. The only common thread is they all seem to benefit from the revolving door between PetroSA, Pasa and other government energy parastatals and departments.

Rhino Oil and Gas is led by Patrick J Mulligan, a lawyer from Dallas, Texas. South African Phillip Steyn is the COO. The company is set up in two tax havens, with corporate headquarters



**Phillip Steyn, COO of Rhino Oil & Gas**

in the British Virgin Islands and in Nevada, a US-based tax haven. Their BEE partners comprise former PetroSA executives Sastri Gounden and Everton September. September was fingered in the 2013 OilGate scandal. They also have a business registered in the Netherlands – another tax haven.

SunguSungu's Joburg-based owner Thabang Khomo is a regular on the exploratory mining circuit. His junior partner is geophysicist Solomon Lephoto, a former PetroSA employee. *Noseweek* is aware they have been actively looking for investors.

Motuane Energy's only director is Peter Price, a consultant engineer who has spent the latter part of his life bidding for foreign fracking interests. He is also part of the management team for Australian miner Challenger Energy which wants a slice of Karoo's shale gas. He represented the lobby group Onshore Petroleum Association of South Africa (Onpasa) at the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for Shale Gas Development in South Africa. Government departments were also part of SEA.

Based on the SEA outcomes, Minister of Mineral Resources Mosebenzi Zwane announced in March that fracking in the Karoo will go ahead. ■



# The big, fat Maveric con

Millions missing in crazy scam involving scores of victims. **By Jonathan Erasmus**

**A** WOMAN FROM EDENVALE CLAIMS to have permission from the World Bank, the IMF, the UN and “all those short alphabetical organisations” to launch her own country. The launch date is 1 June 2017.

If you are a South African, you are in luck, as she will be annexing parts of Johannesburg as their HQ.

And if you haven’t already begun to roll your eyes, we must tell you it is a scam – an elaborate one that has been duping South Africans for more than a decade.

Almost all the operations which feed into the grand scheme of the “country” idea start with the word “Maveric” – be it Maveric Sovereign State; Maveric Bank; Maveric Old Age Homes; Maveric Oil and Gas; and so on.

*Noseweek* knows of at least three men who have been taken for more than R7.5 million, a school principal who defrauded her school of R5,000,000 to “invest”, a security expert who raised a 40,000-strong army to protect the “country” and a farmer who has bet his pension on his farm being turned into a retirement utopia, despite his own bank manager telling him he is being scammed.

The “President” of this soon-to-be-

launched state is, in her own words, a “silly little old lady in Edenvale” called Marilyn Allen, aged 62, known to her followers as Gypsey Luongo.

Maveric Press Secretary Ursula Allen-Brown, a bona fide Sea Point-based public relations practitioner who is also the managing editor of the website *CapeInfoSA*, said the launch date was 1 June. She said *Noseweek* would eventually “apologise for calling them a scam” when the truth is revealed. She claims the president of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim, will give

the keynote address at the launch.

“We have our own bank with our own currency called Mavericks and Cents. It’s not like opening a guesthouse with three rooms. You know what I mean? This is a country we are launching,” said Allen-Brown.

The organisation’s loony website opens each page with an audio extract from either Kelly Clarkson’s pop hit *Stronger*, Shakira’s *Waka Waka*, Mozart’s *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, 2nd Movement KV-525* or the soundtrack to *Star Wars*. It also has a page dedicated to Dragon videos.

Email communication between Allen and her “bureaucrats” who call her “Madam President” end with “May the Force be with you”.

It has a national anthem based on the old South African anthem, a constitution based on the country’s 1961 constitution and a religion called “Oneism”.

Documents obtained by *Noseweek* reveal that the scamsters are in cahoots with others based in Ghana, the United Kingdom and Nigeria and use traditional money-transfer mechanisms, fake bank websites and fictitious street addresses often used in Advanced Fee Fraud, otherwise known as 419 scams.

**She said *Noseweek* would eventually ‘apologise for calling them a scam’**



**Parts of Johannesburg will be annexed as the HQ of the Sovereign State of Maveric according to its president, Marilyn Allen**

Such scams usually offer promises of wealth but need an upfront payment to make it all happen. In this case the money was always tied up in Dubai, Switzerland or London and Allen always needed an upfront payment from a willing soul for the millions, billions or trillions of dollars – depending on to whom she was speaking– to be released.

Nevertheless Allen-Brown insists: “Kings, Queens, Princes, Princesses, Emirs, Emiras, Heads of States, Prime Ministers, Presidents and Ministers of Foreign Affairs... allies and foes alike, [will] stand united for world peace at the official launch of a new country”.

In a “March 2017 press statement” sent to *Noseweek*, she said the new country is “sanctioned by UN, World Bank and a slew of major world role-players”. She said the country will be spread in enclaves across Africa and the Middle East, with “1,500 Maveric NGO Sovereign States villages” being set up to “service 90 million Maveric families (60,000 families per village).”

The statement goes further to claim that each family will receive “a two-bedroomed furnished home” and there will be “free education, free healthcare and guaranteed employment in a safe tranquil haven of peace, under the protection of Maveric military” who

will have ground-to-air missiles just in case.

“Facilities include schools, academies of learning, universities, technicians, hospitals, family clinics, shopping malls, amphitheatres, recreation centres, parks, state libraries, sports stadiums, post offices, public transport, theatres and nightclubs to fully service Maveric village people of all ages.”

And finally the press statement quotes “Gypsy Luongo, Madam President Maveric NGO Sovereign States” who says: “After building 280 homes at Orange Farm (1989) in record time (6 months), I knew that building 90 million homes and 1,500 Maveric Villages in 18 months was achievable”.

Eastern Cape resident Riaan Kolesky is one victim. He lost R1m to the scam – albeit an earlier version.

“When I was approached in 2008 we had just lost our business. I was trading in auction cars and ran two fishing boats. I was introduced by a friend. I was asked to invest in her oil and gas business. I put in US\$1,000 with promises of a tenfold return and exclusive access to feeding scheme contracts in refugee camps being funded by the UN.

“It’s the hope that captures the guys. And then you are hooked.”

Once it dawned on him he was being taken for an expensive ride, he and others who had been similarly duped put together a 160-page document (costing US\$15,000, this involved hiring investigators in the US and UK) which they handed to the Port Elizabeth SAPS.

“We ascertained she has been running since at least 2006. She was definitely involved with okes in Ghana and Dubai. We handed over a dossier to the police. We cannot understand why they haven’t made any arrests. There was ample information,” he said.

Another victim was Tom\* from Johannesburg who lost R2m. He was conned to cough up the cash on the promise of lucrative air conditioner installation and electrical maintenance contracts at Allen’s multitude of “opportunities” from refugee villages to old age homes.

“The paperwork looked legitimate from the World Bank and UN. She was a sweet-talker. The thing is, during the entire time she always lived in poverty,” said Tom.

However after forking out more and more money into her scheme, including taking out bank loans, he demanded to see his investment. Allen told him to go to Accra, Ghana.

“We arrived with Marilyn. Once at the hotel she told us all our lives were in danger and we needed to stay in the hotel. By this stage we realised that Nigerian and Ghanaian nationals were involved. When we were leaving Accra some guys who knew Marilyn pulled us over and tried to convince us to stay but we decided against it,” said Tom.

He said the whole episode spooked both him and his wife and they walked away seeing the R2m loss as “school fees”. He lost his business.

A third victim, Harry\*, was taken for between R3.5-4.5m.

“When I look back now I realise how foolish I was. I was introduced to Marilyn by Tom. She told me she wanted to start an old age home and that she was in the process of buying land in Hartbeespoort and another on the South Coast. We were invited to take part. I do dredging and I gather they wanted a marina put in. This was in 2008. She had an architect on board and a project manager called Ian Clark. From the surface it looked reputable. Then she needed money. It started off as a R50,000 loan, then R100,000, then R200,000. Eventually I was depositing money into overseas accounts. A few years later it all adds up,” said Harry.

Harry even employed her sons.

“They looked impoverished. She had no car, no food in the house and she was involved in various online relationships. I was always being told her money would be arriving ‘next week,’” said Harry.

In a twist of events Kolesky, Tom, Harry and others scammed by Allen have since gone into business together trading in oil through an offshore business in Nevis in the Caribbean.

