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### Pope Francis, Who Advanced Church's Relationships with Jews, Dies at 88



Pope Francis meets with a delegation of World Union for Progressive Judaism at his studio of the Paul VI Hall on May 15, 2024, in Vatican City, Vatican. Credit: Vatican Media via Vatican Pool/Getty Images

### By Andrew Silow-Carroll

(JTA) – Pope Francis, who significantly advanced the Catholic Church's relationship with Jews by actively promoting dialogue, reconciliation and a strong stance against antisemitism – relations that were tested after the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war – died last Monday, one day after marking Easter with a public appearance in the Vatican. He was 88.

The Vatican did not give a cause of death. Francis suffered multiple health conditions in recent years and had been

hospitalized for several weeks in February with what the Vatican called a "complex clinical picture."

But Francis had rebounded to make public appearances and, last Sunday, meet privately with U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance, a convert to Catholicism whom he had indirectly rebuked before his hospitalization for citing Catholic doctrine in defending the Trump administration's immigration policies.

The first Jesuit and first Latin American to serve as pope, Francis assumed

the leadership of the Catholic Church in 2013 after years of building and sustaining Jewish relationships in his native Argentina. In 2010, he co-wrote, with Rabbi Abraham Skorka, "On Heaven and Earth," a book based on their public conversations on differences and similarities between Judaism and Catholicism.

Francis met frequently with Jewish leaders and paid a state visit to Israel in 2014. He often invoked the spirit of Nostra Aetate, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1965 as part of Vatican II, which repudiated centuries of anti-Jewish theology and inaugurated a new era in Catholic-Jewish relations. He controversially restricted the Latin Mass, a symbol of the pre-Vatican II church whose liturgy includes a call for the conversion of the Jews.

Francis reiterated the spirit of Nostra Aetate in 2013, speaking to the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations. "Due to our common roots, a Christian cannot be anti-Semitic!" the pope declared, before going on to describe his warm relations with Jewish clergy in his native Argentine

"I had the joy of maintaining relations of sincere friendship with leaders of the Jewish world," said Francis. "We talked often of our respective religious identities, the image of man found in the Scriptures, and how to keep an awareness of God alive in a world now secularized in many ways. ... But above all, as friends, we enjoyed each other's company, we were all enriched through encounter and dialogue, and we welcomed each other, and this helped all of us grow as people and as believers."

Such statements sustained a relationship sometimes strained when Francis adopted positions at odds with the core concerns of many Jews. In May 2015, an expansion of Vatican relations with Palestinian leadership following the Palestinians' unilateral pursuit of statehood drew criticism from Israeli and Jewish leaders, who at the time viewed direct negotiations with Israel as the only credible path to peace.

Francis also strongly defended the record of Pope Pius XII, who served during the Holocaust. Critics accuse Pius of having turned a blind eye to Jewish suffering in the Shoah, while the Vatican has long maintained he worked behind the scenes to save Jews. In 2019, Jewish groups welcomed Francis's announcement that the Vatican Archives covering the Pius papacy would open to researchers beginning in March 2020.

For scholars such as David Kertzer,

(See **Pope** Page 2)

### "To Creativity and Beyond" The ISJL's 2025 Southern & Jewish Conference



Jackson, MS – As the Goldring/ Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) celebrates 25 years of supporting, connecting and celebrating Jewish life in the South, the organization is excited to announce the 2025 Southern & Jewish conference. The conference, which will take place June 22-24, 2025, in Jackson, Mississippi, will explore the theme "To Creativity and Beyond."

The Southern & Jewish conference is designed for anyone with a connection to Jewish life in the South. It's an opportunity to gather with others from throughout the region for learning, socializing, collaboration and more. There are networking and programmatic opportunities for clergy, lay leaders, educators, parents, interfaith family members, synagogue board members – truly, anyone and everyone in the Southern Jewish community.

Each of the ISJL's program areas – Culture, Education and Spirituality – will offer sessions and affinity group opportunities. The theme "To Creativ-

ity and Beyond" invites participants to explore the many ways creativity can shape Southern Jewish communities and enrich their lives.

This year, featured presenters include nationally renowned Jewish sketch comedy troupe The Bible Players, and Rabbi Leah Berkowitz, an author and educator whose books include "Queen Vashti's Comfy Pants" and "The World Needs Beautiful Things." More information about all of the presenters can be found at www.isjl.org/2025presenters.

There is no conference fee for Southern & Jewish; participants only pay the costs associated with room and board for the event. Anyone interested in attending the conference can learn more and register at www.isjl.org/conference.

The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) supports, connects, and celebrates Jewish life in the South. To learn more about the ISJL and its programs, visit www.isjl.org, call 601-362-6357, or follow @TheISJL on social media. HW

### Pope..

(Continued From Page 1)

who has written books about the Vatican during World War II, the newly available material only confirmed the impression that Pius, despite his personal objections to Hitler and Nazism and occasionally valiant attempts to protect Italy's Jews, was more concerned with protecting the church and its future under fascism.

The Israel-Hamas war, which followed the deadly Hamas attacks in Israel in Oct. 7, 2023, further strained relations between Francis, the Jews and Israelis. In November 2024, citing experts saying "what is happening in Gaza has the characteristics of a genocide," Francis called for the charge – which Israel strenuously rejects – to be "carefully investigated."

In December, Francis attended the inauguration of a nativity scene at the Vatican that positioned baby Jesus on a keffiyeh, or Palestinian scarf – a nod to activists who have identified Jesus, a Jew born in Roman times, as a Palestinian. Both incidents drew outcry from Jewish groups, and the nativity scene was removed.

Defenders of the pope said his statements about the Israel-Hamas war were in keeping with Catholic doctrine on the value of peace and human life, and did not reflect on Francis's commitment to fighting antisemitism. He also repeatedly called for the release of the Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

Indeed, a document issued last December by the American Jewish Committee, "Translate Hate," included Catholic commentaries written, with the pope's blessing, by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. The commentaries endorsed key post-Vatican II doctrine on teaching about Judaism and respecting the Jews' deep religious connection towards Israel.

Despite the disagreements, Francis maintained warm relations with Jewish leaders involved in interfaith dialogue.

"I sorrowfully mourn the death of Pope Francis, a towering figure in our time whose leadership, compassion, and dedication to peace transcended religious boundaries," Rabbi Arthur Schneier, who received the papal knighthood honor from Francis in New York in 2015.

The following year, Francis made his first appearance at Rome's Great Synagogue, marking the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate and issuing a joint call with Rome's chief rabbi against religious violence.

"We are clearly living in a renewed era of Catholic-Jewish relations," Rabbi Noam Marans, the AJC's director of interreligious and intergroup relations, wrote in September 2017, on the eve of the pope's second visit to the United

States. "When there are disagreements, they are discussed and often resolved among friends, but even when unresolved, the conversation rarely devolves into a contretemps."

During that visit, Jewish leaders took part in "Witness for Peace: A Multireligious Gathering with Pope Francis" at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum.

