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Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

HEBREWWATCHMAN.COM 17 TAMMUZ, 5783 JULY 6, 2023 VOL. 101, NO. 41

Memphis Jewish Federation Announces Awardees of Inaugural Antisemitism Microgrants

Memphis Jewish Federation is pleased to announce the nine recipients of its inaugural antisemitism microgrants. Launched in 2023, the microgrants initiative is a proactive step to address rising antisemitism.

Grant awardees include Beth Sholom MICAH Core Team, Church Health, Facing History & Ourselves, Junior League of Memphis, Margolin Hebrew Academy/Feinstone Yeshiva of the South, Memphis Friends of Israel, Memphis Jewish Community Center, Memphis University School, and The Rose Grows with Memphis Public Library

"This year's grant awardees represent a broad range of both the Jewish and wider Memphis community," said Federation Executive Vice President Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein. "The Jewish community cannot confront antisemitism alone. It is a symptom of an ill society, and it will take all strata of society to confront its toxicity. We are heartened the awarded grant programs will be targeting diverse demographics in our city."

All microgrant awardees are sponsoring innovative and creative programs to raise awareness of antisemitism, provide education or training in best practices to respond to the scourge, or educate the broader Memphis community about Jews, Judaism, and Israel to

dispel harmful antisemitic myths and tropes. Each awardee will receive grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,500.

\$20,000 was raised for the microgrants initiative as part of Federation's Annual Community Campaign. During this year's granting cycle, Federation's Grants Committee underscored addressing antisemitism as a community need and grant priority.

"It is so important in times like these for initiatives like this to take place," noted newly installed Federation Board Chair Scott Notowich. "I am so pleased that many different organizations submitted program ideas and that Federation was able to fund a wide range of programs."

According to a recent report by the Anti-Defamation League, 85% of Americans believe at least one anti-Jewish trope, and 20% believe six or more tropes. Antisemitism online is particularly toxic, with a recent study conducted by the American Jewish Committee finding that 85% of young American Jews ages 18-29 were the target of antisemitism online or have seen it online at least once in the past 12 months.

The antisemitism microgrants initiative is one component of Federation's ongoing efforts to address antisemitism. Through its fledgling Community Relations Council, under the leadership of lay leaders Janis Finan and Jill Noto-



Yard signs available through Memphis Jewish Federation

wich, Federation is engaging in other educational, outreach and advocacy activities. Recently, in partnership with all Tennessee Federations, Memphis hired a lobbyist and successfully advocated for \$750 million in state security funding for faith-based institutions.

As part of our mission, Federation supports antisemitism efforts in the Jewish community and in greater Memphis. We are pleased to provide complimentary "We Stand Against Antisemitism" signs for your business or home. Visit Jewish Community Partners (6560 Poplar Avenue) to get your sign(s).

MEMPHIS JEWISH FEDERATION

Memphis Jewish Federation's mission is to align financial, human, and organizational resources to foster and sustain a Jewish community that is cared for, connected, and engaged. For more information, visit jcpmemphis. org/federation. HW

Neo-Nazis Target U.S. Synagogue in First Antisemitic Attack in its 165-Year History, Rabbi Says



Members of the Goyim Defense League on Shabbat protested at the Chabad of Cobb County outside Atlanta. Courtesy of Twitter

By Judy Maltz

This article originally appeared on "Haaretz," and is reprinted here with permission from "Forward."

A Reform synagogue in the southern U.S. state of Georgia hasn't experienced

an antisemitic incident in its nearly 165-year history – until last weekend, when it was one of two congregations targeted by a neo-Nazi hate group.

"This is a congregation has been

around since 1859," said Rabbi Elizabeth Bahar, the spiritual leader of Temple Beth Israel in Macon, Georgia, in a phone conversation with "Haaretz." "This is a small, sleepy town. We have lived through the Civil War, we have lived through the civil rights movement, and there has been no incident ever of antisemitism directed against the Jewish community here in all those tumultuous times."

Last Friday morning, she said, members of the congregation living in the nearby city of Warner Robins found antisemitic flyers outside their homes. They had been distributed by an organization called the Goyim Defense League, a white supremacist hate group active mainly on social media. According to the Anti-Defamation League, the GDL's main objective is "to cast aspersions on Jews and spread antisemitic myths and conspiracy theories."

Later in the day, 15 members of the hate group held a demonstration outside the synagogue, where they had hung

a life-sized doll in effigy from a street sign, wrapped in a rainbow flag, with a kippa on its head. According to Bahar, at least one of the demonstrators was wearing a T-shirt with a Nazi insignia on it and another had an Israeli flag tied around his foot.

Bahar noticed the group as she was pulling into her parking spot at the synagogue, where she was about to conduct her weekly Torah study class before the traditional Shabbat evening service. "At first, it didn't register," she said. "I mean, we have never had any problems before with antisemites. We are the second oldest synagogue in the state of Georgia, and nothing like this has ever happened in the past."

