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# State-of-the-Art Mary Pikelny Innovation Center Offers MHA Students Amazing Opportunities



The 3,500-square-foot Center, donated by the Winestone Family and built by Baum and Company, opened on Memorial Day Weekend.

### By Jessica Baum Sukhadolsky

Margolin Hebrew Academy-Feinstone Yeshiva of the South has been a pillar of Jewish education in Memphis for 72 years, but the best truly is yet to come.

Over the past six years, the school has renovated several areas throughout the building including offices and shared spaces, Middle School classrooms, the Moss Gym and the Cooper Family Beit Midrash. On this year's agenda? Construction of the brand-new Mary Pikelny Innovation Center.

The 3,500-square-foot Center, which was donated by the Winestone Family and built by Baum and Company, opened on Memorial Day Weekend with a large crowd of school families and community members in attendance. The Center consists of four spaces: The Lab, The Studio, The Think Tank and The Patio.

The Lab is a space designed for Science education in grades 1-8, complete with a teacher demonstration table, state-of-the-art smart board, group work sta-

tions, curriculum aligned lab equipment and chemical safe tabletop surfaces.

The Studio will be the heart of the school's robust Art program. In the Studio, students will explore various creative avenues through painting, drawing, collage, pottery and technological mediums including the room's smart board and graphic design programs.

The Think Tank was created to serve as a collaborative learning space for students in all grades to access its Computer Center, smart board, 3D Printers, tower garden, robotics equipment, laser cutter and much more. The Think Tank will be staffed by an experienced educator trained in technology innovation who will work with teachers to extend and enhance the curriculum.

The Patio is an Outdoor Classroom available to all students for gardening, woodworking, welding and other projects.

"We are incredibly grateful for this incredible gift, which will allow us to expand our current STEAM education opportunities and give our students access to dedicated spaces in which to study Art, Science and Engineering," said Head of School Rabbi Benjy Owen.

"The center is named for our rela-

tive Mary Pikelny, who was from Poland like our father, Ted Winestone," shared David Winestone. "Their entire family was killed in the Holocaust and Mary did not have any children, so we are thankful for the opportunity to memorialize her in this special way. It was

(See Innovation Page 2)



Ted Winestone with his family, Rebecca Gerber (I) Lee and Jessica Baum (c) and David Winestone (r)

# Federation Supports 340 New Olim from Ethiopia as Ethiopian Aliyah Resumes

Memphis Jewish Federation joins with Israel and world Jewry to welcome the 340 Ethiopian Jews who recently arrived in Israel as new immigrants. The two flights mark the resumption of Operation Zur Israel or Rock of Israel, an initiative approved by the Israeli government enabling 3,000 members of the Jewish community in Ethiopia to make Aliyah and reunite with their family members in Israel. Some of the olim have waited over a decade to reunite with their loved ones and fulfill their dreams of Aliyah.



Credit: Maxim Dinshtein for The Agengy for Israel.

Donors to Federation's Annual Community Campaign contribute to Ethiopian Aliyah through Federation's overseas grant to Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA). "We are so proud of the generosity of the Memphis Jewish community and its commitment to and passion for Israel and global Jewry," said Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein, executive vice president of Memphis Jewish Federation. "This generosity enables us to join with Federations nationwide who collectively contribute over \$100 million in "core" funding annually for

our overseas partners who are on the ground doing extraordinary work like bringing endangered Jewish communities to Israel."

In addition to core funding, JFNA launched a special campaign to support this Jewish Agency for Israel effort to bring these Ethiopian Jews to Israel and to aid in their absorption into Israeli society. Immediately, Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund stepped up and awarded JFNA a grant of

(See Aliyah Page 3)

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### My Teen Israel Experience



Joe Hochberg, Evan Schrier, Alex Weinstein and Ryan Kertzner enjoy a beautiful sunrise after an early morning hike to the top of Masada.

Evan Schrier, son of Carolyn and Adam Schrier, just graduated from Memphis University School. Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemksy Endowment Fund provided him with a Teen Israel Experience grant to help offset the cost of his BBYO International Leadership Seminar in Israel last summer. All rising high school juniors and seniors in the Memphis Jewish community are eligible for grants up to \$3,000 to attend a recognized teen summer or semester program in Israel. To learn more and apply, please visit: www.jcpmemphis. org/lemsky-endowment-fund

### By Evan Schrier

From meeting new people and seeing new places to learning from different organizations and speakers about life in Israel, my trip to Israel this past summer was truly unforgettable. Prior to departing for Israel, I was nervous. I did not know many people going on the trip - BBYO's Israel Leadership Seminar in Israel (ILSI) – let alone who would be in my tour group (there were four groups of twenty-five: two groups per bus). On the other hand, my sister knew almost half of the group already; I was afraid of becoming known as "the brother" and not as "Evan." Thankfully, however, I was very wrong.

The people whom I shared my Israel experiences with I can now call some of my best friends in the world; the relationships and bonds that can form from being thrown into those kinds of situations are like no other (camps are similar in providing this type of situation as well). At first, I was scared to be my true self: I was nervous of what people would think of me and that they would think I was annoying - that I would be labeled as "the annoying kid" or "the weird guy." This was obviously not the case, and I am so grateful for the staff and teens for making the trip a safe place for everyone. Also, I was able to build my leadership skills to a

greater extent because of the openness and strong dynamic of the group.

I grew up living in a strong Jewish household - celebrating the holidays and following the customs and traditions of Judaism - but I was seeking to be openly Jewish. Prior to Israel, I considered my Jewish identity to be very strong and outgoing, but today I consider it to be stronger than ever before. I am proud to be Jewish; that is not always so easy to say living in the South. Having spent three weeks in Israel I now care about the land more than ever.

While on the trip I met with an organization known as Friends of Roots. Roots is dedicated to building a world of peace amongst Israelis and Palestinians, where activists from both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict come together to unite the groups. The main message the organization tells is although Israelis and Palestinians have two different stories, they both occurred on the same land, and Roots strives to make people understand that this is okay; that it is normal. Visiting with Roots made such an impact on me that I have helped to create a formal partnership between BBYO and Roots, in order that teens from across our Order can learn about the conflict. In addition, I am currently working on getting the Memphis interfaith community involved with the organization. I hope people of all religious and political backgrounds can come together through Roots and understand their perspective, because they tell a unique and very impactful story.

Israel provided me with the summerof-a-lifetime, and although I will never be on that same trip with that same group of people, who I now call my friends and family, I will forever yearn for another experience like that. I cannot wait to return to Israel.

Thank you to Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Fund for helping to make my BBYO International Leadership Seminar possible. HW



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### Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. June 17, 2022 / 18 Sivan, 5782......7:58 p.m. Havdalah, Sat. June 18, 2022 / 19 Sivan, 5782 ....... 9:01 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Behaalotecha

### Innovation...

(Continued From Page 1)

important to our family that the new addition be something that sets the school apart academically and helps the faculty provide the best possible General Studies education for students of all ages."

In addition to providing various new outlets for collaborative work in the Innovation Center, the school is looking forward to introducing a variety of new extracurricular activities in the fall. Robotics, Coding, Pottery, Rocketry, Drones, Moviemaking and STEM clubs are just some of the offerings that



are in the works.

"I can't wait to get to work in the new Innovation Center," said incoming senior Nathan Baer. "Our CYHSB Rocketry Club plans to use the 3D printers and other technology to enhance our rocket-making capabilities."

If you haven't visited the MHA lately, now is the perfect time! Please email jessica.baum@mhafyos.org or call 901.682.2400 to schedule a tour. **HW** 

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### Aliyah...

(Continued From Page 1) \$35,000 to support this historic Aliyah.

"We're fortunate to have the Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund to help with efforts like this," said Scott Notowich, vice chair of Israel & Overseas for Federation and chair of its Lemsky Endowment Fund Committee. "It's important that we as Jews play a role in helping our Jewish brothers and sisters return to the Jewish homeland."