Jewish groups also appreciated Francis's frequent pleas to his followers to heed the lessons of the Holocaust. "The memory of the Shoah and its atrocious violence must never be forgotten," the pope said in 2018 in a message through the Vatican's secretary of state in Berlin. "It should be a constant warning for all of us of an obligation to reconciliation, of reciprocal comprehension and love toward our 'elder brothers,' the Jews."

In 2017, Pope Francis and Rabbi Skorka co-authored an introduction for a book by three Argentine doctors about the Nazi medical experiments. The essay calls the Holocaust a "hell."

"The human arrogance exposed during the Shoah was the action of people who felt like gods, and shows the aberrant dimension in which we can fall if we forget where we came from and where we are going," they wrote.

The pope's friendship with Skorka, rector of the Latin American Rabbinic Seminary, dated to 1997, when the pope, then known as Jorge Mario Bergoglio, became coadjutor bishop of the Buenos Aires archdiocese. In addition to collaborating in 2010 on their book "On Heaven and Earth," the bishop and the rabbi appeared frequently together on Argentinian television.

In a 2013 interview with the New York Jewish Week, Skorka said Francis had a "special relationship towards Jews and Jewishness" and a commitment to Nostra Aetate.

"From a theological point of view, according to what I spoke with him about, he and other important Catholic thinkers believe in cooperation between Jews and Christians in order to get a better world – respecting one another and sharing the challenge to bring more spirituality and justice to the world," Skorka said.

Pope Francis was born Jorge Mario Bergoglio, on Dec. 17, 1936 in Buenos Aires. He served as archbishop of the Argentinian capital beginning in 1998 and as cardinal after 2001. In contrast to the often-forbidding Benedict XVI, his immediate predecessor as pope, Bergoglio was said to be warm and modest, cooking his own meals and personally answering his phone.

Friendly relations with Jewish clergy was a hallmark of his priesthood. In 2005, as archbishop of Buenos Aires, Bergoglio attended Rosh Hashanah services at the Benei Tikva Slijot synagogue in September 2007. Bergoglio was the first public personality to sign

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info@hebrewwatchman.com

Susan C. Nieman Editor and Publisher

Larry Nieman
Advertising Sales Director

Toni Nieman
Office Manager & Subscriptions
toni@hebrewwatchman.com

Rebecca Schudel
Social Media Director
Web Development

Herman I. Goldberger Editor and Publisher Emeritus

Barbara B. Goldberger Editor and Publisher Emeritus ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Memphis and Mid-South \$36 Out-of-State \$50 Payable in Advance

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5/1/2025



### **Memphis Candlelighting Time**

**Weekly Torah Portion: Tazria-Metzora** 

a petition for justice in the 1994 AMIA bombing case, in which 85 people were killed in a terrorist attack at a Buenos Aires Jewish center. In June 2010, he visited the rebuilt AMIA building to talk with Jewish leaders. In 2024, after years of stalled investigations and charges of a cover-up, an Argentinian court ruled that Iran directed the attack, and that it was carried by Hezbollah.

While he took mostly traditional views on issues like same-sex marriage, Bergoglio also had a reputation as a social reformer. Israel Singer, the former head of the World Jewish Congress, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency soon after Francis's election as pope that

he spent time working with Bergoglio when the two were distributing aid to the poor in Buenos Aires in the early 2000s, part of a joint Jewish-Catholic program called Tzedaka.

Bergoglio wrote the foreword to a book by Rabbi Sergio Bergman, a Buenos Aires legislator, and in 2012 hosted a Kristallnacht memorial event at the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Cathedral with Rabbi Alejandro Avruj from the NCI-Emanuel World Masorti congregation.

During that visit, Bergoglio told the congregation that he was there to examine his heart "like a pilgrim, together with you, my elder brothers."

He was 76 when he was elected to the papacy following the resignation of the German-born Benedict XVI. Francis was the first pope to come from outside Europe in more than a millennium.

He inherited a church wrestling with an array of challenges, including a shortage of priests, a sexual abuse crisis and difficulties governing the Vatican itself.

In 2018, Francis renewed his commitment to fostering relations between Catholics and Jews and condemning antisemitism.

"Dialogue and friendship with the children of Israel are part of the life of Jesus' disciples," Francis wrote in "Evangelii Gaudium" (The Joy of the Gospel), described as the flagship document of his papacy. "The friendship which has grown between us makes us bitterly and sincerely regret the terrible persecutions which they have endured, and continue to endure, especially those that have involved Christians." HW



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### Baron Hirsch Synagogue SoShuls May Luncheon





Previous SoShuls Luncheon participants enjoy good food, entertainment by Creative Aging and Bingo.

Baron Hirsch Synagogue's next SoShuls Luncheon will be on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, at 12 p.m. People who are 64 years or older are invited to attend the SoShuls luncheons. You do not have to be a synagogue member to attend the SoShuls luncheons.

This month's luncheon menu will include hamburgers and condiments, grilled onions and peppers, potato salad and chocolate chip cookies for dessert. The cost of the luncheon is \$5 per person. Baron Hirsch SoShuls Luncheons are sponsored by Elaine Miner.

Creative Aging, a local non-profit agency, which connects local entertainers to perform at a variety of community non-profit organizations, will provide the entertainment for the May SoShuls luncheon. This month, instead of a mu-

sical performance, the entertainer will be a magician, Mr. Jeffrey Day.

Great food, good company and magical entertainment are the ingredients for a terrific afternoon. Come join the fun at the May SoShuls Luncheon and enjoy yourself.

Alvin Steinberg will complete the afternoon with Bingo games following lunch! Bring a friend along with you to enjoy share the afternoon.

Please make your reservation in advance, by Monday, May 5, 2025.

Simply call 901-683-7485 to make your reservation or send an email reservation request to gwen@ baronhirsch.org. We look forward to having you join us for an interesting afternoon and a great meal! We hope to see you there! **HW** 

### 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.

Wednesday, April 30

Rabbi Talk with Rabbi Noach Karp, Director of Memphis Jewish Experience for the Memphis Kollel

**Topic: What's up with The Beard?** 

You may figure from the title that Rabbi Karp's talks are not the typical ones you hear. Rabbi Karp always brings a fun and informative topic to his remarks at the MJCC! Come listen, learn and enjoy a session with this engaging rabbi. There is a reservation needed for the lunch but not the rabbi's talk. We hope to see you here.

Monday, May 5

Rabbi Talk with Rabbi Yosef Braha, Rosh Kollel and Director of Operations of the Memphis Kollel

Topic: Ask the Rabbi

Rabbi Braha's talks are always one of the highlights for the speaker series. Bring all your Jewish questions and queries that you have been wondering about, but maybe, were afraid to ask. No questions too tough! Rabbi Braha always has a nice, and sometimes humorous answer. Have a nice lunch and an informative afternoon.



Rabbi Noach Karp



Rabbi Yosef Braha

Wednesday, May 7 Field Trip to Baron Hirsch Synagogue for their Monthly Luncheon.

