Second Anniversary of Pittsburgh Synagogue Massacre Marked by Top US Jewish Group

Ahead of the second anniversary of the Pittsburgh synagogue massacre on Tuesday, a top US Jewish group issued a statement remembering the victims and urging renewed vigor in the fight against antisemitism.

“We observe the second anniversary of the deadliest antisemitic attack in American history, in which 11 innocent people were murdered simply because they were Jews,” the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations said. “We mourn the lives lost and the senseless carnage wrought upon congregations Tree of Life, Dor Hadash, and New Light two years ago at their shared synagogue, and we stand in solidarity with the Pittsburgh Jewish community.”

“This tragedy ended the age of innocence for American Jewry,” it added. “It can no longer be said that antisemitism will not manifest itself in this country. As we recall the victims and express sympathy to their families, we must also learn from this tragedy and work to prevent further incidents. When Jew-hatred rears its ugly head, there must be action from all levels of government and all sectors of society.”

Biden to Push Into Georgia as Trump Embarks on Three-State Campaign Spree

With just a week to go until the Nov. 3 election, President Donald Trump and Democratic Joe Biden will crisscross the country on Tuesday in an intense day of campaigning that will also see former President Barack Obama back on the stump.

Trailing Biden in national opinion polls, Trump will hold rallies in three states key to his reelection hopes — Michigan, Wisconsin and Nebraska — while Biden journeys to Georgia and Obama campaigns on Biden’s behalf in critical Florida.

The 2020 US presidential campaign has been unlike any other as a raging coronavirus pandemic that has so far killed more than 225,000 Americans pushes record early voting. More than 64 million votes have been cast so far, approaching half the total 2016 vote, according to the US Elections Project at the University of Florida.

The huge volume of mail ballots could take days or

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Honoring the Two-Year Anniversary of the Tree of Life Shooting by Strengthening Communal Bridges

Deplatforming the Campaign to Deplatform the Jews

The news that Zoom has once again denied service to a webinar featuring the infamous Palestinian terrorist Leila Khaled following protests from advocacy groups was very welcome, but it also raises an issue — and a tactic — that has become ever more controversial with time: deplatforming.

Deplatforming is a very simple, indeed somewhat simple-minded phenomenon. It is essentially a means of political protest and activism that involves denying specific forums — usually but not always of the prestigious variety — to certain speakers or movements. This means things like disinviting or picketing speakers, disrupting events (sometimes violently), pushing social media companies to ban offensive accounts and, perhaps most shockingly, pushing social media companies to ban offensive accounts and, perhaps most shockingly, disrupting events (sometimes violently), with the power of information capital, and right-wing organizations and individuals, along with the power of information capital, to set the agenda for what can and cannot be said on public university campuses.

The irony of this is that pro-Palestinian, anti-Zionist, and antisemitic forces on our universities and the influence of Zionist and right-wing organizations and individuals, along with the power of information capital, to set the agenda for what can and cannot be said on public university campuses.

For opponents, it is an uncomfortable question, given that many of us disapprove of deplatforming itself and oppose attempts to deplatform the Jews. The question, then, is whether we ought to do the same to the deplatformers, whether or not we agree with them, in order to protect the democracy of speech. Indeed, as many critics have pointed out, the very idea of codifying “offensive” speech for the purposes of deplatforming is in many ways a violation of the right to free speech.

Ironically, Khaled’s leftist and Islamist defenders immediately leapt on the free speech bandwagon once she was threatened with deplatforming. The US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, which is promoting the terrorist’s webinars, quickly began fulminating an antisemitic conspiracy theory, shrieking in ridiculously neatly orchestrated rhetoric that the deplatformers were systematically subjected to campaigns of intimidation and in-person events will require face masks and social distancing.

In the two years since the massacre, Myers has led a movement to discourage vitriolic, menacing speech online — what he terms “ID speech” — that he views as having been a contributing factor to the Tree of Life atrocity.

Myers, who was conducting services when the gunman broke in and who reportedly evacuated several congregants to safety, characterized his efforts to heal over the past two years as a process.

“Driving through Squirrel Hill, you see signs [memorializing the victims] still there,” he said. “It can cheer you up because you know the person is thinking of you and sending you love. But sometimes, you look at it and it can bring you back to that day.”

Two years on, he still has “good moments and bad moments,” Myers said, adding that “it’s going to be that way for the rest of my life.”

He has dedicated time over these past two years to building bridges to other communities.

“New York is No.1 in bridges, Pittsburgh is second,” he said. “At any rate, we’ve got a lot of bridges here, but they are only good if we use them for good purposes.”

Buoyed by the outpouring of love and support immediately following the massacre, Myers noted that some of the “bridges” built then have stood the test of time. This year, he was deeply touched when Pittsburgh Steelers Zach Banner, a member of his own initiative, took a public stand against antisemitism after other NFL players tweeted antisemitic remarks that NFL officials failed to condemn. (In a posted video, Banner, who also came from Pittsburgh Steelers players attended some of the funerals for the victims of the Tree of Life massacre, said the experience helped to sensititize him to antisemitism, and stated, “When … we talk about elevating ourselves, when we say Black Lives Matter, we can’t do that while still standing on the back of other people … and that’s very important to me.”)

“This past year, Myers met with Banner. ‘He’s an incredible young man, and the Steelers and our entire city should really be proud of him,’” Myers said.

Bridges extended to those with different political views, too. Two years down the line, Myers stands by his decision to welcome US President Donald Trump and his family to pay their respects — a choice some community members protested at the time.

“I stand by the choices I’ve made,” he said. “The Torah will be my guide, and the Torah says we welcome strangers. I’ll let history be the judge of what I’ve said and done these past two years.”

He added, “What happened to us transcends politics.”

Doris Dyan, a Reconstructionist rabbi and survivor of the massacre, will co-lead the yahrzeit morning service on behalf of Congregation Beth Shalom.

Rabbi Jeffrey Myers, the religious leader of the Tree of Life*Or L ’Simcha synagogue, and several other survivors of the mass shooting that cut short the lives of 11 Jewish members of the three congregations sharing a home in the synagogue, recently spoke about how they will observe this year’s commemoration of the tragedy.