The first plane load of 180 Ethiopians was accompanied by a high-level Israeli and world Jewry delegation including Israeli Minister of Aliyah and Integration Pnina Tamano-Shata, the first Ethiopian-born woman to enter the Knesset, and senior leaders from The Jewish Agency for Israel, Jewish Federations of North America and other organizations. The inaugural flight followed a three-day JFNA mission to Ethiopia where Jewish leaders met with community members awaiting Aliyah in Gondar and Addis Ababa and visited sites of historical significance for Ethiopian Jewry.

"Jewish Federations are proud of our decades-long work side by side with The Jewish Agency for Israel and the Israeli Government to help over 97,000 Ethiopian Jews realize their dream of making Aliyah and to support their absorption into Israeli society," said Mark Wilf, chair of the Board of Trustees of Jewish Federations of North America. "This sacred effort is the highest expression of the dedication of Jewish Federations to help Jews wherever they live, and we will continue to work with our partners to support the first steps in Israel of Ethiopian olim and to assist those still waiting to make Aliyah."

Watch the broadcast of the first group of immigrants arriving in Israel: https://www.jewishagency.org/live/ **HW** 

### Senior Adult Classes Returning to the MJCC

Mah Jongg

Starting Monday, July 11 at 6:30 - 8:30 p.m., Mah Jongg will be taught by Melanie Mann. Melanie has been teaching Mah Jongg for many years at the MJCC, as well as other places around town. Whether you are a beginner or relearning, Melanie can teach you this very popular game. A new Mah Jongg card is included in the class fee. Course number is 8448.

#### **Conversational Spanish**

Beginning on Monday July 11, Conversational Spanish will be taught by Barbara Mansberg, who has taught this popular course at the MJCC for many years. Classes are held Mondays and Wednesdays from 1 to 2 p.m. in the Senior Lunchroom. Join Barbara and learn a new language or touch up your previous knowledge. Course number is 8450.

### **Beginning Bridge Lessons**

Starting August 11 Debbie Jackson will teach you how to play the world's greatest game. This class will teach you all the basics you need to start playing bridge like a pro! The class will be on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon. Course number is 8449.

The cost is the same for all courses. \$80.00 for nonmembers of the MJCC and only \$72.00 for members. Reservations can be made by calling the MJCC front desk at 901-761-0810. They can also be made by contacting Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis. org. Reservations are limited so please make your reservations before they are sold out. **HW** 

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

Lunch Mon. – Fri. at 11:30 a.m. All programs start at 12:15 p.m.

Fall Prevention Tuesday, June 21

Learn about "Fall Prevention" with Elizabeth Barton from Visiting Angels. It has been said that 70% of seniors hospitalized, are the result of falls.

Elizabeth will share some easy safety tips to help prevent you or a loved one from having this happen. She always makes every program fun and exciting.

Ice Cream Social Thursday, June 23

These non-dairy treats will be served with other goodies that can be added. There is no charge for this delicious desert.

This is following lunch at 12:15. Reservations are required to ensure there will be enough on hand. RSVP to Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org.

Super Bingo Tuesday, June 28

Featuring special prizes. No reservations necessary.

Make Your Own Mezuzah Cover Thursday, June 30

Decorate your own mezuzah cover (generously donated). All have a place for the scroll built in. Reservations are required to ensure there will be enough on hand. RSVP to Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org.

Join us Monday through Friday for a delicious Kosher lunch from the Kitchens at the 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, at stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org or calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. **HW** 

### Beth Sholom's Intro to Kabbalah Class

What's going on in God's mind? Why did God create the universe? Do mitzvot matter? Does God need us as much as we need God?

Big questions that many of us have pondered. "Intro to Kabbalah," a sixweek course at Beth Sholom Synagogue, is designed to help people explore possible answers. The first class meets on Wednesday, June 29 at 6:30 p.m., and will continue on Wednesdays through August 3.

"Kabbalah approaches difficult questions about existence," explains Geo Poor, who has taught Kabbalah at Beth Sholom for six years. "Together, we try to make sense of God and the universe, which is incredibly difficult and import-



Geo Poor, executive director of Beth Sholom and a Kabbalah scholar

ant in today's complex world."

"Kabbalah" is a Jewish, mystical attempt to find meaning and understand the workings of the cosmos. Jewish conceptions of God often focus on either an unknowable infinite God, or a very personal, almost human-like God; Kabbalistic thought works to combine and reconcile the two of these theological models into a system for deeper connection with Judaism, the world, and the Divine.

"There is so much about the world, God, and Judaism that we can't really understand," Poor says. "Kabbalah works to describe the indescribable so that we can have an emotional and spiritual relationship with it."

Poor, who serves as executive director of Beth Sholom, is well equipped to teach the course. A Kabbalah scholar who has studied with Daniel Matt, Eitan Fishbane, Elliot Ginsburg, Nathaniel Berman, and other leading scholars of Kabbalah, Poor also leads a weekly class after Shabbat morning services called "Mystical Readings of the Parshah," which is a look into deeper mystical interpretations of the weekly parshah, as viewed by early Hasidic rebbes. Currently, he is pursuing a PhD in Jewish Mysticism through the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership.

"Geo has an amazing ability to make Kabbalah accessible to the layperson," says Larissa Kay, Beth Sholom vice president of education. "It's a chance to explore the big questions about God, life, and the universe, and so forth, in a very intentional way."

Intro to Kabbalah will meet on Wednesdays at Beth Sholom from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., and there will be snacks. The cost for the six-week course is \$25 for Beth Sholom members and \$45 for non-members. The first class begins on June 29. To sign up, visit https://www.bsholom.org/form/kabbalah-registration-2022.html or call 901-683-3591. **HW** 

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# How An Elite Group of Jewish Refugees Helped to Defeat the Third Reich



The Titular Troop: X-Troop at Aberdovey, 1943 Credit: Courtesy of Leah Garrett

### By Leah Garrett

This originally appeared in Forward. Reprinted with permission.

Lieutenant George Lane is in big trouble. His waterlogged Sten gun has jammed, and bullets from German rifles and MP40s are flying all around him. He is hiding in the surf next to beach obstacles made of thin iron girders. The Nazis are shooting blindly into the darkness while Lane and Captain Roy Wooldridge, an expert in mines, desperately seek cover. It's May 17, 1944, Ault, northern France, two hours after midnight, three weeks before D-Day.

Something has spooked the Germans, and Lane doesn't know whether they have been discovered and the mission compromised, or the bored guards are now simply letting off steam. He does know that if they are taken prisoner, it will mean almost certain death. Adolf Hitler's 1942 Kommandobefehl edict states that all captured Allied commandos are to be summarily executed. The two men lie as still as possible on the beach, and after 10 minutes the shooting stops. The British officers find their concealed rubber dinghy, which is miraculously unpunctured. They jump in, push into the waves and start paddling out to sea, hoping to make it back to the motor torpedo boat from which they deployed.

They begin to think that they might just make it back from this mission, but after rowing frantically for 20 minutes, they are spotted by a German E-boat. A blinding spotlight turns on them, and a 37 mm flak

cannon and machine guns are pointed at their torsos. "Hände hoch, Tommy!" a Kriegsmarine lieutenant shouts.

Lane and Wooldridge have no choice but to surrender. Lane is thinking more about torture than the Kommandobefehl and summary execution. "The Gestapo make everyone talk," he has been told.

Lane is not worried about giving up any details about D-Day. As a lowly lieutenant he's not privy to such operational information. He is concerned that the Germans will crack his cover story. And if they crack that, they might find out about his brother soldiers and their secret unit: X Troop.