The bus will take the group from the MJCC to Baron Hirsch and bring the group back to the MJCC following the lunch. Baron Hirsch also has entertainment provided by Creative Aging and Bingo following the entertainment. We will also pick up those who need it and live around the MJCC. Call Steve Kaplan for more information at 901-259-9220.

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 through Thursday 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **HW** 

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# Your Health Understanding Dietary Supplements: What You Need to Know

By Cindy Katz, DNP

For years, we've seen patients take over-the-counter supplements without fully understanding their effects. Many rely on social media or word-of-mouth recommendations without considering the science behind them. Knowing how to choose, take and monitor supplements can help you maximize their benefits while minimizing potential risks.

#### **How are Supplements Regulated?**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates dietary supplements differently than prescription medications. Since they fall under the category of food, manufacturers can introduce products they believe are safe without prior FDA approval. However, the FDA can only intervene after a product has been on the market and has been shown to cause harm.

### When Do You Need to Supplement?

A well-balanced diet – rich in lean proteins, whole grains, fruits, vegetables and non-fat dairy – often provides the essential nutrients you need, making supplementation unnecessary for most people. However, certain medical conditions or deficiencies may require additional support, including:

Post-surgical needs – Patients who have undergone bariatric surgery often require supplementation.

Bone health support – Calcium and vitamin D are essential for maintaining strong bones.

Digestive health – Probiotics and digestive enzymes can help support gut

health

Pregnancy – Prenatal vitamins, including folic acid, are crucial for maternal and fetal health.

Vitamin B12 deficiency and Iron Deficiency Anemia – Patients can check for deficiency with a simple lab test.

### How to Choose the Right Supplement

Opt for brands that undergo third-party testing from organizations like the United States Pharmacopeia (USP) or NSF International.

Avoid supplements containing artificial additives, fillers or excessively high dosages.

#### **Watch for Side Effects**

Common side effects of supplements include nausea, stomach discomfort and headaches. If you experience severe reactions, such as an allergic response, stop taking the supplement and seek medical attention if needed.

### **Final Thoughts**

Be cautious of bold claims on social media. While testimonials may make supplements seem like miracle cures, their effectiveness varies from person to person. Some supplements provide real health benefits but understanding when and why to take them is key to making informed decisions.

Always consult a healthcare provider and pay attention to how your body responds to ensure you're getting the benefits you need while minimizing risks. **HW** 

### Memphis Brooks Museum of Art Unnveils A Flash of Sun

On April 17, the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art unveiled A Flash of Sun, a vibrant new outdoor installation by Memphis-based artist Khara Woods to kick off the third year of its Summer Art Garden series. Positioned prominently on the museum's front plaza, A Flash of Sun transforms the space into a radiant landscape of geometric patterns, saturated color and light-responsive materials. Woods' design invites guests to slow down, soak up the sun and experience a Memphis summer in full artistic bloom. The work will remain on view until October 20.

"I wanted to create something that felt alive – something that shifts with the light and echoes the energy of the people who gather here," said Woods. "The Summer Art Garden is about celebration, warmth and connection."

The Summer Art Garden series has become a signature of the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art's warm-weather season – an ever-evolving celebration of color, creativity and community. Over the six-month run of A Flash of Sun, the museum plaza will host a wide range of summer programming, making it a destination not only for art lovers but for music fans, foodies and families alike. Highlights include:

Memphis Art & Fashion Week 2025 Runway Afterparty: Friday, May 9

Qemist Presents: A Summer Art Garden Celebration: Wednesday, June 12

Ongoing live DJs and musicians will activate the plaza throughout the summer

Guests are invited to order seasonal food and beverage offerings from the museum's café, including charcuterie boxes and sandwiches by Feast and Graze (feastandgraze.com), and enjoy them in the immersive outdoor setting. Admission to the installation is free.

The Summer Art Garden is presented by the museum's Art Now Collective, which actively collaborates with the museum to provide a platform for emerging creatives and supports the museum in investing in key works of art by local artists. Art Now is sponsored by Tate and Webb Wilson.

Extending the installation's design language into wearable, giftable form,

Khara Woods has created a limited-edition capsule collection, available for purchase individually in the museum store and via Instagram. The collection includes:

Bucket Hat: Featuring Woods' signature tile-like motifs, this lightweight hat offers both style and protection, making it an ideal companion for sunny days on the plaza or around town.

Frisbee: Adorned with swirling patterns reminiscent of the installation's dynamic forms, this frisbee is perfect for playful afternoons in the park or on the museum grounds.

Koozie: Keep your summer beverages cool with this stylish koozie, emblazoned with designs that echo the exhibition's rhythmic patterns and vibrant color palette.

Collectible Postcard Set: A series of postcards featuring abstract compositions from the installation, ideal for sending a note and inviting friends to the Summer Art Garden.

Each piece is infused with the aesthetic of A Flash of Sun, making it possible for the Art Garden's visitors to carry a piece of summer with them everywhere.

About the Artist

Khara Woods is a multidisciplinary artist and graphic designer based in Memphis, Tenn. Her studio practice includes abstract geometric paintings, wood assemblage and public art projects, including murals and community engagement initiatives. Her work has recently been exhibited at Sheet Cake Gallery and Crosstown Arts in Memphis, Red 225 Gallery in Nashville, the Hilliard Art Museum at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and the Beverly + Sam Ross Gallery at Christian Brothers University in Memphis.

About the Summer Art Garden

Now in its third year, the Summer Art Garden is a seasonal initiative from the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, turning the museum's front plaza into an evolving public art installation space. Past installations include Summer Art Garden (2022) by Kong Wee Pang and Creatures of Paradise (2023) by Banana Plastik. The series reflects the museum's mission to create joy through the power of art. **HW** 

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### Al Gore Compares Trump Admin to Nazi Germany



Al Gore, former vice president, speaks at the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco, Calif., August 2018. Credit: Nikki Ritcher Photography via Wikimedia Commons.

(JNS) – Former vice president and presidential candidate Al Gore compared the Trump administration to Nazi Germany during an event marking the start of San Francisco's Climate Week last Monday, Politico reported.

Gore, speaking before roughly 150 attendees and policymakers, stated the Trump administration was "insisting on trying to create their own preferred ver-

sion of reality," similar to Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party.

"I understand very well why it is wrong to compare Adolf Hitler's Third Reich to any other movement," Gore said. "It was uniquely evil, full stop. I get it. But there are important lessons from the history of that emergent evil.

"We've already seen, by the way, how populist authoritarian leaders have used migrants as scapegoats and have fanned the fires of xenophobia to fuel their own rise of power," he continued. "And power-seeking is what this is all about. Our constitution, written by our founders, is intended to protect us against a threat identical to Donald Trump."

Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk, who was named an advisor and special government employee under the Trump administration, was seen performing a gesture that many have claimed was a Nazi salute during an inauguration celebration in January. However, the actuality of the gesture has been widely debated. **HW** 

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### It's Official: Southeast Florida's Jewish Population is **Growing – and Getting Younger**



Miami Beach was the most popular destination for Passover 2021. **Credit: Envato** 

### By Grace Gilson

(JTA) - Picture a Jew in Miami. Is the person you're thinking of old-

er? Perhaps a retiree from New York complete with the accent - who lives in

a condo on the beach?

