

A survivor's story of Holocaust heroism

How a Muslim Turkish consul on the island of Rhodes helped save Jews from the death camps

VALERIE BOJE

SATURDAY marked Holocaust Day, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, the largest of the Nazi World War II concentration and death camps, by the Red Army on January 27, 1945.

In the decades since, numerous stories have emerged of heroes who hid or helped Jews escape certain death in the camps. Among them was a group of Turkish diplomats stationed in countries across Europe who used their country's neutral status to save the lives of thousands of Jews of Turkish descent.

During his time in South Africa, Turkey's former ambassador, Kaan Esener, hosted a screening of an international documentary film, *The Turkish Passport*, which tells the story of around 20 Turkish diplomats who issued Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe with Turkish passports so that they would have a degree of protection during the round-up of Jews, and in extreme cases, could be pulled off trains headed for the death camps.

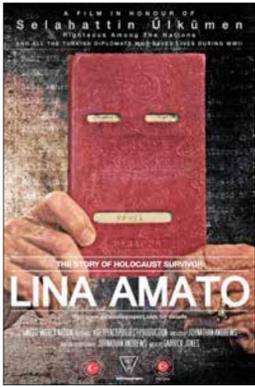
Now local film-maker, Johnathan Andrews, has followed this up with a documentary, *The Story of Holocaust Survivor Lina Amato*, made in association with the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish Embassy in Pretoria.

The story, told by Amato, now 81, with background from Richard Freedman, director of the SA Holocaust Foundation, and comments by the Turkish ambassador to South Africa, Elif Çomo lu Ülgen, honours Selahattin Ülkümen, Turkey's consul on Greece's Rhodes Island during the war.

Ülkümen, a Muslim is credited with saving 43 Jews living on the island, including the Amato family, by issuing them with Turkish passports. Another 1 783 Jews living on



Lina Amato



Johnathan Andrews sets up for the interview with Turkish ambassador Elif Ülgen for the documentary, *The Story of Holocaust Survivor Lina Amato*, which premiered on International Holocaust Day on Saturday. Turkish diplomats helped to save Jews from the death camps in Nazi-occupied countries in Europe.

the island – including Amato's childhood friends – were taken to Athens and then on to the last rail transport of the war, destined for Auschwitz.

In the film, Amato clutches her red Turkish passport – a symbol of her freedom – and says how she regrets she never had the chance to

meet Ülkümen to thank him.

She also honours Italian residents on Rhodes, Girolamo and Bianca Sotgiu, family friends of the Amatos who took Lina, then aged eight, into their care when Jewish citizens were ordered by the Gestapo to report to the local barracks.

She tells how they taught her Catholic ways, including reciting

Latin prayers, to protect her.

Lina's parents had Italian passports, but her grandmother was Turkish. She describes how Bianca Sotgiu came up with the idea to approach Ülkümen, and how he agreed that he would save as many Jews as he could under the pretext of their being Turkish citizens.

It was to be a torment for her

father that they had to leave behind friends and his workers to deportation and certain death, and that the Germans attacked Ülkümen's home in retribution for his efforts, leading to his wife's death.

After the war, Lina and her parents left Rhodes for Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and later moved to South Africa.

Andrews hopes his film will bring home to people that "what we had in history, in some respects, still prevails today", evident in "tensions in many areas of society all over the world".

● To buy a copy, go to <https://unitedworldnation.org/product/the-story-of-lina-amato/> or <https://goo.gl/gDoXCV>

City writes off R400m debt

THE multi-party council running the metro under the leadership of the DA said it was writing off nearly R400 million in irrecoverable debt owed by the poor.

Mayor Solly Msimanga said the move was in line with his commitment after assuming office to address the plight of poor residents and stabilise the finances of the capital.

"This administration has, as at the last meeting of council, agreed to write off R371 140 786 in irrecoverable debt for the indigent residents across the city who continue to suffer under the weight of being unable to afford their municipal accounts," he said.

The write-offs included unpaid bills for electricity, property rates, sanitation, waste management, as well as interest and value added tax, Msimanga said.

This was in addition to the R754m deemed irrecoverable debt that the council had elected to hold in abeyance for a period of 12 months pending a possible write-off.

"The write-off of the debt will be done on the condition that the residents affected begin paying for the monthly levies for municipal services provided to them by the City," said Msimanga.

"This is designed to encourage the residents... to take responsibility and start being conscientious ratepayers while also rehabilitating the debtor book."

Msimanga said 50% of the debt would be written off if the residents paid their current account in full for a period of six months and the other 50% if payment was received in full for another six months. – African News Agency (ANA)

No better time, says Oprah of musical in SA

FOR the first time, the acclaimed musical *The Color Purple* is to be performed outside of the US and UK – with the official opening of an all-South African production at the Joburg Theatre this Sunday.

Excitement for the show, produced by Bernard Jay at the Joburg Theatre, is high, with the cast receiving a letter of support from Oprah Winfrey, who said there was no better time to tell this story in South Africa.