When she peered out the window of the synagogue at the demonstrators, she recounted, they responded with a Nazi salute and screamed "Heil Hitler."

Police arrived at the scene not long thereafter and arrested GDL leader Jon

(See Neo-Nazis Page 3)

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Gal Gadot to Become First Israeli Actor to Get Star on Hollywood Walk of Fame



Gadot at the 90th Annual Academy Awards in 2018. Credit: Getty Images By Nirit Anderman

This article originally appeared on "Haaretz," and is reprinted here with permission from "Forward."

While it remains unclear whether Gal Gadot will play Wonder Woman again on the big screen, last Monday the Israeli actress received official recognition of her stellar celebrity status: securing a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Gadot is among 31 people who will be honored next year with a star bearing their name on the historic California landmark, as announced by the Walk of Fame organization's representatives. Israeli President Isaac Herzog tweeted in response: "You were always a star."

In a video she uploaded to Instagram, Gadot said that her husband was the one who informed her of the award. "I'm so, so grateful and thankful and humbled," she said, while expressing her gratitude to the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. She said the news gives her "fuel" to continue "doing what I love doing."

Gadot will receive the honor alongside a number of film, television, and sports stars, as well as those from the American music industry. Other 2024 recipients include: Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige, actors Chris Pine, Christina Ricci, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Michelle Yeoh, Kerry Washington and the late Chadwick Boseman, musicians Dr. Dre, Gwen Stefani and Otis Redding, as well as former tennis player Billie Jean King.

Gadot, 38, began her career as a beauty queen and model. In 2009, she played a retired Mossad agent with her Hollywood debut in the movie "Fast and Furious," which also featured Vin Diesel and Paul Walker. Since then, she has acted in many films and television shows in both Israel and Hollywood.

In Israel, she acted in the series "Asfur" and "Kathmandu," as well as a number of other projects, and in Hollywood she performed in several "Fast and Furious" films.

Gadot's titular role in "Wonder Woman" made her a Hollywood star. She first played the character in the 2016 film "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice." A year later, she starred in "Wonder Woman," performing alongside Chris Pine. The film, which was directed by Patty Jenkins, was an international success.

It also showed that superhero movies with female protagonists can gross as much as any other superhero film, and that this genre of movie can be directed by women.

Gadot returned for the role in additional DC films, and she also starred in the sequel "Wonder Woman 1984," which was released in 2020. Two years ago, she starred in "Red Notice" alongside Ryan Reynolds, which is considered the highest budget film in Netflix history.

Gadot was expected to play Wonder Woman in a third film in the series under the direction of Jenkins – but in December 2022, DC decided to cancel the movie in order to rebuild their cinematic universe.

In addition to her acting, Gadot has also worked as a producer. Among other things, she announced in 2020 that she would produce and star in a series about the Egyptian queen Cleopatra, with Gadot playing the lead role.

The first star on Hollywood Boulevard, named after director and producer Stanley Kramer, was inlaid in 1960. Today, 2,789 golden stars commemorating key figures in the American entertainment industry are already stamped on the sidewalk of Hollywood Boulevard. HW

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Office: 901.763.2215 Direct: 901.827.7244

info@hebrewwatchman.com

Susan C. Nieman Editor and Publisher

Larry Nieman
Advertising Sales Director

Toni Nieman
Office Manager & Subscriptions

Rebecca Miller Schudel Social Media Director Web Development

Herman I. Goldberger Editor and Publisher Emeritus

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

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7/6/2023



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Fortney

Abby and Jimmy Fortney are the proud parents of a daughter, Evelyn Charlotte, born May 16, 2022, in Memphis, Tennessee.

Grandparents are Jeff Pohlman (of blessed memory) and Robin Pohlman of Germantown, Tennessee, and Gene Fortney (of blessed memory) and Brenda Fortney of Bartlett, Tennessee. Great-grandparents are Alfred Greenberg (of blessed memory) and Diane Mednikow Greenberg of Germantown, Tennessee, and Charlotte Hubbard (of blessed memory) and Milton Hubbard of Bartlett, Tennessee. HW

Pohlman

Andrew and Heather Pohlman are the proud parents of a daughter Sophie Jean, born February 28, 2023, in Frisco, Texas.

Grandparents are Jeff Pohlman (of blessed memory) and Robin Pohlman of Germantown, Tennessee, and Arvin and Tammy Zwick of Overland Park, Kansas. Great-grandparents are Alfred Greenberg (of blessed memory) Diane Mednikow Greenberg of Germantown, Tennessee, and Shirley Steinberg (of blessed memory) and Harold Steinberg of Overland Park, Kansas. HW



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Neo-Nazis...

(Continued From Page 1)

Minadeo II on charges of disorderly conduct and public disturbance after he continued shouting obscenities through a bullhorn despite being ordered to stop. He was released the following day.

Last Saturday, a group of about 150 residents of Macon gathered outside the Reform synagogue, and in a show of solidarity and support, they held hands and surrounded Temple Beth Israel. "It was an impromptu gathering," recounted Bahar, who said she was deeply moved. "We did not organize it."