According to a recent Jewish population study of Miami-Dade County, at least part of that snapshot is becoming

outdated. The southeast corner of the Sunshine State is growing – and getting younger.

The new document, released last Monday and titled "Jewish Miami: A 2024 Community Study," found that the Jewish population of Miami-Dade County had grown by 7% in the past decade, adding nearly 8,000 people for a total figure of 130,100.

That increase, the study found, is being driven by youth. While the adult population grew by 5%, the number of Jewish children grew by 13%.

The study helps quantify a Jewish boom that has burgeoned in southern Florida in recent years. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the area saw a large influx of Orthodox Jews, in line with an overall spike in Florida's population.

In that vein, the study found that South Florida's Jewish population skews more Orthodox than the rest of

the U.S. Jewish population. 13% of Jews in the county identify as Orthodox compared to 9% nationally.

The study covers just Miami-Dade and does not include other heavily Jewish areas in the region, such as Palm Beach County. It was commissioned by the Greater Miami Jewish Federation.

'We are excited about the many areas of growth, particularly in the Central region, where so many young adults are participating in Jewish life and community." Federation CEO Scott Kaufman told the Miami Herald. He said the study "shines a light on a bright future for Jewish Miami.'

But retirees looking to find a home in Miami-Dade will still have company: The study found that the county's Jewish community is older, on average, than in other states. Miami-Dade's Jewish adults have a median age of 59, compared to a median Jewish adult age of 49 nationwide. HW

### Rare Parrots Stolen from Jerusalem Biblical Zoo



Lorikeet parrots seen at the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo on July 2, 2013. Credit: Miriam Alster/Flash90.

(JNS) - Thieves broke into the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo early last Thursday, stealing six rare parrots and about 20 lorikeets in what officials suspect was a targeted wildlife trafficking operation.

"This was a professional job. They knew what to take," said zoo director Sigalit Hertz.

The birds were part of international breeding programs aimed at conserving endangered species. Their loss is a major setback to global conservation efforts.

Police and the Israel Nature and Parks Authority are investigating. The zoo, located in the Malha neighborhood, is calling on the public for tips that could help locate the stolen birds. HW

Have Símcha? share with The Hebrew Watchman readers 901.763.2215 info@hebrewwatchman.com

The pre-dawn theft is a major setback to conservation efforts.

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### Ben Shapiro, Emily Damari Among Torch Lighters for Israel's Independence Day Ceremony



Conservative pundit Ben Shapiro speaks during a conference of Israeli conservatives in Tel Aviv, July 20, 2022. Courtesy of Nadav Cohen Jonathan

#### By Grace Gilson

(JTA) – American conservative pundit Ben Shapiro, former Israeli hostage Emily Damari and NBA player Deni Avdija have all been invited to light torches at Israel's Independence Day ceremony.

Shapiro, who has shown staunch support for Israel and its government to his millions of followers on X and YouTube, was chosen by Israeli Transport Minister Miri Regev following the recommendations of a public advisory committee.

"Ben Shapiro is one of Israel's greatest supporters in the world," Regev said in a statement. "Throughout his media career – and especially since the start of the war – he has demonstrated unwavering support for Israel, its right to self-defense and the justice of its cause."

The ceremony is a centerpiece of Israel's observance of Independence Day, or Yom Haatzmaut, and being chosen to bear a torch is considered an elite honor. A Diaspora Jew was included in the ceremony for the first time in 2017.

Shapiro, the Orthodox Jewish founder of the conservative outlet The Daily Wire, was warmly received during his first speech in Israel in 2022, when he warned against importing "woke culture" to a packed crowd in Tel Aviv.

But while he has his fans in Israel, his hard-line stances against abortion rights and past homophobic statements, which include calling homosexuality and transgender identity a mental illness, have caused some in Israel to decry his inclusion in the ceremony.

"You can't whitewash misogyny and LGBTQ hatred just because the person who expressed it supports Israel," the Israeli LGBTQ advocacy organization Aguda said in a post on X. "This choice erases us, and it shames the ceremony, the country, and the values around which we are all supposed to unite."

The Israel Women's Network also condemned the appointment in a post on X, writing, "Ben Shapiro, the man who claims that women who have abortions are 'baby killers,' should not be lighting a torch on Independence Day. It's not an honor, it's an insult to women in Israel."

And Gilad Kariv, a Reform rabbi and member of Knesset, denounced Regev's choice, saying on X that there were many better choices to represent the Diaspora than "a controversial, polarizing and divisive figure who has come out against the gay community, against the State of Israel's investment in liberal communities in the Jewish world, against women's right to their own bodies, and against every American Jew who supported the Democratic Party (3/4 of American Jewry)."

The theme of Israel's 77th Independence Day is "Bridges of Hope" and comes a year after a somber ceremony that included only survivors and first responders from Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on the country. The ceremony was prerecorded to head off possible protests against the government over its failure to secure a deal to return the remaining hostages in Gaza.

Some of the hostages who have since been freed were selected for this

year's ceremony. Damari and Eli Sharabi, who were released from captivity earlier this year during a two-month ceasefire, will also light torches, Regev announced.

Damari, whose injured hand, which resembles a "rock on" emoji and "I love you" in American sign language, became an instant symbol of the movement to free the remaining hostages when she was rescued in January.

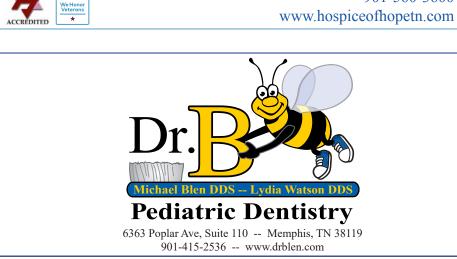
Avdija, whose success in the NBA has made him a point of pride for Israelis at home and abroad, was chosen because of the example he is setting for Israelis, Regev said.

Other torch bearers announced so far are less famous but represent Israeli society and those who have contributed to it, including IDF officers, a 90-year-old woman who has knit clothing for soldiers, and the relatives of soldiers killed in Gaza. The list also includes Rachel Edri, who gained fame for surviving Oct. 7 after offering cookies to her Hamas captors.

At least one person has declined to light a torch, citing Israel's current political situation, with the government enmeshed in scandal and 59 hostages remaining in Gaza.

"The torch-lighting ceremony is a state ceremony, but this period is not statesmanlike," Yarden Arazi, an Israeli singer, wrote on Instagram to explain why she was turning down an honor she had initially been excited to receive. "I am hurting and hope for better, more unified days when statesmanship will once again be a leading value in Israeli public life." **HW** 







### You Actually Don't Have to Wish Jews a Happy Passover, IKEA

So is that a matzah meal blueberry cobbler or...?



### Design by Avital Dayanim

### By Evelyn Frick

This originally appeared on HeyAlma, reprinted with permission.

There are a few things a girl like me expects from IKEA. I expect that IKEA will be affordable. I expect that my partner and I will be able to assemble IKEA furniture without the dissolution of our relationship. And I expect that the names of said IKEA furniture will have many, many vowels. What I do not expect is that IKEA will wish a girl like me (read: a Jew) a happy Passover.

