

# Association for Monitoring and Advocacy of Government Pensions

# (AMAGP)

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The Association for Monitoring and Advocacy of Government Pensions: An independent group of pensioners and civil servants concerned about the long term viability of the GEPF and sustainability of its return on investments.

[www.AMAGP.co.za](http://www.AMAGP.co.za)

 [GEPF Watchdog - Wagbond](#)



## NEWSLETTER NO 8 of 2020

- AMAGP – Association for Monitoring and Advocacy of Government Pensions
- BOT – Board of Trustees [of the GEPF]
- FSCA – Financial Sector Conduct Authority [previously the FSB]
- GEPF - Government Employees' Pension Fund
- PIC – Public Investment Corporation
- PSA – Public Servants' Association
- ROI – return on investment
- SCOF – Standing Committee on Finance
- SCOPA - Standing Committee on Public Accounts
- SOE – state owned entities

*The Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF) is Africa's largest pension fund. We have more than 1,2 million active members, in excess of 450 000 pensioners and beneficiaries, and assets worth more than R1,8 trillion. <https://www.gepf.gov.za/>*



## The Editor's Word

This newsletter doesn't have as much news as usual as most of those who lust after our Fund's funds were also locked down, while the government is busy micro managing our daily activities, unsupervised by parliament. However, I thought this might be a good time to summarise where we are with our Fund.

Our Fund remains under threat for the foreseeable future, the assets are too massive not to generate avarice. Keep in mind these assets aren't money in the bank, they are in hundreds of different investments, some of them in unbelievable large amounts. But they keep enticing fingers to meddle in where and how the funds are placed and especially who benefits from the placing. A 1% brokerage or consultant fee for a R1bn investment would allow any one of us to live comfortably for life.

To administer, manage and control the Fund we have the GEPLaw 1996. Interesting that it states law and not act as for other legislation and doesn't seem to have a number, as all acts do! This law determines how the Fund is managed [how many of you have read the Law?]. The GEPF management seemed to be in good order until the last two decades, when suspicions were raised and a few good men decided to monitor what was happening to the future of the Fund.

This concern eventually resulted firstly in a Monitoring Group, becoming the AMAGP when it was formalised/officialised. The AMAGP doesn't have any employees or staff. We are all either retired or pensioners. What you see in/from the AMAGP is done on a voluntary basis, unpaid. Any funds are retained for when needed, such as the website. Can I re-emphasise? We are all unpaid volunteers since inception. Astounding what AMAGP has achieved without funding, isn't it?

Now why the AMAGP when there are Trustees whose responsibility is the well-being of our Fund? Who are amply if not royally rewarded for their duties, which are detailed in the Rules to the GEPLaw? Stand by.

Perusing the GEPF Annual Reports revealed the frightening trend of decreasing returns on investments, investments with no return and rationale for being invested, vague basis for investment, loans of unknown result, apparent impropriety in investments, suspicion of corruption, resulting in the medium to long term viability of the Fund being eroded exponentially. Enquiry of the Trustees, Fund administration, Principal Executive Officer and others did not result in reassurance in their non-replies. In fact, the transparency and openness of the Fund and Trustees aren't. Reinforcing the feeding of the suspicions of course, and the lack of communication is one of the reasons for the AMAGP.

The GEPF administration has regular newsletters and statements providing assurance that the Fund is strong, viable, in no danger of underfunding, and well managed. Why then no answer to questions and queries?

Expert analysis of the GEPF Annual Reports reveal horrifying lack of detail about billions of Rands' investments, including so-called unlisted investments. Go to <https://www.gepf.gov.za/>, find the investment drop down and look at 24 pages of investments, loans, stocks, bonds, etc. Loans to and bonds in SOE aren't visible there. Do yourself a favour and just scan them to see where our money is. You will be shocked at how much of our Fund's funds is invested in the JSE and property in SA.

This brings me to the Public Investment Corporation, the PIC, which is our only investment house and agent, according to the GEPF website. We pay this state owned organisation generously annually to manage our Fund's funds; much of these millions goes to the state in any case as PIC 'profit'. So, actually, we are 'giving!' some of our pension money to the state. There is nothing wrong with paying an investment broker or house for investing our money, this is normal business, but really ...

The report of the Mpati Commission on the PIC is damning. Unfortunately it seems the lockdown is delaying implementation, although in the time the PIC Board spends at home it should deliver at least some implementation.