The latest victim is security expert Eugene Halliday. With the promise of a US\$500,000 down payment, he raised an army and was given the title of “General”. But after nine months of building a database, drafting “military” budgets, trying to arrange boot-camps and creating an insignia for the uniform, he realised the deal stank.

“I never invested any money but we put a considerable amount of time and energy into the recruitment drive. I eventually contacted Marilyn’s ‘donors’ – all of whom knew nothing about her.

**‘What I have is totally real. You will sit with a big problem if you want to call me a scam artist’**

“I have since found several people who invested money and eventually walked away. Some put in their life savings, others turned down job offers. We were under the impression of providing security and dropping off food parcels. She tried to ask for money from us but thankfully we never gave her any. She kept on saying she needed US\$24,000 to clear a fine so her millions could be released,” said Halliday.

In May he opened a criminal case of fraud at Hibberdene SAPS.

Allen told *Noseweek* she plans to change her name to Gypsey Luongo “because I am going to be the president of my own country I can pick my own name”. She admitted to asking her potential citizens and business partners for the money to clear the fines. She is also working with her son, Derek Allen.

“What I have is totally real. You will sit with a big problem if you want to call me a scam artist. I have been investigated by SA Crime Intelligence, go ahead and do it.

“Everybody has investigated me and I have been cleared by FICA and the top people in the world. Make a fool of yourself.”

● Tom\* and Harry\* are not their real names. They both feel embarrassed at being duped by such a scam. ■



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# You're drinking the wrong milk

Researchers have been making alarming discoveries about dairy products. By Josh Harkinson

**W**HEN MY IN-LAWS MOVED FROM India to the United States 35 years ago, they couldn't believe the low cost and abundance of milk – until they developed digestive problems. They'll now tell you the same thing I've heard a lot of immigrants say: American milk will make you sick.

It turns out that they could have been on to something. An emerging body of research suggests that many of the 1-in-4 Americans who exhibit symptoms of lactose intolerance [*as do many South Africans*] could instead be unable to digest A1, a protein most often found in milk from the high-producing Holstein cows favoured by American and South African industrial dairies. The A1 protein is much less prevalent in milk from Jersey, Guernsey, and most Asian and African cow breeds, where, instead, the A2 protein predominates.

"We've got a huge amount of observational evidence that a lot of people can digest the A2 but not the A1," says Keith Woodford, a professor of farm

management and agribusiness at New Zealand's Lincoln University who wrote the 2007 book *Devil in the Milk: Illness, Health, and the Politics of A1 and A2 Milk*. "More than 100 studies suggest links between the A1 protein

and a whole range of health conditions – from heart disease to diabetes, to autism", Woodford says, although the evidence is far from conclusive.

Holsteins (also known as Friesian or Friesians), the most common dairy-





cow breed in the US and South Africa, typically produce A1 milk.

For more than a decade, an Auckland company called A2 Corporation has been selling a brand of A2 milk in New Zealand and Australia; it now accounts for 8% of Australia's dairy market. In 2012, A2 Corporation introduced its milk in the United Kingdom through the Tesco chain, where a two-litre bottle sells for about 18% more than conventional milk.

But critics write off the success of A2 Corporation as a victory of marketing over science. Indeed, a 2009 review by the European Food Safety Authority found no link between the consumption of A1 milk and health and digestive problems. So far, much of the research on the matter is funded by A2 Corporation, which holds a patent for the only genetic test that can separate A1 from A2 cows.

And in 2004, the same year that A2 Corporation went public on the New Zealand Stock Exchange, Australia's Queensland Health Department fined its marketers AU\$15,000 for making false and misleading claims about the health benefits of its milk.

The A1/A2 debate has raged for years in Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Europe, but it is still virtually unheard of across the pond. That could soon change: A2 Corporation recently announced plans to offer its milk in the United States in coming months. In a letter to investors, the company claims that "consumer research [*in Los Angeles*] confirms the attractiveness of the A2 proposition."

The difference between A1 and A2 proteins is subtle: they are different forms of beta-casein, a part of the curds (ie milk solids) that make up about 30% of the protein content in milk.

**The good, the bad and the uddery (clockwise from above left): Guernsey, Friesian, Jersey and Indian cows; and (facing page) African cows**

The A2 variety of beta-casein mutated into the A1 version several thousand years ago in some European dairy herds. Two genes code for beta-casein, so modern cows can either be purely A2, A1/A2 hybrids, or purely A1. Milk from goats and humans contains only the A2 beta-casein, yet not everyone likes the flavour of goat's milk, which also contains comparatively less vitamin B-12 – essential for creating red blood cells.

The A1 milk hypothesis was devised in 1993 by Bob Elliott, a professor of child health research at the University of Auckland. Elliott believed that consumption of A1 milk could account for the unusually high incidence of type-1 diabetes among Samoan children growing up in New Zealand. He and a colleague, Corran McLachlan, later compared the per capita consumption of A1 milk to the prevalence of diabetes and heart disease in 20 countries and came up with strong correlations.

Critics argued that the relationships could be explained away by other factors, such as diet, lifestyle, and latitude-dependent exposure to vitamin D in sunlight – and in any case started to fall apart when more countries were included. Yet a 1997 study by Elliott, published by the International Dairy Federation, showed that A1



beta-casein caused mice to develop diabetes, lending support to the hypothesis, and McLachlan remained convinced. In 2000, he partnered with entrepreneur Howard Paterson, then regarded as the wealthiest man on New Zealand's South Island, to found the A2 Corporation (since renamed a2 Milk Company Limited).

Starting in 2003, A2 Corporation sold milk in the United States through a licensing agreement, but pulled out in 2007 after it failed to catch on. Susan Massasso, A2 Corporation's chief marketing officer, blamed mistakes by the company's US partner, though

declined to elaborate. But now the market dynamics may be changing in A2 Corporation's favour as compelling new research on the A1/A2 debate grabs headlines in Australia and UK.

When digested, A1 beta-casein (but not the A2 variety) releases beta-casomorphin7 (BCM7), an opioid with a structure similar to that of morphine. Studies increasingly point to BCM7 as a troublemaker. Numerous recent tests, for example, have shown that blood from people with autism and schizophrenia contains higher-than-average amounts of BCM7.

In a recent study, Richard Deth, a professor of pharmacology at Northeastern University in Boston, and his postdoctoral fellow, Malav Trivedi, showed in cell cultures that the presence of similarly high amounts of BCM7 in gut cells causes a chain reaction that creates a shortage of antioxidants in neural cells, a condition that other research has tied to autism. The study, underwritten in part by A2 Corporation, is now undergoing peer review in the *Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry*. The results suggest that drinking A2 milk instead of A1 milk could reduce the symptoms of autism, Trivedi says, but, he adds: "There's a lot more research that needs to be done to support these claims."

Researchers without ties to A2 Corporation are also lending increasing support to the A1 hypothesis. One peer-reviewed study conducted at the National Dairy Research Institute in India, published in October in the *European Journal of Nutrition*, found that mice fed A1 beta-casein over-produced enzymes and immune regulators that other studies have linked to heart disease and autoimmune conditions such as eczema and asthma.

The leading explanation for why some people but not others may react poorly to A1 milk implicates leaky gut syndrome – a concept that got its start in alternative medicine circles but has been gaining wider traction in the medical establishment. The idea is that loose connections in the gut, like tears in a coffee filter, allow rogue proteins such as BCM7 to enter the body and run amok. The body brings in immune cells to fight them off, creating inflammation that manifests as swelling and pain – a telltale

## The leading explanation for why some people, but not others, may react poorly to A1 milk implicates leaky gut syndrome

symptom of autoimmune diseases such as arthritis, diabetes and autism.

Though many adults may suffer from leaky guts, the condition is normal in babies under a year old, who naturally have semi-permeable intestines. This may pose a problem when they're fed typical cow-milk formula. In a 2009 study formula-fed infants developed muscle tone and psychomotor skills more slowly than infants that were fed (A2-only) breast milk. Researchers in Russia, Poland, and the Czech Republic have suggested links between BCM7 in cow milk formula and childhood health issues.

