

binding as it was not explicitly passed under chapter VII of the UN Charter. A truth-seeker would consider also Articles 24 and 25 of the Charter, which oblige all states to comply with 'decisions' of the Council (whether or not they refer to chapter VII) and examine whether wording of UNSCR 2334, discussions preceding it, and other circumstances indicate an intention to create a legally binding decision.

Thus the International Court of Justice held in its 1970 Namibia advisory opinion that UNSCR 276, which did not refer to chapter VII, contained a legally binding determination that the presence of South African forces in Namibia was unlawful and that the Council called upon states to refrain from dealings with South Africa inconsistent with that determination was also legally binding. Cf. para 2 of UNSCR 2334: "[The UNSC] reiterates its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard."

Robin Margo
Macmasters Beach, NSW

Ignoring history

CALL the West Bank by any of the names it has had, including Samaria and Judea, as it was known at the time of the Second Temple.

However, in doing so you'll be ignoring thousands of years of history and leaving it wide open for revision to fit the political narrative of the day. But be warned, as with most things, reality can't be revised.

By the way, Leon Poddebsky (AJN 26/06), Yitzhak Rabin z"l also said that the biggest mistake the Jewish state has made was thinking that the land was terra nullius.

Henry Herzog
St Kilda East, Vic

Status of statues

JEREMY Stowe-Lindner (AJN 26/03) writes, "Those seeking removal of statues of James Cook ... should advocate through communal and legal means ... not with chisels and ropes."

However reasonable this may sound, Mr Stowe-Lindner is actually creating a moral equivalence between the building of the statues and the bringing down of them. The implication here is that those who built them had some intrinsic and meritorious entitlement to do so. Yet I would be surprised to learn that those statue-builders made their case for the erection of their monuments through 'communal and legal means' and with 'argument and discourse'. (It does not count to argue that they consulted and discoursed among themselves). And the First Nations People these statues might conceivably offend

were certainly not consulted upon whether they would or would not like to walk past monuments of Cook or Batman as they made their way through our city.

It might even be argued that not only were those statues built without any communal discourse whatsoever, they were also built without any demonstrable legality. And in the absence of legality, these statues should most definitely be taken off our streets and out of our parks and gardens. How this is to be done, and where they might ultimately come to rest, I leave to wiser heads than mine. But the 'why' of it should matter to all of us.

Yvonne Fein
Caulfield, Vic

Naming and shaming

A LETTER (AJN 19/06) signed by two individuals on behalf of Jewish Greens Victoria, congratulates the Glen Eira Council on its declaration of a 'Climate Emergency'. Whether one agrees with this declaration or not, it was the result of a democratic vote in the council. But why was it necessary for the letter-writers to list the name of every individual councillor who voted against the proposal in what was clearly meant to be an exercise in naming, shaming and demonisation? Of more relevance would have been a list of names of those individuals who choose to associate themselves with

what many consider the antisemitic Green party.

Robert Weil
Highett, Vic

Jews in Japan

FROM Sushi to Jew-shi (AJN 19/06) was a very interesting read, and indeed enjoyable. Readers would no doubt wish to know that there is a thriving Jewish community in Japan, with a well-resourced Jewish community centre. The community is a very active member of the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ), which covers not only Australia and New Zealand but a number of Asian congregations. Visitors to Tokyo would be well advised to visit the wonderful Jewish community centre there.

David Knoll and Brian Samuel
Co-presidents, UPJ

Ties to Hobart

I JOIN with Rabbi Raymond Apple (AJN 19/06), in congratulating the Hobart Hebrew Congregation on the 175th anniversary of the consecration of the Hobart Synagogue. But for the COVID-19 pandemic, I would be in Hobart next weekend joining in the celebrations, which have been postponed.

My family connection with the Hobart Jewish community dates back to 1841, before the synagogue was built, when my 3x great-grand-

parents, Emanuel "Money" Moses and his wife, Sarah, arrived separately from London.

Emanuel, licensed victualler and well known fence of the Black Lion Inn in Drury Lane, was given a free passage as a convict, for his part in the "Great Gold Dust Robbery" of 1838. Together with a daughter, Alice, and father and son Ellis and Lewin Casper, Emanuel conspired to intercept a substantial gold dust shipment from Brazil. Their trial in the Old Bailey attracted great interest from the press and from the London Jewish community.

Sadly, Emanuel died just three months after his arrival in Hobart, aged 60 years. His wife, Sarah, followed her husband to Hobart as a free settler, arriving just a month later, accompanied by four unmarried daughters and a grandson. She left many adult children and grandchildren behind in England.