The oversight over the Fund seems to be under suspicion when we see the loss of income in many of the investments. The Survé/Sagarmatha saga springs to mind, where it was not for AMAGP and Daily Maverick, we would have lost hundreds of billions.

The BOT is there to fulfil the oversight over our Fund to our advantage, but the oversight of the Trustees seems lacking when we note the negative trends in our Fund's funds. The lack of communication by the Trustees contribute to suspicion about the activities of the GEPF management and its investment arm, the PIC. This is exacerbated by the murkiness of the PICs activities and its investments for the GEPF. The impression gained from the GEPF Annual Reports is that being a Trustee is a sinecure [Google that word for the full impact].

Our non-pensioner [still working] members are more than a million, and pensioners about 450 000. The life expectancy in SA indicates our pensioner numbers will keep growing, with the accompanying drain on our Fund. Believe what you will, but the lockdown has brought brutal reality about SA's precarious economic situation and the importance of providing for retirement into greater clarity, against the background of the state not being able to provide. Where will our pensions be coming from when the state is bankrupt – the so-called state guarantee?

Ex-parliamentarian pensioners are funded directly from the current tax income, ie paid directly out the taxes we pay every day. They don't have a pension fund that needs funding, we fund it every year. Need one say more?

Enough said. Now for the news.

The first two bits of news are by political parties – the DA and VF Plus - joining us in warning the government about misuse of pension savings, the DA with specific reference to the 'PIC'.

Then Anthea Friend of the Daily Friend discusses how big business can be tempted to use pension funds in the lockdown chaos, for all the wrong reasons.

Followed by a short statement from AMAGP about our Trustees, their lack of communication and transparency, and seemingly disregard for accountability.

A short message about the SAA business rescue fiasco, with no solution in sight. Keeping the level of concern high.

Finally, for all the pensioners and those of us getting on in years, an excellent article by Anneliese Burgess of the Vrye Weekblad about the side-lining and disregard of all of us who are approaching our 'expiry' date but still have an excellent 'best before' date. Well worth reading.

## NEWS NUUS NEWS

### *Synopsis*

Statement by Mr Hill-Lewis of the DA

The DA cautions the President against any attempt to use PIC funds to finance any economic bailout.

Raiding the PIC, as proposed by COSATU, to further delay application for funding from International Finance Institutions (IFIs) will not only be irresponsible but will also be illegal in terms of the PIC Act and its associated investment strategy. Any such attempt will be resisted strongly by the DA and all organisations concerned with the preservation of the pension funds of civil servants.

The PIC has been hard hit by market losses in recent months. To force the PIC to sell out of those positions now would cement those losses and leave the state with a huge future liability.

Any economic bailout should be financed through budget reprioritisation and external funding from IFIs.

A comprehensive economic stimulus is not a matter that can be delayed. The country faces full blown economic depression, not just recession, with devastating human consequences. We are already beginning to see the first signs of what these consequences will be, with South Africans beginning to go hungry.

Issued by *Geordin Hill-Lewis*, DA Shadow Minister of Finance, 21 April 2020

### Comment

"The PIC has been hard hit by market losses in recent months."

*The statement is laudable, however, the PIC's most recent financial statements indicate it has negligible funds and assets - total assets is R3bn = petty cash. The PIC itself hasn't suffered at all. They will get their massive R1bn+ management fee from the GEFPF and their own generous profit margin remains intact.*

*I believe Mr Hill-Lewis had the GEFPF in mind but thought the GEFPF and PIC are synonymous. The PIC is a well-paid agent for investing GEFPF funds.*

### Oorsig

## **Staatspensioenfonds (GEFPF): VF Plus waarsku trustees oor persoonlike aanspreeklikheid indien fondse aan regering gegee word**

Mediaverklaring uitgereik deur:  
**Adv. Anton Alberts**  
**VF Plus-nasionale voorsitter**

22 April 2020

Die VF Plus rig 'n waarskuwing aan die Trustees van die Staatsdienspensioenfonds (GEFPF) dat hulle weens roekelose optrede persoonlik aanspreeklik gehou kan word indien die GEFPF op enige wyse fondse beskikbaar stel aan die regering vir enige rede, insluitende die skep van 'n ekonomiese hulp pakket vir die post-COVID-19 tydperk.