A 2011 study implicates BCM7 in sudden infant death syndrome: the blood serum of some infants that experienced a "near-miss SIDS" incident contained more BCM7 than of healthy infants of the same age. Capitalising on those findings, A2 Corp also sells an A2-only infant formula, a2 Platinum.

The mainstream dairy industry in the US may be more interested in the A1/A2 debate than it lets on. For example, US companies that sell bull semen for breeding purposes maintain information on the exact A1/A2 genetics of all of their offerings. And breeders have already developed A2 Holsteins to replace the A1 varieties typically used in confined agricultural

feeding operations.

"There is absolutely no problem in moving across to A2 and still having these high-production cows," says Woodford, the *Devil in the Milk* author, who in more recent years has worked as a consultant for A2 Corporation.

But the transition to A2 milk would take a bit of money and probably about a decade, Woodford believes.

"The mainstream industry has always seen it as a threat," he says, "whereas another way of looking at it is, hey, this can actually bring more people to drinking milk."

For now, the best way to get milk with a higher-than-average A2 content in the US, is to buy it from a dairy that uses A2 cow breeds such as the Jersey, Guernsey, or the Normande. In Northern California, for example, Sonoma County's Saint Benoit Creamery specifies on its milk labels that it uses "pastured Jersey cows".

The heirloom A2 breeds tend to be hardy, adapted to the open range and not producing a ton of milk, but what they do produce is comparatively thicker, creamier, and – many say – a lot tastier than what you'll typically find at the supermarket.

"People taste our milk and they say: 'Oh my gosh, I haven't tasted milk like this since I left home and came to America,'" says Warren Taylor, the owner of Ohio's Snowville Creamery, which has been phasing out A1 cows from its herds.

"For the time being, the switch to A2 milk is going to be for the small producers – people like us," he adds. "It's just a part of our responsibility."

● Dr Cuthbert Banga of the Agricultural Research Council in Pretoria told *Noseweek* that the issue of A1 and A2-type cow's milk has not been investigated by his institute but after reading this article, agreed that it should. "We have not even discussed it until now," he said, adding that he was personally aware of children who could not tolerate cow's milk but could digest goat's milk – which could be linked to the A1/A2 phenomenon.

Dr Chris van Dyk of the Milk Producers' Organisation promised to send *Noseweek* a statement on the subject, but never did. ■

*This article first appeared in the US investigative magazine Mother Jones (www.motherjones.com).*

# Liz McDaid of the nuclear victory

Triumphant anti-nuclear campaigner believes courage works wonders. **By Sue Segar**

**B**ATTLE-WEARY SOUTH AFRICANS had cause for a rare moment of national jubilation when on 26 April the Western Cape High Court made its momentous ruling, effectively halting the country's ridiculous nuclear power expansion programme.

The ruling, on the eve of Freedom Day in South Africa, also coincided with the anniversary of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Ukraine, then part of the Soviet Union. To top it all, it rained in drought-stressed Cape Town, and jubilant activists danced outside the court until they were drenched.

If upheld, the ruling will save the country trillions of rands. It represents arguably the biggest achievement by NGOs in decades. Two small NGOs, Earthlife Africa Johannesburg and the Southern African Faith Communities' Environment Institute (\*SAFCEI), following two years of court preparation, finally managed to block the deal.

Among those dancing for joy was a fifty-something woman in jeans and a SAFCEI T-shirt. Liz McDaid, the leader of the anti-nuclear campaign by SAFCEI, played a key advisory role in the legal proceedings. She's now known in NGO circles as "Liz McDaid of the nuclear victory".

Speaking outside court on the day

of the ruling, an ecstatic McDaid told the crowd the court case meant that the people of South Africa have to be consulted. "It is now time to stand up and demand to be counted. The thunder and rain are a signal from the heavens that justice has been done."

McDaid has been involved in a number of environmental battles: she coordinated a multi-stakeholder team for an asbestos summit which eventually led to a total asbestos ban in 2008. She also helped fight the battle against the location of Saldanha Steel, and was one of those who pushed for a commission of inquiry into the fire in a chemical store belonging to AECl, initially killing two people and causing a "significant" deterioration in the health of "thousands" of others since then.

In an interview with *Noseweek*, McDaid casually mentioned that she was also involved in coordinating – and winning – the legal battle against the Pebble Bed Reactor. "But that was small beans compared to this nuclear thing," she said. "As someone who has worked all my adult life for justice, this was a big one for me."

Over a mug of tea at her home in Claremont, Cape Town, a few days after the judgment, McDaid, a single mother with a collection of dogs, was still processing the momentous win.

"To think that two small NGOs who



**Anti-nuclear campaigner Liz McDaid**

didn't even have proper operating budgets managed to pull this off. It has been fantastic, a real case of 'power to the people'.

"This was not a legal battle between two fancy law firms. It was two small NGOs with a lot of supporters – including the Right To Know Campaign, the Green Anglicans, Catholic Justice and Peace, the Muslim Judicial Council and others acting alongside. Everyone started

coming to the party to stand up and be counted as people realised what was at stake. That's why everyone is so excited."

For McDaid, the main success of the court action has been to raise awareness among South Africans about "what has been going on under everyone's noses".

The response to the judgment has been "overwhelmingly positive, congratulatory and appreciative... So many people have emailed and phoned to say, 'thanks, you did it for all of us'. People were blown away.

"This outcome tells us democracy does work and people have a right to a say in our future, particularly around energy. All we have done is reset the system and now it's up to all South African citizens to use their voices again and be active. It's a wake-up call for everybody in South Africa."

Ordinary South Africans, McDaid believes, are tired and apathetic... and have "kind of given up". "What with Nkandla, the Guptas, the late-night Cabinet reshuffle – they feel we are never going to win... This judgment gave people hope."

For several years, McDaid has been a key participant in the Wednesday vigil outside Parliament to protest against the government's planned nuclear deal. "We normally go to a little coffee shop in town after standing vigil... and on the day of the court case, the guy who runs the coffee shop said, 'tomorrow after the vigil the coffee will be R10 for all protestors!' Even he was excited."

The ruling effectively set the procurement of nuclear right back to square one, ensuring that any deals with Russia, the US and South Korea are off.

Judge Lee Bozalek ruled that the secret tabling of the intergovernmental agreements with Russia, USA and Korea were unconstitutional, illegal and should be set aside and that the decisions made by former energy minister Tina Joemat-Pettersson (the so-called section 34 determinations) in 2013 and 2016 to procure 9,600MW of nuclear power were unlawful and unconstitutional and should be set aside. Any existing requests for proposals from nuclear energy providers were also set aside.

The court also ruled that Eskom, as

the procurer, was set aside and that there must be public participation as part of the procurement process before any new decisions are made.

McDaid, known as Liziwe to friends and colleagues, grew up in Cape Town, and studied Zoology at UCT. "I wanted to be an environmental somebody. I liked animals, but I am essentially a scientist," she said.

At university McDaid had a physics lecturer "who ranted on about the wonders of nuclear but then he was also talking about Three Mile Island, the 1979 nuclear disaster in America and how human error and technical safety systems caused a partial meltdown which then led to improved regulations in the USA.

"I remember thinking, well that's all very well, but nuclear sounds very dangerous, and I wonder if it is really necessary."

McDaid completed a BSc, followed by a higher diploma in education through the University of South African (Unisa), before taking up a post as a teacher on the Cape Flats in the mid-1980s.

While teaching – and witnessing the conflicts between students and apartheid security forces – she became politically active.

"The apartheid government threw me out of teaching and I went to work at university," said McDaid.

Earthlife Africa had been formed and she started becoming interested in environmental issues. She also became part of the group that formed the Environmental Justice Coalition,

which focused on environmental justice.

After 1994, during the Mandela era, she was part of an advisory team to the ANC and later became a researcher in Parliament's national research unit on environment and energy. "That was a time of such possibility and hope," said McDaid. "The years from 1995 to 1997 were years of putting in place policies for the people of South Africa but after that it seemed to be all about economics that would favour the big guys. I didn't like that attitude so I went back to civil society."

Then the Pebble Bed bounced up and McDaid became the coordinator of Earthlife Africa in Cape Town. "I was part of the preparation for the legal case which tackled the Pebble Bed. It eventually went to court and Earthlife Africa won the court case."