Jay spent four years negotiating for the rights and preparing for the show, and promises that "South African audiences will laugh, will cry, will cheer"... and will never forget *The Color Purple*.

The Color Purple, based on a novel by Alice Walker, tells the story of a woman who, through love, finds the strength to triumph over adversity and discover her unique voice in the world.



A scene from *The Color Purple*

Steven Spielberg directed the 1985 film version which starred Winfrey.

The award-winning musical was written by Marsha Norman, with music and lyrics by Brenda Russell, Allee Willis and Stephen Bray. The joyous score features jazz, ragtime, gospel and blues and is, ultimately, a celebration of life.

Award-winning director Janice Honeyman leads the South African creative team, with musical direction by Rowan Bakker, choreography by Oscar Buthelezi, production design by Sarah Roberts, lighting design by Mannie Manim and sound design by Richard Smith.

The cast features the following talented performers (in alphabetical order):

Zane Gillion, Didintle Khunou, Sebe Leotlela, Dolly Louw, Andile Magxaki, Yamikani Mahaka-Phiri, Venolia Manale, Namisa Mdlalose, Phumi Mncayi, Neo Motaung, Lerato Mvelase, Tshepo Ncookane, Thokozani Nzima, Funeka Pempeta, Aubrey Poo, Senzesihle Radebe, Lelo Ramasimong, Zolani Shangase, Ayanda Sibisi and Lebo Toko.

The Color Purple is on at the Nelson Mandela Theatre until March 4. Tickets from Computicket. – Staff Reporter

A Capital idea to stay at uMhlanga

DAILY NEWS REPORTER

UMHLANGA has another new hotel. And this is because the luxury hotel and apartment group, Capital Hotels & Apartments, has expanded its national presence and opened the new attraction at the Pearls of uMhlanga development landmark in the holiday resort.

The Capital Pearls Resort Hotel, which is the fifth phase of The Pearls of uMhlanga, has direct access to the main uMhlanga Beach, and offers 140 apartments and extensive conference and meeting facilities for up to 200 delegates.

The hotel also offers easy access to the swimming pool, bar, sun deck, more than 16 restaurants and a children's play area. Complimentary access to the

development's Planet Fitness Gym is also available to residents.

The contemporary apartments are a mixture of executive suites, and one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, each including a modern fully equipped kitchen and living area, all designed to strike a balance between the comfort of home and the luxury of resort living.

Officially opening its doors last month, The Capital Pearls is the group's eighth property in South Africa, and its first property outside the main cities of Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town.

"Our guests choose The Capital's hotels and apartments across South Africa because we are 25% more affordable than other hotels of comparable size

and quality," said Marc Wachsberger, managing director of Capital Hotels and Apartments.

The Capital Pearls, along with all The Capital's properties across the country, does not offer services such as porters, bedtime turn-downs, sewing kits or unlimited toiletries.

Instead, it is designed to make travellers stay more efficient and cost-effective by offering free uncapped high-speed internet, laundry services, secure parking, and shuttle services.

As well as being ideal for families, The Capital Pearls also offers a comprehensive solution for business travellers who seek a balance between the comfort of home and the luxury of resort living when they're travelling for work.



Il Padre 3 Piece high grade FULL LEATHER suite Available in bronze & pearl



Angelica Modern styled 3 Piece LOUNGE SUITE Available in blue & cream or purple & cream



Fielli 2018

The beauty of NEW BEGINNINGS

WOODMEAD
Shop 1, Woodmead Square
Waterside Crescent, Woodmead Drive
Tel: (011) 656 1885
Email: joburg.enquiries@fielli.co.za

www.fielli.com

makro  **BIG on life**
makro.co.za

Valid from: Tuesday 30 January to Monday 5 February 2018

BIG SAVINGS ON YOUR FAVOURITE BEERS



24 x 330/340 ml

190
(572728; 572767)

CASTLE LITE
Cans or NRBs



CORONA EXTRA
Imported NRBs

24 x 355 ml
330
(14040)



HANSA PILSENER
Cans or NRBs

24 x 330/340 ml
180
(572728; 572767)

*To earn mRewards download and register on the mCard app. Unless we state a specific limitation, Makro will attempt to have sufficient advertised stock available to meet consumers' anticipated demands. If we still run out of stock, we will attempt to obtain the stock or we will offer you a reasonable alternative. In an attempt to satisfy the demand of the majority of customers, limited quantities per customer might apply. Makro takes utmost care to ensure that all advertisements are correct. If a mistake occurs or incomplete information is printed, we will display a notice in-store with all the correct details. Our advertisements do not specify wine vintages because we cannot guarantee that a specific vintage will be available at a specific store. *To earn mRewards download and register on the mCard app. Prices include 14% VAT and bottle deposits.

1 / 5/2018 Makro DTP ATH LIQUOR 300 mm x 188 mm / MKNTLQ2721

 Alcohol Not for Sale to Persons Under the Age of 18. Drink Responsibly.