Daar is geen twyfel nie dat Suid-Afrika 'n enorme ekonomiese stimulus nodig het, maar daardie fondse kan by banke en internasionale noodlenigingsorganisasies verkry word.

Die Trustees sal nie kan staatmaak op enige waarborge van die regering nie, juis vanweë die regering se eie benarde finansiële posisie. Dit sou dus uiters roekeloos van die GEFPF-trustees wees om toe te laat dat enige beleggings gemaak word of lenings gegee word wat nie 'n optimale opbrengs vir die GEFPF-lede sal oplewer nie.

Verder is die GEFPF ook in 'n swakker posisie weens die daling van markte wêreldwyd en sal enige beleggings of lenings vanuit dié verswakte status, riskant en roekeloos wees.

Die VF Plus rig ook 'n waarskuwing aan die regering om daarop te let dat die fondse in die GEFPF daar is vir lede se aftrede en nie 'n spaarfonds is waaruit fondse goedsmoeds onttrek kan word nie.

Daar is wetgewing en reëls wat die fondse oormerk vir die aftrede en versorging van hul lede en enige onbehoorlike versoek of druk op die GEFPF van die regering sal daartoe lei dat lede sal moet optree om hul belange te beskerm, insluitende die neem van regstappe.

Die VF Plus herinner die regering aan die enorme dilemma wat vir die regering geskep is weens die wanbestuur van die Transnet-pensioenarisse se pensioenfondse wat gelei het tot 'n rekordeis van R79 miljard. Indien die regering gaan karring aan die GEFPF, sal die eise wat daaruit voortspruit die Transnet-pensioensaak klein laat lyk.

### Kommentaar

*Die toenemende steun van politieke partye dui op groter bewuswording van die gierige oë gerig op uitbuiting van die Fonds. Die AMAGP se gereelde kontak met parlementariërs is besig om algaande hulle bewus te maak die erns van die bedreiging teen ons Fonds. Dit is van pas dat die VF+ se waarskuwing aan die Trustees gerig is.*

### Synopsis

## **A risk of 'raiding' pension funds with the blessing of big business**

Daily Friend

By **Anthea Jeffery** 23 April 2020

**South Africa's stringent lockdown has so hurt the poor – including the hundreds of thousands now newly jobless or otherwise unable to work – that the government is urgently casting around for billions of rands to help support them.**

But the fiscal cupboard is almost bare, while public debt is already inordinately high. All of

which makes the country's pension pot – the 4<sup>th</sup> biggest in the world as a percentage of GDP – a particularly tempting target for the government to tap for its stimulus package.

South Africa's pension funds, both public and private, are valued at close on R4 trillion, even after the recent market carnage. More than 11 million South Africans of all races (72% black, 28% white) contribute to these funds or draw from them after reaching retirement age.

Taking families into account, the country's pension funds benefit some 33 million people – or more than half the population, as Mike Schussler, head of Economists SA, pointed out at an IRR media briefing earlier this week.

Yet big business, according to a recent report in the *Daily Maverick*, seems willing to work together with the government in 'raiding' the country's public and private pension funds to help provide relief for the massive economic damage from the lockdown.

'We need to be raiding resources wherever we can find them,' said BUSA president Siphon Pityana at last Friday's meeting of Nedlac, called to discuss a stimulus package.

### **Private sector savings**

At this meeting, investment banker Martin Kingston assured the government and Cosatu that the business community was already identifying what 'reserves were available'. The meeting also discussed how 'funds from SA's private sector savings (including pensions) and investments, which are estimated to be worth about R8-trillion' could be 'mobilised for the stimulus package'.

Mr Kingston stressed that adequate returns on such savings would need to be maintained. But this caveat is likely to count little if 'the government opts for directly using private sector savings and investments', as Mr Pityana and Cosatu spokesman Matthew Parks seemed willing to propose.

Though Mr Pityana also expressed a need for caution in 'using public and private savings', this too will mean little if pension funds are forced to invest in government and SOE bonds at artificially low rates – and with

little guarantee that their capital will not be frittered away.

### **National democratic revolution**

A crisis of the magnitude that Covid-19 has unleashed needs to be dealt with at the international level, as Mr Schussler says. But the ANC has little interest in pursuing this option because of its long-standing commitment to a national democratic revolution (NDR) aimed at taking South Africa from a capitalist to a socialist (and ultimately a communist) future.

