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VOL. 103, NO. 18

# Beth Sholom Celebrates 70th Anniversary with Special Shabbat Feb. 8; Dedicates New Torah Gifted by Notowich Family



Beth Sholom's leaders, May 1976. Seated (l-r): Joe Altfater, Herman Appleson, Sam Weinraub, Maurice Fink. Standing: (l-r) Oscar Makowsky, Stanley Yukon, Henry Samuels, Alvin Shultz, Herb Notowich, Norman Sulkin.

Beth Sholom Synagogue will celebrate its legacy through the dedication of a new Torah at a special 70th Anniversary Shabbat on Saturday, February 8. The shul, which received its state charter on January 4, 1955, was the first Conservative congregation in Memphis and the Mid-South. Today, the synagogue continues its tradition of being a warm, caring, and hamish community where members feel like family and the

synagogue feels like home.

The new Sefer Torah, which was sewn and inscribed in Israel, is a gift from Alvin Notowich and his immediate family, Sarna, Sam, Jake, Chloe and Brooke Notowich, in memory of his beloved wife, Marcia Notowich, z''l. This is the second Torah gifted by Notowich, who attended Beth Sholom as a child and served as president from 1985 to 1987. The first Torah was giv-



Marcia, z"l, and Alvin Notowich.

en by Notowich and his wife in memory of his parents, Sam and Sadye Notowich, early members of the congregation.

"It is apt to dedicate a new Torah as we celebrate our 70th anniversary because generous gifts such as the Notowichs' have helped to build and sustain our incredible shul throughout our history," says Keri Unowsky, Beth Sholom's president. "Our members are as devoted today as our 19 founding families were 70 years ago."

## Conservative Judaism: A Middle Road

Beth Sholom came into being because of two friends, Joseph H. Altfater and Dr. Justin H. Adler, who wanted to participate in traditional Jewish ritual suited to contemporary life.

Susan Adler Thorp, Justin H. Adler's daughter, explains, "Beth Sholom started as an idea between my father and Uncle Joe [as she called Altfater] in the

(See **Beth Sholom** Page 4)

## Memphis Lions were Proud to Represent the Memphis Jewish Community at ILOJC 2025



Memphis Lions of Judah gather to celebrate Lion Elieen Baer Posner with the Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award (KWF).

On a snowy Sunday morning, 19 Memphis Jewish Federation Lions of Judah (a dynamic group of philanthropic women) boarded a plane for the 2025 International Lion of Judah Conference being held in Atlanta. Over the course of 2 ½ days they joined with more than 1700 like-minded women from around the world to delve into the biggest issues facing our Jewish world today.

The event featured addresses by members of hostage families and those who lost loved ones since Oct. 7, communal leaders, U.S. officials and Israeli politicians — specifically Amos Hochstein, the White House's special envoy, and Israeli First Lady Michal Herzog, who received the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Award for her work in exposing Hamas' sexual crimes.

"This was the largest Memphis con-

tingent we've had at this bi-annual conference," said Laura Linder, president and CEO of Jewish Community Partners who attended the conference. "It was especially meaningful to have Memphis participants whose ages range from 30's to 80's! We were inspired by the programming and by each other."

In the opening plenary, conference attendees were treated to a breathtaking performance by Israeli superstar Eden Golan and inspired by stories of advocacy and resilience, including from Columbia University master's student Noah Fay who is recognized for her fight against antisemitism on college campuses.

Throughout the conference there were Impact Forums allowing each partici-

(See Lions Page 2)

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## Alleged Nashville School **Shooter Appears to Have** Praised Hitler and Shared Neo-Nazi Content



A police car sits on the street in Nashville patrol in an undated photo. Credit: Getty Images

#### By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) - Police in Tennessee are investigating whether an antisemitic manifesto posted online was written by a teenager accused of carrying out a fatal school shooting in Nashville last Wednesday.

The alleged shooter at Antioch High School appears to have posted a livestream of the shooting as well as content on his social media accounts prior to the attack, in which one student was killed. The material was removed after its connection to the shooting became

According to "The Tennessean" newspaper, the materials attributed to the shooter, identified as Solomon Henderson, included statements praising Adolf Hitler and opposing "race-mixing," as well as materials related to past school shootings, including a deadly one at a Nashville Christian school in 2023. Authorities say Henderson, a 17-year-old student at Antioch, killed himself during the incident after fatally shooting another.

"Our analysts located a sprawling manifesto full of anti-Black content, references to accelerationism and antisemitism," Carla Hill of the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism, told the newspaper. "It also plagiarized from various far right manifestos and publications, including Terrorgram Collective and a manifesto by Matthew Harris."

Harris is a former philosophy instructor who was arrested in 2022 for making a mass shooting threat against the University of California, Los Angeles,

where he had worked. Harris, who is Black, posted an 800-page manifesto that included explicit calls for violence against Jews and white people. The Terrorgram Collective is a white supremacist group whose leaders were arrested in September.

The alleged shooter at Antioch High School is also Black; according to local media reports, the materials seen as likely to have been posted by him said the writer was "ashamed to be Black." The reports said the content also included a poster for the Goyim Defense League, whose members distribute antisemitic propaganda, and a declaration that "Candace Owens influenced me above all each time she spoke." Owens is a Black far-right commentator who has embraced antisemitism.

Henderson was allegedly radicalized online. "These online spaces not only glorify violent fantasies, extremist ideologies, and mass killers but also fuel offline violence - acts that are often as incomprehensible as the ideologies that drive them," Oren Segal, VP of the ADL Center on Extremism, said in a statement.

The Tennessee shooting adds to a long list of incidents apparently carried out by people who have been radicalized online by far-right movements. They include the 2018 Pittsburgh synagogue shooting in which 11 Jews were murdered at prayer; a 2019 synagogue shooting in Germany that was livestreamed; and mass killings in Buffalo, New York; Texas; and New Zealand by shooters who posted about their belief

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## Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. Jan. 31, 2025 / 2 Shevat, 5785......5:09 p.m. Havdalah, Sat. Feb. 1, 2025 / 3 Shevat, 5785 ........................ 6:08 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Bo

in the antisemitic "great replacement" conspiracy theory.

The streaming platform Kick said it had removed footage from an attack in Nashville that it said was "partially livestreamed" on its platform. "KICK rapidly banned the account and removed the video. Violence has no place on KICK," the company tweeted. "We are actively working with law enforcement and taking all appropriate steps to support their investigation." HW

#### Lions...

(Continued From Page 1) pant to select topics of interest to them. Sessions on advocacy, financial literacy, women's rights, antisemitism, leadership and many more were offered, all of which featured leading topical experts.

Highlighting the conference was the honoring of Eileen Baer Posner, longtime Memphis resident and Federation executive committee member as Memphis' pick for the 2025 Kipnis-Wilson/ Friedland Award winner. This award recognizes a Lion of Judah who takes community commitment via philanthropy and volunteerism to extraordinary levels.