The GDL group showed up once again and tried to hold its own demonstration, which was soon broken up by police. From there, the group headed to the Atlanta suburb of Marietta, where it held another demonstration, brandishing Nazi flags, outside the local Chabad synagogue.

This [July 2], Temple Beth Israel will be hosting an interfaith service for religious congregations in the area under the title of "Praying for Love and Unity."

"I know it sounds cheesy, but my goal is radical empathy, and this is to show that there are many, many more people who support the Jewish community here and engage with us in a loving way than the very small group of people who have only anger and fear in their hearts."

The event, organized by Bahar, will be attended by municipal and state of-

Temple Beth Israel has a membership of 86 families, the rabbi said, "mostly grannies and grandpas, who make mean potlucks and amazing cookies, many of them fifth, sixth, seventh generation members of this congregation - one family even eighth." HW

More about this on page 4.

Iraq 'Gradually Turning into a Source of Threat' to Israel



U.S. Army Soldiers, attached to Heavy Company, 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, take cover behind their vehicle as small-arms fire opens up in the distance in Mosul, Iraq, on Jan. 17, 2008. Credit: U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Kieran Cuddihy.

(JNS) – Last month, almost two years after the United States announced the end of combat missions in Iraq, the White House extended an emergency decree regarding the country due to what it called ongoing obstacles to its orderly reconstruction, peace and security.

The Biden administration said in its decree that "the development of political, administrative, and economic institutions in Iraq continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States."

There are growing signs, however, that Iraq is also gradually posing an unusual - and more geographically immediate - threat to Israel.

The Iranian-backed Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces, which recently threatened the 2,500 U.S. forces stationed in the country, are a member of the Iranian-backed radical axis, and cooperate with Hezbollah, as well as with Shi'ite

militias in Syria.

One PMF group, Golan Liberation Brigade, as its name suggests, was set up to fight Israel. Some of the Iraqi militias are also active in Syria, such as Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, which is activated by the Iranian Quds Force.

In 2019, international media reports said Israeli aircraft or drones struck PMF bases in Iraq – a report that, if true, would suggest that Iran has transferred weapons to Iraq for future use against

Danny (Dennis) Citrinowicz, a senior research fellow at the Tel Aviv-based Institute for National Security Studies, assessed that the significant threat to Israel stemming from Iraq involves armed unmanned aerial vehicles.

"In the past, there was a claim of an attempted UAV launch from Iraq at Israel during 'Operation Protective Edge' [in 2014, against Hamas in Gaza]," said Citrinowicz, who served for 25 years in a variety of command positions in the Israel Defense Forces' Military Intelligence Directorate.

He added that Shi'ite militias in Iraq have themselves said that they are building up UAV capabilities, noting that they attack American targets in Syria using UAVs on a regular basis.

Professor Eyal Zisser, vice rector of Tel Aviv University and chair in Contemporary History of the Middle East, told JNS that Iraq is "slowly turning into a source of threat."

He argued that since Hezbollah wants to maintain a quiet border with Israel, while in Syria the Assad regime, concerned about Israeli reprisals, does not wish to give Iran a free hand, Iraq becomes "a comfortable arena - from which one can fire missiles at Israel without entanglement, and without the finger of blame falling directly on Iran."

According to Zisser, the missile threat from Iraq is small, and can't be compared to that posed by Hezbollah's enormous arsenal. However, he said, any projectile fire out of Iraq "would create a lot of noise - including media [coverage] in Israel."

Citrinowicz noted that Iraqi militia leaders have stated - including during the recent May escalation between Israel and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, that "they would not hesitate to attack Israel," adding that it is clear that they are part of the Iran-backed axis, and part of the trend of unifying multiple arenas.

In light of their growing proximity to Hezbollah in recent years - particularly after the death of Quds Force Commander Qassem Soleimani in a January 2020 U.S. drone strike in Baghdad, Citrinowicz said it would be correct to assume that the threat from Iraq is taking shape, in practice, through the actions and declarations of the militia heads.

Zisser noted that in Iraq, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force is the organizer and funder of the Shi'ite militias, giving the elite extraterritorial Iranian force a significant role there.

At the same time, he added, Iraq has not yet fully fallen "into Iran's pocket, and there are various streams, including within the Shi'ite sect, some of which are hostile to Iran."

PMF militias are upset over what they see as Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani's cooperation with the United States, he said.

"Hence, the Iranian effort is first of all focused on the domestic Iraqi scene," he explained. "The moment that Iraq is in their pocket – and it's not certain that this will happen - then it would be easier for the Iranians to focus their efforts on Syria. But that isn't the current situation.

Citrinowicz said the Iraqi arena has a deep influence on eastern Syria, where Shi'ite militias have become the main military force active on the Syrian-Iraqi

The United States is facing a trap in Iraq, he said, since it "has to preserve its influence and work with Prime Minister Sudani – who is viewed negatively by the militias - and at the same time, the United States has to respond to every action by the militias, mainly in Syria. This is a very delicate balance, and it is expected to become even more delicate in future."