The E-boat takes them ashore. Still in soaking-wet clothes, the prisoners are driven to a command post and put in two separate basement cells for a long, cold, hungry night. Desperate to escape from a likely firing squad, Lane manages to pick his door's lock with a piece of metal ripped from a floor pipe. As he steps out into the dark corridor, a guard yells at him to get back into his cell.

The next morning Lane and Wooldridge are driven to a village in the French countryside. They are wearing blindfolds, but Lane's has been fitted poorly and he is able to make a mental map of his bearings. They arrive at a place on the Seine River called Château de La Roche-Guyon, which has been turned into a Wehrmacht headquarters for Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. Rommel has chosen this spot because it lies

neatly at the boundary between his two armies.

The British officers are separated. A German captain offers Lane something to drink and tells him that he should tidy himself up.

Lane asks why.

"Because you're going to be interrogated by someone important," the German explains.

Lane washes his face, cleans his fingernails, and is led into a study.

There is a man at the fireplace with his back to him. He turns. Lane is stunned to discover that it is Field Marshal Rommel himself. Lane instinctively gives him the salute due a superior officer. It's an odd moment. Lane, like all the members of X Troop, is a fanatical anti-Nazi. His unit of Jewish commandos has been mostly recruited from German and Austrian escapees of the Nazi regime.

This ragtag group includes a semiprofessional boxer; an Olympic water polo player; a previously Orthodox Jew obsessed with science; and painters, poets, athletes and musicians. By this stage of the war, the summer of 1944, most of their relatives who weren't able to escape have been murdered in the death camps. To protect themselves and any family members still alive, the men in X Troop have all taken on fake English names and identities. Lieutenant George Lane himself is Lanyi György from Budapest, pretending to be a Welsh infantry officer. He's lived in England for the past eight years; his English isn't bad, but his Welsh accent is terrible.

"You realize that you are in a very tricky situation here, Lieutenant Lane?" Field Marshal Rommel says through an interpreter.

"I don't think so. I happen to be a POW – there's nothing tricky about that," Lane responds.

"Well, my people seem to think that you are a common saboteur," Rommel says

"If the field marshal believed I was a common saboteur then I don't think he would have invited me for tea," Lane replies.

"So you think this is a polite invita-

"Indeed I do and I'm greatly honored by it," Lane answers, to a smile from the field marshal. The ice has been broken.

Rommel's adjutant pours the tea.

"So how is my friend General Montgomery?" Rommel asks.

"Unfortunately I don't know him personally, but as you know he's preparing the invasion, so I imagine you'll see him very soon," Lane says.

Rommel asks Lane where he thinks the invasion might be. Lane explains that he is only a junior officer who is not privy to any of the invasion plans.

Rommel nods. "Of course what you

don't realize is that the greatest tragedy today is that you British and we Germans are not fighting side by side against the real enemy, Russia."

X Troop played a

crucial role in the

D-Day landings and

killed, captured and

all the way into the

interrogated their way

across occupied Europe

heart of the Third Reich

Lane knows he should keep his mouth shut, but he can't help himself and he says, "Sir, how can the British and Germans fight side by side considering what we know about what the Nazis are doing to the Jews? No Englishman could ever tolerate such a thing."

"Well, that's a political argument, and as a soldier you shouldn't be interested in politics at all," Rommel answers curtly.

"I'm sorry, sir, but it's very important to us English," replies the Jewish refugee from Budapest.

The conversation peters out. A side door opens and an officer leads Lane away. Lane wonders what Captain Wooldridge will say during his interrogation. He's furious with himself, knowing that he should have stuck to name, rank and serial number, but he hadn't expected to see Field Marshal Rommel himself.

Lane is given a bite to eat and later that afternoon is handed over to the Wehrmacht – not, he is relieved to find, the Gestapo or the SS.

He is transferred to a prisoner of war camp, where he is released into the general population of POWs. His Welsh cover story doesn't survive one day in the camp, and the English prisoners assume he is a stooge. He finds the camp's Allied commanding officer and explains to him that he isn't George Lane.

"Who the devil are you, then?" the commanding officer demands.

"I'm a member of X Troop."

"And what the blazes is that?"

"Sit down, sir," Lane says, "and I will explain everything."

### X-Troop: The Allies' Secret Weapon

At the nadir of World War II, in Britain's darkest hour, a group of Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria and Hungary volunteered for a top secret mission to fight as commandos on the front lines against the Nazis. Determined to wreak havoc on Hitler's regime, the 87 men of No. 10 (Inter-Allied) Commando, 3 Troop – better known as X Troop – saw the war as personal. They played a crucial role in the D-Day landings and killed, captured, and interrogated their way across occupied Europe all the way into the heart of the Third Reich.

To uncover the history of this remarkable unit, I declassified long-sealed, top secret British military records; read the breathless heat-of-the-battle official war diaries; and discovered a trove of startling new materials from the families of the X Troopers. I also conducted interviews with still-living commandos and the wives and children of a number of X Troopers. It is a tale that needed telling. This group of highly trained soldiers gained a fearsome reputation, and they found themselves fighting in France, Sicily, mainland Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Albania, the Netherlands and Belgium. When the war was over and most

(See X Troop Page 5)

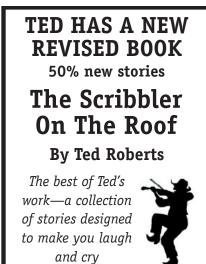


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### X Troop...

(Continued From Page 4)

of their comrades were going home, these extraordinary men went hunting for Nazis in the rubble of Hitler's Europe.

As Britain in 1942 sought to claw its way back from the brink of defeat and contemplated the daunting prospect of invading the Nazi-occupied European continent, British military planners determined they would need one weapon that was not yet in their arsenal: highly intelligent, highly motivated, German-speaking commandos. They would use these men to infiltrate behind enemy lines, interrogate prisoners on the spot, and help guide the Allied dagger into the heart of the Third Reich. To fill this role, the British conceived of X Troop, a unique commando force with an unusual combination of skills that usually don't go together: advanced fighting techniques and counterintelligence training. These men had to be special. They had to be heart and head. They had to be both brains and brawn.

Only one group fit the bill: the German-speaking Jewish refugees who had been arriving in Britain since Hitler's rise to power. Most of these "enemy aliens" came to England without their parents on Kindertransport trains or as part of religious missions. Many had lost their families, their homes, their whole worlds to the Nazis. They became one of Britain's most important secret commando units, referred to by Miriam Rothschild, the famous spouse of one particularly storied X Trooper, as a "suicide squad." The anger and hunger for revenge of these commandos was palpable.

Many were brilliant young men, sons of diplomats and scientists, but initially the British didn't trust them because they were German, Austrian or Hungarian. So they put them in detention camps, often in appalling conditions. Eventually, though, the men were selected or volunteered for unspecified "hazardous duty," which they were told would entail extremely dangerous work that involved taking the fight directly to the Nazis. Every man offered a place in X Troop accepted the mission.

In order to operate behind enemy lines they had to shed their previous lives as refugees and take on new British identities. If they were recognized as Jews, they would be killed instantly and the Gestapo would hunt down their families if they were still alive. Each volunteer was given a few minutes to pick a new British persona, then they had to destroy any connection with their old selves, burning letters from home and throwing out any belongings with their names on them. For those killed in battle this change would remain permanent, and many would be buried under their nom de guerre and a marble cross. Once they had their new names and identities, the X Troopers underwent tough commando training in Wales and Scotland. They spent days and nights hiking over mountains with full packs, and practiced beach assaults, live ammo drills, rock climbing, parachuting, and demolition

When their training was completed, the X Troopers became the very tip of the Allied spear, using their advanced fighting techniques to capture enemy soldiers and then immediately interrogate them rather than wasting valuable time bringing them back to headquarters. Where are the mines laid? How many soldiers are in your formation? What units are they from? Where is your headquarters? What weapons are being used? This information was used to make crucial battlefield decisions in the next minutes, hours, and days.