And yet, that is what IKEA did last month. Or, at least, they tried.

[On April 12], the IKEA USA Instagram account shared a photo with the caption: "Wishing everyone a joyous Passover filled with love, family, and delicious memories." The picture in question features a tablescape with \*checks notes\* what appears to be a blueberry cobbler, cream, glasses of water and a mug of coffee. So is that a matzah meal crust or...?

The post didn't get quite as much traction as a certain Hallmark Instagram post, but quite a few Jewish Instagram users (including actor Jonah Platt) critiqued IKEA in the comments section.

"Nothing says 'we know Jewish holidays' like using the exact kind of food we don't eat on this specific holiday in your post!," one wrote. Another joke, "Ah yes, the traditional Passover blueberry pie, just as they had in the desert."

If I may be bold enough to add a fifth question: What are we doing here, IKEA?

Here's the thing. Jew to Scandinavian multinational conglomerate, allow me to say: You don't actually have to wish Jews a Happy Passover. It's OK. I am happy to receive Passover wishes from my family and friends, and endure Jewish Star Capitalism when it actually makes sense for that to be happening. I anticipate I will see a social media post about Passover from companies like Manischewitz and Kedem, because, duh. I won't even bat an eyelash at Hallmark attempting a Passover post because sharing holiday wishes is their whole thing.

But my Passover will not be made or broken by the acknowledgment from a Swedish chair company, because my assumption is that most Nordic peoples don't really know what it is. And clearly, the good (non-Jewish) people of IKEA don't! And now because of this weird Passover post, I've done enough Googling about IKEA to know that its founder Ingvar Kamprad low-key had Nazi ties. So like, once again, what are we doing here, IKEA?

Shows of solidarity are important, but in the future, maybe just stick with Hanukkah, IKEA. In exchange, I promise I will not try to wish you a merry Gustavus Adolphus Day. HW

### The Invitation Said, 'No Jews.' The Response from Campus Officials, at Least, Was Real.



A flyer for a fake party posted online by a former SCAD student included the instructions "No Jews." (Screenshot)

### By Grace Gilson

(JTA) – Jewish leaders in Savannah, Georgia, snapped into action last Friday after seeing a social media post with a flyer for a party that included an apparently antisemitic message.

The flyer purported to invite students at the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) to a party that included a list of instructions for the affair written in micrographic form — within letters spelling out the phrase "No Jews."

When it first began circulating, Jewish leaders on campus and in the local community quickly decried it and called for action.

"We are proud as the Jewish commu-

nity of SCAD and will not feel safe if nothing is done," said SCAD Hillel in an Instagram post.

"We are deeply disturbed and saddened by the antisemitic incident that occurred at SCAD where a party invitation stated that no Jews were welcome," said Chabad of Savannah, where many Jewish SCAD students affiliate, in a post on Instagram. "This type of hate has no place on campus in our community or anywhere in society."

And the Savannah Jewish Federation condemned the incident, writing in a post on Instagram that it was working with school officials and police on a response

"At this juncture, our priorities are the welfare of the Jewish community," the federation's post read. "Appropriate disciplinary measures, and education to ensure Jewish students understand the nature and history of antisemitism and why such an invitation is beyond the pale."

The incident landed amid high alert about antisemitism on college campuses. The Anti-Defamation League tallying an unprecedented number of incidents it deemed antisemitic last year, largely related to protest against Israel's war in Gaza, and the Trump administration is levying steep penalties on schools it says did not adequately protect Jewish students.

But soon, it became clear that the person who posted the original image was not a SCAD student, meaning that there was no new instance of campus antisemitism in this case.

"There was no party," said Rabbi Zalman Refson, co-director of Chabad of Savannah. "It was clearly just, obviously, just to either show his disdain for the Jewish community, or he's going through a mental episode, and we're not quite sure just yet."

The person behind the post was not enrolled at SCAD, and the school found no evidence of the party or signage discriminating against Jewish students, SCAD said in an emailed statement.

"The investigation is ongoing to confirm that no current member of the SCAD community was involved in the creation of the social media post or related activities," the statement said. "SCAD leadership is reaching out to students, faculty, and staff who have been affected by the social media post to offer support and resources."

And the federation issued an updated statement, thanking SCAD's administration for its "swift action" and noting that national Jewish groups had also stepped in.

"The Savannah Jewish Federation appreciates the swift action of SCAD administration and their commitment to the continued safety and security of all students," the post read. "We also want to express our deep appreciation for the many National Jewish organizations and elected officials who have offered their support during this process."

Because the student had withdrawn in the fall, it is unclear what action, if any, can be taken against them for the offensive post, Refson said.

"There's a lot of outside parties, like a lot of outside aggravators, who are stirring up a lot of the hate, which seems to be the case in other schools as well," he said. "We hope that he comes to his senses in some way, and nothing illegal was done. So it's hard to penalize, but we do know that if he was at SCAD, he would have been expelled instantly." HW

DEADLINE FOR STORIES AND ADS WEDNESDAY AT 5 P.M. WE ARE HAPPY TO ACCEPT YOUR STORIES IN ADVANCE.







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### Cancer Happens: Insurance Can Help Fortify Your Finances

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 • fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael-stein

Cancer diagnosis rates are on the rise, especially for younger people under age 55. Meanwhile, U.S. death rates from cancer fell by one-third between 1991 and 2021, largely due to early detection, effective treatments, and declines in smoking.<sup>1</sup>

Although it's scary to consider the possibility of a cancer diagnosis, it might be helpful to prepare for the financial implications. Even with health insurance, today's advanced cancer treatments can be very costly. And for self-employed individuals or workers who don't have paid sick leave, taking time off for medical appointments or because they are not feeling well could make it difficult to cover their families' living expenses.

The Affordable Care Act made it illegal for insurers to deny coverage due to a pre-existing condition such as cancer, so losing access to health insurance is no longer the major concern that it used to be. However, some other types of insurance tend to be much more expensive and might even be impossible for a cancer survivor to obtain. Having at least one of the following policies in place before you are diagnosed could help stabilize your finances — so that you and your family have one less thing to worry about as you fight against cancer.

#### Disability income insurance

Disability benefits could replace a percentage of your lost income if you are unable to work during cancer treatment or recovery (up to policy limits). If your employer pays for disability income insurance, it's probably a short-term policy and may provide benefits for just three to 12 months.

A long-term disability income insur-

ance policy provides extended coverage that may last for as long as cancer substantially impairs your ability to work (up to retirement age). Private disability income insurance usually offers more comprehensive benefits than Social Security or state disability programs. Individually owned disability income insurance policies may offer the most coverage (at a greater cost), followed by group policies obtained through an employer or association.

#### Critical illness insurance

Critical illness insurance will pay you a lump sum if you become ill from — and then survive — certain illnesses or injuries, including life-threatening cancer. You can use the tax-free lump sum for whatever you want, whether it's related to your illness or not.