U.S. influence in Iraq places checks on the Iranians, and also forces them to focus on the U.S. presence there, he said, adding, however, that it is unclear what will happen after U.S. forces leave.

"Iraq is in a transitional phase, and it is worth monitoring developments there, because it can go back to being a threatening arena to Israel," he cautioned. HW

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'Most Frightening Thing I've Ever Seen,' GA Synagogue Congregant Says of Neo-Nazi Protest

(JNS) – Neo-Nazis protested outside two Georgia synagogues over Shabbat.

Last Friday night, some 15 protesters yelled antisemitic things outside Temple Beth Israel, a Reform congregation in Macon, Ga. The following day, about a dozen bore Nazi symbols outside the Chabad of Cobb County in East Cobb, Ga.

Worshippers were reportedly in synagogue while neo-Nazis gathered outside.

"This was the most frightening thing I've ever seen in my entire life," Stewart Levy, who is part of the Cobb County Chabad community, told WSB-TV.

"There is absolutely no place for this hate and antisemitism in our state. I share in the outrage over this shameful act and stand with Georgians everywhere in condemning it," Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp (R) tweeted. "We remain vigilant in the face of these disgusting acts of bigotry."

Per reports, the neo-Nazis were associated with the so-called Goyim Defense League, which is said to be behind the dissemination of many antisemitic flyers. The founder of the group was arrested at the Friday night protest after continuing to use a bullhorn after officers asked him to stop. He was released and was part of the Saturday protest too.

Sen. Jon Ossoff (D-Ga.), who is Jewish, stated, "Georgia's Jewish community will never be intimidated by antisemitism. Today, as symbols of genocide were paraded in front of synagogues, we continue to stand strong, proud and unbowed." **HW**

Ohio Police Receive a 'Judaism' 101' Course



Tri Delta Sundial at Miami University, May 2, 2022. Credit: Wikimedia Commons.

(JNS) – Rabbi Yossi Greenberg, director of Chabad at Miami University in Ohio, said of his 25 police pupils that "when they interact with the Jewish

community, they should understand a basic level of knowledge."

On June 6, alongside police chaplain Mendy Kalmanson, Greenberg taught a course to Ohio's Oxford Police Department and the Miami University Police Department about the core teachings of Judaism. Instruction also included potential police interactions related to Jewish Sabbath observance, which starts at sundown on Fridays and ends after sundown on Saturdays. That's when many synagogues hold services and other programs for individuals and families.

"Conversation flowed about what to look out for and how to be the best resource for the Jewish residents and students," Greenberg said of the class.

Greenberg had previously consulted with the Oxford police when they had questions on Judaism and proposed a course in 2022 in response to rising antisemitism

One officer, Lt. Lara Fening said of the rabbi: "He understands that we don't know, and he's very accommodating to our questions."

As a takeaway from the session, Fening described learning that she "could see situations on the Sabbath where they [Jews] would have limitations or restrictions." **HW**

Arrest Warrants for Four Tied to 1994 Buenos Aires Jewish Center Bombing

(JNS) – An Argentinian federal judge has called on Interpol to arrest four Lebanese men believed to be connected to a truck bomb that killed 85 people and injured more than 300 at the Buenos Aires AMIA Jewish community center on July 18, 1994.

The warrants were issued by Judge Daniel Rafecas, who sent an order last October for the arrest of an Iranian official alleged to be involved in the attack

"Regarding these individuals, there

are well-founded suspicions that they are collaborators or operational agents of the ... armed wing of Hezbollah," Rafecas wrote in a June 13 resolution, according to the Associated Press.

No one has been charged in the case. Argentine courts and others believe that Iran is behind the attack, but the Islamic regime denies involvement.

The four men are not believed to be directly responsible for the bombing but to have assisted in the terrorists' entry into the country. **HW**

Italy to Bar Soccer Players from Wearing No. 88, which has Coded Meaning for Neo-Nazis



Tomas Rincon wears jersey No. 88 for Torino FC during a Serie A match in Rome, Dec. 11, 2017. Credit: Paolo Bruno/Getty Images

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) – Soccer players in Italy will no longer be permitted to wear the number 88, which has a secret antisemitic meaning among neo-Nazis, thanks to a joint initiative announced last Tuesday between Italy's government and the Italian soccer federation.

The number 88 has been used by neo-Nazis as a coded antisemitic symbol meaning "Heil Hitler," as "h" is the eighth letter in the alphabet. In March, a fan of the Roman club S.S. Lazio was banned from the team's games for life after wearing a jersey with the number 88 and the name "Hitlerson."