"I was so proud to represent our community," continued Linder. "Memphis was well-represented, and participants felt inspired, albeit overwhelmed, by the experience. Everyone returned home ready to roll up their sleeves and do more to strengthen our community." HW



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## The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is Monday—Friday at 11:30 a.m. All programs start at 12:15 p.m. Monthly Luncheon is at noon.

Monday, February 3 Speaker, Sherry Harbour

**Topic: Senior Fraud in Today's Time** 

Mrs. Harbour spoke previously about Senior Scams, and it was a terrific and well- received talk. Whether you are a senior or the child of seniors, this talk is very much needed with all the frauds that are targeted at seniors. Please call the MJCC front desk to make a reservation at 901-761-0810.

#### Wednesday, February 5

Field Trip to Baron Hirsch Synagogue for their Monthly Luncheon. Everyone so enjoyed their last luncheon with great food, terrific entertainment and a lively Bingo game that followed! You can ride the Senior Bus from the MJCC, be picked up if you are in the area, or meet us there. Reservations can be called in directly to Baron Hirsch at 901-683-7485 or call the front desk of the MJCC to be put on the list.

Monday, February 10 Rabbi Talk

Speaker: Rabbi Akiva Males, The Rav of Young Israel Congregation

Topic: Tu' B'Shevat and the Judean Palms Amazing Rebirth

Rabbi Males talks are always an interesting highlight to the day! He always brings a unique perspective to any topic. He is a knowledgeable and fun speaker to hear. One of his last talks on "How Coca Cola became Kosher" is still talked about by the group who heard him. Come learn and enjoy this nice, interesting subject.

## Wednesday, February 12 First Bingo Game of 2025!

We'll have special prizes and a different game to make things more interesting! Come have a nice lunch and enjoy a classic game of Bingo with prizes. Reservations are required for lunch.

Please join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch from the kitchens at Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required the day before by 1 p.m. by contacting Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org or by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. Steve works Monday thru Thursday 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **HW** 

## Have a Simcha?

share with The Hebrew Watchman readers 901.763.2215

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## Jewish Org Blasts Belgian Report Rejecting Holocaust Compensation

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – The World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) accused the Belgian government last Monday of evading responsibility and denying its moral obligation in response to an official report rejecting compensation to Holocaust survivors.

The unusually blunt reaction followed the release [the week prior] of an official report on the role of the National Railway Company of Belgium (SNCB) during the Holocaust. The report, concluded after years of study and with the number of elderly Holocaust survivors fading fast, argued that the railway organization did not owe compensation to survivors for its part in facilitating deportations.

"To reject compensation from the perpetrator to the victim denies the moral obligation by SNCB to those it wronged; instead it would allow the railroad to dilute and evade the necessity of taking any current action by permitting it to spread the blame widely across Belgian society," the World Jewish Restitution Organization statement said.

Nearly six years ago, the Belgian Parliament unanimously passed a resolution requesting that the federal government open an independent investigation into the role of the National Railway Company of Belgium in deporting over 25,000 Jews and more than 350 Roma on 28 convoys from Mechelen, Bel-

gium, to extermination camps during the Holocaust. Most of the deportees were murdered on arrival.

The Belgian national railway company was paid the equivalent of millions of dollars by the Nazis for its services, according to a 2023 report by a war research center attached to the State Archives of Belgium.

The Jewish restitution organization, which advocates compensation for Holocaust victims, said that the Belgian government report, presented on Jan. 17, "offered an important opportunity to confront the historical injustices suffered by Holocaust survivors and their families," yet failed to do so. The organization noted that this is in contrast to the acceptance of responsibility for the victims by both France and the Netherlands

The WJRO criticized the committee that produced the report for failing to consult survivor representatives, adding that it is urgent to take action while the remaining Holocaust survivors are still alive.

"We urge the government to act quickly to ensure that the railway provides compensation to those who suffered and their heirs," the WJRO statement continued.

There are currently about 200,000 Holocaust survivors around the world, half of them in Israel. **HW** 

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## 2 Synagogues in Sydney Graffitied with Swastikas

By Ben Sales

(JTA) – Two synagogues in Sydney were defaced on consecutive days with swastikas and other antisemitic language.

Police are investigating the attacks, which come at a time of heightened antisemitism in Australia, and about a month after a synagogue in Melbourne was torched in what the country's leaders called an antisemitic attack. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese condemned the graffiti [that] Saturday morning.

"The vile graffiti we've seen overnight, including at the Newtown Synagogue, is abhorrent and needs to stop immediately," he wrote on X. "Australia is a better place than this."

The Friday before, according to Australian reports, Southern Sydney Synagogue was graffitied in red and black with swastikas as well as the phrases "Hitler on top" and "Allahu akbar," Arabic for "God is great." The following day, Saturday, the city's Newtown Synagogue was likewise graffitied with red swastikas. And a house in Sydney was tagged with the phrase "F— Jews."

Albanese noted in his statement that one year ago, Australia banned the use of Nazi symbols. The law followed the lead of many other countries and was enacted after the symbols had been seen at anti-immigrant and anti-LGBTQ rallies

"We made it illegal to use Nazi and other hate symbols because there's no place in Australia for antisemitism," he wrote. "The people that committed these crimes should face the full force of the law." **HW** 

#### Beth Sholom...

(Continued From Page 1)



Dr. Justin H. Adler (left) with officials from Conservative Congregations at the Concorde Resort in 1955.

living room in my house in 1955. They felt uncomfortable in both the Reform movement or orthodoxy. They talked about how they had heard about the Conservative Judaism movement and felt it offered a middle ground."

Altfater and Adler floated the idea to friends and acquaintances who might like a new option, and on December 16, 1954, a group of 37 men and women met in Meyer and Fannie Starr's home and voted to establish a Conservative shul in Memphis. Herman Appleson, Jack Langer and Bernard Schnierer worked with Altfater and Adler to apply for a charter: David Hanover, a Temple Israel member, drew up the document.

The state of Tennessee issued a charter for Beth Sholom Synagogue on January 4, 1955, and the congregation lost no time in getting started. One week later, founding members conducted Kabbalat Shabbat Services and Oneg Shabbat in the chapel of B'nai B'rith Home and Hospital in Midtown. Rabbi James A. Wax, z"l, of Temple Israel lent a Torah to the fledgling congregation, and Langer led services.

#### The First Year

Without a building of its own, the congregation held services and meetings all over Memphis. Its first membership meeting took place on January 27, 1955, in the community room of the Union Planters National Bank branch on Summer Avenue. It held its first High Holiday Services and celebrated its first bar mitzvah at the Memphis Little Theatre (in the Pink Palace). Hebrew Sunday School classes were held at the Highland Nursery on Walker and staffed by volunteers. Herman Appleson was installed as the first president at a dinner and ceremony at the Hotel Claridge. An inaugural Sisterhood meeting took place on March 12, 1955, just over two months since the shul had received its charter. The shul hired its first spiritual leader, Rabbi Herbert Berger, who assumed the pulpit on August 5, 1955.