A particularly important NDR objective is to 'mobilise ... the immense resources ... controlled by ... private capital' into serving the needs of the revolution, as the SACP states in *The South African Road to Socialism*. How this is to be achieved will 'vary according to circumstance' and will often depend on 'effective state...regulation'. It may also require 'straightforward compulsion and even expropriation'.

Now the Covid-19 crisis and an unnecessarily stringent and prolonged lockdown, have given the ANC/SACP alliance the chance to achieve this long-standing ambition.

### **Relatively small step**

Under Regulation 28, pension funds must currently invest 25% in interest-bearing investments, such as bonds, even if their members would prefer a higher equity exposure. It would thus be a relatively small step to amend Regulation 28 to require, say, a 50% investment in state bonds. Since shifts in regulations do not generally need legislative endorsement, Parliament could be left out of the process.

The potential blow that could be visited upon the 33 million South Africans with accumulated pension benefits is massive. All will suffer greatly, regardless of their race. However, since most of the individuals affected happen to be black, the upshot, as Mr Schussler warns, could be 'a huge destruction of black assets, the worst the world has ever seen'.

### *Comment*

*The government's single encompassing pension fund is probably in lockdown too, taking it easy at home waiting for phase 1 to happen. At or about that time the government will have been frantically considering how to access more billions to keep the government and SOE afloat.*

*Making it the ideal opportunity to propose and promote the single pension fund, to access the about R4trillion in all the pension funds in SA. You know where that is going to end up if we don't pay scrupulous attention to any mention of our Fund and aggressively react and respond immediately to any such implied or actual threat, or even casual thoughts of misuse of our Fund.*

*Synopsis*

AMAGP STATEMENT

Cape Town

6 May 2020

## **GEPF INVESTMENT EXPENSES ARE CAUSE FOR CONCERN**

**Is the Board of Trustees really in control of the investment of the funds of the Government Employees Pension Fund (GEPF)?**

When analysing the 2018 Annual Report of the GEPF our auditor colleague raised the matter of Investment Expenses of the pension fund. He concluded the investment expenses are visibly out of line with the growth in the investment balance and the productiveness of those underlying assets (net investment income).

The Mpati Commission also considered this matter and made the following recommendation:

*"A detailed investigation should be initiated by PIC management (potentially with the support of appropriate governmental prosecuting bodies) to create an exhaustive list of all fees paid over R5 million since 2014. This list must then be interrogated to aggressively initiate legal processes of recovery where appropriate."*

AMAGP agrees fully with the recommendation of the Mpati Commission as well as the conclusions of our colleague.

We have noted with gratitude that the PIC is already giving attention to the recommendations of the Commission with regards to the above recommendation. AMAGP suggests that auditors be involved in the detailed investigations into transaction fees.

Like our colleague we must ask: Where exactly does the GEPF Board as principal in the asset manager relationship feature in this matter? Did the members of the BoT not become aware that the investment expenses rocketed to an estimated R14 billion since 2014? It should be remembered that they annually signed off their statement of responsibility certifying that they ensured that

- proper internal control systems were implemented by or on behalf of the Fund;
- investments of the Fund were made and maintained in accordance with the Fund's investment strategy.

The Mpati Commission proved beyond doubt that the control over investments including transaction fees was serious lacking.

**So, is the Board of Trustees really in control? The facts indicate otherwise.**

Adamus P Stemmet  
Spokesman: AMAGP

*Comment*

*Let's hope the recovery will include investment fees paid to agents/facilitators or go-betweens involved, if malfeasance was involved.*

*Synopsis*

## **UNIONS AT SAA OUTLINE THEIR STRATEGY FOR NEW NATIONAL CARRIER**



Numsa and South African Cabin Crew Association (SACCA) members picket at the SAA Airways Park in Kempton Park on 15 November 2019. Picture: Mia Lindeque/EWN

Kgomotso Modise  
Eyewitness News

Trade unions at SAA have formulated a strategic plan that outlines what they believe a new national carrier should look like.

SAA's business rescue practitioners have been given 25 days to produce a business rescue plan for the beleaguered airline. They have submitted a proposal to terminate contracts after government refused to pump any more cash into the ailing airline.

The Labour Court ruled last week that the retrenchment process should be halted.

Last week, Parliament's SCOPA rejected the BRP's draft plan, saying they should focus on saving the airline.