It's vital that you understand exactly what is covered (or not covered), which will be outlined in the policy. For example, what does the insurance company consider to be a life-threatening cancer? If you have a family history of a certain type of cancer, will the policy exclude that illness? Are there pre-existing condition limitations? Does the monthly premium increase as you get older? Finally, be aware that if you own one of these policies and never get sick, you won't get any money back.

### **Screenings Save Lives**

The ages to begin screening for breast and colorectal cancers have been lowered in recent years. These guidelines are for people at average risk. Individuals with a family history of cancer or other known risk factors may be advised to undergo more thorough screenings and/or genetic testing.

functional functions for the first form of the f				
	Type of cancer	Screening	When to begin	Frequency
	Breast (women)	Mammogram	Age 40	Every other year
	Colorectal (men&women)	Colonoscopy	Age 45	Every 10 years
	Cervical (women)	Pap test	Age 21	Every three years
	Lung (men & women)	Low-dose	Age 50	Annually
	(for long-term smokers)*			

\*A 20-year history of smoking one pack of cigarettes daily, including those who have quit in the last 15 years

Source: U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, 2024

#### Life insurance

If your life insurance policy has a critical illness rider, you may be eligible to receive some or all of the death benefit when you are diagnosed with an illness specified in the policy, which commonly includes cancer. You can use the tax-free proceeds however you wish, and any remaining death benefit will go to your beneficiaries.

Otherwise, you can typically borrow from any permanent life insurance policy that has accumulated a cash value. If you can't repay the loan in full before your death, the balance will be subtracted from the proceeds that are payable to your beneficiaries.

The cost and availability of life insurance depend on factors such as age, health, and the type and amount of insurance purchased. Before implementing a strategy involving life insurance, it would be prudent to make sure that you are insurable. Optional benefit riders are available for an additional fee and are subject to contractual terms, conditions, and limitations as outlined in the policy. Any guarantees are contingent on the financial strength and claims-paying ability of the insurance company.

A complete statement of coverage, including exclusions, exceptions, and limitations, is found only in the disability income insurance policy. It should be noted that carriers have the discretion to raise their rates and remove their products from the marketplace.

1) American Cancer Society, 2024

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### Could Changes at the FDA Call the Kosher Status of Milk into Question? Many are Asking.



### By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – As soon as news broke last week that the Food and Drug Administration was suspending federal testing of commercially produced milk, the Orthodox Union's hotline lit up.

The flood of inquiries was "off the hook ... crazy: emails, calls, WhatsApp, everything," said Rabbi Avrohom Gordimer, chair of the dairy committee at O.U. Kosher, the most recognizable kosher certifier in the United States.

The callers were all anxious about the potential implications of the policy change on the kosher status of milk. Since 1954, most kosher-keeping American Jews have relied on an influential rabbi's determination that government oversight of milk production is sufficient to render commercially produced milk kosher.

The rabbi, Moshe Feinstein, was dealing with an age-old problem of Jewish law when he made his ruling.

According to halacha, or traditional Jewish law, milk is only kosher if it comes from a kosher animal. One way to ensure that is the case is to consume only milk produced in a facility where Jews oversee every step of the process – relatively easy to accomplish in the pre-modern world, but less practical in the contemporary United States.

Feinstein – considered one of the most important Jewish legal authorities of the 20th century – addressed the challenge by ruling that government regulations could effectively take the place of some aspects of Jewish supervision. Because the U.S. government both requires that only cow's milk be called milk, and because inspectors are regularly dispatched to milk production facilities to ensure that all legal requirements are upheld, Jews could assume that commercial milk does not contain milk from non-kosher animals, Feinstein concluded.

His opinion was so decisive and pivotal that the Orthodox Union cites it on its landing page for queries about milk. But what happens if the federal government overhauls or abandons its oversight of milk?

Nothing, at least for now. That's what Gordimer and his team have concluded after seeking to understand just what has changed at the FDA.

"This development has no impact whatsoever on the kosher status of 'chalav stam' (regular commercial milk) that Rabbi Feinstein permitted in the US, as the primary oversight of farms and dairy factories is performed by state governments; the FDA is a mere secondary body for this purpose," he said by email.

What's more, Gordimer said, the test-



In this photo illustration, Froot Loops are on display on Nov. 22, 2024, in Miami, Florida. Robert F. Kennedy has said that he is concerned that Froot Loops along with other processed foods are a potential health danger for consumers. Credit: Joe Raedle/ Getty Images

ing that Kennedy suspended is meant only to detect certain contaminants and prohibited additives. Physical inspections, which he said are continuing uninterrupted, are different, and key to Feinstein's ruling.

"There has been no change in inspections, which are ongoing," Gordimer

Plus, the law prohibiting anything other than cow's milk being sold as "milk" remains on the books.

Still, the reports about changes have prompted concerns from kosher consumers. "Are we seeing the first step in the end of chalav stam..." one person asked in the Facebook group Great Kosher Restaurant Foodies.

Some Jews have rejected Feinstein's opinion and instead limited their consumption to cholov yisroel milk, which is overseen by Jews throughout the production process. But it tends to be harder to find and more expensive.

A kosher-keeping critic of President Donald Trump tweeted about the regulatory changes, "If I have to go cholov yisroel because of Tronald Dump my head might explode."

Even as OU Kosher – as well as health experts – says the current changes are no cause for concern, the scaling back of milk testing offers an early sign that kosher supervisors will need to pay attention to sweeping changes underway under the Trump administration. Trump's secretary of health, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has broad and unorthodox views on a number of topics and has promised to shake up everything from fluoridation in water to vaccines to food additives.

Last week, he announced plans to ban synthetic food dyes. Mounting concerns about synthetic dyes, which are widely used in commercial food production, have caused producers to turn to natural alternatives – such as cochineal extract, a derivative from parasitic bugs that is a powerful substitute for red dyes.

Cochineal extract, called carmine, is not kosher, meaning that kosher supervisors may need to retract certification of some items if their producers opt to replace synthetic reds with it. That happened with some forms of Tums, the heartburn relief medication, in recent years, according to a 2021 alert from the Chicago Rabbinical Council, which like the OU certifies products and offers guidance to kosher consumers.

But it's also possible that producers will keep kosher-keeping customers in mind as they adjust to Kennedy's decrees. Paulaur, which produces sprinkles and other food toppings, recently dropped its use of Red 3, a synthetic dye, the Wall Street Journal reported last month – but turned to beetroot juice and purple sweet potatoes as coloring agents so it could continue to sell kosher products. **HW** 

Kosher milk production in the United States has largely relied on government oversight as a crucial component. Credit: Getty Images

## Temple Israel Launches New High School Program: TI CHAI to Inspire and Connect Teens

Temple Israel is introducing an innovative new high school program to provide diverse pathways for Jewish engagement. Temple Israel has unveiled a groundbreaking new program designed to meet teens where they are in their journey. With an emphasis on flexibility and meaningful participation, the initiative aims to empower students to explore their Jewish identity in ways that resonate with them.

The new program offers three distinct pathways, ensuring every teen can find a level of involvement that suits their interests and commitments.