The remembrance of those killed and charitable projects in their memories are planned to honor them.

Myers will pre-record a memorial prayer for the victims that will be livestreamed via the commemoration website on October 27. He will also co-lead yahrzeit prayers and virtual Torah study on the anniversary of their deaths, according to the Jewish calendar, which this year falls on November 4-5.

“ ‘My responsibility is to make it as warm, welcoming, and user-friendly as possible,’ he said of the service.

Comprised of local organizations and the affected congregations, the 10.27 Healing Partnership, a nonprofit organization coordinating this year’s commemoration, was formed with a grant from the US Department of the Interior.

Congress designated money to commemorate the religious and cultural impact of the Tree of Life shooting. It is in the eye of the beholder. For supporters of trans rights, for example, the claim that biological sex is immutable is offensive speech. For opponents, it is simple common sense.

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Deplatforming the Campaign to Deplatform the Jews

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The irony of this is that pro-Palestinian, anti-Zionist, and antisemitic forces on our universities and the influence of Zionist and right-wing organizations and individuals, along with the power of information capital, to set the agenda for what can and cannot be said on public university campuses.

The obvious goal of all this is to violate precisely those principles Khaled’s defenders claim to advocate and thus brutalize Israel and Judaism, its campus defenders into surrender and silence. In other words, they want to deplatform the Jews. The question, then, is whether we ought to do the same to the deplatformers, whether or not we agree with them, in order to protect the democracy of speech. Indeed, as many critics have pointed out, the very idea of codifying “offensive” speech for the purposes of deplatforming is in many ways a violation of the right to free speech.

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Doris Dyan, a Reconstructionist rabbi and survivor of the massacre, will co-lead the yahrzeit morning service on behalf of Congregation Beth Shalom.
NYU Chapter of AAUP Professors Group Slams Zoom for Denying Platform to Palestinian Terrorist

BY BENJAMIN KERSTEIN

The New York University (NYU) chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has released a statement in support of holding academic events with terrorists.

The statement came in reaction to the video-conferencing platform Zoom's decision to deny service to a webinar featuring a message from Palestinian terrorist Leila Khaled, a leading member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) who took part in the hijacking of a Tel Aviv-bound commercial flight in 1969. The PFLP has been designated as a terrorist group by the United States.

The cancellation followed two similar occurrences, one at San Francisco State University (SFSU) and another at the University of Hawaii, in which webinars featuring Khaled were canceled by Zoom, which said events featuring terrorists violated its terms of service.

The SFSU event was moved to YouTube, which shut it down 20 minutes after the live feed started.

The statement put out last week by the NYU-AAUP executive committee referred to Khaled as a “Palestinian rights advocate” despite her self-admitted terrorist activities, and decreed Zoom’s alleged “censorship” of her. It also claimed that the canceled webinar had been intended to discuss this “censorship.”

The description of the event in question called Khaled a “Palestinian liberation advocate” and claimed a conspiracy was behind her cancellation, asking, “Why are big tech platforms making decisions that violate academic freedom?”

The NYU-AAUP statement said, “We recognize that it is an act of sick comedy to censor an event about censorship, but it raises serious questions about the capacity of a corporate, third-party vendor to decide what is acceptable academic speech and what is not.”

“The shutdown of a campus event is a clear violation of the principle of academic freedom that universities are obliged to observe,” the statement claimed, and then propagated a conspiracy theory of its own, asserting the cancellation was the work of “organized, politically motivated groups.”

The statement then described Zoom’s decision as “appalling” and demanded the NYU administration “issue a strong statement denouncing this act.”

A Zoom spokesperson told The Algemeiner on Tuesday, “Zoom is committed to supporting the open exchange of ideas and conversations and does not have any policy preventing users from criticizing Zoom. Zoom does not monitor events and will only take action in receive reports about possible violations of our Terms of Service, Acceptable Use Policy, and Community Standards.”

“Similar to the event held by San Francisco University, we determined that this event was in violation of one or more of these policies and let the host know that they were not permitted to use Zoom for this particular event,” the spokesperson added.

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Deplatforming hate speech is an actual threat to life and limb, the mortal equivalent of physical violence and even murder. By this definition, groups like the American Association of University Professors must not seek to suppress the free exchange of ideas and conversations.

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Campaign Spree

weeks to tally, experts have said. Mail voting is nothing new for the United States — about one in four ballots were cast that way in 2016, but is surging amid the pandemic.

Trump, who has repeatedly and without evidence claimed that mailed ballots are likely to be subject to fraud, on Monday said on Twitter: “Must have final total on November 3rd.”

Tuesday flagged the tweet with a disclaimer describing the post’s content as “disputed” and potentially misleading.

Biden’s foray into Georgia, long a Republican stronghold, is a sign of the campaign’s optimism heading into the final week.

Polls show the race to be tight, and win by Biden in Georgia would likely be a severe blow to Trump’s chances. The state

hasn’t supported a Democrat in a presidential election since 1992.

Biden told reporters on Monday he believes he has a “fighting chance” to take Georgia.

He will hold an afternoon event in Warm Springs, Georgia — where former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt maintained a vacation home — before capping the day with an evening rally in the state capital, Atlanta.

Flash with cash, Biden’s campaign has been advertising in the state for weeks.

Obama, who has emerged as a top stand-in for Biden down the stretch, will campaign in Orlando after heading up a rally in Miami over the weekend. Biden served as Obama’s vice president for eight years.

Trump heads to Nebraska

Trumps rally in Nebraska, meanwhile,

‘Zionism Only at Beginning of Its History,’ French Intellectual Bernard-Henri Levy Says

Leading French intellectual Bernard-Henri Levy has called for a renewal of the Zionism vision, arguing that the Jewish national liberation movement had already fulfilled its mission and is sorely mistaken.

“Zionism is only at the beginning of its history,” Levy declared in a statement addressed to the 38th World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem last week.

“Israel is such a young nation,” he noted. “And in another way, it is ancient, as old as the history of the world. What we call Zionism today must continue to maintain its spirit as long as we are alive. Let us not say today that Zionism has exhausted its message; that’s completely untrue.”

Levy also argued that Diaspora Jewish communities had to remain at the core of the Zionist movement’s vision.