Numsa, the South African Airways Pilots' Association (SAAPA), and SACCA said that they had considered the pressure on the public purse, especially during this time of the coronavirus pandemic. Numsa spokesperson Phakamile Hlubi-Majola said: "Our plan is prudent and it's designed to make SAA commercially viable and financially self-sufficient. It will be disastrous for South Africa's economy if we are unable to provide vital airlift and connectivity when Africa and the world emerge from the current COVID-19 crisis."

Hlubi-Majola said that the unions had also drawn up a list of demands. "A forensic audit and a PFMA [Public Finance Management Act] investigation of all expenditure since the appointment of the BRP. The immediate cessation of the BRP's legal challenges and maximisation of consulting and legal fees.

And if they are not willing to categorically support the vision of the new national airline, they must resign and the withdrawal of their legal advisors," she said.

*Comment*

*SAA's problems go back decades and are similar to the other SOE. Closing will definitely not be an economic disaster, there are too many other airlines waiting to take over. We really don't really need a national carrier, it is just for ego.*

*It seems the BRP are window dressing from the demands placed on them - do it our way or else? SCOPA and unions say no to closure, where and when is the arguing going to stop? Don't forget minister Gordhan also has a proposal to keep SAA.*

*The losers will be the employees.*

*Oorsig*

*Die wêreld se vlak obsessie met jeug steek Anneliese Burgess nog altyd dwars in die krop, maar in die tyd van Covid-19 neem die narratief oor ouer mense 'n uiters donker wending. Ons moet ons houding teenoor ouer mense radikaal verander en ophou om hulle na die kante van die samelewing te skuif, sê sy.*

Vrye Weekblad

MY vriendin is 70, haar man is 68. Sy is 'n sielkundige, hy 'n kunstenaar. In die tyd voor COVID het ons klompie elke Dinsdag vroegeand 'n paar doppe op hulle dek deurgewerk. Nou moet ons maar op die foon praat (en die whisky is in elk geval ook op).

"Ek was vantevore nooit regtig bewus van my ouderdom nie," vertel sy my dié week. "Tot nou. Tot COVID. Ek lewe my lewe presies soos ek dit 10 of of 20 jaar gelede gedoen het. Natuurlik is daar 'n paar ekstra skete en pyne by, maar ek sien myself as net so integraal deel van die samelewing as vantevore. Ek konsulteer nog elke dag met kliënte, ek lees wyd, ek skryf akademiese stukke, ek stap, ek swem, ek werk in die tuin, ek drink 'n dop of twee of drie."

Ek en Judy lewe ons lewe op presies dieselfde manier, al is daar biologies 'n 20-jaar-verskil in ons ouderdomme. Dié ouderdomsverskil is totaal irrelevant.

My broer is 43 – en sy beste vriend is 76. Hulle het in die verloop van 'n 13 jaar lange vriendskap die Oos-Kaap saam platgetrap vir hul gemeenskaplike obsessie met rotskuns. Vir hom is die ouderdomsverskil ook heeltemal irrelevant. “Dit kom nie regtig op nie. Natuurlik is daar meer fisieke fragiliteit by hom as by my, maar daardie werklikheid is maar net ingebak in hoe ons met mekaar omgaan.”

### **Offerande vir die aandelemark**

“Maar nou, met COVID,” sê my vriendin, “moet ek oor en oor hoor hoe kwesbaar ek is, hoe oor die muur ek is, dat ek myself moet wegsluit in 'n hok, want COVID gaan my eerste doodmaak – en dan die ergste soos ek is in elk geval useless vir die ekonomie.”

Ek kan hoor hoe hierdie gewoonlik superkalm vrou ewe skielik nie meer kalm is nie. “Dit is asof alles wat ek is, weggevee word deur 'n gesprek oor wie ons moet laat doodgaan sodat die aandelemark kan stabiliseer. Al my drome van nog reis, van verdere avonture, van weer werkswinkels elders in die wêreld hou, word ewe skielik ontken deur hierdie koor wat sê: ‘Laat die oues maar vrek,’” sê sy driftig. Ek hoor hoe aggressief sy aan haar e-sigaret teug.

“Dit berokken ongelooflike skade. Die narratief is eerstens dat COVID nie so erg is nie, want ouer mense wat doodgaan, is nie so 'n groot verlies vir die samelewing soos jongmense nie, want ons vervul net nie dieselfde ekonomiese funksie as hulle nie. Maar nog meer pervers: Eintlik is ons 'n las vir die ekonomie; so ons is heeltemal opofferbaar.