During their service the X Troopers worked with some of the most eccentric, brilliant characters of World War Two: Lord Lovat of the Special Service Brigade, Queen Victoria's great-grandson Lord Mountbatten, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, and the famous Captain "Mad Jack" Churchill. They proved their worth again and again. And even after the war was over and the unit was formally disbanded, the X Troopers were central to the denazification campaign: routing out hidden party members (almost capturing the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler), uncovering sensitive intelligence, and gathering evidence for the Nuremberg trials. At least 87 volunteers passed through the ranks of this elite unit, and half of them would be killed, wounded, or disappear without a trace. Collectively, the survivors and the fallen alike would contribute to the Allied war effort in a way that defies the imagination and that still has not received due credit.

Each member of X Troop has an exceptional biography, a tale of loss and redemption, of agency stolen and reclaimed. In the words of the commando Peter Masters, "Shocked by history, desperate, and in danger, we were threatened by Hitler ... the creator of hell on earth, and we fought for the chance to counter those seemingly insurmountable odds." Some of the men were more blunt about their motivations. One of Peter's comrades later said, "Frankly I was looking forward to all the killing." In this book I focus on three of these men in particular: Peter Masters (birth name: Peter Arany), Manfred Gans (nom de guerre: Fred Gray), and Colin Anson (birth name: Claus Ascher), whose stories are typical of the others'. I also looked in some detail at the men who fought under the names George Lane, Ian Harris, Tony Firth, Maurice Latimer, Geoff Broadman, Ron Gilbert, and Paul Streeten.

As of 2021 several military and intelligence files relating to X Troop still remain classified. Until these secret files are fully available to the public, however, the history of this unit will remain somewhat cloaked in shadows – much like the commandos themselves. The X Troopers' aliases also present a challenge to any historian, especially one who aims to tell their individual stories from beginning to end.

Many of the men chose to keep their cover identities after the war, living out their lives under the names not of the refugees they had been, but of the soldiers they had become. This also reflects a broader truth about this remarkable group of soldiers: After enduring unspeakable abuse at the hands of a genocidal, totalitarian state, the X Troopers became masters of their own fate, winning a personal victory. Their story is a remarkable testament to the human abil-

ity to face the most extreme challenges while staying focused on a higher goal: in this case, to right a world that had gone terribly awry.

Excerpt from "X Troop: The Secret Jewish Commandos of World War II" by Leah Garrett. Copyright © 2021 by Leah Garrett. Reprinted by permission of HMH Books & Media HW

### Have a Simcha?

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### Bar Mitzvah

Samuel Stanley Cohen, son of Stephanie and Stuart Cohen celebrated his bar mitzvah Saturday, June 4, 2022, at Temple Israel. Rabbi Micah Greenstein officiated the service.

Sam is a rising eighth grader at Memphis University School and is a member of the MUS swim team. He also enjoys archery, fishing and being outdoors.

He attends Camp Nebagamon in Nebagamon, Wisconsin. This summer will be his fourth year.

Sam has chosen to raise funds for a Camp Nebagamon scholarship reflecting his strong bond with the camp and the hopes of sharing that same joy with others.

He is the grandson of Carol Cohen Slutsky of Memphis, Tennessee, and the late Stanley M. Cohen of Clarksdale,



Samuel Stanley Cohen

Mississippi, Louise Guff of Memphis, and the late Samuel Guff also of Memphis. **HW** 





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### Next Up for Adam Sandler's Production Company: A YA Bat Mitzvah Novel Adaptation



Adam Sandler is seen at "Jimmy Kimmel Live" in Los Angeles, Jun. 1, 2022. Credit: RB/Bauer-Griffin/GC Images

#### By Caleb Guedes-Reed

(JTA) – Last month, Adam Sandler threw his daughter a star-studded bat mitzvah party.

Now it looks like his production company is making a bat mitzvah-themed film.

The casting site Backstage has posted a casting call for an in-the-works adaptation of "You Are So Not Invited to My Bat Mitzvah," a 2005 young adult novel by Fiona Rosenbloom.

Whether Sandler will have a role in the middle school-set story has not yet been revealed, but his Happy Madison Productions company is behind the film. Sammi Cohen, who has helmed other teen films such as "Crush," "Hollywood Darlings" and "Mr. Student Body President," is directing. At least part of the filming will take place between June 20 and August 12 in Toronto, according to the casting call.

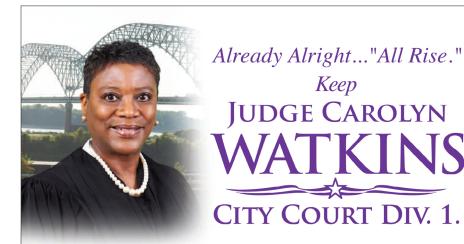
In the novel, teenager Stacy Friedman is determined to host the best bat mitz-

vah ever, in the face of middle school drama and competing love interests.

The Backstage post features a specific call for the role of Dante, a 12-14-year-old "foreign exchange student from Italy with a slight Italian accent" who is not Jewish but "is earnestly interested in the Jewish faith and helping out in the community."

The movie will likely end up on Netflix; Sandler signed a deal in the beginning of 2020 to make four more films with the streaming giant. Since then, the production company has released two: "Hubie Halloween" and the upcoming "Hustle."

Sandler threw his daughter Sunny a bat mitzvah with the likes of Jennifer Aniston, Charlie Puth and Sander's good friend, David Spade, in Los Angeles last month. Two years ago, he held an equally celebrity-filled bash for his eldest daughter, Sadie, which included a performance by Adam Levine. **HW** 



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### Israeli Heirs to the 'Top Gun' Story Sue Paramount Pictures for Copyright Infringement



Tom Cruise at a "Top Gun: Maverick" premier at Leicester Square in London, May 19, 2022. Credit: Neil Mockford/FilmMagic via Getty Images

(JTA) – The widow and son of the Israeli author whose 1983 magazine article inspired the original "Top Gun" film are suing Paramount Pictures for copyright infringement over the newly released sequel, "Top Gun: Maverick."

A complaint filed in a Los Angeles federal court last Monday and shared by Variety argues that Paramount failed to reacquire the rights to Ehud Yonay's California magazine piece after the rights reverted to his heirs Shosh and Yuval Yonay in 2020.

The Yonays, who currently reside in Israel, claim that Paramount was notified of the copyright termination in 2018 and 2022. Paramount argues that

the sequel was "sufficiently completed" by Jan. 24, 2020, the date the copyright reversal went into effect.

"These claims are without merit, and we will defend ourselves vigorously," Paramount said in a statement.

"Top Gun: Maverick" has become one of the summer's top blockbusters, grossing over \$550 million globally since its U.S. debut on May 27. The Yonays are seeking unspecified damages, including profits from the film, as well as an injunction preventing its further distribution.

Ehud Yonay, who died last year, also wrote a book titled "No Margin For Error: The Making of the Israeli Air Force." **HW** 



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### Folk Band Big Thief Won't Play in Member's Native Israel, Days After Defending Concerts There



Max Oleartchik, left, who is Israeli, and Adrianne Lenker of Big Thief perform at The Anthem in Washington, D.C. Credit: Kyle Gustafson for The Washington Post via Getty Images

### By Gabe Friedman

(JTA) – Days after defending their decision to play in Tel Aviv, the hometown of their bass player, the indie folk rock band Big Thief canceled two scheduled Israel shows, writing that they "oppose the illegal occupation and the systematic oppression of the Palestinian people."

Last week, the Grammy-nominated band had announced two shows at Tel Aviv's Barby venue in July, and said that they would donate the gig profits to NGOs that aid Palestinian children. They also noted that they wanted to explore bassist Max Oleartchik's hometown, and said that they were unsure of their thoughts on the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement,

the international movement to boycott Israel.