“The Diaspora is not some kind of remainder, or remnant, cast away by history,” the philosopher said. “On the contrary, it is something that should be integrated quickly into the mainstream of Zionism.”

Continued "In Diaspora life, Jewish existence, let’s say someone who’s Romanian, Italian, American or French, there is something very noble in the existence of these Jews, something that cannot be reduced to the expectation of going to Jerusalem. I don’t think that existence in the Diaspora, in exile, is somehow less than.”

Levy expressed hope that Israel would “be able to continue to play the same path of democracy.”

“Such is the basic element of the ideal that has brought us all together here today,” he concluded.

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Pittsburgh society to counter it and to hold to account perpetrators, invitees, and enablers. The security of our communities and our institutions must be paramount.”

As we mark this solemn occasion, words and condolences are not enough.” the Conference suggests his campaign is preparing for a close finish. The state apportions three of its five electoral votes by majority vote in its three congressional districts, with the Omaha area district a potential pick-up opportunity for Biden while the rest of the state is expected to go for Trump.

In a scenario where Trump and Biden finish close to a tie in the US Electoral College, that Omaha district with its single vote could make the difference of clinching the 270th elector needed to win. Trump’s rally is also likely to draw attendees from neighboring Iowa, another state that is likely to be competitive.

Early on Tuesday, Trump will stage rallies in Michigan and Wisconsin, two states he won by narrow margins in 2016, but where polls show him now trailing to Biden.

Trump will be able to tout the confirmation of his nominee Amy Coney Barrett to the US Supreme Court. Barrett cleared the Senate on Monday by a 52-48 vote and was sworn in during a night-time outdoor ceremony at the White House, meeting the president’s goal of having her on the court by Election Day.

The scene was reminiscent of the Sept. 29 event in which Trump introduced Barrett as his nominee, albeit with more attendees wearing masks and increased social distancing. The September event preceded an outbreak of the virus that infected Trump and three Senate Republicans.

Shortly before Barrett’s confirmation, the Supreme Court refused to allow an extension ordered by a federal judge in the deadline for returning mail-in ballots in Wisconsin, dealing a setback to Democrats.

Record numbers of new US COVID-19 cases in recent days, including a new outbreak among Vice President Mike Pence’s staff, have offered Biden’s campaign a chance to remind voters of how Trump and his allies have played down the advice of public health experts to wear masks and observe social-distancing guidelines to battle the pandemic.

Despite his exposure to the coronavirus, Pence has continued to campaign and will travel to North Carolina and South Carolina on Tuesday. He tested negative for the virus on Monday, the White House said.

French philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy addressing the 38th Zionist Congress. Photo: Screenshot.
New Survey Shows More Than 8 in 10 American Jews Think Antisemitism Is on Rise in US

BY BENJAMIN KERSTEIN

A new survey shows that more than 8 in 10 American Jews believe antisemitism has risen in the US over the past five years.

The State of Antisemitism in America 2020 survey — conducted by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) — also found that 85% of American Jews view the statement, “Israel has no right to exist,” as antisemitic, with 84% feeling the same about the statement, “The US government only supports Israel because of Jewish money.”

Another 76% considered the idea, “American Jews are more loyal to Israel than to America,” as antisemitic.

Furthermore, a combined 80% said the BDS movement was “mostly antisemitic” or had “some antisemitic supporters,” with only 15% saying it “was not antisemitic.”

Asked how much of a problem antisemitism was in the US today, 88% said it was a “very serious problem” or “somewhat of a problem.”

However, 97% said they had not suffered a physical antisemitic attack, 75% said they had not been the target of an antisemitic remark and 77% had not been targeted over their religion on social media.

Of those who were targets of such abuse, however, 76% said they had not reported the incidents.

Occurrences of antisemitism on social media were overwhelmingly clustered on Facebook, at 62%; with Twitter at 33%.

There were also mixed responses to the question of where antisemitism was coming from. Some 89% of respondents said right-wing antisemitism was a threat and 61% said the same of left-wing antisemitism. And 85% said Muslims extremist represented an antisemitic threat.

IDF soldiers look on toward people standing next to the Israel-Syria border fence on the Golan Heights, July 17, 2017. Photo: Reuters / Aaron Davidson.

BY JNS.org

A 1,700-year-old boundary stone bearing the Greek inscription “Kfar Nafah” (Nafah village) was discovered during an archaeological excavation in the Golan Heights last month by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) announced on Tuesday.

When the inscription was deciphered, by Danny Synn of the IAA and professor Hamim Ben-David of the Kinneret Academic College, it aroused great excitement, as the location bears the same name today, despite a lack of settlement continuity at the site. Nafah was the name of the Syrian village that existed at the location until the Six Day War in 1967, and is now the name of the adjacent Israel Defense Forces base.

The dig, directed by Dina Avshalom-Gorni and Yardena Alexandre of the IAA, was conducted ahead of the planned installation of a security barrier at Nafah by the Dead Sea Water Company. The stone was uncovered in secondary use as a tomb covering, according to the statement.

The reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian (approx. 300 C.E.), such stones marked village boundaries for the purpose of collecting taxes. This is the first boundary stone found in the central Golan Heights.

According to researchers, ancient names are typically preserved as a result of settlement continuity, from generation to generation. However, Nafah, archaeological remains have not revealed such settlement continuity. From the Byzantine period—about 1,500 years ago—and up to modern times, there are no known settlements to have existed here, apart from briefly during the Mamluk period (13th-15th centuries C.E.).

The find thus supports the theory that ancient place names can be preserved for events and “threatening to attack people.”

Still, said Finkelstein, it’s not just the far-right using the webs. He noted a “parallel structure for left-wing violence, leftist anarchists and socialists,” who tend to utilize their own code words and memes.

‘Guidance for reviews looking at content’

According to Peter Stern, director of stakeholder engagement and content policy at Facebook, 95 percent of hate speech is removed by automatic, and they are trying to make it harder for administrators of groups that have been removed to create new groups.

“It’s easy to forget that at the end of the day, we have to come up with guidance for the more than 15,000 reviewers who will be looking at content every day,” said Stern, adding that they need concrete guidance and not just have people making judgment calls.