McDaid was involved in a range of environmental causes and worked as a researcher for a number of NGOs including the World Resources Institute, Oxfam and groundWork.

Much of her research and development work has focused on energy related policy analysis and on climate change. She is particularly committed to building the capacity of civil society and government.

Since 2009, she has co-ordinated SAFCEI's Energy and Climate Change programme.

McDaid's philosophy on life is "that the universe gives us strength and energy to do the right thing. Just simply, like, it is there, you just have to step out and take it, absorb it and work with it. My life works like that. In 1990, when we were trying to oppose Saldanha Steel because it was going to pollute the lagoon, lo and behold, on the day that it was necessary for something to happen, there was an oil spill, and we were able to prove that the oil would actually go into the lagoon because that was exactly what happened."

McDaid's argument against nuclear power is simple: "In my view, if you add up all the different sources of energy from an environmental perspective then nuclear has the terrible long-lived radioactive waste... the one with the biggest risk of disaster.

"The way we make decisions should be on the basis of real, comparative information and in the public interest.

**The universe  
gives us  
strength and  
energy to do  
the right thing**



**Anti-nuclear vigil outside Parliament in Cape Town**

And what's happening at the moment is not that. Misleading the public is what I don't like. I think if we had an honest discussion about the merits of different power sources, we would easily come to what's the best solution for South Africa.

"But when you get all these lobbyists who, it seems, are not interested in what is best for South Africa, but only in their own greedy paws, if they are prepared to spin stories just to get money, then you have to take it on.

"That's why this court judgment is a major victory. Nuclear has never been about energy. It's always been about power and corruption."

For McDaid, who believes the Jacob Zuma presidency will go down as "the one fixated on nuclear", is convinced there are "a lot of dots to join" in terms of alleged corruption and nepotism related to the deal.

She loves murder mystery novels, "as I like to try and put the pieces

of the puzzle together" as well as Malcolm Gladwell books "which inform a theory of change". A firm favourite is the book *Blessed Unrest* by Paul Hawken, "about small groups of people who are changing the world". Her heroes – besides Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela "of course" – include people like Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, who stand up against injustices. And KZN-based Reverend Sue Britton, "who has done amazing things as an anti-apartheid activist, church minister and environmental activist".

"My other heroes are all people who speak out – and not just when it is popular to do so."

A quote at the end of her email signature is one by Nelson Mandela: "You have a limited time to stay on earth. You must try and use that period to transform your country into what you desire it to be."

McDaid warned: "What we have to

look out for now is the media propaganda on nuclear. It's already starting with the nonsensical thing of equating X-rays to nuclear power stations.

"How do you justify building 9.6 GW of nuclear power and then say it's beneficial because people get X-rays. We must be aware of the media onslaught – a complete waste of public money – that will now try and bamboozle people into believing nuclear contracts are a good idea."

What disturbs her most about life in South Africa today, apart from nuclear deals and environmental issues, is this: "There seems to be an orchestrated attempt to divide people... along any lines possible.

"There is a lot of stereotyping going on and it is used in a very divisive way. That's the saddest thing. It results in people self-censoring. People don't speak out because they don't want to be labelled.

"When we first held our vigils outside Parliament people were scared to come, as they thought they'd be beaten by police. We told them they have a right to protest in South Africa.

"This ignorance of their rights is a very sad thing. So many people gave their lives for democracy in this country... and the current generation doesn't seem to know how to use those rights. If they used those rights, then we wouldn't be where we are. That's the saddest thing for me.

"As someone once said, 'in order for evil to flourish it is sufficient that the good do nothing'."

\*On Saturday 6 May, SAFCEI launched its Active Citizens Network, aimed at working towards a more compassionate and just world. See [www.safcei.org](http://www.safcei.org). ■



# A 19-ton truck in the gardens of the afterlife

You've pored over the New York Times, Washington Post, Guardian, and Der Spiegel online, now dip into the monthly ISIS publication on the dark web. By Andrey Kolmogorov

**W**HAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU stir *Cosmopolitan*, *GQ*, *You*, *Joy Magazine* and *Popular Mechanics* into a boiling vat of blood? *Rumiyah*, the monthly magazine put out by the Islamic State, also known as ISIS. The publication title is aspirational: it's named after Rome, a city on the target bucket list of many ISIS supporters. As new editions of *Rumiyah* appear, they're dredged up from the deep web and posted by the Clarion Project, a non-profit organisation focused on revealing the activities of radical Islamists.

Like its predecessor publication *Dabiq*, *Rumiyah* isn't just an appalling read that leaves you feeling sullied and scared. It's also enlightening.

You get straight-talk from the mujahideen, or at least from their marketing people. The central message is unequivocal – as one article sassily puts it, “The Kafir’s blood is Halal for you, so shed it”. There is plenty of practical advice. Blades are the classic weapon, given their place in holy scripture (“When you encounter those who disbelieve, then strike their necks until when you have massacred them”).

The second issue of *Rumiyah*, from October 2016, suggests getting a knife with a guard “to prevent one’s hand from sliding forward on to the blade when plunging it into a victim”. Then find a target, such as “a drunken kafir on a quiet road returning home from a night out... or someone by himself in

an alley close to a night club or another place of debauchery, or even someone out for a walk in a quiet neighbourhood”. On meeting the target, “A swift slice across the face should quickly subdue them, as very few people will continue to fight once the smell, feel, and sight of blood becomes apparent”.

The author suggests striking the victim’s head with a baseball bat, then slitting his throat.

Heavy-duty vehicles are recommended too, with a special mention for the man who “plowed his 19-ton load-bearing truck into crowds celebrating Bastille Day in Nice”. The effects of a high-speed truck on heads, torso and limbs are described with relish.

Emphasising the blood-lust are many bright photos. Some are eerie or menacing: ISIS children wielding weapons, American soldiers weeping, dazed medics at scenes of terror. Other photos embrace the horror: a homosexual about to be thrown off a building, a man being shot point-blank, a line of heads placed on the backs of the dead, a man being decapitated, head hitting the ground, before a crowd. One surprising realisation is that the cartoonish images of beheading in medieval illustrations are not unrealistic – the neat separation of head from body turns out, once you’ve seen a picture of the actual thing, to be just how it looks. It seems those monks knew what they were illustrating.

Human nature being what it is, you can only feel pity for a while for

the people in these pictures before wondering how you would handle such a situation if you were in it. Would you argue, as Socrates did, that it is better to be the victim of evil than to be the perpetrator, conducting yourself so calmly and bravely that even your killer would be moved to tears? Or would you plunge into the crowd, zigzagging through the stunned group until a sympathetic fruit-seller pushed you towards an alley that led on to a hidden... No and no. You aren’t Socrates or Indiana Jones. That neck waiting on the stump for the chop, as pasty and drained of blood as a terrified body can be before it really is drained of blood, could have been yours if you’d lived under ISIS.

Where there is brutality, sentimentality is not far behind. Among the gory pages is a picture of a mujahid fondling a kitten. Three smiling young men, relaxing before their suicide mission, hold hands as they stroll in the soft light. ISIS fighters in the field look sweetly at the camera, raising a finger to indicate the oneness of God. And those who kill themselves receive admiring obituaries – for instance, one obit praises a young man who refused to get married, join his father’s garment business in Bengal and accept his old man’s offer to buy him a car, instead, choosing “the eternal gardens of the Hereafter over the petty pleasures of this worldly life”.

Let no one tell ISIS that Islam is a religion of peace. Under a photo of

- Foreword
  - A Message from East Africa #12
- Exclusive
  - Important Memorandums #14
  - The Shahada of the Gulshan Attack #16
  - Just Terror Tactics #17
- Articles
  - The Religion of Islam and the Jama'ah of the Muslims - Part 3 #18
  - Paths to Victory - Part 1 #18
  - Brutality and Severity towards the Kuffar #12
  - Glad Tidings of Imminent Victory to the Patient #26
  - Stories of Steadfastness from the Lives of the Sahabiyat #28
- News
  - Operations #32



articles establishing ISIS theology, such as the extended religious justification for enslaving Yazidi women and children in issue 4 of *Dabiq* (October 2014). Articles like these sometimes identify opponents: those who dare to call themselves Muslims but are, in fact, “The worst creatures under the sky, deserving to be killed”. Reading such pieces is like being stuck in a lecture by a cantankerous theology lecturer who, in his frustration at their obduracy (Is there not someone to restrain them, or to cut off their noses?), occasionally murders members

of the class.