Notowich says his parents were among Beth Sholom's first members. "I grew up in that shul. Everybody had to do something to make it work. If something needed to be painted, we painted it." Notowich says he thinks the congregation's hands-on involvement created the warm, caring, and friendly atmosphere that still exists today.

Finally, on May 8, 1956, with the help of the late Morris Fogelman, the congregation purchased a permanent home, a two-story white house on 5.4 acres of land at 482 Mendenhall. A parsonage was added adjacent to the building in 1957. In 1959, Rabbi Arie Becker, the shul's third spiritual leader, moved in. Rabbi Becker, an Auschwitz survivor, became an inspiring and transformational leader who served 20 years until his death in 1979. Considered to be a Talmudic genius, Rabbi Becker was still approachable. He was happy to stop what he was doing to give a newcomer a tour of the shul.

"Rabbi Becker was such a wonderful man," says Dee Altfater Kline, Joe Altfater's daughter. "The only time I ever saw my father cry was when Rabbi Becker died."

The congregation continued to grow, thanks in no small part to Rabbi Becker.

In 1961, a concrete educational wing was added to the house. Beth Sholom purchased land within the Eastlawn Cemetery Grounds to open Beth Sholom Memorial Gardens, which was consecrated on September 18, 1966.

#### **Building a New Building**

But more room was needed, and the shul turned to members once again to help. Both Altfater and Adler, along with many other devoted members, donated and raised money to build a new building on the shul's existing site. The building was dedicated on March 5, 1967. In 1986, Altfater paid off the mortgage, and the shul hosted a "mortgage-burning" celebration on November 9. Notowich, who was the congrega-



Rabbi Arie Becker (left) and Dr. Justin H. Adler hold the Torah that survived the Holocaust that was gifted by Adler to Beth Sholom in 1968.

tion's president at the time, says it was a huge relief to be free of the debt.

"Joe was considered to be the father, major founder, and guardian spirit of Beth Sholom," wrote his widow, Gertrude Altfater, in 1999. "Over his life, until his death, he continued to be completely supportive of Beth Sholom with his time, efforts and financial support." He died in 1998. In 1990, Altfater received Beth Sholom's highest honor, the Arie Becker Hevrah Award. It cited Altfater as "the moving force in the founding of Conservative Judaism in Memphis and the Guardian Spirit of Beth Sholom Synagogue."

But in 1980, Beth Sholom suffered a tragic loss. Thieves broke into the building and stole the Sifrei Torah. They stripped them of their silver breastplates, rimonim, and yads, and dumped them into the Wolf River. (Sifrei Torah stolen from Anshei Sphard Beth El Emeth were also found in the river.) Sadly, attempts to restore the sacred scrolls were fruitless. The scrolls were buried in Beth Sholom Memorial Gardens in 2010.

Among the Sifrei Torah lost was a Torah that had survived the Holocaust. It was donated by Dr. and Mrs. Adler when the synagogue turned 13, the age of bar mitzvah. The 150-year-old Torah had been buried for safekeeping in Breslau, Germany, in November 1939. The Torah had to be smuggled out of Eastern Europe to come to the United States.

#### **Women Counted in Minyanim**

As times have changed, so has Conservative Judaism and Beth Sholom. While it took several votes before it passed, the board voted to count women in minyanim in 1988. Rachel Shankman was the first woman to have an aliya to the Torah—an event conducted with little fanfare to avoid ruffling the feathers of congregants who still opposed it.

Beth Sholom moved into its current home at 6675 Humphreys Boulevard in 2000. In addition to the shul's modern, airy main sanctuary, there is the intimate Rabbi Arie Becker Chapel, donated by the late Dr. Murray N. Murray. The chapel is adorned with an exquisite series of eight stained glass windows that originally graced the sanctuary of Temple Israel in Blytheville, Arkansas.

Notowich, who is donating the new Torah, notes that Beth Sholom members continue to be hands-on and deeply involved in all aspects of Beth Sholom, especially ritual. "When I was young, Rabbi Becker was the only one who could read Torah," he says. "Now we have about two dozen congregants who read Torah. That's amazing."

Unowsky, Beth Sholom president, adds that membership continues to grow. "The warmth of our community and our enthusiasm is contagious," she says. "Our members are as dedicated today as they've been throughout our history. We're looking at a bright future." **HW** 



phone camera

## Why Create An Estate Plan?

By Benjamin I. Wachtel, Esq. and David L. Mendelson, Esq.

Estate Planning applies to everyone, regardless of age or net worth, in different ways and at different times throughout an individual's life. More specifically, estate planning applies to anyone who owns a home, has children or grandchildren, has been divorced, owns a business, or expects to receive an inheritance.

Here are seven (7) examples of areas proper estate planning serves to protect:

1. INCAPACITY: Proper planning enables one to control and designate who will manage the individual's or couple's affairs in the event of disability or death. When one fails to plan properly in the State of Tennessee and becomes incapacitated, through a Conservatorship court case, a Probate Judge will determine who makes key decisions (medical and property) for the incapacitated individual

2. LONG TERM CARE: Proper planning enables individuals and couples to plan for long-term care and long-term



care expenses. Nursing homes today can cost as much as \$125,000 per year or more. Thus, a long-term stay can impoverish wealthy families. With proper planning, however, one can shelter assets and keep most if not all of the family's wealth intact. Because over two thirds of those who reach the age of sixty-five (65) will be placed in a nursing home for some period of time, in many cases, Long-Term Care planning is essential to preserving the individual or couple's assets.

3. PROBATE COURT: Proper planning enables individuals and couples to avoid Probate Court during the individu-

al's lifetime (as discussed briefly in "1." above) and when one dies. As mentioned in previous articles, Probate Court is public, expensive, time-consuming and, whenever possible, in our opinion, should almost always be avoided.

- 4. CREDITOR PROTECTION: Proper planning enables individuals and couples to protect assets inherited by heirs from lawsuits, divorces and other potential claims.
- 5. INCENTIVE PLANNING: Proper planning enables individuals and couples to impose discipline upon and incentivize children and/or grandchildren who may not be capable or experienced in asset management. Proper planning ensures that children and/or grandchildren spend their inheritance wisely and receive their inheritance in the right ways and at the right times throughout their lives. Otherwise, children and grandchildren will receive their inheritance in one lump sum as soon as they reach the age of eighteen (18), which,

in our experience, is typically before heirs are mature enough to do so. Proper planning shields inheritance from inexperience and mismanagement by including specific conditions, incentives and rewards in the plan.

6. SPECIAL NEEDS PLANNING: Proper planning enables individuals and couples to provide for Special Needs children and grandchildren. Special considerations and planning are needed to avoid the loss of governmental benefits for Special Needs individuals and beneficiaries.