The popular video platform TikTok is also working to combat hate on its platform. According to Jeff Collins, senior director of global trust and safety, it’s not enough to “disrupt the ecosystem of hate,” but to try to prevent the “amplification” of it.

One step they are taking is utilizing algorithms to prevent “filter bubbles,” where a user would only see one type of content watching, for example, cute cat videos and then getting more like-minded videos in an individual feed might not be problematic, the concern of a “filter bubble” is when it’s used to target and amplify hate or other problematic content.

Collins also said it’s not always as simple as taking down content due to the sheer amount of material online and because “bad actors” are trying to circumvent security measures.

Another issue is defining what constitutes antisemitism. It’s a question that vein not only social media companies but many others as well, particularly as it relates to Israel and Zionism.

That’s why many of the speakers stressed the importance of passing one standard definition of antisemitism, specifically the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition. However, stressed a number of the speakers, it is not enough to pass the short definition, but to utilize and include the extended definition, which includes examples of antisemitism in real-life speech, media and elsewhere.

It is the extended definition that some balk at, claiming that it limits legitimate forms of expression and criticism of Israel; it was also a point that caused some bristling from conference speakers.

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Found in Golan Heights


BY JNS.org

The scene outside the JCC in Nashville, Tennessee, following a bomb threat. Photo: YouTube screenshot.

The scene outside the JCC in Nashville, Tennessee, following a bomb threat. Photo: YouTube screenshot.
Trump Celebrates at White House as Supreme Court Nominee Confirmed

BY REUTERS & ALGEMEINER STAFF

President Donald Trump reveled in one of his signature achievements on Monday at a White House ceremony to celebrate US Senate confirmation of his third Supreme Court nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, eight days before the election.

The made-for-TV prime-time event on the White House lawn mirrored one a month ago, when Barrett’s nomination was announced, which preceded a coronavirus outbreak among top Republicans including Trump himself.

It came little more than an hour after the Republican-controlled Senate confirmed Barrett to the lifetime appointment on a 52-48 vote, with Democrats unified in opposition.

Her confirmation as successor to liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who died last month, creates a 6-3 conservative majority on the high court. One Republican, Susan Collins, voted against the confirmation.

Trump, who has been touting the appointment at campaign rallies to the cheers of his supporters, had pressed the Senate to confirm Barrett, 48, before the Nov. 3 election in which he trails Democrat Joe Biden in national opinion polls. No Supreme Court justice had ever been confirmed so close to a presidential election.

“The Barrett family has captured America’s heart. It is highly fitting that Justice Barrett fills the seat of a true pioneer for women, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg,” Trump said with a smiling Barrett at his side.

In contrast to the White House event last month, more people wore masks and seats were spread out to ensure social distancing. Several of the Republican senators who voted to confirm Barrett were in attendance, although not Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who has not been to the White House since August due to COVID-19 concerns.

Conservative Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, wearing his judicial black robes, administered one of the two oaths of office that justices have to take.

Barrett vowed independence

In brief remarks, Barrett declared her independence from Trump and the political process even as the president stood behind her.

“The oath that I have solemnly taken tonight means at its core I will do the job without fear or favor and do it independently of the political branches and of my own preferences,” she said.

After the ceremony, Trump and Barrett waved to applauding guests from the White House balcony.

Chief Justice John Roberts will administer the separate judicial oath at the court on Tuesday, the court said in a statement.

Trump's other Supreme Court appointees are conservatives Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh.

Trump has said he expects the court to decide the outcome of the election and wants Barrett to participate on any election-related cases that go before the justices.

Just before the Senate vote, the court on a 5-3 vote with the conservative justices in the majority, issued an order curbing the deadline for mail-in ballots to be received in the electoral battleground of Wisconsin.

Barrett’s confirmation shifts the Supreme Court further to the right, which could pave the way to conservative rulings curbing abortion rights, expanding gun rights and limiting voting rights, among other things.

Biden said late on Monday the confirmation was “rushed and unprecedented.”

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said the Republican majority was “lighting its credibility on fire” by proceeding with the vote so close to the election after blocking Democratic President Barack Obama’s election-year nominee in 2016.

“The truth is this nomination is part of a decades-long effort to tilt the judiciary to the far right,” he added.

McConnell defended Barrett’s nomination.

“We don’t have any doubt, do we, that if the shoe was on the other foot, they’d be confirming,” McConnell said. “You can’t win them all, and elections have consequences.”

The move sparked outrage on the left, with Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, one of the most liberal members of Congress, tweeting, “expand the court.”

That is a reference to adding more justices to balance the three Trump has named.

Obamacare case

Barrett is expected to participate in arguments on Nov. 10 in a case in which Trump and Republican-led states are seeking to invalidate the Affordable Care Act. The 2010 healthcare law, also known as Obamacare, has helped millions of Americans obtain medical insurance and barred private insurers from denying medical coverage to people with pre-existing conditions.

Barrett has criticized previous rulings upholding Obamacare but said during her confirmation hearing she had no agenda to invalidate the measure.

In Biden’s statement after Barrett’s confirmation, the former vice president said Trump has been “crystal clear” about wanting to “tear down” the Affordable Care Act.

During her confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee two weeks ago, Barrett, a favorite of Christian conservatives, irked Democrats by sidestepping questions on abortion, presidential powers, climate change, voting rights, Obamacare and other issues.
Israel's 50 'Racist Laws'? Hardly

ADAM LEVICK
JERUSALEM

The Guardian has, once again, disseminated the erroneous claim that Israel has 50 racist laws, in an op-ed by Samu Abu Shehadeh, an Arab MK who was recently revealed to have attended an event that called for the release of a terrorist convicted of conspiring to murder Israelis.

The op-ed ("Israel's pact with the UAE is not about peace. It's a business deal," Oct. 1) included the following:

- Discrimination and racism against Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, an indigenous population that makes up over 20% of the country's population, is present in every aspect of life. More than 50 laws discriminate against non-Jewish citizens. Israel's trains do not stop in a single Arab city. (Emphasis added)

There are actually two problems with that last sentence.

Turning to the second sentence, we highlighted, that Israel trains don't stop in Arab cities. This is extremely misleading. There's an Israel Railway station called Lebanon/Rahat, serving Rahat, the largest Arab Bedouin city in Israel. (The train station is a mere 18-minute drive from the town.)