"We are well aware of the cultural aspect of the BDS movement and the desperate reality of the Palestinian people," the band wrote at the time. "In terms of where we fit into the boycott, we don't claim to know where the moral high ground lies and we want to remain open to other people's perspectives and to love beyond disagreement."

Their opinions had changed by last Thursday, when the band released a new statement.

"Since announcing these shows in Israel we have been in constant dialogue with friends, family, BDS supporters

and allies, Palestinians, and Israeli citizens who are committed to the fight for justice for Palestinians," the band wrote.

"Our intent in wanting to play the shows in Tel Aviv, where Max was born, raised, and currently lives, stemmed from a simple belief that music can heal. We now recognize that the shows we booked do not honor that sentiment. We are sorry to those we hurt with the recklessness and naivete of our original statement on playing in Israel and we hope those who were planning to attend the shows understand our choice."

The Barby venue posted an angry message to social media in response last Thursday, calling the band "spineless" and saying Big Thief had reached out to schedule the shows, not vice versa. The venue also accused the band of "hypocrisy," and of bowing to pressure from "paid protesters."

"BDS has been with us for 20 years, it has not changed since the last time they were in the country," the venue wrote in Hebrew on Facebook. "The insults on Instagram, just made you fold / scared. Some paid protesters outside the hall in Europe made your managers kneel, 'and the solution' – let's skip Is-

rael, let's give up our audience, where it's less important."

The venue continued: "In fact, your cancellation only made me sad for you, a bunch of poor, spineless musicians who are afraid of their own shadow."

Max Oleartchik is the son of Alon Oleartchik, one of Israel's most well-known musicians, who rose to prominence with the 1970s rock band Kavaret and has since released more than 10 solo albums in different genres.

Big Thief, which formed in 2015 in Brooklyn, released its fifth album to continued critical acclaim earlier this year. The band was nominated for multiple awards at the 2020 Grammys but did not win.

The band had previously long opposed the BDS movement. Journalist Omar Sakr wrote last Monday that singer Adrienne Lenker had told him so unprompted in an interview a few years earlier, and that afterward the band's publicist killed his article.

"[H]alfway through the interview with the singer, she blurts out that they play in Israel, because one of their band members is from there, and how they don't agree with BDS," he wrote. HW

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### Food Inflation: What's Behind It and How to Cope

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

As measured by the Consumer Price Index for food at home, grocery prices increased 3.4% in 2020, a faster rate than the 20-year historical average of 2.4%. More recently, food inflation accelerated by 6.5% during the 12 months ending in December 2021, while prices for the category that includes meat, poultry, fish, and eggs spiked 12.5%.<sup>2</sup>

Food prices have long been prone to volatility, in part because the crops grown to feed people and livestock are vulnerable to pests and extreme weather. But in 2021, U.S. food prices were hit hard by many of the same global supply-chain woes that drove up broader inflation.

The pandemic spurred shifts in consumer demand, slowed factory production in the United States and overseas, and caused disruptions in domestic commerce and international trade that worsened as economic activity picked up steam. A shortage of metal containers and backups at busy ports and railways caused long shipping delays and drove up costs. Severe labor shortages, and the resulting wage hikes, have made it more difficult and costly to manufacture and transport many types of unfinished and finished goods.<sup>3</sup>

As long as businesses must pay more for the raw ingredients, packaging materials, labor, transportation, and fuel needed to produce, process, and distribute food products to grocery stores, some portion of these additional costs will be passed on to consumers. And any lasting strain on household budgets could prompt consumers to rethink their meal choices and shopping behavior.

### Seven Ways to Master the Super-

The U.S. Department of Agriculture expects food inflation to moderate in 2022, but no one knows for certain how long prices might stay elevated.4 In the meantime, it may take more effort and some planning to control your family's grocery bills.

- 1. Set a budget for spending on groceries and do your best not to exceed it. In 2021, a typical family of four with a modest grocery budget spent about \$1,150 per month on meals and snacks prepared at home. Your spending limit could be higher or lower depending on your household income, family size, where you live, and food preferences.<sup>5</sup>
- 2. To avoid wasting food, be aware that food date labels such as "sell by," "use by," and "best before" are not based on safety, but rather on the manufacturer's guess of when the food will reach peak quality. With fresh foods like meat and dairy products, you can usual-

ly add five to seven days to the "sell by" date. The look and smell can help you determine whether food is still fresh, and freezing can extend the shelf life of many foods.

- 3. Grocery stores often rotate advertised specials for beef, chicken, and pork, so you may want to plan meals around sale-priced cuts and buy extra to freeze for later. With meat prices soaring, it may be a good time to experiment with "meatless" meals that substitute plant-based proteins such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, or tofu.
- 4. Stock up on affordable and nonper-

ishable food such as rice, pasta, dried beans, canned goods, and frozen fruits and vegetables when they are on sale.

- 5. Select fresh produce in season and forgo more expensive pre-cut and prewashed options.
- 6. Keep in mind that a store's private-label brands may offer similar quality at a significant discount from national brands.
- 7. Consider joining store loyalty programs that offer weekly promotions and personalized deals.
  - 1, 4-5) U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2021 2) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022

### Annual Change in Consumer Price Indexes for Food, 2021















Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022

3) Bloomberg Businessweek, September 15, 2021

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## Ukrainian Ambassador Urges Israel to Sell Iron

(JNS) - Ukrainian Ambassador to Israel Yevgen Korniychuk urged Jerusalem last Tuesday to sell its Iron Dome air defense system to the Ukrainian military, the AP reported. The ambassador also asked Israel to sell Ukraine

While Korniychuk did not go so far as to accuse Israel of blocking the sale of the Iron Dome system, he called on the Jewish state to back up its verbal support for Ukraine with deeds, according

States "would not oppose such a sale."

Korniychuk also said that last week Israel had declined a U.S. request for Germany to deliver Israeli-licensed Spike anti-tank missiles, made by Rafael, to Ukraine.

Israel has sent protective helmets and ceramic vests to Ukrainian emergency responders, and was the only country to operate a field hospital in the country this year, which treated some 6,000 patients.

However, Israel fears that aiding Ukraine militarily would jeopardize its operations against Iran in Syria, which rely on security coordination with Russia. HW

# Dome to Ukrainian Military

anti-tank missiles.

to the report.

Speaking at a news conference in Tel Aviv, he contended that the United

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# Before WWII, Jewish Mobsters Kept Nazis at Bay in The U.S. – With Their Fists



Meyer Lansky, bottom right, lent his services to Jewish leaders looking to counter the American Nazi movement. Credit: Getty Images

### By Howard Lovy

(JTA) – The way author Michael Benson tells it, one day in 1938, New York judge and Jewish communal leader Nathan Perlman sat at a bar and thought, "How come these Nazis get to march down 86th Street, goose-stepping and 'sieg heiling' like it's the Macy's Parade? Why are they so brazen?"

It was because they were not worried about the consequences. Too few people in then-isolationist America really cared about what was being said about the Jews or what was happening to them in Europe, Benson said. What was needed, then, were Jews who weren't afraid to break some laws – and some bones – as they challenged the homegrown Nazi threat.

And that's when, in Benson's words, "Judge Perlman thought outside the box."

What happened next is the subject of Benson's book, "Gangsters Vs. Nazis: How Jewish Mobsters Battled Nazis in Wartime America" (Kensington), published in late April. As the title suggests, Perlman had a few connections in the underworld. That included Meyer Lansky, an accountant, bootlegger and fixer

whose work straddled both the Italian American and the Jewish mob. Lansky, in turn, had at his disposal Jewish members of a mob enforcement organization known as "Murder Inc."

The Jewish mobsters showed up to intimidate and fight the German American Bund and other Nazi organizations from New York to Chicago to Minnesota and even Los Angeles. It got to the point, Benson said, when Nazis began to stay away from rallies because they knew they would be in for it.