It is refreshing to have scholarship taken so seriously. Instead of simply saying “Those who can’t do, teach,” the ISIS operatives rail vigorously against “barking dogs from the scholars of deviance”. True, sometimes the mujahideen lose patience. “By Allah, the time has come for these skulls to be split, for these souls to be smothered, and for these tongues to be cut off!” But more often, they write page after page of religious argument. After all, someone has to get a grip on the helm, or there’ll be anarchy: “When the sailor is absent, and the ship is tossed by winds, the frogs take over”.

**We would  
continue to hate  
you because our  
primary reason for  
hating you will not  
cease to exist until  
you embrace Islam**

Muslims with posters saying “Terrorism is not Islam” and “Terrorism has no religion” is the caption “Slogans of apostasy”. ISIS makes sure to impart the lesson early: an ad for a mobile app to teach children the alphabet includes a “choose your target”, function that depicts a cute little rocket flying towards landmarks including Big Ben, the Statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower.

Why such loathing? A wholly direct piece, in issue 15 of *Dabiq* (July 2016), headed “Why We Hate You & Why We Fight You” – unusually, addressed to foes rather than supporters – lists several reasons. For one thing, “We hate you because your secular, liberal societies permit the very things that Allah has prohibited while banning many of the things He has permitted”. For another, “We hate you for your crimes against the Muslims; your drones and fighter jets bomb, kill, and maim our people around the world, and your puppets in the usurped lands of the Muslims oppress, torture, and wage war against anyone who calls to the truth.”

But here’s the bottom line: even in the absence of violence against Muslims, “we would continue to hate you because our primary reason for hating you will not cease to exist until you embrace Islam”.

The hostility may not be surprising. What might be more so is the volume of theology. Amidst the calls to arms and the infographics about downed Abrams tanks and Humvees are long

One sign that these peevish wrangles really matter to the ISIS editors is that they don’t seem good for mass propaganda. Who has the interest to go through all that stuff, except for fanatical theologians? Surely many readers will just skip to the pics and the advice for sticking in the knife?

These rants feel less like a canny marketing move than a labour of obsession. Of course, their density alone might serve to impress readers, but that’s not the whole purpose. The writers of these sermons are endlessly compelled to be right. And by their own theological lights, one has to say, it seems they do enjoy ample supportive sacred material.

Well, are they completely wrong? Maybe – conceivably – there is a supreme intelligence, alive to all the goings-on in the world, with detailed desires for human behaviour. The universe, after all, keeps turning out to be stranger than it looks. And since similar phenomena sometimes appear at very different levels, perhaps mental life is to be found not only in little creatures like us, but also on some vastly majestic scale. Still, given the many contradictory human gropings in this realm, it seems prudent to be cautious about reports of a supreme being’s judgements on humanity, especially if the alleged commands are not simply to help one another thrive – a practice to be recommended on independent grounds – but to slice throats.

*Rumiyah* and *Dabiq* have an incomparably oppressive atmosphere, and it is a wonder to emerge and realise that one is allowed to read something else. One might pick up, say, Jon Krakauer’s *Eiger Dreams*, an elegant and acute collection of his journalistic pieces on climbing, mostly in impossibly harsh conditions.

What a contrast with ISIS: absurd and frightening goals and methods, yes, but in the service of individual freedom and the pursuit of one’s own eccentric passions. The book is a thrill, a breath of fresh air. And it is a steadying experience to read the work of climbers, because there’s an essential knowledge that they have in their bones: once you let go of your grip on solid rock and abandon yourself to the ether, the empty air won’t hold you, and it may be a very long way down.

● See Editorial. ■

# Seme's historic rallying cry owes much to US thinkers

## The unacknowledged sources of ANC leader's Regeneration of Africa speech. By Grant Christison

**E**ARLY IN 1906 NEWSPAPERS ACROSS America reported that Columbia University's prestigious Curtis gold medal for oratory had been awarded to "a full-blooded Zulu", a man "of Royal Zulu blood", a Zulu "Prince". In the 111 years intervening, that speech on "The Regeneration of Africa" has achieved iconic status. *Colored American Magazine* published it in 1906 and it has reappeared at intervals across the decades. Kwame Nkrumah, first President of Ghana, read it at the first International Congress of Africanists in 1962. Scholars have discerned behind it "a man of vision" and "extraordinary eloquence". It has been labelled "timeless", "an important contribution to discourse on the notion of an African Renaissance", carrying a message that has "inspired later generations of African nationalists".

The speaker was Pixley ka Isaka Seme, born at Inanda Mission, north of Durban in 1882. He received his early education from American missionaries there and at the Adams Training School for Boys at Amanzimtoti. In 1897 a missionary, Stephen Clapp Pixley, who had noted the youth's aptitude for learning, sponsored him to study at Mount Hermon School for boys in Massachusetts, USA. He excelled there, passed Columbia's entrance examination in 1902 and graduated BA in 1906.

Moving on to Oxford, he studied law. Gaining admission to the bar in 1910, he returned to South Africa, at once throwing himself into his legal business and activism. Today, he is remem-

bered principally for his leading role in the establishment of the African National Congress.

Seme was a handsome man with a commanding presence. He was a natty dresser and was often seen smoking his pipe – a practice he cultivated during his Oxford days. Those who heard him speak were struck by his sharp intellect. *The Galveston Daily News* in 1902 described his "ambition and ability" and found his "scholarship and general intelligence... far above many American freshmen". Many years later his peers and collaborators in South Africa described his lavish lifestyle, spendthriftiness, impetuosity, snobbery, ambition, and brash self-confidence. An early resident of Sophiatown, his house was described by a contemporary as "an absolute palace inside and out".

In his oration, Seme took the line – already given wide currency by Booker T Washington – that each of the races of mankind has its special "genius", making direct comparison between them impossible. Like other African intellectuals before and after him, Seme pointed to great African achievements, ancient and latterday, demonstrating that Africa is no intellectual or industrial backwater. The slumbering African "giant" was finally awakening, he proclaimed, and he drew evidences of this from across the Continent. African "race-consciousness", he maintained, was a central feature of this reawakening – an awareness of a pan-African identity transcending ethnic differences. He confidently predicted a great African

civilization unlike any other on earth.

Seme was certainly a man of big ideas but his key ideas and even some of the phraseology of his speech were purloined from pre-existing sources. The fact is that Seme was not thinking "outside the box". On the contrary, he was working very much along tramlines of thought laid down by an older generation of Afro-American thinkers – men like Booker T Washington, Alexander Crummell, Edward Wilmot Blyden, and W E B du Bois. Nineteenth-century African intellectuals had already begun to grasp the utility of the African past in the service of their ideological projects. These men sought to salvage African history and apply it to contemporary propagandistic purposes. Some white detractors claimed that Africans could boast of no original achievements – that at best they were only mimics. As a new generation of African thinkers saw it, an early step toward effacing that enduring slur would be for them to claim possession of their own historiography. When Seme climbed aboard this ship as a young man, it had already been afloat for decades.

Seme concluded his speech with a poetic address:

*O Africa!*

*Like some great century plant that shall bloom*

*In ages hence...*

The poetic speaker anticipates the time when Africa will "shine" like her "sister lands with equal beam".

Seme appropriates this poem as though it were his own. In fact, it is even attributed to him in *Return*



Pixley Seme

of the *Amasi Bird*, an anthology of English-language poetry by black South Africans published in 1982.

But why, I asked when I first read the oration, would any Zulu man characterise Africa as a land of “swamps” as this poem does?

Okay, Google and voilà: the poem is not Seme’s. It is the brainchild of Lloyd Mifflin (1846-1921), once regarded as “America’s greatest sonneteer”. It appears in his *Collected Sonnets* published in the same year that Seme delivered his oration. Well chosen by Seme, it brings his oration to a rousing, visionary crescendo, but he must not be credited for it.