As part of the new policy, officials are able to stop gameplay if they hear antisemitic chants or are made aware of antisemitic acts in the stands. Such behavior is somewhat commonplace

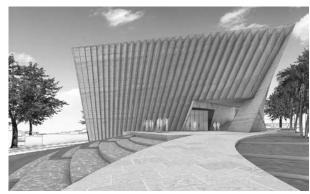
at soccer stadiums across Europe, and other teams and leagues in Germany and England have recently taken steps to stem antisemitism and protect Jewish fans.

The new initiative also includes a code of ethics in accordance with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, the global coalition based in Sweden that works to advance Holocaust awareness and education.

Italian Interior Minister called the new rule "an adequate and efficient response to intolerable prejudice that too often arises in our stadiums," according to the Associated Press.

According to "Sports Illustrated," two players in Italy's top league, Serie A, currently wear No. 88: Lazio's Toma Bašić and Atalanta's Mario Pašalić. **HW**

Cornerstone Laid for Einstein House at Hebrew University



Rendering of the Daniel Libeskinddesigned Einstein House. Credit: Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

(JNS) – Israeli President Isaac Herzog last Tuesday participated in a cornerstone-laying ceremony for an \$18 million building at the Hebrew University that will explore the legacy of Albert Einstein.

Einstein House, designed by architect Daniel Libeskind, is to be built adjacent to the school's campus in Jerusalem's Givat Ram neighborhood and feature exhibits displaying the 1921 Nobel laureate's personal documents and contributions to science.

One of the founders of the Hebrew University, the theoretical physicist bequeathed all of his writings and intellectual property to it. The Albert Einstein Archives at the Hebrew University contains some 55,000 filed documents.

"Right here, we are laying the foundations for a vital living archive of the writings of one of the greatest minds in the history of humanity," Herzog said at the groundbreaking ceremony.

"But we are also laying the foundations for a beautiful building designed by the architect Daniel Libeskind, for a legacy that goes far beyond any one person alone: This is the legacy of human curiosity – 'holy curiosity' as Einstein himself put it.

"Over the past century, the Hebrew University has blossomed into a worldclass institution that is at the forefront of global research and of contribution," Herzog said.

Hebrew University President Asher Cohen, Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Lion and Jose Mugrabi, a prominent art collector who helped fund the Einstein House along with the Israeli government, also participated in the ceremony.

"We look forward to seeing the wonders that this House will bring to Israel and the rest of the world in the future. Einstein House represents so much more than the physical space. It will be a center of science and technology for our students, and we are convinced that this place will create a new generation of Einsteins," Mugrabi said. HW

Estate Planning How Special Needs Trusts Work To Protect Loved Ones With Special Needs

By Benjamin I. Wachtel, Esq. and David L. Mendelson, Esq.

Proper care for a loved one with special needs (for estate planning purposes, "special needs" means an individual with a disability - physical or mental typically, said individual receives governmental benefits) involves not only addressing daily needs but also planning for the special needs individual's longterm financial security. Special needs trusts (SNTs) have emerged as a vital tool to protect and manage the assets of individuals with disabilities. Importantly, SNTs enable special needs individuals to protect and maintain eligibility for governmental benefits and simultaneously ensure a comfortable, financially stable and fulfilling life.

A special needs trust is a legal arrangement or estate plan that allows special needs individuals to benefit from assets while preserving eligibility for government assistance programs such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid. While there are different structures for special needs trusts, these trusts are often established by a grantor/ trustor (individual who sets up the trust), who is typically a parent, grandparent or guardian of the special needs individual, and is managed by a named trustee, who carries out the terms of the trust and oversees the distribution of funds for the benefit of the individual with special needs. The trustee's primary responsibility in the SNT is to supplement rather than replace government benefits for the special needs individual and ensure trust assets are used to improve the special needs beneficiary's quality of life.

Government programs like SSI and Medicaid have very strict or limited income and asset thresholds. Income here means the monthly threshold or amount of income the special needs individual may receive and still maintain eligibility for the government benefit. Assets here means the threshold or total value of assets (houses, cars, bank accounts, etc..) the special needs individual may own in his or her name and still maintain eligibility for the government benefit.



Thus, one of the primary advantages of special needs trusts is the SNT's ability to preserve eligibility for government benefits for the individual with special needs. Without a SNT in place, if an individual with special needs receives an inheritance or gift, for example, he or she could lose and forfeit eligibility for government programs upon receipt of the gift or inheritance. However, assets held in a special needs trust, on the other hand, are not counted as personal resources, which enables the beneficiary with special needs to continue receiving essential governmental assistance. This preservation of benefits ensures access to medical care, housing support, and other vital services that may be otherwise unaffordable.

Special needs trusts offer flexibility in how funds are used to enhance the beneficiary with special needs' quality of life. The trustee can allocate trust assets to cover a wide range of expenses, including medical and dental care, therapy, education, assistive technology, recreational activities, and even vacations. This flexibility allows individuals with disabilities to experience a more fulfilling life by accessing resources that promote their well-being, independence, and personal development. The SNT can also be designed to ensure continuity of care, providing a long-term plan for the beneficiary's needs even after the grantor's passing. The bottom line is that preparing on the front end with a special needs trust often makes all the difference for the special needs individual in receiving funds or assets and maintaining governmental benefits. HW

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is Monday-Friday at 11:30 a.m. All programs start at 12:15 p.m.