7. LIMIT FIGHTING WITHIN THE FAMILY: Sadly, in our experience, once money is involved in an estate, beneficiaries and heirs often fight over their inheritance, which often leads to lengthy and expensive estate litigation. Proper planning enables individuals and couples to prevent or discourage such fights and challenges and can even work to bring the family together at the time of death or incapacity. **HW** 

## 'Kinocide' Report: Hamas Brutality Systematically Targeted Families



Amid the ruins of Kibbutz Be'eri after Hamas terrorists attacked, Dec. 20, 2023. Credit: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90.

#### By Rolene Marks

(JNS) – The Civil Commission on October 7th Crimes by Hamas against Women and Children released a ground-breaking report last week. Titled "Kinocide: The Weaponization of Families," its key findings demonstrate the systematic and widespread targeting of families "aimed at terrorizing and breaking the spirit of kins and entire communities."

The report, prepared by Dr. Cochav Elkayam-Levy, Dr. Michal Gilad and Dr. Ilya Rudyak from the Civil Commission, introduces the term "Kinocide," which is defined as "the weaponization of families and the exploitation of familial bonds as a distinct form of violence."

To compile the report, the commission reviewed a substantial volume of materials and evidence including photographs, video footage, audio recordings, satellite images, text messages exchanged as the attack unfolded, recorded testimonies, media coverage, investigative reports and public databases.

A profoundly harrowing read, it details Hamas atrocities committed against families and communities on Oct. 7, 2023. They included acts such as: killing and severe injury in the presence of other family members; eliminating entire family units; abduction of families, including children; using digital and social media to broadcast abuses directly to the victims' families and the general public, including by commandeering victims' social media accounts; intentionally separating family members; and burning and vandalizing family homes.

The "Kinocide" report features contributions from eminent experts such

as the Hon. Irwin Cotler, International Chair, Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights and former Minister for Justice in Canada, and other distinguished legal and human rights voices. The report is endorsed by many leaders, prominent individuals and organizations.

Elkayam-Levy, founder of the Civil Commission, told JNS, "The weaponization of families in war is a crime without a name, inflicted on victims without a voice. It represents a devastating form of atrocity that demands urgent recognition and action from the international community. By identifying and documenting the systematic and targeted abuse and destruction of families – a crime we have named kinocide – we aim to give this suffering a name and provide victims with the language to articulate their unique pain, bringing this hidden cruelty into the forefront of international law and human rights discourse."

The Oct. 7 attacks were not the first time that the crime of Kinocide has been evident. Other examples included in the report come from war and conflict in Iraq, Syria, Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Russia, and Ukraine, as well as earlier occurrences in Nazi Germany.

According to the report, identifying and naming Kinocide is key to protecting families and bringing attention to this historically unrecognized phenomenon. The report's authors see such recognition as a powerful tool for ensuring justice and accountability.

Masih Alinejad, Iranian-American journalist, author, and women's rights activist has endorsed the Civil Commis-

sion's report, noting that "The weaponization of families is neither new nor unique to the October 7 attack, but... deliberate targeting of families should be recognized as constituting a new form of international crime."

Sheryl Sandberg, founder of Lean In and producer of the documentary "Screams before Silence," has also endorsed the commission's report: "On October 7, Hamas struck at the heart of the Jewish community: the family unit. Hamas' atrocities against families were designed to break one of life's strongest bonds. They tried, but they must never be

allowed to succeed. This groundbreaking work by the Civil Commission, led by the incredible Dr. Cochav Elkayam-Levy, and supported by the Raoul Wallenberg Center.... serves as a clarion call to the international community to stand up and take action to protect families across the globe from future acts of violence by classifying kinocide as a crime against humanity."

The Civil Commission began disseminating the report in late December 2024 and will continue throughout 2025 through various channels, including email distribution, in-person meetings, webinars, and conferences. **HW** 

In memory of
Dr. Justin H. Adler and
Joseph H. Altfater,
whose vision, friendship,
and devotion to Judaism
planted the roots of
Conservative Judaism
in Memphis through the
creation of
Beth Sholom Synagogue
in 1955.

May their memories be a blessing.



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## Freed Hostage Romi Gonen: 'There is Life after Death'

#### By Akiva Van Koningsveld

(JNS) – Romi Gonen, who was released from Hamas captivity last Sunday, thanked the people of Israel for their support and prayers overnight last Tuesday in her first social media post in over 471 days.

"There is life after death," she wrote on Instagram.

Sharing a picture of the reunion with her mother, Gonen expressed her gratitude to "the people of Israel, to family, to friends."

"The prayers and strength you sent accompanied us the entire way and helped us believe that this nightmare would eventually end," she wrote.

"We must remember that there are 94 more hostages who are simply dying for us to save them," Gonen noted. She concluded her message with, "Am Yisrael Chai ['the people of Israel live'], and with God's help, we will continue to receive good news in the coming weeks."

Gonen, 24, and the other two released hostages, Emily Damari, 28, and Doron Steinbrecher, 31, were handed over by Hamas to representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Gaza Strip last Sunday night as part of an Israeli ceasefire agreement with the terror group.

Following an initial medical examination at the Israel Defense Forces reception point near the Gaza border and their subsequent transfer to a hospital

via helicopter, Tel Hashomer General Hospital Director Dr. Yael Frenkel Nir told local media that the women's physical condition was good enough to allow them to focus on reuniting with family members.

Damari took to Instagram last Monday, thanking her family, friends and God for her release. "I have returned to life, my loved ones," she wrote.

"I have only managed to see just a tiny bit of everything, and you have exploded my heart from emotion. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I am the happiest person in the world, just to be," Damari added.

Damari lost two of her fingers when she was shot by Hamas terrorists during the Oct. 7, 2023, kidnapping from her home in the border community of Kfar Aza.

In a Channel 12 News report vetted by Israel's military censor and approved by the hostages that was published last Monday, the three captives recalled living in underground facilities with little medical attention, tremendous uncertainty and, at times, despair.

Ninety-four hostages remain in captivity, 30 of whom are to return to Israel in the coming weeks during the first phase of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire. The remaining 64 hostages are to be released in the second and third phases, according to a schedule that has yet to be an-

## Released Hostage Emily Damari's Injured Hand Becomes an Instant Symbol of Israeli Defiance



The image of Emily Damari's wounded hand has been repurposed by Israeli artists as a symbol of resilience. (IDF Spokesperson/Photo illustration)

#### By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – Within hours of her release from captivity in Gaza, Emily Damari's hand had become a new Israeli icon.

Damari was injured on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas terrorists shot her and took her hostage. It became clear after she was released on the first day of a cease-fire last Sunday that she had lost the ring and middle finger on her left hand.

The clearest evidence came in a photograph released by the Israeli government, and later confirmed by pictures her family shared, showing Damari video chatting with her brother and father. In it, she was smiling as she showed off her hand, which was bandaged, with her thumb, index and pinky fingers visible.

Soon, supporters had added bandages to the "rock on" emoji, which uses the same configuration of fingers, to transform Damari's injury into a symbol of defiance. Damari's mother, Mandy, added the emoji to her handle on the social network X, and posted a photo with her daughter grinning while displaying the wounded hand.