Perhaps it would be anachronistic to charge Seme with plagiarism today. Contemporary academic practice a century ago was freer with regard to how sources were handled and acknowledged. Still, having identified one of Seme’s direct borrowings, it seems only natural to wonder if there might be others.

Indeed there are. One of Seme’s memorable sentences has caught the attention of several academics: “In all races, genius is like a spark, which, concealed in the bosom of a flint, bursts forth at the summoning stroke.” To the best of my knowledge, no-one has yet remarked upon the fact that an almost identical sentence appears in a little book published almost a century before Seme: “In all countries, genius is a spark concealed in the bosom of a flint, which bursts forth at the stroke of the steel.” Had Seme been my undergraduate student and I known of this older text, I might have hauled him over the coals for such unacknowledged borrowing.

The work in question is *An Enquiry Concerning the Intellectual and Moral Faculties, and Literature of Negroes*. The French original appeared in 1808. It was authored by Count Henri Baptiste Grégoire (1750-1831), Constitutional Bishop of Blois – an important leader of the French Revolution. Translated into English by David Bailie Warren, acting American consul in France, it was published in Brooklyn, New York, in 1810.

The Abbé Grégoire was prominent in abolitionist circles, a leading member of the short-lived Société des Amis des Noirs (Society of the Friends of the Blacks) and supporter of the Haitian



Revolution of 1791. His *Enquiry* refutes contemporary arguments for the inferiority of Africans. Whether Seme borrowed directly from his book or through an intermediary text is unclear, but Columbia’s online library index shows that it holds a copy of the 1810 edition. Likely the book was already on its shelves in Seme’s day.

On reading *An Enquiry* I discovered several of Seme’s other borrowings. In supplying evidence of the intellectual capacity of Africans both texts note the existence of those proficient in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldaic – a singular sampling of language. Both authors refer to Africans who committed the entire Quran to memory; also to an African professor of philosophy at a German university. Seme notes a “corresponding member of the French Academy of Sciences, who regularly transmitted to that society meteorological observations and hydrographical journals, and papers on botany and geology”. He lifts this from the Abbé. He also refers to “officers of artillery in the great armies of Europe, generals and lieutenant-generals in the armies of Peter the Great, in Russia and Napoleon in France”. So does the Abbé. So, just how much of Seme’s speech is “original”?

Not a lot. We start with the title. Some historians locate the origins of the discourse surrounding the “Regeneration of Africa” in the thought of mid-nineteenth-century Afro-American intellectuals. In fact, the phrase can be traced back even further. Irish orator and jurist, John Philpot Curran (died 1817) linked abolition with the “regeneration” of former slaves. *The Analectic Magazine* of Philadelphia used the phrase “regeneration of Africa” in 1818. At that time, it was linked to the projected abolition of slavery and the repatriation to Africa of freed slaves who, it was hoped, would “regenerate” the Continent with Christian values. Regeneration at this stage had unmistakable theological resonance: it implied a spiritual rebirth.

The expression was taken up by black proto-pan-Africanists like Blyden who referred repeatedly to “the regeneration of Africa” through the agency of freed slaves from the New World who would return to their ancestral homeland and “regenerate a continent”. Crummell, who founded the American Negro Academy, presented a discourse in 1865 titled, just like Seme’s, *The Regeneration of Africa*.

Repeatedly in his oration Seme

**President Jacob  
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reference to Seme’s  
‘seminal speech  
which shaped Pan  
Africanism across  
the world’**

voiced ideas others had expressed before him. Like Blyden, he cited the Great Pyramid of Cheops as proof of Africa’s former greatness. Without attribution, he shares an anecdote first told by Crummell of the slaveholding John Calhoun, senator for South Carolina, who stated that “if he could find a Negro who knew the Greek syntax, he would then believe that the negro was a human and should be treated as a man”. Seme exposes Calhoun’s speciosity, and points to Africans who did indeed know Greek syntax. Well and good, but Crummell did this before him.

So why in South Africa is Seme remembered for his speech and not the Abbé Grégoire and the others – black and white – to whom he was so indebted intellectually? Perhaps the success of the *Regeneration of Africa* comes down to the personality of the speaker: though of lowly birth, Seme’s princely stature and brash self-assurance never failed to catch the eye. He said nothing new but he spoke with a confidence and vigour seldom heard before.

At the Centenary Celebrations of the University of Fort Hare in 2016, President Jacob Zuma made reference to Seme’s “seminal speech which shaped Pan Africanism across the world” – a speech that “inspired a generation of black people across the world to look at themselves in a positive light and to be proud of their African heritage”. The President went on to quote a portion of Seme’s oration:

“:The brighter day is rising upon Africa. Already I seem to see her chains dissolved, her desert plains red with harvest, her Abyssinia and her Zululand the seats of science and of religion, reflecting the glory of the rising sun from the spires of their churches and universities. Her Congo and her Gambia whitened with commerce, her crowded cities sending forth the hum of business...”

A transcendent vision perhaps but it did not originate in Seme’s mind. Very possibly he lifted it from Ebenezer Porter’s *Rhetorical Reader* (New York, 1856) which contains *A Plea for Africa*, authored by Edward Dorr Griffin (1770-1837):

“...a brighter day is arising for Africa. Already I seem to see her chains dissolved, her desert plains

turned into a fruitful field, her Congo and her Senegal the seats of science and religion, reflecting the glory of the rising sun from the spires of their churches and universities, her Gambia and Niger whitened with her floating commerce, her crowded cities sending forth the hum of business..."

A *Plea for Africa* was a sermon preached in October 1817, in the First Presbyterian Church, New York. The vision of "a brighter day arising for Africa" was Griffin's, not Seme's, and it was first articulated 200 years ago. Griffin was a white American.

Over the decades, "regeneration" has meant somewhat different things to different thinkers. Blyden actually predicted the "spiritual regeneration" of Africa in 1862. In 1905, the Zulu-

## What does all this mean? That we err when we locate the genesis of big ideas in a single human mind



Lloyd Mifflin

English newspaper, *Ilanga lase Natal* anticipated the "social regeneration" of Africa.

Seme, in his speech, gives his own take: "By this term, regeneration, I wish to be understood to mean the entrance into a new life, embracing the diverse phases of a higher, complex existence." He anticipates a "new civilization" in Africa that involves "a regeneration moral and eternal". Here he appears to borrow from Blyden who predicts in 1862 that "Africa will furnish a development of civilization" of which the "great peculiarity will be its moral element".

Blyden in turn was inspired in part by Alexander Kinmont, a disciple of the Swedish mystic Emanuel Swedenborg. Kinmont predicted in the 1830s that Africa would furnish a "civilization of a peculiar stamp", one "exalted and refined by a new and lovely theology". Curiously, *Ilanga* quoted this prediction of Kinmont in 1904.

In the twentieth century "regeneration" began to morph into "renaissance" and today African Renaissance discourse seldom invokes the ideas entertained by the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century abolitionists.

In *Renascent Africa* (1937), Nnamdi Azikiwe, who would later serve as president of Nigeria, described "the Renascent African" as being "socially regenerated". Perhaps it is with Azikiwe that we see best illustrated "regeneration" evolving into "renaissance". Considered etymologically, the



Edward Dorr Griffin

words are interchangeable but the connotations of "renaissance" signal a shift towards a more secular vision of the future.

What does all this mean? That we err when we locate the genesis of big ideas in a single human mind. To do so is reductionist, ahistorical, and ultimately dishonest. Too much African historiography is still written in this sloppy mode. Ideas are bigger than humans. They transmute; they jump continents in a flash; they are tenacious of life.

Grégoire was French; Griffin came of a wealthy and respectable Connecticut family; Mifflin was an American of mixed English-German descent; Kinmont was a Scot who emigrated to the States. These men were white yet they were among the first to glimpse a regenerate or renaissance Africa. They have unquestionable chronological pre-eminence over Seme. Surely they share credit with him? ■



## Royal rage. Serpents in Eden

**D**O NOT BE DECEIVED. KINDLY REFRAIN from judging this book by its blithe cover. Jennifer Friedman, daughter of the verkramppte old platteland, launches her memoir of ye olde hick Vrystaat with a lyrical evocation of blessed early childhood in a natural paradise. But soft! – there are shadows lurking at the bottom of the garden.