“'n Samelewing wat die waarde van enige van sy mense in terme van die aandelemark evalueer, is 'n samelewing wat die pad byster geraak het,” sê sy.

### **Stop die infantilisering**

John Simpson is die BBC se 75 jaar oue redakteur van wêreldsake. Hy skryf oor hoe

die diskriminasie teenoor ouer mense deur die pandemie op die spits gedryf word.

“Daar is baie ouderdomsdiskriminasie in ons samelewing; groot organisasies veral is geneig daartoe. Jy hoef net na die spesiale stem te luister wat soveel jonger mense aansit as hulle met ouer of sieklike mense praat om te besef hulle projekteer hulle eie houdings op ouer mense.”

“Hulle is neerbuigend en infantiliseer hulle. Ouer mense het hierdie tipe behandeling begin aanvaar, en miskien selfs begin verwag. Sir Muir Grey [skrywer van die boek *Sod 70!*] sê net soos mans moes leer om op te hou om neerhalende en seksistiese uitdrukkings jeens vroue te gebruik, so moet ons ophou om beperkende uitdrukkings soos ‘bejaardes’, ‘versorger’ en ‘oues van dae’ te gebruik vir ouer mense. En ek stem saam.”

Adamus Stemmet is die 85-jarige woordvoerder van die Vereniging vir Monitering en Voorspraak vir Regeringspensioene (en *Vrye Weekblad*-leser). Hy het hierdie week vir my 'n woedende brief geskryf nadat ek die woord “oompie” in 'n bulletin gebruik het. Hy is heeltemal reg. Hy skryf:

“En dan die alewige oumensies, oompies, tjies, tjies. Ons het waaragtig nie 'n oumensietaaltjie nodig nie. Dit is vernederend. Sê vir my hoe die presidentjie en sy ministertjies gaan bepaal wie oumensies is? Ek weet van mense van 60 wat stokoud is, maar ook van 80-jariges wat nog 'n volle dag se werk doen. Wie sou jy jou sê is die oumensies?”

“Hierdie oompie is een van jou ou mensies wat nog 'n volle dag se werk doen om die ministertjies, vakbondleiertjies, professortjies, doktortjies en ander skelms (hulle het nie tjies nie) saam met ander oompies en antietjies te help weghou van ons pensioentjies en soms darem tyd kan maak om jou interessante koerantjie ook nog te lees!”

Die taal wat ons gebruik is ontsettend belangrik, sê Rayne Stroebel, besturende direkteur van Geratec, 'n Wes-Kaapse maatskappy wat spesialiseer in navorsing oor ouderdomsverskynsels.



"Dit gaan verder as net die woorde wat ons gebruik om na ouer mense te verwys. Dink aan hoeveel keer mens byvoorbeeld sê jy het 'n 'Alzheimer-moment' of 'n 'senior oomblik' as jy iets vergeet het. Selfs daardie sogenaamde grappige verwysing is 'n verkinderliking van ouer mense se ervaring."

## **Ons is ons stories**

Ek onthou die keer toe my pa – hy moes toe al baie laat in sy 60's gewees het – vir my vertel het hoe hy 'n veel jonger man wat hom by die koöperasie gehelp het (tot dié se groot konsternasie) as "oom" aangespreek het. Dit is in my geheue vasgebrand.

"Die ding met ouer word," het hy my ná die voorval vertel, "is dat jy presies dieselfde voel, maar mense begin jou anders hanteer. Jy voel nie ouer nie, jy word ouer gemaák."

My vriendin die sielkundige sê: "Ons raak die stories wat ons onself vertel, en dit is hoekom die COVID-narratief so diep traumatiserend is vir ouer mense. Dit trek die mat onder jou uit en dit ondermyn mense se geestestoestand, want aan die een kant is daar die diepliggende vrees oor COVID, en aan die ander kant is daar die ontmensliking."

'n New Yorkse kunstenaar skryf die volgende in The Huffington Post:

"Net omdat ek 90 is, beteken dit nie ek het nie dinge om te leer en vaardighede om te slyp nie. Ons lewens, ons drome, ons produktiwiteit eindig nie wanneer ons 65 word nie – daardie ouderdom wat die samelewing besluit het is 'oud genoeg'.

"Senior burgers kan produktief wees en bydra tot die wêreld, terwyl hulle ook die bykomende dimensie van ouderdom en ervaring saambring. Ek dink nie daar kan enige grens geplaas word op wanneer iemand se lewe nie meer waardevol is nie."