Lansky was happy to help and accepted no pay for the service. "I am a Jew, and I feel for the Jews in Europe who are suffering. They are my brothers," Benson quotes Lansky as saying.

Despite the syndicate's name, said Benson, "No one gets killed in the entire book." It wasn't that Lansky didn't relish the thought of killing Nazis. But Rabbi Stephen Wise, the Reform rabbi and Zionist leader whom Perlman brought along to a meeting with Lansky, insisted on no deaths.

While Jewish members of Murder Inc. cracked a few skulls during the course of 1938, the year covered in the

book, they didn't kill any Nazi sympathizers.

This is all familiar territory for Benson, who specializes in books about the Mafia and true crime. His interest in crime and killers dates back to his childhood, growing up near Rochester, New York. When he was nine years old, his babysitter and her friend were murdered, a cold case that he said he later cracked as an adult – a story he tells in the 2015 book "The Devil at Genesee Junction."

"I started out writing about psycho killers and grisly murders," Benson told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "And for the last few years, I've been the Mafia writer for Kensington Books. So, I knew the cast of characters and I think that's why they brought me in."

Benson is not Jewish – he describes himself as a "lapsed Catholic" – but says he has a deep understanding of antisemitism. He went to Hofstra University in New York, which he described as "80% Jewish."

"I understand hate," he said. "When my first child was about to be born, I was walking my very, very pregnant wife to Beth Israel [Medical Center] in Manhattan, and we were egged by kids in a van, who shouted the 'K-word' at us. I understand antisemitism, prejudice, and hateful thinking."

In Benson's book, the main villains – the embodiment of hateful thinking – were members of the German American Bund. By 1938, what began as an organization to celebrate German-American heritage had been taken over by Fritz Julius Kuhn, who worshiped Hitler and attempted to imitate his speaking style.

"He's as much like Hitler as he could possibly be, waives his arms, spittle spews when he talks, and he harps again, again, again, on how the Jews are responsible for all the world's problems, and that's why everybody's poor these days," Benson said. "And it's a message

that resonates."

That's when Lansky had his boys take matters into their own hands. There are a series of brawls – a big one in the Bund's home turf of Yorkville in Manhattan – and the Bund is shown just how tough Jews can be.

In Benson's book, everything comes to a head in an infamous 1939 Madison Square Garden pro-Nazi event, which the author calls "The Bund's Last Gasp." It was a hate rally led by Kuhn. But the American Hitler wannabe was upstaged by a Jewish plumber from Williamsburg named Isadore Greenbaum, who jumped onstage, pulled the plug on Kuhn's microphone in the middle of his speech, and was roughed up by Kuhn's bodyguards. "When I heard persecution against my religion, I lost my head," Greenbaum later said.

"And the next day, all of the newspapers that were supposed to say what a great rally it was talked about the one hero who busted it up," Benson said.

This is very much a story of its time. Mobsters showing restraint against killing doesn't seem very plausible in today's world. But, Benson said, the threat to Jews remains.

"The forces of evil that the Jewish gangsters were fighting are with us today and scary as ever," he said. "Who's going to be Captain America? Who's going to be the Judge Perlman and Meyer Lansky?"

Antisemites are small in number, Benson said, but they are just as brazen in their hatred as were the American Nazis in 1938. What's the solution? Well, Perlman and Lansky may have used crude methods, but they succeeded in shaming the Bund.

"I don't really want to advocate violence," Benson said, "but it seems about time that all of society should subject them to the same level of embarrassment and shame and stigma if they behave in this way." **HW** 

# IDF to Open New Elite Units for Women Soldiers



The IAF's five new women UAV operators, Dec. 9, 2020. Credit: IDF Spokesperson's Unit.

(JNS) – Israel Defense Forces' Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi has begun a screening process for women soldiers who wish to serve in combat units previously only open to male personnel, the Israeli military announced last Tuesday

The units, described by the IDF Spokesperson's Unit as requiring significant combat roles, include the elite Unit 669 airborne combat rescue; the elite Combat Engineering Corps Yahalom unit, which specializes in engineering breaches and sabotage operations; and the Mobility Unit of the Infantry Corps, which uses vehicles to transfer critical logistical and other types of supplies.

Describing the IDF as a people's military that "functions professionally and in accordance with operational requirements of the battlefield," the IDF Spokesperson's Unit stated: "A central aim of the IDF is to maximize human resources while emphasizing operation-

al requirements and providing opportunities for all military personnel to have meaningful service. Today, women are involved in most of the positions in the IDF, including a large number of combat roles, combat support roles, technological positions and command positions throughout the IDF."

Kochavi had previously ordered a task force to be formed, led by the former Commanding Officer of the Ground Forces, IDF Maj. Gen. Yoel Strick.

"The task force conducted a thorough examination regarding the placement of women in additional IDF combat roles. The task force examined the IDF's fulfillment of its goal, the first of which is to meet operational needs, as well as maintain the health and safety of all IDF soldiers and utilize IDF personnel to the fullest extent. The examination was presented to the Chief of the General Staff and the General Staff Forum in recent months," said the military.

"Combat courses will begin for women undergoing screenings for Unit 669, which is classified as a special forces unit," it added. "Candidates will be required to meet physiological threshold conditions defined by the professional staff and screening procedures for the unit. A trial period will begin to evaluate the inclusion of women for the special forces unit of the Combat Engineering Corps [Yahalom], which is a unit that performs unique operational tasks." HW

### Iran Smuggling Missile Parts Via Passenger Flights After Alleged IAF Strike on Damascus Airport



The aftermath of an alleged Israeli missile strike on the container yard of Syria's Latakia port, Dec. 28, 2021. Credit: Syrian Arab News Agency.

(JNS) – Iran has resorted to smuggling precision missile components into Syria via hand luggage on European passenger flights, following an alleged Israeli Air Force strike in May that damaged runaways at Damascus International Airport, Israeli media reported last Tuesday.

The alleged Israeli strike was reported by Syrian state media on May 20. Satellite images released by the ImageSat International showed damage to the runways.

"This strike effectively prevents Iran from landing its large Boeing 747 cargo planes at the airport," Channel 12 reported last Tuesday. "These are the planes that deliver the precision missile systems, which in the end move to Hezbollah," the report added.

Those planes have not been able to land at the airport since the attack, according to Channel 12. **HW** 

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### Is It Kosher for a Jewish Girl to Visit a Psychic?



Credit: Busà Photography via Getty Images

#### By Sarah Berman

This previously appeared on Alma. Reprinted with permission.

One summer day before my freshman year of college, I visited a fortune teller. I was nervous about being a college athlete, navigating a boy "situation" and heading to upstate New York for the next four years. I wanted some advice.

I hoped this stranger with a card table on the sidewalk could reassure me I was making the right decisions in exchange for me handing her \$90 in cash, no strings attached. I considered it an act of self-care, not a spiritual awakening. Still, I was nervous. A nice Jewish girl from Connecticut should consult with a rabbi for advice, right, not a psychic?

Sitting under an umbrella, I gave the psychic one-word answers as she carefully evaluated my life. At one point, she said, "I have no idea what this means, but someone in Spain loves you and wishes he could tell you."

Ludicrous. For a minute, I thought I stumped her.

When I left the reading, I immediately opened Instagram. The first post on my feed was from my newly ex-boyfriend, who was on vacation in... Spain. Bizarre. Suddenly, I went from skeptic to sold. But then I started to feel strange about the whole experience, once I contemplated it with actual legitimacy. Throughout my upbringing, a hybrid of reform and conservative Jewish practices, fortune tellers were a cultural taboo and never discussed. I knew they were prohibited in the Bible and outlawed by Jewish tradition for thousands of years.

Did this mean it was a sin to visit one, even in our modern day?