Now, regarding 50 laws that allegedly discriminate against non-Jewish citizens, which, though unattributed, is almost certainly based on a report by the radical anti-Israel NGO Adalah.

However, CAMERA and other watchdog groups have refuted Adalah's claims of racist laws—a term they use so unspecifically that it is difficult to identify. For example, according to Adalah, the flag constitutes a discriminatory law. Needless to say, this unfounded reasoning would mean that any country, the flag of which bears a cross or crescent, discriminates against its non-Christian or non-Muslim minorities. A more in-depth comparison between laws—fully, frequently Israel legislation is actually characterized by a higher degree of tolerance for its national minorities. In at least 13 cases, a large disparity exists between the explicit content of the laws and the biased (and sometimes warped) interpretation accorded to them by Adalah. In some instances the claimed discrimination is difficult to identify. For example, the Golan Heights Law is considered discriminatory due to its objective of “accord­ing a legal basis for the implementation of Israeli law on the territory of the Golan Heights conquered by Israel.” It would seem that only Adalah is capable of explaining a law intended to grant special status to all residents of the Golan Heights as being discriminatory.

- Eight laws are intended to protect the security of all Israeli citizens regardless of their race, or gender. Included in these laws are a number of legislative amendments to the Criminal Procedure Law and the Prisons Ordinance, which serve to prevent and penalize attacks on law enforcement. These laws are not directed at any distinct group.

• In the case of some of the laws mentioned in the list, the supposed discrimination actually affected the Jewish majority and not the Arab minority. For example, Clause 7a of the Basic Law: the Law for the Protection of Discharged Soldiers Law is indicted by Adalah as discriminatory because it presumes that individuals towards whom the State is not obligated to act with equality. The absurdity in Adalah’s approach can be demonstrated by the example of the Trading with the Enemy Act (a law evolving from British anti-Arab laws) being included in the list as a discriminatory law because the countries declared as such (Iran, Syria and Lebanon) are Arab and/or Muslim states.

According to this logic, if members of the Arab sector of the population are the main criminal violators of a certain law, then that particular law perform is deemed racist. This could apply to laws against theft of property, against sex crimes, or against driving through red lights. The constructive and proper solution to disproportionate violations is not amendment of necessary laws, of course, but rather—educating and encouraging observance of the law among all sectors of the population—without distinction or favoritism.

A large portion of Adalah’s racist claims, they add, stem from their belief that Zionism is intrinsically racist, and that the Jewish state, within any borders, has no right to exist—a view considered antisemitic by the IHRA Working Definition.

The fact that such a patronely false, unsubstantiated claim smearing Israel got past Guardian editors is just another example of the media group’s institutional anti-Israel bigotry that we’ve been documenting on these pages over the last 11 years.

Adam Levick serves co-editor of CAMERA UK—an affiliate of the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA), where this article first appeared.

Sudan and Israel: An Era of Change

HAIM KOREN
HERZLIYA

Prior to gaining independence in 1956, British-ruled Sudan had good relations with the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine and later with the State of Israel. Khartoum did not take part in the 1948 war, and many al-Qaeda terrorists who were forced to flee South Arabs. It became a close ally of the Iranian regime as well as an important source of supplies to Hamas, Hezbollah, and other terror­ist organizations in Somalia and Yemen. According to foreign sources, Israel has repeatedly interrupted arms deliveries to terrorist groups, including the destruction of a convoy of trucks carrying Iranian missiles to Hamas in the early 1990s and a strike on an Iranian arms ship in Port Sudan.

After the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant in July 2008 against Bashir for crimes against humanity and (later for genocide) committed in Darfur, where some 350,000-500,000 men and women were murdered in 2003-04, Bashir was said to have advised his top aides in Khartoum that “if things go well with the US, maybe you can help us with Israel, your closest ally.”

This was the first time the establishment of relations between Israel and Sudan had been raised as a distinct possibility, though that did not stop the regime’s support for the “axis of terror,” thus transforming Sudan into an arena for a covert war between Israel and Iran.

In October 2012, for example, Israeli fighter jets attacked a weapons factory near Khartoum that belonged to Iran’s Revolutionary Guards—a factory that produced long-range Shahab missiles and other weapons to be smuggled into Gaza and Lebanon.

With Sudan subsequently joining the Saudi-led coalition of Sunni Arab states, hints were renewed regarding the possible establishment of relations with Israel. In January 2016, Foreign Minister Ibrahim Ghandour was quoted as saying, “The issue of normalizing relations with Israel can be examined in exchange for the removal of US sanctions on Khartoum. In response to the media storm caused by Bashir’s remarks, Ghandour said that he had been “advised to regulate his relations with Israel” in order to ease Sudan’s economic predicament.

These hints, which were probably intended to signal to the West the seriousness of Sudan’s intention to abandon the “axis of evil,” were supported by opposition figures who believed that “there is no justification for Sudan to show hospitality to Israel and pay a political and economic price for it.”

Continued on Page A7
apartments are seen in the Israeli settlement of Efrat, Aug. 18, 2020. (Photo: Reuters / Baz Ratner)

This is why we can expect that Israel will soon be advancing plans to develop industrial parks in Judea and Samaria where Israelis and Palestinians will be able to work side by side (as they already do at the Kishon and Golan Heights). And it will be geared to be greeted with even stronger affirmation among Israel’s new allies, who have prioritized economic coexistence as a pretense to diplomatic breakthroughs.

Israel’s efforts to increase economic opportunity based on coexistence is likely to attract investors from these Gulf states, and enable to put down their guns and go to work.

For some time now, PA leader Mahmoud Abbas has refused to accept funds collected by the Israel Tax Authority. Donor countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and others, have significantly reduced aid to the PA. The PA Finance Ministry recently announced that international aid has shrunk by no less than 81%.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in recent months has met with senior PA officials, sponsored reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas, and transferred funds to the PA. Erdogan’s Turkey is fully supportive of Hamas and its extremist positions. The emerging reality is that our Palestinian neighbors, who remain in economic distress, are now receiving funds from a highly radical and impulsive autocrat. Once the COVID-19 crisis has ended, the above could lead to a third intifada.