## **Die kultuur van institusionalisering**

Dié skuif van ouer mense uit die hoofstroom-samelewing is integraal deel van die wêreldbeskouing waarmee ek (en ek aanvaar ook baie van ons lesers) grootgeword het. Mense werk hulle hele lewe lank vir aftrede; daardie byna mitiese tyd van uitspan en rustiger raak nadat jy 65 word. So baie mense

werk hulle lewe lank om 'n plekkie in 'n aftreede-oord te kan bekostig.

'n Belangrike subteks van immigrasie is byvoorbeeld dat jonger mense dit doen om "n beter lewe" vir hulle kinders te gee. In soveel gevalle is daardie beter lewe ten koste van hul ouers wat dan "vir hul veiligheid" na 'n tehuis of sorgsentrum geskuif word terwyl die lewe aangaan vir die jonger geslag.

Ek moet nou baie versigtig wees om nie my vooroordele oor die wegpak van ouer mense in gheto's te laat oorspoel in 'n veralgemening wat juis ouer mense se reg om keuses oor hul eie lewe uit te oefen te verguis nie. Daar is baie mense vir wie die aftreede-opsie juis outonomieit verseker en hulle die kans gee om in veiligheid en sonder afhanklikheid hulle lewe te kan lei.

Maar daar kan ook geen twyfel wees dat die institusionalisering van ouer mense instrumenteel is in die "onsigbaar maak" van hulle in die breër samelewing nie.

## **Wat is oud?**

Jane Goodall, beroemde primatoloog en die wêreld se voorste kenner van sjimpansees, is 89 en sy werk nog volstoom aan bewaringsinisiatiewe oor die wêreld heen. Die beroemde avonturier sir Ranulph Fiennes is 76 en hy beplan tans sy volgende ekspedisie. David Attenborough is 94. Donald Trump is 74, Joe Biden amper-amper 78 en Bernie Sanders 79.

Pres. Ramaphosa is 69. Lindiwe Sisulu is 66. So ook Angela Merkel. Nelson Mandela het op 76 president geword.

My pa is 84 en boer nog steeds, stadiger en moeisamer natuurlik. My ma is 76 en het tot die koms van COVID19 nog voldag in haar winkel in die dorp gewerk. My oupa het gelewe tot hy 104 was, het in sy huis op die dorp gewoon en het nog 'n paar weke voor sy heengaan sy gebruiklike daaglikse potjie golf gespeel.

## **Omgekeerd**

Ek sluit af met 'n erkenning van my eie vooroordeel. Populêre kultuur se obsessie met jeug en jeugdigheid verveel my. Ek vind die fokus op die uiterlike vermoeiend. Ek vind

die insig en ervaring van ouer mense veel meer aantreklik as die ongetemperde selfvertroue van die jeug.

Ek hou van ouer word en om aan die ander kant van die halfeeu-mytpaal te wees. Ek hou van die ewilbrium wat daarmee saamkom. Ek hou van my gryser hare. Ek hou daarvan om ge-“tannie” te word. Dit voel vir my reg. Oud word vul my nie met vrees nie, hoewel ek wel 'n ongelooflik donker vrees het om my ouers te verloor.

Ek het geen nostalgiese vir my jeug nie, maar ek fantasieer beslis ook nie oor aftrede nie. Ek wil nog baie doen en ek hoop ek kan aanhou werk tot ek nie meer kan nie.

Ek wil veg vir 'n wêreld en 'n land waar ouer mense deel bly van die samelewing, waar hulle stemme, wysheid en opinies ernstig opgeneem word, waar hulle nie weggesteek word in instellings nie, waar vroue nie dink hulle moet hulle plooi wegstryk met plastiese chirurgie nie en bowenal, waar ouer mense nie weggedefinieer word as opofferbaar nie.

Want ouer mense is onvervangbaar – hulle is ons konneksie met onself. 'n Onontbeerlike bate, nie 'n offerande vir ekonomiese groei nie.

En ek hoop ek en Judy kan nog vir 'n paar dekades saam whisky drink op 'n Dinsdagaand.