It helps to know at the outset that Friedman no longer lives in the remote village which she evokes with piercing accuracy and humour. She hymns veld and friendship, with vivid caricatures of the local, mainly farming, community, and provides a moving description of social survival in the face of prejudice. It clearly wasn't easy, growing up as a "bladdyJew" in a stern trad Afrikaner dorp. Now she lives in the Central Coast of New South Wales. Which is about as far as you can possibly cry from the beloved country.

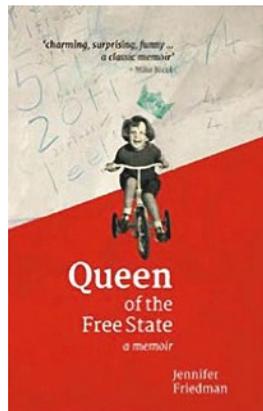
Friedman has total recall of every scent, sound and detail of her origins. Anyone familiar with the terrain, the people, and the period will be dazzled by the lyrical accuracy of her recollections. She revels in the positives, but the child was clearly baffled and appalled by racial and political tensions. The loss of innocence as she encounters the triumphalist political rigidity of small-town officialdom, and the small-minded parents of her playmates, is painful to read.

Her own parents come across as peculiarly unsympathetic to the plight of their forthright eldest. They counsel patience and resilience, and dismiss the child's fears and confusion while trying to comprehend the alien values of Nationalist education and all its works. Pa tells her, unhelpfully, to "get on with it" and Ma simply insists on conventional proprieties.

Raising teenagers is not for the weak, but nor is it for the dictatorial. After all the introductory dancing in the sunlight, with unstinting love from grandparents and barefoot black housekeepers, the surprisingly violent clashes with parents is startling. It may well be that Jennifer's

### QUEEN OF THE FREE STATE

By Jennifer Friedman  
(Tafelberg)



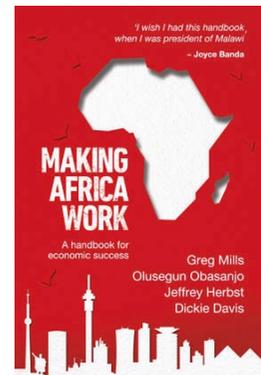
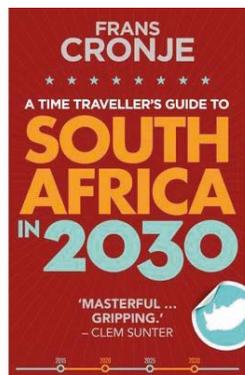
parents, if still alive, have a different tale to tell. But there is no question that the bitterness of their failed relationship with the young Jennifer created an apparently permanent schism.

The *Queen of the Free State* commences as a romantic portrait of laughing childhood. Then (surprise!) it subtly evolves into a rage against authoritarianism in all its forms. Both moods are rendered with consummate fluency, and both are impressive for their intense observation of things and people. Friedman leads Gentle Reader up the garden path – then performs an emotional mugging.

The harsh home truths are delivered with a fierce honesty that commands respect. Her conventional parents experienced a whirlwind of adolescent fury as their adventurous baby matured. But perhaps they came eventually to accept this defiantly independent soul, and even to admire her bravery. ■

**MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF the forest, two new Tafelberg books of prognostications on this country's future have arrived. Will they offer the émigré Friedman a vision that could restore her faith in Africa? Clem Sunter says Frans Cronje's *A Time Traveller's Guide to South Africa in 2030* is "Masterful...**

**Gripping". DA leader Mmusi Maimane says of *Making Africa Work: A Handbook for Economic Success*: "At last, a book on how, rather than what, to do to improve the fortunes of Africa's people." The distinguished authors are: Greg Mills, Olusegun Obasanjo, Jeffrey Herbst and Dickie Davis. ■**





## Upside down. Back to the future

**U** PDATE STORY OF THE DAY: DOWN at the butcher's, a woman in black running gear says: "Sorry, sorry, sorry, for being so particulah... that's amazing, though, thanks, sorry, mah son just hates fat, isn't that amazing? Oh and those sausages, they look amazing, do you put cheese in, parmesan? I'll take two, will they keep? I just don't feel like cooking today, I dunno whah..." Packing them up, the stony-faced but nice-enough butcher says "You won't regret it, just fry them with a bit of butter". "Oh no, mah son never wants butter, isn't that amazing? Oh mah Gawd, they're veal, I didn' realise, I wanted chicken, I'll leave it for now. I'll come back, I promise, definitely. I come heah often... Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry for the trouble."

On the good South African side, the wonderfully energetic Ronni Kahn last month started OzHarvest Market, a supermarket of sorts with "rescued" leftover food and groceries from cafes, restaurants and food businesses. Customers pay whatever they can afford, as little or as much as they can manage.

On the train to work, a lanky earringed and tattooed (it's body art, through which individuality is expressed) young man discusses with the multiple nose-ringed girl the "sweet syrup fruit infusion" he'll make that night, maybe even with "some tomato for flavour". They kiss goodbye, lattes still steaming, and I restrain myself from following him. These boys brought up by women who are both mothers and friends really are something.

Like a fruit that's about to turn, looming beggardom in Sydney starts with mismatched clothes and running shorts-gone-grey, or wrinkled toes, a little more weathered in flip-flops. The extra plastic carrybag, the slight menace and the eyes that don't meet yours (and not because of an iPhone). As health-care and other

social services and payments become less accessible and the mentally unstable are left to their own devices, there are now beggars on most Sydney streets.

Nature abhors a vacuum. The *New York Times* has started an Australian edition just as the country's two major non-Murdoch newspapers collapse in a heap. Journalists from the *Sydney Morning Herald* (this columnist's alma mater and a very fine newspaper in its time) and *The Age* newspapers had a week-long strike in April in protest at 125 jobs to be cut in their newsrooms, on top of the 100 job losses not long ago, and that, on top of years and years of trims, while the hatchet man presiding over this "modernisation" has been awarded a AU\$2.5 million bonus.

It's unfortunately a rearguard action – too late it seems – by a bewildered (print) profession which has traditionally prided itself on not navel-gazing. It failed to convey to the public how central the role of paid journalists (who can take the time) is to democracy and accountability. Specialist journalists are disappearing at a frightening rate, and clickbait is taking over in a big way.

Speaking of not navel-gazing, that seems to be the essence of the Australian national character. Lately I've been hearing "Suck it and see" more and more often as an exhortation to be stoic.

"Suck eggs" is less common, although more mysterious. On a lighter, drier note, a friend describes his neighbour: "Martha's a nice woman but she doesn't have a lot of horsepower."

Along these lines, over the years have been: "not the sharpest tool in the shed" and "one slice short of a sandwich".

Somehow tied to the suck-it-and-see approach is "no worries," and the ubiquitous "too easy" which is rivalling "awesome".

"You need to get out more" is a backhander when someone is a bit earnest. The scariest of all passive-aggressive

ones is the use of "mate" by a person whose mate you clearly are not, as in "take it easy mate, back off mate" or even "settle down mate".

After 30 years in Australia, I find myself, too, using the word, an escapee from my ageing addled brain. Yesterday my neighbour at work said of a client who is not fitting into her workplace culture, "You're like the bird on the biscuit tin, on it, not in it".

You heard it here first. One of *The New York Times*'s first localised stories, by columnist Lisa Pryor, observes that, despite what you hear about spiders and sharks, the remarkable thing about Australia is not its danger, but its safety. At its best, says Pryor, it's a peaceful nation, with health care and education for almost everyone and has had over the past two decades the longest period of economic expansion of any developed country in modern history.

Getting ahead has become a national obsession in a world where the expectation is to get a little richer every year. And Australia has some of the world's most spoiled baby boomers. "Many retirees divide their time between cruise holidays overseas and subsidised medical appointments here," she notes. But this enviable quality of life is at risk: aside from one of the highest levels of household debt in the world (those mortgages!) it is moving away from its egalitarian roots, as evidenced by the ballooning government funding of private schools with their swimming pool complexes and performing arts centres.