"The Torah is concerned with divination, fortune telling and psychics speaking on behalf of other gods," said Rabbi Richard Freund, professor of Jewish Studies at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia. "False prophets are those that lead you to other gods. If you're consulting psychics that don't bring you to a path that leads you to following another religion, or anti-Jewish practices, it's fine."

As Rabbi Freund explained, the prohibition on seeing psychics might have a similar evolutionary path to the prohibition on getting tattoos. While some still believe a lingering misconception that Jews do not get body art because the Nazis forcibly inked our ancestors with identification numbers throughout the Holocaust, the true prohibition against tattoos is found in the Torah. In the Bible, tattoos were likely understood to be imagery of other gods and religious symbols, indicating a lack of allegiance to Judaism if one were to get inked. The issue surrounding tattoos was about the intent behind the symbol, and it might make sense to think about the issue with psychics as similarly rooted in intent.

I liked thinking about such acts as rooted in questions of intent. Modern Jews, like me, live at the intersection of modern life and religious law. To me, this means avoiding BLT sandwiches, but I won't turn down an opportunity to learn my fate.

The psychic from the sidewalk as-

sured me of a successful career after a pivot, a physical challenge that would shape my perspective, and two marriage proposals. No engagements yet, but her wisdom never once made me question my religion. I'm not looking for another God; I'm pretty content with what's going on up there. I'm looking for assurance. Will I become a successful writer? Will my summer fling evolve into something more? Is there anything spooky that will happen to me?

For Rabbi Ethan Witkovsky of the Park Avenue Synagogue in Manhattan, the words of a psychic might serve as a warning, but it is important to remember God has the final word and our actions can always impact our fate.

"If you pray a bunch or do whatever to avoid something happening, God has the power to change what's going on," he said, though he does not think such a supernatural worldview speaks to many Jews today. "Most American Jews, and Americans in general, are not down with mystical interpretations of the universe."

In other words, seeing a psychic can be kosher, but it is the opposite of rational.

I think I'm OK with my religious worldview being a little irrational and a little mystical. For much of Judaism, the distinction was never all that clear. Some of the most legal, or rational, parts of Judaism are rooted in mysticism. Rabbi Yosef Karo, who's considered to be the last great writer of ancient Jewish law, wrote that he got his knowledge from an angel. If Judaism can accept mysticism influencing a legal scholar who crafted laws that people still follow, I can accept receiving guidance from a human on the side of the road.

It's about balance. "Some people feel bound to Jewish law and other people are informed by Jewish law," says Rabbi Jessica Lott, campus rabbi at Northwestern University.

That made sense to me, too. I believe that my spiritual life extends beyond religion. I think of my life as inspired by Jewish practice, but not bound by it. For me, I would turn to the guidance of rabbis for religious observances where I'm seeking a Jewish guide, such as advice on grieving, observing a holiday, or understanding topics that directly apply to Jews, like antisemitism, but the topics that I discuss with psychics – life goals, professional hopes and boys – don't feel religious to me. Therefore, it seems more natural to have these discussions with a psychic, whose worldview seems

to consistently match my own in a much more helpful way. I view the guidance that rabbis and psychics provide as entirely separate, but equally as important.

While I knew I could talk to a rabbi or even a friend, it felt easier for me to talk to a psychic about my worries because she wasn't part of my broader life, in addition to being aligned with how I think about the modern world. This woman had no external motivation in telling me something, unlike my inner circle that has opinions on what's best for me. I also felt free to disclose what I was thinking and feeling in that moment because I knew she wouldn't spill our discussion to anyone in my life.

When I pray or attend synagogue, I feel connected to God through the prayer tunes and the presence of others, but I don't know the meaning behind the words in the Siddur. I say the Amidah at synagogue because I learned that it's important, not because I feel empowered to say that specific prayer. On the other hand, when seeing a psychic I'm alone and being explicitly given information in my native language. It fills a different need for reflection and engagement with myself.

Nowadays, I consult a fortune teller as often as I see my dentist, semi-annually. Psychic readings are like opening a fortune cookie or shaking a magic eight ball – something fun and lighthearted. I take the wisdom if it resonates with me, but otherwise, I shrug it off. I don't view the psychic as godly. I love listening to someone offering friendly, albeit expensive, advice. I view it like receiving a manicure, or the occasional spray tan. Sure, I could handle life without it, but it's nice to treat myself. It's entertaining and sometimes offers opportunities for self-reflection and thought.

After my first visit six years ago, I sensed judgment from my Jewish best friend. When I asked why it bothered her, she shrugged. "It's just not something I think Jewish people should do."

Maybe not, according to some interpretations of Jewish law. But after a decade of Hebrew school and Jewish summer camp, I have learned to always ask why. And it turns out that as long as psychic readings do not serve as an alternative to God, then it is a practice that works with my religious worldview. And the universe might agree: Nearly five years later, God hasn't punished me for choosing Madame Dorinda over a rabbi. **HW** 

# UNHRC Commission Condemns Israeli 'Occupation' as 'Root Cause' of Conflict



The U.N. Human Rights Council chamber in Geneva. Credit: U.N. Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré.

(JNS) – The United Nations Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory issued its first report last Tuesday, blaming Israel's "occupation" for the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict.

Navanethem "Navi" Pillay, who chairs the commission, said, "The findings and recommendations relevant to the underlying root causes were over-

whelmingly directed towards Israel, which we have taken as an indicator of the asymmetrical nature of the conflict and the reality of one state occupying the other."

The 18-page report also claimed that Israeli actions, such as "forced displacement, threats of forced displacement, demolitions, settlement construction and expansion, settler violence, and the blockade of Gaza" fed "recurring cycles of violence."

Israel's failure to implement recommendation of past commissions and U.N. fact-finding bodies "is at the heart of the systematic recurrence of violations in both the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel," the report claimed.

Commissioner Miloon Kothari said, "It is only with the ending of occupation that the world can begin to reverse historical injustices and move towards self-de-

termination of the Palestinian peoples."

Commissioner Chris Sidoti added: "Israel clearly has no intention of ending the occupation. In fact, it has established clear policies to ensure complete permanent control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This includes altering the demography of these territories through the maintenance of a repressive environment for Palestinians and a favorable environment for Israeli settlers."

The report also noted that the Palestinian Authority uses the occupation as a justification for its own human rights violations "and as the core reason for its failure to hold legislative and presidential elections," according to a U.N. press statement. Hamas, which rules in the Gaza Strip, has "shown little commitment to upholding human rights, and no adherence to international humanitarian law," according to the report.

The Commission of Inquiry was es-

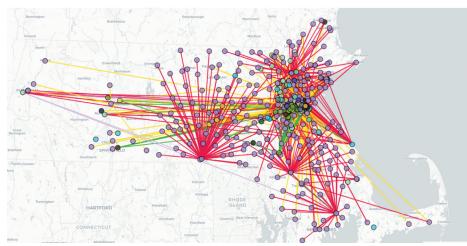
tablished by the Human Rights Council on May 27, 2021, in the wake of Israel's "Operation Guardian of the Walls." It's mandate is to investigate "all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and all alleged violations and abuses of international human-rights law leading up to and since" April 13, 2021, in Israel and areas it designates as occupied by Israel.

The COI will present its report to the 50th session of the Human Rights Council on June 13, 2022. **HW** 

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# Boston Jews Say a Pro-Palestinian Group's Map of Local 'Zionist Leaders and Powerhouse NGOs' is a Guide to Antisemitism



A map of purported connections between Jewish groups and other organizations in Massachusetts created by progressive activist group The Mapping Project, which says its goal is to map 'institutional support for the colonization of Palestine." (Screenshot)

### By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – A Jewish arts group. A Jewish high school. A Jewish newspaper. A synagogue network. A major Jewish philanthropy that directs funds to mental health, homelessness prevention and refugee resettlement initiatives.