Monday July 10

"Staying on your Feet"

With speaker Kristin Miller from Mid-South Aging Consultants

Wednesday July 12 Super Bingo!

A new batch of fun prizes. Come join us and have some fun with your peers. No Charge!

Monday July 17

"Life Without the Temple" with speaker Rabbi Ian Lichter, Senior Rabbi of Baron Hirsch Congregation. Reservations are not required.

Wednesday July 19

"Torah and the 54th Anniversary of the Moon Landing" with Rabbi Akiva Males, Senior Rabbi of Young Israel of Memphis. This is a really cool topic. Please come join us.

Please come join us from Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch at 11:30 a.m., from the Kitchens at the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. The cost is only \$2.00 for seniors. Reservations are required the day before by 1 p.m. by contacting Adult Services Coordinator Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org, or calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. **HW**

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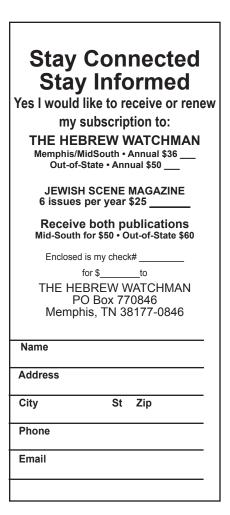
Thursday, July 13 at 7 p.m. Social Security Information with Lawson S. Arney, CFP®

You've paid into Social Security for decades. Don't you want to maximize what you get back? Social Security is the foundation of retirement income, yet its complex rules and various claiming options can make choosing your best strategy a challenging proposition that deserves a well thought out plan. Join Lawson Arney, CFP® for a compli-



mentary seminar on ways to help maximize your Social Security benefits. Free refreshments available. Seating is limited so please call the MJCC front desk at 901-761-0810 to reserve your spot. HW







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Russian Court Rejects Appeal to Release U.S. Journalist Evan Gershkovich



U.S. journalist Evan Gershkovich stands inside a defendants' cage at Moscow City Court on June 22, 2023. Credit: NATALIA KOLESNIKOVA/AFP via Getty Images

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – A Moscow court has upheld an extended detention for "Wall Street Journal" reporter Evan Gershkovich, who must remain in jail on espionage charges until at least August 30.

Gershkovich, 31, is the son of Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union and has been in Russia's Lefortovo prison since late March. He is being held on an allegation of espionage that he, the "Wall Street Journal" and the U.S. government deny.

Russia's Federal Security Service requested to extend the reporter's detention, which was scheduled to end on May 29. The extended detention was then appealed by Gershkovich's legal team. Last Thursday, that appeal was rejected, and he will remain in jail at least until August.

"We were extremely disappointed by the denial of his appeal," said U.S. Ambassador to Russia Lynne Tracy, who was at the Moscow courthouse last Thursday. "The charges against him are baseless," she said. "He is an innocent journalist who was carrying out journalistic activities and has been wrongfully detained."

Gershkovich's parents, Ella Milman and Mikhail Gershkovich, who left the Soviet Union in 1979, were in the court-

room last Thursday morning. They had previously visited him in May.

"I am just happy to see him, and very, very sad to leave him," Milman told the "Wall Street Journal" after the hearing concluded last Thursday. "The heavy feeling is not leaving me."

If convicted, Gershkovich could face up to 20 years in a Russian penal colony.

Danielle Gershkovich, Evan's sister, remained in the U.S. and watched the decision unfold over video.

"There's always a little bit of hope when these things happen, but we understand we're in it for the long haul," Danielle Gershkovich told the "Wall Street Journal." "We're all living in a place where we have to adjust our expectations, sometimes moment to moment."

Evan Gershkovich is the first American journalist arrested in Russia on espionage charges since the end of the Cold War. His detainment has attracted interest and support from Jews and Jewish organizations around the world who have pushed for his release, sometimes invoking symbols of freedom for Soviet Jews used in the 1960s. Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a unanimous resolution calling on Russia to free the journalist. **HW**

Golan Druze Protest Turns Violent



Police stand guard during a protest against the construction of a wind farm near Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights, June 21, 2023. Credit: Ayal Margolin/Flash90.

(JNS) – A dozen police officers were injured and three protesters were hurt, two seriously, during a demonstration last Wednesday by the Druze community in the Golan Heights against the construction of a wind farm.

The injured protesters were transported to Ziv Medical Center in Tzfat; one man in his 20s suffered from a gunshot wound.

The Israel Police said that 12 of its officers were injured in the clashes without giving details on their condition.

The police said one officer was forced to shoot "after he felt an immediate danger to his life, when a group of masked men approached him with stones in their possession. One of them who ran towards him with what was apparently a sharp object was slightly wounded in the leg by the shot."