Thank you to everyone in the UK and around the world who supported the campaign to bring Emily home, and for all your messages here on X. You are amazing and we love you all.

The most widely circulated version was made by Aviad Amergi, an Israeli sneaker artist, who posted it on Instagram along with the words, "A great small victory." His followers quickly

requested that he turn it into a sticker for WhatsApp, the messaging platform that is massively popular in Israel, where it soon circulated widely.

Others adapted Damari's gesture as well. A drawing of Damari's hands demonstrating the Jewish priestly blessing circulated online, with words from the biblical benediction: "May God bless you and keep you." The drawing was attributed to Moshe Shapira, a Jerusalem artist and architect, whose son, Aner, was killed on Oct. 7 after saving the lives of others.

The Israeli soccer player Ohad Hazut made the sign with his hands after a win last Monday, writing on Instagram, "An important victory."

And at least one Israeli has even had the image etched onto his leg as a tattoo, according to a video shared by the pro-Israel influencer Hen Mazzig.

Together, the symbol is emerging as a companion to "We Will Dance Again," the refrain adopted by survivors of the Nova music festival massacre, as a show of resilience for Israelis traumatized by Oct. 7. It also joins the yellow ribbon, which has become a ubiquitous symbol of advocacy for the hostages.

"There are many symbols of victory, this is my symbol," tweeted the Israeli artist Nemo Shiff alongside several renditions of Damari's hand. "For me, it symbolizes survival and bravery against all odds."

Some – including Lihi Lapid, the writer who is the wife of Yair Lapid, the Israeli parliamentary opposition leader — have also noted that the configuration of Damari's remaining fingers is the same as the sign for "I love you" in American Sign Language.

Damari herself channeled both interpretations in her first Instagram post after returning to Israel. ""Love, love, love," she posted, in a video visible to her friends and family but soon shared much more widely. "I have returned to my beloved life." She ended her post with the "rock on" emoji. **HW** 











## Trump's Appointee for Pentagon Middle East Adviser has Called for 'Pressure' on Israel

By Andrew Bernard

(JNS) – The man whom the Trump administration appointed last Monday as chief Middle East policy advisor at the Pentagon had urged the Biden administration to "pressure" Israel to deliver more aid to Gaza. Michael DiMino also believes that the United States has "no vital or existential" interests in the region and supports a policy of "offshore balancing" to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq and Syria.

DiMino, a former CIA analyst, was sworn in last Monday as U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Middle East.

In his tenure as a fellow at the Washington think tank Defense Priorities, which bills itself as a "hub of realism and restraint" and was founded with money from the libertarian Koch brothers, DiMino expressed skepticism about U.S. commitments in the Middle East, including its relationship with partners like Israel.

"There are no vital or existential U.S. interests in the region," DiMino said in a February webinar.

Washington's two interests in the region are natural resources and coun-

tering terrorism, the threat of which Di-Mino said was "exaggerated," he said in February.

"We're really there to counter Iran, and that's really at the behest of the Israelis and the Saudis," he said, of the U.S. troop presence in Iraq and Syria.

DiMino said he favored "offshore balancing," a controversial policy that proponents argue is a realistic response to a multipolar region. Critics allege that it amounts to appeasement of Iran at the expense of U.S. allies like Israel and partners like Saudi Arabia.

"I'm absolutely in favor of getting closer to a point of offshore balancing, reducing U.S. security commitments in the region," DiMino said. "Removing troops is a way to do that."

In his comments, many of which were first reported by "Jewish Insider," Di-Mino at times suggested that the Jewish state has been the more aggressive party in the region, while Iran has been "fairly moderate."

After an Iranian ballistic missile attack against Israel in October, he said that the Jewish state was "pushing to change the facts on the ground as much as they can," while "the Iranians are go-

ing to try to hold back."

Writing in January 2024 for the eponymous publication of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, another Koch-backed think tank, DeMino said that the United States should engage the Houthis in Yemen diplomatically by providing more aid to Gaza.

"This would also necessitate increased diplomatic pressure on the Israeli government to allow more aid into Gaza, a step the Biden administration remains uninterested in taking," he wrote.

In November 2023, DiMino wrote that he expected Hamas to continue to govern in the Gaza strip in any post-conflict scenario. "It is hard to imagine a workable alternative to Hamas under Gaza's status quo, and something similarly radical is likely to grow from its ruins," he said.

Trump's appointment of DiMino is the president's latest step to raise eyebrows among Israel supporters since he resumed office last Monday.

At the Pentagon, DeMino will report to Elbridge Colby, whom Trump nominated to be under secretary of defense for policy. Colby, who served in the Department of Defense during the first Trump term, has argued that the United States needs to empower Israel but shift its priorities to the Indo-Pacific.

Last Tuesday, Trump publicly fired his former Iran envoy, Brian Hook, who as recently as November was reportedly leading the Trump administration's transition team at the State Department.

In an interview last Wednesday with Fox News, Steve Witkoff, the U.S. special envoy to the Middle East, was asked about a claim from a Hamas spokesman that the terror group was "prepared for a dialog with America and achieving understandings on everything" after the ceasefire-for-hostages deal between Israel and Hamas.

"I think it's good if it's accurate," Witkoff said.

A billionaire real estate investor who is a personal friend of Trump's, Witkoff, who is Jewish, also praised Qatar, with which he has had business dealings, and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani for their role in the negotiations.

"Qatar was enormously helpful in this," Witkoff said, adding that Sheik Mohammed's "communication skills with Hamas were indispensable here." HW

### New Knesset Law Punishes Denial of Oct. 7 Massacre with Up To Five Years in Prison



The bloody floor of a home in Kibbutz Be'eri after Hamas terrorists carried out a brutal massacre on Oct. 7. Credit: Kobi Gideon/GPO

(JNS) – The Knesset passed a law unanimously that criminalizes denying Hamas's Oct. 7, 2023, attacks on southern Israel.

Oded Forer, of Yisrael Beytenu, proposed the legislation, which 16 members supported in its third and final reading last Tuesday.

The law designates denying the massacre to defend or support Hamas or its partners, as a criminal offense punishable by up to five years in prison.

The proposal clarifies that statements made incidentally, in good faith, or for

legitimate purposes will not be considered a criminal offense.

The Israeli attorney general must approve indictments under the new law.

The legislation is reportedly modeled on a 1986 law, which the Knesset passed and which criminalizes Holocaust denial.

"The horrors of Oct. 7 cannot be denied," Forer stated after the law was

"We will not let lies and hatred prevail," stated the lawmaker who proposed the bill.

approved. "The truth is more important than ever. We will not let lies and hatred prevail." **HW** 

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## Should You Change **Investment Strategies?**

Provided by Mike Stein

Managing Director - Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors Questions for Mike? You can reach him at 901.761.8151 or Michael. Stein@WellsFargoAdvisors.com

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You may take a "set it and forget it" approach to investing. But, over time, life events, the timing of when you need the money, and market events are likely to compel you to revisit your strategy. Here's some things to consider when they arise.