### **Social Engagement:**

The program offers a calendar of events that foster community and connection. Offerings, including study groups, watch parties, grade-level Shabbats, a Chanukah party, a Memphis Grizzlies game, a trip to Washington DC and more, are in store for those looking to connect to other Jewish teens.

### Judaics For You, By You

For those eager to deepen their engagement, monthly Wednesday sessions provide additional opportunities for learning, discussion and connection. These gatherings allow teens to explore Jewish traditions, values and contemporary issues in a welcoming space. During these sessions, students will engage with Judaic content and work in

groups to present lessons to their peers through hands-on experiences.

#### L'Dor V'Dor Internship

Temple Israel is also proud to introduce the L'Dor V'Dor Internship, a micro-internship designed to provide 40 hours of hands-on, impactful engagement throughout the year. Meeting twice a month on Wednesdays and once a month on Sundays, this leadership-focused experience allows interns to apply Jewish concepts in real-world scenarios, develop essential skills and gain invaluable experience in program planning. In addition to being role models for younger generations, interns can earn hours toward college credit at select institutions, making this an outstanding resume-building oppor-

Temple Israel's new high school program reflects a deep commitment to the continued development of Jewish identity within our teens. With multiple ways to get involved, every student can grow, learn and lead in a way that aligns with their personal journey. This is more than a program – it's a gateway to lifelong friendships, leadership development and a stronger connection to Jewish identity. For information on enrollment and program details, visit Temple Israel's website (timemphis.org) or contact the education department directly. **HW** 



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### Chairman of 'Jewish Nobel' Stan Polovets Hails Non-Jewish Laureate's Extraordinary Support for Israel and Jewish People



Stan Polovets, left, co-founder and chairman of The Genesis Prize Foundation, with Argentine President Javier Milei. Credit: Genesis Prize Foundation

(JTA) – When Argentina's president Javier Milei was named in mid-January as the recipient of this year's Genesis Prize, it marked the first time the \$1 million annual award, sometimes called the "Jewish Nobel," was given to someone who isn't Jewish.

Stan Polovets, co-founder and chairman of the Genesis Prize Foundation, recently sat down for an interview to discuss this seemingly unorthodox choice, the dramatic changes Milei is making to his country's ties with Israel and Milei's own relationship with Judaism.

#### Why are you giving this high-profile Jewish prize to a Catholic?

We realize this laureate choice may come across as unusual. It's the first time the selection committee has awarded the prize to a non-Jew, or to a head of state

But there's a uniquely compelling case to make for President Milei. He's been publicly, unequivocally supportive of Israel at this difficult time, steering Argentina on a firmly pro-Israel course even as Israel came under international criticism for its response to the October 7th attack.

Although President Milei was raised Catholic, he has strong personal Jewish connections. He studies Torah regularly, attends prayer services, placed a mezuzah on his office doorpost, and has made four visits to the grave of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, to pray for guidance.

Milei has said that he plans to convert to Judaism after leaving office, as the challenges of observing Shabbat while serving as president make it impossible to do now. He also has Jewish roots: In a 2024 visit to a Miami synagogue, President Milei revealed that his grandfather learned late in life that

his mother was Jewish, and that Milei's great-great-grandfather was a rabbi.

Okay, but why skip over other Jewish world leaders, such as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky or Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu?

Given Israel's pressing challenges on the diplomatic front, the Prize Selection Committee felt it was important to honor a remarkable non-Jew who is an extraordinary supporter of Israel. It's imperative that non-Jews who are outspoken in their support for Jews and Israel be recognized and celebrated by the Jewish world.

Argentina is a relatively minor player in world affairs – and certainly when it comes to the Middle East. Why are Milei's positions on Israel significant?

President Milei's support for Israel isn't just a political issue, but a moral one: He believes Israel's existential struggle is a clear-cut fight between good and evil. So do I.

Early in his term, Milei engineered a drastic change in Argentina's policies on Israel, reversing decades of overwhelmingly anti-Israel votes at the United Nations. He traveled to Israel during the first year of his presidency and, together with Israeli President Isaac Herzog, paid tribute to October 7 victims at the devastated Kibbutz Nir Oz. Milei designated Hamas as a terrorist organization, called for the immediate release of the hostages in Gaza and announced plans to move Argentina's embassy to Jerusalem.

On the domestic front, Milei gave a powerful new impetus to the investigations of the 1990s-era terrorist bombings of the AMIA Jewish community center and Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, which killed a total of 114 people.

Investigations of those bombings essentially had been swept under the rug by previous governments.

Finally, under Milei, Argentina has emerged as an important strategic ally of Israel in Latin America, a region where the Jewish state currently has very few friends. Since October 7, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Bolivia all have downgraded their diplomatic ties with Israel, and Venezuela has been a harsh critic of Israel for years.

Milei's fresh approach opens new opportunities for meaningful strategic cooperation between Israel and Argentina. In December, Argentinian Defense Minister Luis Petri went to Israel to sign a multi-year cooperation agreement focusing on joint projects in cyber defense, drones, border protection, satellite communications and more.

As you mentioned, Argentina repeatedly has failed to bring the real perpetrators of the 1994 AMIA and the 1992 Israel Embassy bombings to justice. What exactly is Milei doing to rectify this?

In April 2024, Argentina's Criminal Cassation Court ruled that Iran and Hezbollah had engaged in "crimes against humanity" for their role in organizing the AMIA bombing. That was a major step in a country whose government in 2013 signed a memorandum of understanding with Tehran that would have had Iran and Argentina jointly investigate the AMIA bombing. The Argentinian president who signed that document, Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, is now on trial for her role in that farce.

Last October, Argentina asked Interpol to arrest Iran's former interior minister, Ahmad Vahidi, as the alleged mastermind behind the AMIA bombing. Argentina's security minister also has identified Hezbollah's head of Latin American operations as being behind the two bombings. President Milei has proposed a bill allowing in-absentia trials of the suspects and has promised to beef up the country's intelligence system to prevent future attacks.

Argentina's government is also advancing an investigation into the 2015 murder of Alberto Nisman, the special prosecutor who was assassinated just before he was scheduled to present key evidence in his investigation of the AMIA bombing. Kirchner sabotaged that investigation during her presidency and her successors also declined to pursue it.

As Milei has said, "The era of impunity has ended in the Argentine Republic."

How are Milei's dramatic policy changes on Israel and the bombing investigations, and his very public embrace of Jewish symbols, being received in Argentina?

During my visit to Buenos Aires in December, I met with over 30 Jewish business, community, philanthropic and religious leaders, as well as prominent members of the media and education community, including university students. There was broad approval of Milei's strong support of Israel and his promises to get to the bottom of the bombing investigations as well as appreciation for his sincere personal interest in Judaism.

While a few people expressed concern that economic pain felt by segments of Argentina's population could lead to the emergence of antisemitism in a country where antisemitism is almost non-existent, most did not share this view. In fact, there was a broad consensus that Milei's policies will lead to an improvement in the lives of most Argentinians and that his embrace of Israel and Judaism is a net positive for the Argentinian Jewish community.