It was the second consecutive day that thousands of people from Majdal Shams – the largest of the four Druze towns in the Golan Heights – protested against Israel's largest renewable energy project.

The protesters threw stones, fireworks and Molotov cocktails at officers, the police said. Several roads in the area were blocked as authorities dealt with the demonstrations.

Police said that in the afternoon, dozens of Druze attempted to take over a police point at a restaurant using live fire, throwing stones and shooting fireworks. The police provided visual evidence of the incident.

"It is important to note that any act of violence against police officers is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The Israel Police is committed to ensuring the safety of all citizens and will take all necessary measures to maintain order and security," police said in a statement.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last Wednesday met with Shaykh Mowafaq Tarif, the spiritual leader of the Druze community in Israel. They were joined by Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) Director Ronen Bar and other senior officials.

"I view with great severity and concern what is happening at the moment on the Golan Heights," Netanyahu said.

The Enlight Renewable Energy company announced the groundbreaking for the \$350 million Genesis Wind project in June, which will include 38 advanced wind turbines upon completion. The Druze community sees the project as an encroachment on their land.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich in a statement said that the government was moving ahead with a plan to address the concerns of the Druze villagers. He added, however, that there was no justification for violence and that the wind farm project went through the proper legal procedures to be built. HW



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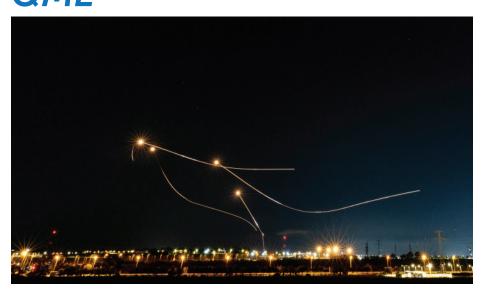
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The Depletion of U.S. Munitions Stockpile Harms Israel's QME



Iron dome anti-missile system fires interception missiles as rockets fired from the Gaza Strip to Israel, on Aug. 7, 2022. Credit: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90.

By Israel Kasnett

(JNS) – Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Washington has contributed in excess of \$39.7 billion in security assistance to Kyiv.

However, faced with the pressing issue of ammunition scarcity in Ukraine, the U.S. has stepped up to replenish its depleted arsenal by dipping into its own overseas munitions reserves. Interestingly, one of these stockpiles is located in Israel.

The War Reserve Stockpile Ammunition-Israel, or WRSA-I, was, until recently, relatively secret. The cache of ammunition and supplies is intended to serve as a readily accessible reserve – an insurance policy – should Israel face a shortage during a crisis, such as occurred during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

The Jewish Institute for National Security of America (JINSA), a Washington, D.C.-based organization, has made replenishing and modernizing the WR-SA-I one of its highest policy priorities.

Blaise Misztal, VP of policy at JIN-SA, told JNS that the organization "is working to educate Washington about three rather obscure facts: the existence of WRSA-I; its current, depleted state; and the importance of U.S.-supplied precision-guided munitions (PGMs) to Israel's ability to deter Iran and its proxies and, therefore by extension, to U.S. security interests as well."

The latest iteration of this year's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) proposed by the House incorporates a crucial provision within which the Pentagon is mandated to submit a comprehensive report to Congress. Included in this report are the present inventory of PGMs within WRSA-I, the Defense Department's strategy for replenishing the stockpile after the transfer of munitions to Ukraine and an evaluation of whether the current stockpile aligns with the legal obligation to uphold Israel's Qualitative Military Edge (QME) as safeguarded by U.S. law.

Preserving Israel's QME stands as a crucial goal within the U.S.-Israel relationship. The overarching objective is to safeguard Israel's QME by ensuring it possesses the necessary resources to effectively tackle any future security threats. However, the transfer of the munitions stockpile to Ukraine has resulted in a diminished WRSA-I inventory for Israel.

JINSA has learned that the remaining weapons stored there are virtually useless for Israel's needs, and since 2018 has been the only organization to call for WRSA-I to be modernized and replenished with much-needed PGMs to help counter threats from Iran and/or Hezbollah.

American officials have stated repeatedly how WRSA-I helps ensure the Jewish state's ability to defend itself. Yet, according to JINSA, "the stockpile is falling dangerously short of meeting its stated purpose. Of particular concern is the stock of PGMs, especially Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) tail kits to convert unguided bombs. Israel will need abundant PGMs to compensate for limited defensive capabilities and prevail in an expected major war with Tehran and its proxies, all while minimizing collateral damage to civilians."

U.S. Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-Calif.) has demonstrated unwavering dedication to this matter.

"Israel is one of the United States' closest allies and is essential to defending both regional security and upholding our shared democratic values," he told JNS.

Panetta said the U.S. "has a responsibility to ensure Israel has access to weapons capable of defending and deterring security threats posed by Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran and other regional malign actors."

"To help Israel better meet those threats," he said, "the U.S. must replenish our joint WRSA-I stockpile."