The State of Israel must decide that it will not let the ‘noise’ of the coronavirus ‘kill its thought’ and determine its actions. Israel must attract international investors from our new friends in the Gulf, as well as from the United States and other allies. It is time to start industrial areas that will enhance and connect the Israeli-Palestinian economies.

If we want security, peace, good neighborliness and cooperation with the Palestinians, we must invest in Judea and Samaria. It is time to build an economic axis that will put bread on the tables of ordinary Palestinians, who will choose to put down their guns.

Regardless of what happens on Election Day in the United States, there is a genuine opportunity to build on the momentum of the Abraham Accords and on the American administration’s maximum pressure on Iran and the PA. If we don’t, disaster may lie ahead.

Israel thus has no choice but to rise above the noise of COVID-19 and plan how best to leverage the opportunities provided by Trump’s policies.

The stakes are too high to do otherwise.

Oded Revivi is the mayor of Efrat and the former chief foreign envoy of the Judea and Samaria Council.
Why I’m So Supportive of Israel and Donald Trump

BY JON VOIGHT

People ask me why I am so supportive of Israel and of Donald Trump.

I was born in 1938, and therefore was alive through the time of the Holocaust, and I also witnessed the carnage of Israel as the historic homeland of the Jewish people in 1948. I saw the attacks on this tiny state from the beginning through to today. Of all the dangers to Israel, the most frightening is the existence of Iran as led by the Mullahs with its pledge to wipe the Jews into the sea.

The Iran deal under the prior administration paved the way for that very destruction with its promise of a nuclear Iran within a decade. Donald Trump dismantled this poisonous agreement. Joe Biden has promised to reinstate it, if he becomes president.

Donald Trump has brought our embassy to Jerusalem. Prior presidents promised to do this, to curry favor with voters, but then never followed through. This move has important ramifications, as are the designations of the proper borders of Israel that president Trump has acknowledged in various ways: one being the demarcations set forth in his peace plan.

With these moves he has paid respect to the Bible account of God’s gift of the land to Abraham, and all the succeeding drama of the land and the Jewish people, testified to by the journey of Moses and the utterances of the ancient Hebrew prophets. And now president Trump has brought a third Arab country in the past two months to make peace with Israel, giving the world hope that, for the first time in modern history, the neighbors in that troubled area might find a way to peace.

It is appropriate that Donald Trump has been nominated for the Nobel prize, but he is just beginning. I hope everyone who loves Israel and the Jewish people will vote for him to continue his work for us all.

Jon Voight is an award winning American actor.

Impressions.

Morocco’s Jews Remain Strong Despite COVID-19

BY GILLES BERDUGO

As COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc on the world, the Jewish community of Morocco has not managed to escape unscathed. The tight-knit community, which has many elderly members, suffered a relatively high number of deaths in the early days of the virus, including the passing of Rabbi Sholom Eidelman. However, community leaders are confident that by sticking together and continuing to support one another, they can pull through this crisis.

Rabbi Eidelman, born in the Soviet Union, emigrated to Morocco in 1958 as an emissary of Chabad, the Jewish Hasidic outreach movement. Every year, he made sure that shmurah matzah, a special kind of matzah, was brought in from France in time for Passover. Rabbi Levi Bannour, another Chabad emissary residing in Morocco, called Rabbi Eidelman “the rabbi of rabbi’s” and said that he will be sorely missed in the Moroccan Jewish community. Rabbi Bannour is now the go-to rabbi for coronavirus-related funerals.

The Moroccan Jewish community has a long and rich history. In fact, it was once home to perhaps the largest number of Jews in the Arab world. The Jewish population of Morocco totaled more than 250,000 at its peak in the 1930s and 1940s, before the mass exodus triggered by World War II and the founding of the State of Israel.

Jewish roots in Morocco go back as far as 70 CE. Though there were periods of unrest, there were also times of peaceful coexistence. Jews that settled in Morocco originally are known as Tashavim. Those that came as a result of the Spanish Inquisition in the 15th century have been called Megorashim. In the wake of the Inquisition, tens of thousands of Spanish Jews fled to Morocco. While they came with not much more than the clothing on their backs, they did bring education, business savvy, and trade connections, all of which they used to benefit their new communities.

The creation of the State of Israel and Morocco’s subsequent independence from France led to a period of political unrest. Jews began to leave for Israel in secret, but in large numbers. Between the years of 1961 and 1967, approximately 120,000 Jews left Morocco. Most went to Israel, though some chose France, with which they shared a similar culture. They also emigrated to the United States and Canada. By 1973, there were only 20,000 Jews left in a country that once boasted more than 10 times that number.

Since then, the population has continued to dwindle. Today, there are 2,500-3,000 Jews in the entire country, most of them in Casablanca.

Morocco is seen as an example of ideal Jewish-Muslim coexistence and is one of the few Arab countries that is actively embracing its Jewish history. In fact, 10 years ago, King Mohammed VI launched an ongoing project to restore Morocco’s historically significant Jewish sites.

While the current Jewish community is small, it is still vibrant. There are 16 synagogues, kosher butchers, bakeries, restaurants, and caterers, plus three Jewish schools with approximately 600 students.

Jews in Morocco also play host to the many visitors that come every year. Moroccan Jews who live outside the country have a very deep connection to their roots, and approximately 50,000 come to visit each year, both as tourists and as returning citizens. Some have the custom to have their weddings in Morocco, and others traditionally come for Passover. In fact, 22 hotels in Moroccan cities are entirely reserved for Moroccan Jews who come to visit during the holiday.

At this point, the tourism industry has taken a hit due to COVID-19, but Jews living in Morocco know that once travel becomes easier, they can expect to see their brothers and sisters visiting again. Moroccan Jews, no matter what is going on in the world and where they are, will always have a strong connection to the country.

Gilles Berdugo is an international businessman, angel investor, and active member of the Moroccan Jewish community. He has served as CEO of a range of companies and invests in startups that show strong leadership and innovative solutions. He also enjoys golfing and spending time with his wife and children.
Twenty years ago, on Oct. 12, 2000, a group of Israeli police reservists, Vadim Norozhch and Yosef Atrashvili, accidentally shot and killed the Palestinian Authority-controlled city of Ramallah in Judea-Samaria (aka the West Bank). While in the custody of PA police, the two reservists were stabbed and beaten to death, their bodies subsequently mutilated and burned throughout their bodies. These images were broadcast live around the world and seared into the minds of all those watching.