Sarah lived in Hobart until her death in 1864, in her 83rd year. She saw her four daughters all married in the early days of the Hobart Synagogue, at a time when there was an acute shortage of single Jewish women in Hobart. Sarah is listed on the honour boards in the synagogue.

I look forward to joining the anniversary celebrations when they are held at a later date!

Phil Lipshut
Elsternwick, Vic

MAINSTREAM GROUPS' SUPPORT FOR JEWS OF PRIDE

Strengthening our community, not virtue signalling

MICHAEL
BARNETT



THIS year the Victorian branch of the National Council of Jewish Women, the Zionist Federation of Australia and the Australian Jewish Democratic Society marched for the first time, alongside Jewish Care, SKIF, Habo, Temple Beth Israel, the Jewish Lesbian Group of Victoria, Keshet and Aleph Melbourne, in the Jews of Pride contingent at Melbourne's annual Pride March. Jewish Community Council of Victoria past president John Searle and the State Member for Caulfield David Southwick also joined in.

There are few places in the community calendar where a group of people this multifaceted sets aside a Sunday morning to rally in unity.

One year ago, Adam Seef, a young South African man, travelled to Israel on a program promoting itself as teaching "about life through the prism of Torah knowledge".

He was a bright, much-loved person who was also lost in the world. While in Israel he tragically took his life because he didn't know how to express his feelings to those who cared about him.

I can relate to the conflict he experienced. Through to my 20s I wanted my parents to broach the topic of sexuality with me and let me know they would unconditionally accept me no matter what mine was. I wished that they had been putting their energies into helping me find the right Jewish boyfriend. Alas. Yet I bottled up my feelings and didn't raise the topic of my attraction to men because I genuinely feared being rejected and being kicked out of home by the people who loved me. It was a toxic situation.

Perhaps for similar reasons Adam Seef



Participants in this year's Jews of Pride contingent.

Photo: Michael Barnett

took his own life, lost and alone in Israel while on a program to become more connected to Torah.

I always wondered why my parents didn't ask me, for I knew they knew. Was it shame, embarrassment, too difficult a topic, the hysteria generated by the AIDS epidemic, or just that they didn't have the words to show me their support? Perhaps all of these, or none. It doesn't matter now, but it did then, deeply.

I became involved in Aleph Melbourne, the support group that was there for me when I needed someone to talk to about my sexuality. From there I discovered a new community, and in that, friends, and love.

My family were there for me every step of the way since telling them I was gay, two-and-a-half decades ago. My fear of their rejection was unfounded, and they became my strongest advocates. Not in my wildest dreams growing up could I have imagined them celebrating me marrying

a man, and yet it happened, with much naches and love in their hearts.

It was immediately after our wedding in New Zealand in 2014 that my parents joined Gregory and me in the Melbourne Pride March, cheering us as newlyweds. What better wedding present, really?

Since 1997 I have helped organise a Jewish presence in the Pride March, be it Aleph Melbourne or more recently the Jews of Pride contingent. Some years it was just a handful of us. This year, on the verge of the pandemic, a mind-blowing 140 people clapped and danced our way down Fitzroy Street, all to Israeli and Jewish music.

Pride March is a party, but it's so much more. It's a celebration of freedom, about remembering where we've come from, to where we are now. It's also a wake-up call that we've got a long way to go to cast off the shackles that society has burdened us with. We say a familiar 'dayenu'. We also remember those who cannot or could not

be there with us, whether due to persecution, isolation, or simply because they were too afraid to tell someone they were gay and didn't know what else to do but end their life.

We saw the biggest ever Jewish Pride March contingent this year because increasingly our community understands that in order for all our people to achieve their potential, we must be uncompromisingly inclusive and accepting.

Jews of Pride is becoming bigger, stronger, more diverse and unstoppable. It showcases a community that resolutely knows its duty of care includes celebrating and embracing its people in all our beautiful diversity.

We march for the memory of Adam Seef. We march for our collective humanity and dignity. We march so that young Australian Jews struggling with their sexual or gender identity can travel to Israel to explore lessons from the Torah, and be their authentic selves, knowing they are unconditionally loved by their friends and family.

Despite this, it is unsurprising to find hardline opponents who divisively wedge the presence of mainstream community groups in an LGBTIQ+ event as "progressive virtue signalling", for cheap political gain, and to get a rise from homophobic followers.

However, the participation of these groups is beyond tokenism, for they know they are strengthening the community, and in doing so, their own cause. They are also there to be on the right side of history, as a force for good. This is precisely why organisations such as NCJWA, ZFA and Jewish Care know an LGBTIQ+ Pride March is the appropriate place to show their unequivocal support.

Michael Barnett is co-convenor of
Aleph Melbourne.