Anneliese Burgess

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**Vrye Weekblad**

*Kommentaar*

*'n Insiggewende stuk vir ons wat pensioenarisse is, van plan is om binnekort te wees, of sommer net een van die regering se 60-70 groep is wat veronderstel is om nou by die huis te moet bly. Goeie informasie, ek voel ook soos sy, ons het werklik so baie om nog by te dra.*

**IMPORTANT NOTICE. PLEASE READ**

**OR READ AGAIN IF YOU HAVE ALREADY**

**SEE THE BOX ON THE NEXT PAGE TOO**

**Please take a while or two or three to consider what the all-volunteer AMAGP is all about and is actually and continuously achieving. Our Facebook page has more than 31 000 members and continually growing; we must be doing something right. We need you to inform and motivate all the civil servants, policemen, soldiers, correctional services members, etc, you know to join the AMAGP to strengthen our voice when promoting the sustainability of your pension. We need many more AMAGP members, not just the Fb page. Of which there are already over 4 000, but not enough yet if we consider over a million GEPF members. Keep in mind we have just less than 2 million members, of which about 450 000 are pensioners and the other about 1 380 000 are still working but contributing members of our Fund.**

### **- ROLE OF THE FACEBOOK PAGE - GEPF WATCHDOG/WAGHOND**

This Facebook page is the social media platform of the non-profit organisation “The Association for the Monitoring and Advocacy of Government Pensions” (AMAGP). The AMAGP has only one agenda point – safeguarding the GEPF against looting and mismanagement.

Most of our GEPF members are content with the fact that pensioners still get their monthly pension (and some increases annually), and they are convinced by GEPF newsletters and ambitious briefings by the GEPF Board of Trustees that our Pension Fund is in a superb condition. There is, however, another side to the coin!

As a member of the GEPF (working or retired), this Facebook page will keep you updated about any developments affecting the health of YOUR Pension Fund. It also provides you with the opportunity to participate in the debate and raise issues of concern. Although it is not part of the core business of this page, you may also raise matters regarding the day to day management of your pension administration, which we will gladly refer to the Government Pensions Administration Agency (GPAA). Please read the articles that are posted on the wall, BUT also read items saved under “Announcements” and “Files”. You can get

further information on our website – there is no reason to be in the dark regarding our Pension Fund, and what you must do as a member.

This page will only have any value for you if you join the AMAGP. Kindly take note that you do not have to pay membership fees, or do any work for the AMAGP if you do not wish to do so – BUT your membership will add one more brick to the wall that the AMAGP is building to protect our/your money. You can complete the online registration form under “Announcements” (English and Afrikaans) at the top of the Facebook page, or you can visit our website at [www.AMAGP.co.za](http://www.AMAGP.co.za), and complete the online application form that you will find under “Membership”. There are also registration forms in English and Afrikaans that you can print, complete and return to us under “Files” on the Facebook page.

## JOIN THE MOVEMENT



**STEP 1** JOIN THE FACEBOOK GROUP

**STEP 2** BECOME AN AMAGP MEMBER

- 1: Scroll to the top of the AMAGP page;
- 2: Click on “Announcements”;
- 3: Click on “amagp membership”;
- 4: Complete the form :)

## PROTECT OUR FUND

The AMAGP does not want any GEPF member to leave the Fund, because it still is the best pension fund in the RSA – BUT, we as members and owners of the Fund have to protect it against abuse.

Welcome to our page – please help us to get thousands more GEPF members to join this page and the AMAGP, so that we will have the required bargaining power. **We are the owners of the GEPF**, and we have the right and the power to force the GEPF Board of

Trustees, and the Public Investment Corporation (PIC), to manage and invest OUR money in a responsible and profitable way.

## VRYWARING

Die AMAGP maak die Nuusbrieff beskikbaar as ‘n diens aan beide die publiek en AMAGP lede.

The AMAGP is nie verantwoordelik en uitdruklik vrywaar alle aanspreeklikheid vir enige skade van enige aard wat sal ontstaan uit die gebruik of aanhaling of afhanklikheid van enige informasie vervat in die Nuusbrieff nie. Alhoewel die informasie in die Nuusbrieff gereeld opgedateer word, kan geen waarborg gegee word dat die informasie reg, volledig en op datum is nie.

Alhoewel die AMAGP Nuusbrieff skakels mag bevat wat direkte toegang tot ander internet bronne verleen, insluitende ander webtuistes, is die AMAGP nie verantwoordelik vir die akkuraatheid of inhoudelikheid van informasie binne daardie bronne of webtuistes nie.

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