The most visceral image from that day was that of Arie Saal proudly waving his boxing-stained hands from the hospital bed, his festering wounds clearly visible. This bestial murder, and the ghastly images surrounding it, have haunted a generation of Israelis who had supported the Oslo peace process. 

Presenting a perspective from the Jewish world, H.C. Dr. Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, a member of the Federal National Council in the United Arab Emirates, suggested that the way to combat online hate is to start with youth. “We have to start from the schools—from within the educational systems to make sure that teachers in the classroom are promoting these values: values of coexistence, of tolerance,” he said. “We have to engage, beside education, public figures. For example, in our region, football (soccer in the United States) is a large passion. We should engage some of these public players because the new generation looks at them as role models. Let them be engaged in some activities that promote co-existence.”

Al Nuaimi, who also serves the chairman of the steering board of Hidayah, the International Center for Excellence for Countering violent Extremism, also said it was important that religious clergy from different faiths get involved, and work on common initiatives and programs to help the targeted youth. “While it may seem a daunting task, it is one that must be fought and won, stressed the speakers. “The ancient concept of antisemitism is like a vampire, every time we think we’ve killed it and put in the coffin, somehow it comes back to prowl the night,” said speaker Robert P. George, the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University. “We are engaged to get a dagger into the heart of the monster, but that does not mean we should give up from it.”

“We need to learn to use social media to combat, and ultimately, defeat antisemitism.”

PAMELA SINKIN

February 28, 2020. Office location: Kings County. SSNY has been designated as the agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to: 89 B&D LLC 89 Bergen St. Brooklyn, NY 11201 purpose: all lawful activity. AE 16/23/30, 11/16/13

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Mounting Hate

“IFRA allows for criticism of Israel, assuming it’s the same criticism of any other country. It’s a holy mission. Recently, former contributor to JNS. Heather Robinson is a retired dental hygienist, Wedner is coordinating supplies for the two-year commemoration’s dental hygiene drive. She believes that her mother, whose family “meant everything to her,” would wish to be remembered “as a person who cared and provided for the ones she loved.” To register for the Tree of Life commemoration, go to: www.1027healingpartnership.org. Heather Robinson is a contributor to JNS.
Leaders lead. That does not mean to say that they do not follow. But what they follow is different from what most people follow. They don’t conform for the sake of conforming. They don’t do what others do merely because others are doing it. They follow an inner voice, a call. They have their own path, not what is, but of what might be. They think outside the box. They march to a different tune.

Never was this more dramati- cally signalled than in the first words of God to Abraham, the words that set Jewish history in motion: “Leave your land, your birthplace and your father’s house and go to the land that I will show you.” (Gen. 12:1) Why? Because people do conform. They adopt the standards and absorb the culture of the time and place in which they live—“Your land.” At a deeper level, they are influenced by friends and neigh- bours—“your birthplace.” More deeply still they are shaped by their parents, and the family in which they grew up—“your father’s house.”

I want you, says God to Abraham, to be different. Not for the sake of being different, but for the sake of starting something new: a new way of living in the world. That is what idols really were and are, as long as they are shaped by their bours—“your birthplace.” More influenced by friends and neigh- bours and not what is, but of what might be. They think outside the box. They march to a different tune.

The Courage Not to Conform

JONATHAN SACKS

The Courage Not to Conform

To be a Jew is to be willing to be a Jewish commu- nity. The courage not to conform is precisely this willingness to be different. As the Greek historian Thucydides put it: “The strong do what they wish and the weak suffer what they must.” Judaism is a sustained critique of power. That is the conclusion I have reached after a lifetime of studying our sacred texts. It is about how a nation can be formed on the basis of shared commitment and collec- tive responsibility. It is about how to construct a society that honours the human person as the image and likeness of God. It is about a vision, not fully realised but not yet abandoned, of a world based on justice and compassion, in which “They will neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowl- edge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

Abraham is without doubt the most influential person who ever lived. Today he is claimed as the spiritual ancestor of 2.3 billion Christians, 1.8 billion Muslims and 14 million Jews, more than half the people alive today. Yet he ruled no empire, commanded no great army, performed no miracles and proclaimed no prophecy. He is the supreme example in all of history of influence without power.

Why? Because he was prepared to be different. As the Sages say, he was called ha-ivri, “the Hebrew”, because “all the world was on one side (be-eruch etad) and he was on the other.” Leader- ship, as every leader knows, can be lonely. Yet you continue to do because you know that the majority is not always right and conventional wisdom is not always wise. Dead fish go with the flow. Live fish swim against the current. So it is with conscience and courage. So it is with the children of Abraham. They are prepared to challenge the idols of the age.

After the Holocaust, some social scientists were haunted by the question of why so many people were prepared, whether by active participation or silent consent, to go along with a regime that was committing one of the great crimes against humanity. One key exper- tise was the Polish psychologist Janusz Trombrot, who as a boy fled Poland with his family’s archives and ended up in Auschwitz. He assembled a group of people, asking them to perform a series of simple cognitive tasks. They were asked not to write down a number on it, the other with three lines of different lengths, and asked which was the same size as the line on the first. Unknown to one participant, all the others had been briefed by Asch to give the correct answer for the first few trials and then to answer incorrectly for most of the rest. On a significant number of occasions the experimental subject gave a wrong answer he could see was the wrong, because everyone else had done so. Such is the power of the pressure to conform: it can lead us to say what we know is untrue.

More frightening still was the Stanford experiment carried out in the early 1970s by Philip Zimbardo. The participants were randomly assigned roles as guards or prisoners in a mock prison. Within days the students cast as guards went off the deep end, of them subjecting the “prisoners” to psychological torture. The students cast as prisoners put up with this passively, even siding with the guards against those who resisted. The experiment was called off after only six days. Zimbardo had found himself drawn into the artificial reality he had created. He pressed the conform. The conform to lead people into doing what they know is wrong.