#### **Dealing with life events**

Events, both expected and unexpected, like the following could cause a change in your long-term goals and time horizon:

- Graduation
- Marriage, divorce, or remarriage
- Birth of child or grandchild
- Change in health status
- Job loss, retirement, or early retirement
- Death of a loved one

These types of events may prompt you to revisit your investment strategy, and in fact, they may be good reasons to make changes. Do you need to reprioritize your investment goals, spending, or how much debt you need to pay down?

Before you reallocate your investments, remember to plan with the same careful consideration you gave to creating your original investment strategy.

#### **Responding to market action**

In addition to life events, you may want to revisit your investment strategy when there's market volatility. Is that college tuition/mortgage/vacation payment nearer than you anticipated, making you realize that you may need to be more conservatively invested?

It is worth noting that your time horizon for needing the money is the key factor here. Avoid making emotional decisions based on today's 24/7/365 news cycle. It can be tempting to react to the headlines when you might be better off simply riding out the volatility if you have a longer time horizon.

That doesn't mean you should never respond to market action. However, it's often a good idea to think long and hard before you change or, at the extreme, abandon your strategy.

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## Trump Says He is 'Not Confident' about Gaza Ceasefire Lasting



**U.S. President Donald** Trump speaks to journalists in the Oval Office on January 20. 2025. Credit: Jim WATSON/POOL/AFP

#### By Ben Sales

(JTA) - President Donald Trump said he is "not confident" that the ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war will last, adding that the United States could help rebuild

Trump, sitting in the Oval Office, made the comments following his inauguration last Monday. A reporter asked whether he was confident he could "keep the ceasefire in Gaza, and conclude the three phases of the deal."

"I'm not confident," Trump responded. "That's not our war, it's their war. I'm not confident."

Then, presumably referring to Hamas, he added, "But I think they're very weakened on the other side."

Trump and his advisers were key to finalizing the ceasefire alongside the Biden administration, and Trump has previously signaled that he is committed to seeing it through.

The ceasefire began [last] Sunday with the release of three Israeli hostages from Gaza and dozens of Palestinian security prisoners. After an initial sixweek truce, later stages would see the Israeli military fully withdraw from Gaza along with the release of the rest of the hostages. But those phases have yet to be negotiated.

Trump has repeatedly threatened "hell to pay" if the hostages are not released. Last Saturday, two days before taking office, he said the ceasefire "better hold." His Middle East envoy, Steve Witkoff, has said he plans to travel to Gaza to ensure that the ceasefire continues. Witkoff stood near Trump during the inauguration.

During his first term, Trump discussed Israeli-Palestinian peace as a "real estate deal," and in his remarks last Monday, he discussed Gaza, much of which has been destroyed during the war, in real-estate terms.

"I looked at a picture of Gaza, Gaza is like a massive demolition site," he said. "It's gotta be rebuilt in a different way... You know, Gaza is interesting, it's a phenomenal location, on the sea, best weather, you know, everything's good. Some beautiful things could be done with it. But it's very interesting. But some fantastic things could be done with Gaza."

Asked whether the United States would have a role in rebuilding the enclave, Trump said it "might."

In response to a question on who will govern Gaza, he responded, "It depends... You certainly can't have the people that were there. Most of them are dead."

Hamas has governed Gaza since 2007. Israel has killed much of the terror group's leadership in the current war and currently controls a large portion of its territory. HW

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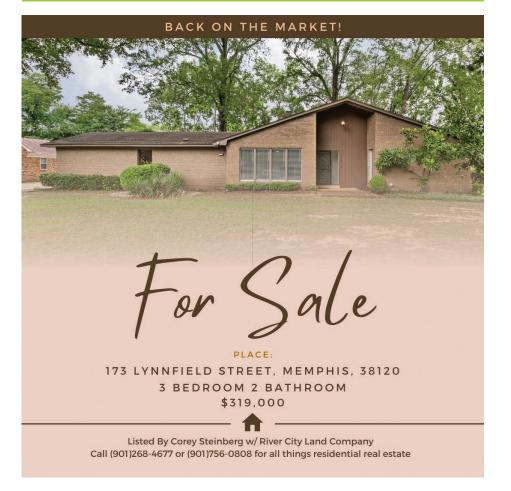
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## PA Must Pay Terror Victims, Israel's Top Court Says



Security and rescue personnel at the scene of a terrorist attack on Route 1 near Ma'ale Adumim, on Feb. 22, 2024. Credit: Chaim Goldberg/Flash90.

#### By Canaan Lidor

(JNS) – Israel's Supreme Court last week dismissed a petition against a law that compensates the victims of Palestinian terrorist attacks using Palestinian Authority funds.

Attorney Asher Stub from the Justice for Terror Victims group, which initiated the law submitted by MK Yitzhak Pindrus and others, told JNS last Monday that the Supreme Court's ruling "cleared the last hurdle" between victims and compensation.

The petition dismissed was filed last year by the Palestinian Authority against legislation passed by the Knesset in March 2024 titled the "Compensation of Victims of Terrorism Bill (Exemplary Compensation)."

It asserted that the Palestinian Authority, which spends hundreds of millions of dollars annually on paying salaries to terrorists in Israeli prisons, is encouraging terrorism and is, therefore, liable to pay damages in civil lawsuits. The money is to be deducted from tax revenue that Israel collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority on goods passing through border crossings.

The Palestinian Authority claimed the law abused punitive damages mechanisms, adding the law would cause its "collapse." It also said Israel lacked legal justification to confiscate its tax revenue. Justice Yitzhak Amit wrote in his ruling that the Palestinian Authority's petition omits how it "pays terrorists and members of terrorists' families money and benefits at significant rates, in close connection to the criminal acts of terrorism they committed."

The Palestinian Authority's Martyrs'

Fund, also known as the "pay for slay" policy, is a cornerstone of P.A. law, granting terrorists or their next of kin the right to receive payments as long as they live.

The ruling clears the path for terror victims or their relatives to file civil lawsuits and receive compensation, Stub said. His organization, Justice for Terror Victims, is handling lawsuits for about 35 families on a nonprofit basis, he said, adding that the statute of limitations on relevant lawsuits is seven years.

According to the Palestinian Authority's estimates in its petition, it stands to lose approximately NIS 2 billion shekels (\$562 million) from immediate tax revenues plus another NIS 5 billion (\$1.4 billion) in funds that Israel is already holding that belongs to the Palestinian Authority, it argued.

In the ruling, Justices Khaled Kabub and Yael Wilner condemned the Palestinian Authority's "reliance on Israeli constitutional law, which primarily protects human rights, to avoid the consequences of its support for terrorism against the state and its citizens." They called this "repugnant both morally and legally."