I share this optimism. When I met President Milei and his close advisers in Buenos Aires, I saw a leader with a very strong and competent team who has a popular mandate for change; a leader who has a vision for a prosperous Argentina and is passionate about making it a reality.

### The Genesis Prize comes with a \$1 million award. What does Milei plan to do with it?

President Milei has announced that he — like all other Genesis Prize Laureates — will forgo the \$1 million financial award and instead will work with our foundation to direct the funds to organizations that advocate for freedom and liberty in Argentina and around the world.

We will coordinate closely with the president and his team to identify such organizations and will seek to leverage Genesis Prize funds with additional contributions from other philanthropists.

The idea of promoting freedom and liberty is on the top of Milei's agenda and we will do whatever we can to support this important initiative.

This article was sponsored by and produced in partnership with The Genesis Prize Foundation, which aims to foster Jewish identity, inspire Jewish pride and strengthen the bond between Israel and the Diaspora. This article was produced by JTA's native content team. **HW** 

### FSU Shooting Suspect Used Neo-Nazi Imagery on Social Media, ADL Finds

By Grace Gilson

(JTA) – The suspect in last month's shooting at Florida State University used Nazi imagery and language in his online profiles, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

Phoenix Ikner, 20, is accused of killing two and wounding six in the shooting on April 17. In a review of his online gaming profiles, the ADL's Center on Extremism found that he was the latest shooting suspect to express admiration for the Nazis and Adolf Hitler.

According to a screenshot the ADL posted on X, Ikner used a crude draw-

ing of Hitler saying "nein," German for no, as his profile photo on XBOX Live. In another screenshot shared with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Ikner's profile uses the emblem of the Patriot Front, a white supremacist group known for disseminating antisemitic propaganda on college campuses and elsewhere.

A screenshot of the alleged shooter's inbox shows him being referred to as "Schutzstaffel," the Nazi paramilitary group known as the SS that played a leading role in perpetrating the Holo-

caust.

Ikner's search history also showed that he may have looked up "scientific racism," an idea that underlaid Nazi antisemitism, as well as "national confederate flag."

An ADL study from January found that bigotry, including antisemitism, was common on online gaming platforms.

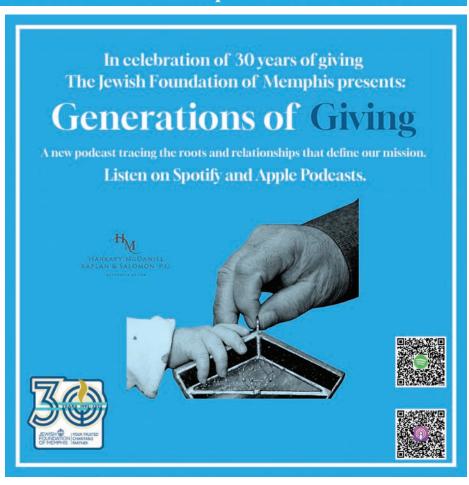
"Neither one means anything in particular but they're part of the broader story," Carla Hill, a senior director of investigative research at the ADL's Center on Extremism, told USA Today of the screenshots. "It gives us a little more insight into what he's thinking about and curious about."

Other mass shooters in recent years have espoused Nazi ideas, even in cases where they haven't targeted Jewish institutions. In January, the ADL found that the suspect in a Nashville school shooting had praised Hitler and shared neo-Nazi content. A series of mass shooters in recent years have promoted the antisemitic "great replacement theory." HW

Celebrating 30 Years of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis



Anthony Morrison was honored in 2022 for his service as the outgoing Foundation Chair. He continues to contribute meaningfully as both a dedicated lay leader and a valued professional advisor.





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### 'F-K Israel' Message Displayed at Coachella Music Festival and Streamed to Millions



A member of the band Kneecap displays a Palestinian flag before a Coachella performance that included an anti-Israel display. Screenshot from Hasan Piker's livestream

### By JTA Staff

(JTA) – The Irish band Kneecap displayed a large anti-Israel message during its set last Friday at Coachella, a music festival held in the California desert.

A series of messages projected behind the band accused Israel of genocide in Gaza and condemned the United States for its support for Israel's military. The messages concluded with a small phrase on top of a larger one: "F-k Israel. Free Palestine."

The progressive Twitch streamer Hasan Piker beamed the performance

to his millions of followers, widening Kneecap's reach beyond the estimated 125,000 people attending Coachella in person. Piker previously caused Democratic Rep. Richie Torres to call for Twitch to improve its handling of Israel-Hamas war content.

Kneecap's display came a week after the band's first Coachella performance, when its protest against Israel was cut from the official livestream. The band had vowed to repeat its protest and collaborated with Piker to evade editing by the festival. Mo Chara, one of the hip-hop trio's members, told concert-goers that what Palestinians are facing is far worse than anything Ireland endured during its persecution by the British. Ireland is staunchly pro-Palestinian in part because of what many Irish see as a shared history of oppression.

"The Palestinians have nowhere to go," Chara said. "It's their f-king home. And they're bombing them from the skies. If you're not calling it a genocide what the f-k are you calling it?"

He then led the crowd in chanting, "Free Palestine."

Kneecap has made anti-Israel advocacy a central component of its performances and social media presence. The band was among 80 groups to pull out of South by Southwest in 2024 to protest the festival's ties to the Israeli military and last month led a "Free Palestine" chant during a performance in Melbourne, Australia. In February, the band posted a picture of a member reading the collected speeches of Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader whom Israel assassinated in September.

Kneecap's demonstration was far more prominent than another pro-Palestinian protest during the festival. Last week the band Green Day, which is known for its political progressivism, replaced a line from the song "Jesus in Suburbia" with the words "Running away from pain like the kids from Palestine." The tweaked lyric elicited criticism from some pro-Israel voices, including the heavy metal musician David Draiman from Disturbed, who tweeted an invitation to lead singer Billy Joe Armstrong.

"You know I respect you brother," Draiman wrote. "I'd love to have the opportunity for you to hear the Israe-li/Jewish side of this horrific war. I'm available to discuss whenever you are."

In the wake of Kneecap's Coachella performance, Draiman offered a harsher take, retweeting messages condemning the band's comments and supporters. One meme, by the pro-Israel influencer Zach Sage Fox, used the styling of the Coachella display to render a different message calling "Free Palestine" a scam. "I doubt you'd be applauding like sheep if this were the Nova music festival and you were being slaughtered like sheep," the message concluded.

It was a reference to the festival where 364 people were murdered during Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel – and not the first likening Coachella to Nova. "Imagine going to a music festival and not coming home," the pro-Israel advocacy group Jewbelong said on bright-pink billboard it put up along the California highway leading to the Coachella site. **HW** 

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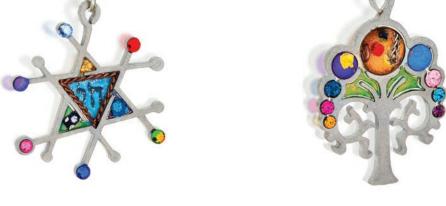


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