That is why God, at the start of his mission, was told to “be a Jew” because “all the world is a bride on her wedding day, who is preparing to go to her groom.”

From a very young age, Pales- tinian children are taught to hate others and to sacrifice their lives to murder them. On a PA TV show for kids, “O Children of the Ghetto,” a home video is shown of young kids addressing terrorists as “heroic prisoners.” Holding a framed poster of a picture of the Palestinian martyr, who is serving four life sentences for his involvement in the murder of four Americans, the video claimsmail films and an impresa- tion terrorists to “tall mountains” and “lions.” A young boy specifically mentioned murderer Allan, sending “love” to all prisoners.

The incitement against Israel and Jews is the glorification of murder is all pervasive in Palestinian society. Street signs and city squares, sporting tournaments and summer camps are named after terrorists. Their beaming “photos” are dedicated to all those who follow in their footsteps — even answers in crossword puzzles mean that the average Palestinian is living in a world of violence, cruelty, daily messages that the murder of Jews, innocent or not, is a desirable, even heroic act.

Unfortunately, Israeli conces- sions and compromises in response to Palestinian demands have not reduced the bloodshed. Even the infamous bloody-handed Azziz Salha, who was arrested by Israeli authorities for incitement to terrorism, was released in 2011 as part of the exchange for IDF soldier Gilad Shalit, who had been held prisoner by Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Salha now receives a generous monthly stipend from the Palestinian Authority in tribute for his murderous actions.

The international community continues aiding Pales- tinian institutions that are involved in incitement and dehuman- ization, it and many media outlets consider issues like settlements, territory, and Jerusalem the main obstacles to peace. Nevertheless, even if an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians was signed, the hatred fanned in generations under the PA would remain, virtu- ally ensuring there would be no peace or cessation of bloodshed.

To achieve real peace, security, and an end to the conflict — good for all the peoples of the region — the international community and mainstream media must ensure that the PA ends its daily campaign of incitement and dehumanization. That requires a more perceptive and the horrifying images of Israelis being butchered recede further into history — replaced with a Pales- tinian society that no longer sees Israelis and Jews as the sub-human enemy of humanity — can peace be achieved? The achievement of peace remains the greatest obstacle to peace and must be remedied as a primary criterion for negotiations.

David Sissa is editor-in-chief and publisher of Traditions, Corp and Jewish Journal. He can be reached at davids@jewishjournal.com.

This article was first published by the Jewish Journal.
Yitzhak Rabin will be the subject of a new miniseries directed by a filmmaker who grew up two houses down from the former Israeli prime minister, who was assassinated by a radical right-wing Jewish extremist 25 years ago next month.

“The Leader” will be a six-part show adapted from the autobiography “The Rabin Memoirs,” which was co-authored by Rabin with journalist Dov Goldstein, Deadline reported.

Los Angeles-based Israeli filmmaker Ariel Vromen will write and direct, and has been working with Rabin’s family and the Rabin Center to uncover previously-unseen archival footage and hundreds of hours of interviews that will form the show’s storyline.

Vromen once resided on the same street as the late Israeli leader.

“I grew up with Rabin, he was living two houses from me,” he said, as reported by Deadline. “It is an amazing story about a guy that was born in Israel who through his lifetime sacrificed everything he had and went on an amazing journey.”

Rabin’s grandson Jonathan Benartzi approached Vromen, on behalf of his family, about doing a project on his grandfather.

Benartzi said, “For the first time in 25 years, our family has allowed access to private materials and family collections so that we’ll finally be able to dispel the myths and present an authentic, in-depth picture of this very exceptional man.”

Vromen stated, “I’m very honored and grateful to have the opportunity to tell the untold story of a man I’ve admired all my life. I want to thank the Rabin family for trusting in me to shed new light on the life and times of a truly legendary leader.”

“The Leader” will follow Rabin’s journey from underground fighter before Israel’s establishment in 1948 to IDF chief of staff, defense minister and the first “sabra” (“native-born”) prime minister.

Each episode will focus on a different significant moment in Rabin’s life, according to Deadline.

Vromen described the series as a “mini Israeli ‘The Crown,’” a reference to the Netflix original drama that chronicles the life of Queen Elizabeth II.

Casting has not taken place yet and now, with a completed outline, the project is on the market.

“Israeli TV has been putting up a good fight for the last couple of years,” he noted. “Israeli content has reached a rich level where the original content is sold to big streamers, and the numbers are finally big. It would be good to do it in Israel but we are looking at the streamers as the best home for a miniseries.”

BY SHIRYN GHERMEZIAN

Grandson of Holocaust Survivors Becomes Latest Jewish Pitcher to Appear in World Series

Tampa Bay Rays relief pitcher Byan Sherriff on Friday night became the latest Jewish pitcher to be appear in a World Series game — a group that most famously includes Sandy Koufax.

The California native — whose maternal grandparents, Helen and Seymour Wildfeuer, were Holocaust survivors from Poland — pitched a scoreless seventh inning in Game 3 against the Los Angeles Dodgers. On Sunday night, he pitched in the top of the eighth inning of Game 5. The 30-year-old left-handed hurler pitched against Max Muncy, Will Smith and Cody Bellinger, and completed a 3-up-and-3-down inning.

The Rays lost the game 4-2, giving the Dodgers a 3-2 series lead.

The 1915 World Series between the Boston Red Sox and Philadelphia Phillies was the first to feature a Jewish pitcher, Erskine Mayer, according to Jewish baseball historian and author Robert Wechsler, as reported by Tablet.

Other Jewish pitchers who appeared in the World Series included Ken Holtzman for the Oakland Athletics, Larry Sherry for the Los Angeles Dodgers and Koufax, also for the Dodgers.

A Jewish batter has yet to face a Jewish pitcher in the World Series.

Sheriff made his MLB debut in August 2017 with the St. Louis Cardinals. He previously said he knew his late grandparents would be proud that he played for Israel's national team in the 2017 World Baseball Classic qualifiers.

“Being able to pitch for Team Israel made me feel very appreciative for everything that they had gone through,” Sheriff told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. “Just to represent the Jewish heritage for them was just a great honor for me. She [Helen] would have been stoked. She would have been really happy if she was still alive today.”
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