"We are proud to assist many victims in filing lawsuits under this new law and will persist in fighting terrorism and its financial backers," Stub said.

In a statement after the court's decision, Stub and Sander Gerber, a global investment manager, called the petition's dismissal "a groundbreaking step in our efforts to stop the Palestinian Authority's' pay for slay' policy and secure rightful compensation for terror victims." HW

#### **OBITUARIES**



Lester Fred Lit

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of Lester Fred Lit, age 81, on January 4, 2025. Lester, a lifelong Memphian, was born in Memphis, Tenn., and was a proud alumnus of the Memphis Hebrew Academy, where he was part of the school's first graduating class. He continued his education at Christian Brothers High School, Tulane University, and Memphis State Law School, where he earned his law degree.

Lester began his professional career as an attorney for the city of Memphis, but when his father, Irvin, fell ill, he left his legal practice to assist his brother, Jerome, in running the family business, Lit Refrigeration Co., a company founded by his father. Lester dedicated his life to the success of the business and worked there until his passing.

A deeply committed member of the Jewish community, Lester made countless contributions to his city. He served as vice president of the Jewish Community Center, president of ASBEE, and passionately worked on numerous fundraising initiatives that supported Jewish and non-profit organizations throughout Memphis. He also ran for city council, driven by a passion to improve the community he loved.

Lester's love for music was wellknown. He had a beautiful singing voice and led High Holiday services at the Memphis Jewish Home for many years, where his presence and devotion to his faith brought comfort to many.

Lester is preceded in death by his parents, Irvin and Norma Lit, and his sister, Barbara Horwitz. He is survived by his brother, Jerome Lit (Judy), his loving wife, Roslyn, his two daughters, Margot and Illysa, and his four grandchildren, who were his greatest joy.

In honor of his memory, the family requests that memorial contributions be made to Beth Sholom Synagogue or the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab.

May his memory be a blessing to all who knew him. HW

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## Elon Musk Makes Holocaust Jokes after Netanyahu Defends Him as 'Great Friend of Israel'



Elon Musk delivers a salute at a Trump immigration rally. Inset: Musk's Holocaust joke post. (Screenshot)

#### By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has come to the defense of Elon Musk, days after the billionaire and prominent Trump ally was accused of delivering Nazi salutes at a presidential inauguration rally.

One hour later, the world's richest man was cracking Holocaust jokes on social media.

"Elon Musk is being falsely smeared," Netanyahu wrote on Musk's own social media account, X, [last] Thursday morning. He avoided addressing Musk's gesture directly but went on to call the tech mogul "a great friend of Israel."

Netanyahu pointed to Musk's visiting Israel after the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack and advocating for what he said was "Israel's right to defend itself against genocidal terrorists and regimes who seek to annihilate the one and only Jewish state."

The prime minister, who remains in the political hot seat after agreeing to a tenuous ceasefire and hostage release agreement with Hamas, concluded, "I thank him for this."

To which Musk, in turn, thanked him – only to fan the flames shortly after with a new X post.

"Don't say Hess to Nazi accusations! Some people will Goebbels anything down! Stop Gőring your enemies! His pronouns would've been He/Himmler! Bet you did nazi that coming," Musk posted [last] Thursday, adding laugh-

ing-face emojis.

His post earned reprobation from Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, a group that took criticism days earlier for declaring that Musk's hand gesture was not a Nazi symbol.

"We've said it hundreds of times before and we will say it again: the Holocaust was a singularly evil event, and it is inappropriate and offensive to make light of it," Greenblatt wrote on X. Addressing Musk, he added, "The Holocaust is not a joke."

Greenblatt's own account had remained silent earlier in the week after Musk's hand gesture; he'd also refrained from commenting on Musk during a panel on antisemitism earlier [last] Thursday at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. An ADL spokesperson did not immediately respond to questions about why [last] Thursday's post was denounced when the gesture wasn't.

Ted Deutch, CEO of the American Jewish Committee, denounced Musk's jokes in stronger terms.

"Wordplay about Nazis isn't funny. It isn't clever. And it's dangerous," Deutch wrote on X. Addressing Musk, he added, "However you feel about the accusations being made against you, this is absolutely the wrong response. Nazi-themed 'jokes' are offensive and harmful. Don't belittle the seriousness of the Holocaust; you give cover to those who seek to do the same."

Linda Yaccarino, X's CEO, also responded to Musk's jokes – with a laughing-face emoji. Yaccarino, who was hired by Musk, has pledged to curb antisemitism on the platform in the past.

Netanyahu's own vote of approval came after the Tesla CEO, [last] Monday, delivered two outstretched-arm salute motions to a cheering crowd following Trump's swearing-in. Many Jewish groups and some Democrats accused Musk, who has a history of engaging with white supremacists, of performing an unambiguous Nazi salute.

The accusations themselves are also having real-world repercussions. In Milwaukee, a meteorologist for a CBS affiliate TV station was fired after writing in a profane post on her personal Instagram account stating that Musk "Nazi saluted twice."

Protesters have seized on the charge: in Germany, an image of Musk's raised arm with the word "Heil" was projected onto the side of a Tesla plant. And in Italy, a leftist student group hung an effigy of Musk at the Milan site where fascist prime minister Benito Mussolini was hanged in 1945.

Before his run of Nazi jokes, Musk – who now heads a government-efficiency program under Trump – had responded to the controversy by attacking his critics. "The radical leftists are really upset that they had to take time out of their busy day praising Hamas to call me a Nazi," he wrote [last] Wednesday on X, in a post shared by Netanyahu. The post echoed a growing pro-Israel talking point: that Musk's critics are hypocrites for excusing antisemitism on the pro-Palestinian left.

Musk and Netanyahu have interacted several times over the past couple of years. Prior to Oct. 7, the billionaire had hosted the prime minister during a stateside visit for a discussion about artificial intelligence that also gave Netanyahu a platform to defend his much-protested judicial reform plan in Israel. After the attacks, Netanyahu hosted Musk on a visit to an Israeli kibbutz targeted by Hamas. When the prime minister addressed the U.S. House months later to galvanize support for Israel's war in Gaza, Musk had a prominent observa-

tion point near rescued hostages.

Greenblatt's [last] Thursday critiques of Musk came days after the ADL had characterized his salute as "an awkward gesture in a moment of enthusiasm, not a Nazi salute." The ADL's quick stance was criticized by several Jews and non-Jews alike. In recent days, other Jewish groups are continuing to define Musk's gesture as a Nazi salute and suggesting the ADL had failed to meet the moment.

"Those trying to deny, minimize, or explain away Elon's Nazi salute should consider that right-wing extremists, white nationalists, and neo-Nazis are embracing it," Halie Soifer, CEO of the Jewish Democratic Council of America, said in a [last] Wednesday statement to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "Trump and his allies don't deserve the benefit of the doubt in this precarious moment for our community and country."

The Simon Wiesenthal Center, named after the famous Nazi hunter, called Musk's gesture "challenging to understand" and added, "It would be appropriate for him to clarify or apologize."