These are a few of the locations on a dense interactive map of "Zionist leaders and powerhouse NGOs" in Massachusetts created by an activist group that says it aims to expose "local institutional support for the colonization of Palestine" and reveal how support for Zionist causes is a nexus point for various "other harms" in society, ranging from gentrification to the prison-industrial complex to ableism.

The Mapping Project, a Boston-area pro-Palestinian activist collective aligned with the local Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement targeting Israel, is using its map (which includes addresses of the organizations and names of their staffers) to draw literal links between dozens of area Jewish groups, universities, foundations, police departments and other organizations.

The group says its goal is to demonstrate that "institutional support for the colonization of Palestine is structurally tied to policing and systemic white supremacy here where we live, and to U.S. imperialist projects in other countries."

Jewish groups in the state say The Mapping Project's efforts amount to little more than an attempt to catalogue and intimidate area Jews.

"They are choosing, in their desire to be intersectional, to essentially point the finger at the Jewish communal infrastructure of Greater Boston as responsible for every evil under the sun that they can think of," Jeremy Burton, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston, told JTA. "They make no bones about it."

Burton said he was especially concerned that the map was amplified and praised on Twitter by the nonprofit activist group Massachusetts Peace Action, which he said has a lot of sway in progressive circles and often sits down with local politicians.

The project's map includes the addresses of most of the major Jewish-affiliated organizations and donor funds in the state: political groups spanning the aisle, from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the Zionist Organization of America to J Street, along with the nonpartisan Anti-Defamation League; charities like the Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston (CJP) and the Jewish Teen Foundation of Greater Boston; private foundations headed up by Jews; religious organizations including the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts; and academic research centers like the Harvard Center for Jewish Studies.

Sometimes its links are accompanied by dollar amounts of financial support drawn from tax forms. Sometimes they're simply demonstrating agency partnerships, or what the group says is behavior "normalizing" Israel. (The Jewish Journal, a Jewish Telegraphic Agency syndication partner based in Salem, is one of the links.)

"Our goal in pursuing this collective mapping was to reveal the local entities and networks that enact devastation, so we can dismantle them," the group, which does not list its members, said in a statement on its website. "Every entity has an address, every network can be disrupted."

The map was posted late last Friday, shortly before Shabbat, and became a topic of concern among Jewish groups coming back online late last Monday after the Shavuot holiday.

In a joint statement, Boston's communal Jewish organizations say that the map and its creators' stated goal amount to little more than an effort to "dismantle" the city's organized Jewish community writ large.

"As a Jewish community, and one that has made allyship and outreach the cornerstones of our work, we condemn this demonization of the Boston Jewish community and attack on its relationship with others," CJP, the New England ADL and the Boston JCRC said last Wednesday. "This is no thinly veiled attempt to target the Jewish community—it is an explicit one that is keeping lists

and naming names."

The map was also condemned by Lior Haiat, spokesperson for Israel's Foreign Ministry, who tweeted that it "is reminiscent of a dangerous antisemitic pattern of activity known from antiquity through the horrors of the 20th century: a pattern which has led to violence against Jews and their institutions."

The Mapping Project did not return multiple requests from JTA for comment.

In an interview with the pro-Palestinian website Mondoweiss, the group identified certain Jewish organizations like the ADL and CJP as "super-oppressors," saying they "have tremendous influence" by linking the foundational and nonprofit world with "overtly repressive forces" like police and weapons developers.

The joint statement from the CJP, ADL and JCRC said the map "draws on age-old antisemitic tropes that are all too clear to our community: Jewish wealth, control and conspiracies."

Much of the Mapping Project's focus is in line with broader trends in anti-Zionist discussions. The focus on police departments follows a recent claim by some progressives that U.S. police have picked up abusive tactics during fact-finding trips to Israel sponsored by Jewish groups – an allegation denied by the groups that run the trips and many of the officials who took part.

The project classifies J Street, a liberal political advocacy group that calls for a two-state solution, as one that "stops short of challenging the fundamentally ethnocratic and settler colonial foundations of the Zionist state." That follows a recent trend of pro-Palestinian groups shunning J Street, which has in the past comfortably occupied a space among Jewish progressives. Earlier this year in the Boston area, a student-led pro-Palestinian campaign at Tufts University also urged students not to join the campus J Street chapter, citing similar objections.

(The BDS movement has also made inroads at another prominent Boston-area university, as Harvard's student paper recently endorsed the cause.)

Similarly, the group's focus on the ADL as an organization that causes "harm" is in line with a recent trend of progressive groups shunning the civil rights group that tends to lean liberal on domestic affairs. The ADL has responded in kind, most recently with CEO Jonathan Greenblatt equating left-wing anti-Zionism to right-wing antisemitism.

Greenblatt's comments were criticized by many Jewish liberals and progressives at the time, but his own fierce denunciation of the Mapping Project put him on the same side as progressive Jewish leaders including T'ruah founder Rabbi Jill Jacobs, who also condemned the map.

"You can protest Jewish organizational policies/positions have [sic] vis-a-vis Israel all you want (or even boycott Israel), but once you call for dismantling the basic Jewish communal infrastructure, you've crossed the line to antisemitism," Jacobs tweeted.

"We won't be intimidated by @ BDSBoston's dangerous call for action against Boston's Jewish community or their attempt to target Jewish schools, institutions, and organizations, including @ADL," Greenblatt tweeted in response to the map of Jewish organizations, amplifying a statement from the ADL's New England branch.

Greenblatt added, "This project plays directly into #antisemitic myths of Jewish power and control."

Burton says The Mapping Project, which published the names of even junior staffers at organizations like the JCRC, is inviting violence and physical intimidation against Jews.

"I have no question that, in this particular case, these radical anti-Zionist activists are deliberately choosing to put a target on the bodies of the Jewish community in Boston," he said. **HW** 

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# 2022 Temple Israel Religious School Graduation



2022 Temple Israel Religious School High School Graduation class with their rabbis and educators. Credit: Amir Sharabi

### By Eli Ostrow, staff intern

On Friday night May 20 Temple Israel held its ceremony for the graduating class of 2022.

This event marked the end of their formal education journey at Temple and the beginning of their Jewish future as adults.

Each of the teens played a part in the ceremony including leading prayers, singing songs and sharing what this ceremony had meant to them.

The rabbis gave them words of wisdom along with the message to please stay in touch.

WAY TO GO GRADS!

Maddie Bray, Noah Cooper, Seth Gibson, Ella Gregory, Emma Gubin, Jonas Kannady, Hayden Miller, Micah Unowsky, Ava Weiss, Marcus Cohn, Michael Hirsch, Jordan Infeld, Alyssa Koplon, Zoe Rubenstein, Evan Schrier, and Morgan Schrier. **HW** 

### Moscow's Chief Rabbi Leaves Russia After Refusing to Support Ukraine War



Chief Rabbi of Moscow Pinchas Goldschmidt, June 7, 2022. Source: Twitter.

(JNS) – Moscow's Chief Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt said he was pressured by Russian authorities to support the

country's war in Ukraine and decided to leave the country instead.

According to tweets by his daughterin-law, journalist Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt, the rabbi was "put under pressure to publicly support the 'special operation' in Ukraine – and refused."

She said Goldschmidt and his wife, Rebbetzin Dara Goldschmidt, flew to Hungary two weeks after the Russian invasion.

Chizhik-Goldschmidt also tweeted that after traveling to Eastern Europe to fundraise for refugees, he then traveled to Jerusalem, where his father had been hospitalized.

Goldschmidt, who served as a rabbi in Moscow for the last 33 years, is also president of the Conference of European Rabbis.

Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt tweeted. Can finally share that my in-laws, Moscow Chief Rabbi @PinchasRabbi & Rebbetzin Dara Goldschmidt, have been put under pressure by authorities to publicly support the 'special operation' in Ukraine – and refused. HW



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