Australia needs to get back to its egalitarian roots. "Australia was one of the first countries to institute a living minimum wage in a famous court case back in 1907 regarding the employees of the Sunshine Harvester Works. The court decided that an unskilled worker should be paid enough to meet the needs of a "human being living in a civilized community which included keeping his family in frugal comfort." ■



## Heady. Hoods are old hat

**S**AD TO SAY, NOT MUCH IS HAPPENING IN the world of my Umjindi that is worth writing about. Right now I'm more interested in looking at the outrageous powers that have been bestowed on our singing prez. And yes, that too – the outrageous presidential orders coming from America's new Commander in Chief.

What do they have in common? Quite a lot really. To both sets of voters – across the Atlantic or here in Mzansi – it has become quite clear that our constitutions have given these men way too much power.

Naturally *Time* magazine has been covering the Trumpster since his shockingly successful election campaign. And suffice it to say, the mag has given us an in-depth breakdown of the Trumpster's cabinet. Man! Oh man! The Trumpster has been responsible for installing the whitest cabinet seen in America in a long time. I couldn't help concluding that we were all wrong, or perhaps we misunderstood the Trumpster's election campaign slogan. Instead of "Make America Great Again" did he actually mean "Make America white again"? After all, he took over from a black president, so this would make sense, ha ha! Gone are the days of the Colin Powells and Condoleezza Rices. Now it's blue blood all the way. Man oh man this cabinet is whiter than a heavy Washington DC snowfall in the heart of winter.

Why aren't our opposition parties and others who are keen to see the back of Zuma crying out for an amendment to our Constitution in order to diminish the powers of the President. It's quite clear that these powers can be easily abused – as we have seen.

You've got to give it to the Americans, at least the States can opt not to abide by the presidential orders. And of course cabinet appointments must go through a rigorous senate

approval process.

Clearly, we do not have such checks and balances. What little oversight we have is very limited and of course can be easily overridden by the ANC majority in Parliament.

Opposition parties are missing the boat. They should rather be making noise about amending the Constitution in order to curtail the President's powers of office instead of fighting a battle they cannot win – eg, these useless votes of no confidence and the overdone marches that many a South African seems to be bored of.

Zuma, it seems, will not be removed by these tactics and only the ANC can recall him. So why continue with a losing battle when another battle plan should be drawn up? Call for the President's powers to be amended, for crying out loud.

In fact, we should be thanking Zuma for prompting us to wake up to the reality that our President's office has too much power. It is no longer about Zuma anymore but rather the office itself. Who is to say that we will not get – from any party – another president who will also abuse the powers bestowed upon him or her?

Kudos to the Americans. At least the Trumpster seems driven by a diehard patriotic approach – which many have described as lunatic – but patriotic nonetheless, while our own prez seems driven by personal and family enrichment.

There is so much being blamed on racism today that the whole notion of the racist tag is becoming quite a bore, if I may say so myself.

Back to *Time* magazine. I came upon a piece in the February/March issue about a budding American comedian-turned-horror-movie-director named Jordan Peele. It highlights a scene from one of Peele's movies that says, "The film's opening scene recalls a sketch in which white people nervously sum-

mon their children inside as Peele, in a hoodie, walks past their homes." Peele is quoted as saying, "The conventional dynamic people understand is white fear of the black neighbourhood..."

Oh spare me the bull please. This hoodie thing is out of control. If it's a fashion statement then it clearly says "be afraid of me", whether that hoodie is worn by a black or white man.

What people like Peele need to be asked is, "Why are you wearing a hoodie in the first place, regardless of the neighbourhood you are walking through?" Of course the piece does not describe whether the movie scene was a winter one because if it was, then that would explain the hoodie thing.

I have noticed over the years the popularity of hoodies among some township youth and two thoughts have come to mind: Why the heck are you wearing a hoodie in the scorching Lowveld, African sun? And "You represent an intimidating figure who suggests criminal intent".

I recall taking a nephew under my wing who had the habit of wearing this hoodie thing. My reaction was simple: "Take that damn thing off your head; we are delivering newspapers, not going on a mugging spree." He complied.

When it comes to our youth I ask myself, what happened to home discipline? Why would a mother or grandmother allow their schoolgoing son to leave the house wearing a hoodie? Dumb question on my part. Clearly today's youth don't pay much heed to their mother's disciplinary measures, let alone that of gogo.

So what is the solution here?

Only fashion houses and clothing retailers can save us from this piece of clothing that has become a favourite amongst criminals. Stop producing or stocking these damn things and, of course, stop importing them from China.

Who needs a hoodie in South Africa, other than criminals? ■



## Originality. Not-so-short shrift

ONE THING YOU MUST GIVE Adolf Hitler credit for is his unerring talent in the naming of things. I mean he could put his finger so elegantly on any phenomenon. Jazz, in full fashion in the US, he defined as Jewish-bolshevistnegroschragmusik, all one word. Neat, man. Succinct. The Fliegerabwehrkanone Flyer-downshootingcannon, known to all aircrew as flak, this gun in the rear cockpit of a Messerschmitt 110 night fighter angled upwards at the main fuel tank of a Lancaster bomber also was known as Schragmusik, a merry piece of National Socialist humour.

But what I want to explain here is an evolutionary theory of National Socialist elegance. The Führer, see, had great regard for Darwin, who could well have been writing about das Drittes Reich in his bit about natural selection, survival of the fittest. Excelsior! Ever onwards, ever upwards! But there was a niggling inconsistency in Darwinism: it could not accept the notion of reverse evolution, retro-evolution you might say. And here was a living example of such Entgegengesetzterentwicklung-lehre; here before our very eyes and ears was the example of Schragmusik retro-evolving from the glories of Wagner, the monumental disintegrating into street rubbish. Work here for the Reichspropagandaministerium and Josef Göbbels. And what Josef did was to send one of his top operatives to take a tour to Darwin's Shrewsbury and nose about there and see if he could pick up something useful for National Socialist thinkers back home to alter Darwin's theory of evolution a little. Just a teeny weeny amendment, see?

Of course this operative might well have gone for a nice seaside holiday to



Brighton for all the Führer might know; he returned after a month-or-so with a nice tan and the most obliging news. Sniffing about in Darwin's Shrewsbury Museum, he claimed, he had there found an old Bible with a family tree in it, and there it stood plain as plain: Darwin's grandmother was a Jew! Darwin rejected the investigative process of retro-evolution lest his descendants be classified as Jewish too!

Right away the scientists set to work, and soon in their publications appeared a Psychogenetischezusammenfassung by Drs Gottlieb von Kratzpfitz and Teodor Krapfhorst, explaining the feasibility of reverse evolution by interferometric nanosonar wave mechanics. Basic Matric maths to this were what they called the K+K Equations: one could expunge the total evolutionary programme of any creature, one could retro-evolve Jews to Australopithecus Africanus and relocate the entire species to an ethnically cleansed jungle habitat in Africa in short time and at little expense. There they could happily sit and crack nuts with stones and

evolve at their leisure. But alas! Philistine armed forces invaded the Drittes Reich and it all came to nought. The rest is history.

Somewhere in the archival places of Germany, though, there must remain the entire Kratzpfitz/Krapfhorst record, and it occurs to me that we Zionists might well avail ourselves of it now. Updated, of course. Modernised. But the same Philistines lie in wait. They cannot mind their own business. I mean we hate militarism, ours is an ancient intellectual culture, before bombing folks with cluster bombs and white phosphorus we always radio them to seek shelter if they could find such a place in Palestine, kids to duck under their school desks because we're com-

ing. I mean come on, dear reader, can you think of any military force as compassionate as ours? Yet we have no alternative, we are forced to do this by philistine terrorists. Given peace in our time we could compassionately apply the K+K Equations and peacefully retro-evolve the unhappy Palestinians to stromatolites and settle them in a nice warm shallow sea along the Mediterranean coast... er... no... on second thoughts make that the Red Sea coast.

Let me make it clear, there's nothing undignified about being a stromatolite. These were the starters in a lifeless world, great compacted mushroom communities of bacteria consuming chemicals in a shallow lifeless sea and farting out small bubbles of oxygen until all waters were full of it and living nuns got evolving. And when the sea was full of fishes and things the stromatolites went on farting and filled the air with oxygen too and land fauna started the long evolutionary trek, ending up with... US! Supreme! Excelsior!

We owe the stromatolites a debt of gratitude, see? ■

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