During his Davos panel, Greenblatt classified social media as "a superspreader of antisemitism and hate." He called Meta, an X competitor, "a gigantic problem," but didn't specifically reference Musk's platform except for a brief aside that many people get their news from it. He did state that he believes "regulatory pressure and reputational pressure" are important checks against social media companies, and also used the panel to repeat his oft-emphasized claim that there is "an equal proportion of antisemitism on the political left and right."

"These are extremists, not in the middle, but you see classic antisemitism from the far right. You see it in intense anti-Zionism from the far left," Greenblatt said. "This plays out in harassment of individual Jews, vandalism of buildings, defacement and violence." On the same panel, liberal Jewish teachers' union leader Randi Weingarten stated, "We need the ADL to fight off both right-wing and left-wing antisemitism."

Israeli President Isaac Herzog also did not mention Musk during his own appearance at Davos. **HW** 

## On 'SNL,' Dave Chappelle Recalls Uproar Over Jimmy Carter's Book 'Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid'

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – Hosting "Saturday Night Live" in its final broadcast before the inauguration of Donald Trump, comedian Dave Chappelle concluded with advice for the new president.

"Do not forget your humanity," Chappelle said. "And please, have empathy for displaced people, whether they're in the Palisades or Palestine."

The line represented Chappelle's signature mix of humor and serious sermonizing and came after a nearly 15-minute monologue that acknowledged his own controversies as a comedian and included an extended anecdote about President Jimmy Carter's 2006 visit to the Middle East.

The appearance came just over two years after Chappelle's last turn hosting the sketch comedy show, which turns 50 this year. In 2022, his jokes about "the Jews" earned chuckles from the audience and opprobrium from others, with Time Out New York's theater critic tweeting: "That Dave Chappelle

SNL monologue probably did more to normalize anti-Semitism than anything Kanye said." That appearance closely followed an uproar over Chappelle's jokes about transgender people.

This time, Chappelle said, he wasn't trying to ruffle feathers. "I'm tired of being controversial. I'm trying to turn over a new leaf," he said. (He later offered a wink to the notion that he was sidestepping sticky subjects.)

Instead, he spoke plainly about Trump's inauguration, and how flags around the country will remain at half-staff afterwards because of the recent death of Carter, president from 1977 to 1981. He recalled that Carter's 2006 trip coincided with the release of the former president's book "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid," which angered supporters of Israel because it likened Israeli practices to the racist South African apartheid regime – a charge that has been made more frequently in the decades since.

Chappelle recalled that he, too, was in

the region after abruptly quitting his TV show, so he was attuned to the discourse about Carter's visit and knew that Carter had many detractors in Israel. He recounted:

While he was there, Jimmy Carter said, I want to go to the Palestinian territories. And the Israeli government said, it's too dangerous, and if you go, we cannot protect you. And, man, Jimmy Carter went anyway. I will never forget the images of a former American president walking with little to no security while thousands of Palestinians were cheering him on. When I saw that picture, it brought tears to my eyes. I said, I don't know if that's a good president, right there, but I am sure that is a great man."

From there, he transitioned to advice for Trump.

The presidency is no place for petty people. Donald Trump, I know you watch the show. Man, remember, whether people voted for you or not, they're all counting on you. Whether they like you or not, they're all counting on you. The whole world is counting on you. I mean this when I say this: Good luck. Please, do better next time. Please, all of us, do better next time. Do not forget your humanity and please have empathy for displaced people, whether they're in the Palisades or Palestine.

The appearance came just hours before a ceasefire took effect in the 15-month war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. Trump is widely seen as having effectively demanded a deal, which includes the release of Israeli hostages by Hamas and Palestinian security prisoners by Israel, against the preferences of Israeli leaders.

Trump reportedly hopes to win a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in the Middle East, which in addition to the ceasefire have included the peace deals between Israel and Arab countries that follow in the model of the one Carter brokered between Israel and Egypt in 1978. **HW** 

## 11th Annual Rachel Shankman Symposium Features Keynote Speaker and Post Luncheon Session on Contemporary Antisemitism



About the Rachel Shankman Symposium

Now in its 11th year, the Rachel Shankman Symposium is named for the founding director of Facing History & Ourselves Southeast and is a tribute to her legacy and dedication to creating a more inclusive and humane world.

This event is presented by Facing History & Ourselves Southeast with generous support from the Memphis Jewish Federation.

For more information about this luncheon, contact Morgan Rittenhour at morgan\_rittenhour@facinghistory.org or 901-452-1776 x337.

If you are an educator interested in attending the day-long symposium, please contact Khari Bowman at khari\_bowman@facinghistory.org or 901-452-1776 x336. **HW** 

The 2025 Rachel Shankman Symposium will feature keynote speaker Dr. Avinoam Patt, who will discuss how Jewish Displaced Persons emerged from the Holocaust to form a vibrant, active, and fiercely independent community.

The luncheon will be held on Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025, at the University of Memphis, University Center, 3rd Floor Ballroom, 499 University Street in Memphis. The lunch will begin at 11:30 a.m. with an open educator session at 1 p.m.

Dr. Avinoam Patt is the Maurice Greenberg Professor of Holocaust Studies at New York University where he also serves as director of the Center for the Study of Antisemitism. Dr. Patt previously held the Doris and Simon Konover Chair of Judaic Studies at the University of Connecticut where he served as director of the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life. He also previously held positions at the University of Hartford and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

He is the author of multiple books on Jewish responses to the Holocaust, including "Finding Home and Homeland: Jewish Youth and Zionism in the Aftermath of the Holocaust" (2009); coeditor of a collected volume on Jewish Displaced Persons titled "We are Here: New Approaches to the Study of Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany" (2010); and contributor to several projects at the USHMM, including "Jewish Responses to Persecution, 1938-1940" (2011). Dr. Patt recently completed a new book, "The Jewish Heroes of Warsaw: The Afterlife of the Revolt" (2021), detailing the early postwar memory of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Together with David Slucki and Gabriel Finder, he is coeditor of "Laughter After: Humor and the Holocaust" (2020) and, with Laura Hilton, "Understanding and Teaching the Holocaust" (2020). His newest book, "Israel and the Holocaust," was published by Bloomsbury Press as part of its Perspectives on the Holocaust series in 2024.

At 1 p.m., Alison Hurwitz-Kelman and Staci Rosenthal of Facing History's Jewish Education team will lead local educators in a workshop highlighting the latest lesson of our Contemporary Antisemitism curriculum, which explores the diversity and complexity of what it means to be Jewish, considers the effects of antisemitism on the expression of this identity, and examines how we can combat antisemitism with a deeper understanding of Jewish identity.

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# We're so proud of you for being "a good neighbor" for 55 years!

We can't wait to spend more time with the David who is also a good husband, father, and friend.





Love, Rose, Jon, Jen, Jamie, Jason, Melissa, Mollie, Clara, Chris, Maria, Jonah, and Orfeas