Panetta told JNS his amendment to the FY24 NDAA "would require the Secretary of Defense to submit a report to the House Armed Services Committee detailing the status of the United States' strategic stockpiles and any plan to replenish these critical supplies, that are necessary to maintain Israel's qualitative military edge and the region's security."

According to Misztal, the Pentagon's announcement that it was withdrawing 155mm artillery shells from WRSA-I to give to Ukraine "suddenly focused attention on the fact that this stockpile exists."

The recent news coverage regarding the transfer of ammunition from WR-SA-I to Ukraine failed to adequately emphasize the dual nature of this stockpile. It not only serves as a reserve for American use but also as a contingency resource available to Israel in times of emergency, said Misztal.

Leveraging its extensive relationships with defense establishments in both the United States and Israel, JINSA has effectively advocated for the replenishment of the stockpile with PGMs as a means to enhance Israeli security.

A depleted WRSA-I potentially places Israel in a vulnerable position should a conflict arise unexpectedly, underscoring the significance of carefully considering the implications of such actions.

For example, as a "New York Times" article in January noted, according to a Congressional Research Service report released in February 2022, Israel was given permission to use the stockpile in

the past – once during its war with Hezbollah in the summer of 2006, and again during operations against Hamas in the Gaza Strip in 2014.

Israel has refocused in the last two years on expanding its military capabilities, particularly vis-à-vis Iran. The U.S. decision to withdraw munitions from WRSA-I to assist Ukraine has created a new opportunity to make the case in Washington for filling the stockpile with modern weapons that boost Israel's capabilities.

Misztal explained that if the current legislative language regarding WRSA-I in the House version of the NDAA becomes part of the final bill, the Pentagon will have a legal obligation to produce a report to Congress.

However, while this legislation serves as a means for Congress to express its concern and interest in the matter, it does not independently compel the Department of Defense to replenish the munitions taken from the Israeli stockpile.

The forthcoming reports from the Pentagon will provide vital information about the contents of the stockpile, any planned additions, and will enable advocates for Israel to advocate for greater congressional guidance on maintaining the crucial support provided by WR-SA-I to both U.S. and Israeli security.

The bill requires that reports be submitted by December 1.

According to Misztal, "The most important thing right now is building support for the WRSA-I language in the NDAA, to make sure that it is included in the final version of the bill."

Michael Makovsky, president and CEO of JINSA, has also noted that "the stockpile is falling dangerously short of meeting its stated purpose. Israel will need abundant PGMs to compensate for limited defensive capabilities and prevail in an expected major war with Tehran and its proxies, all while minimizing collateral damage to civilians."

He said that JINSA is "making progress on this critical issue, with strong support from both Democrats and Republicans."

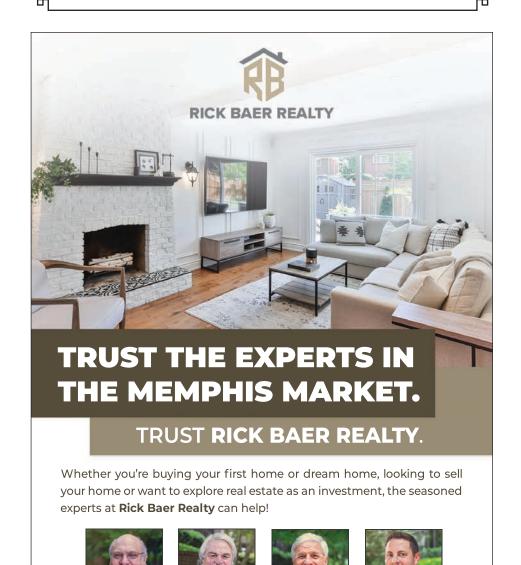
"We applaud Congressman Panetta, with whom we've worked closely on this issue, for introducing this important provision into the NDAA, and we thank House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers (R-Ala.) for his support," said Makovsky.

"Much work remains to be done before this provision becomes law, but JINSA will continue to work with our partners in Congress so this and other JINSA recommendations are included in this year's NDAA." HW

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Rescuing America's Safety Net

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors

Questions for Mike? You can reach him at 901.761.8151 or Michael.Stein@WellsFargoAdvisors.com • fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael-stein

A March 2023 survey found that more than 90% of Americans worry about the Social Security program, and about half of those said they worry a great deal. A separate survey the same month found that more than 80% of Americans worry Medicare will not be able to provide the same level of benefits in the future.

These concerns are well-founded, because both of these programs – the cornerstones of "America's Safety Net" – face serious fiscal challenges that require Congressional action. And the longer Congress waits to act, the more extreme the solutions will have to be. Even so, it's important to keep in mind that neither of these programs is in danger of collapsing completely. The question is what type of changes will be required to rescue them.

Demographic Dilemma

The fundamental problem facing both programs is the aging of the American population. Today's workers pay taxes to fund benefits received by today's retirees, and with lower birth rates and longer life spans, there are fewer workers paying into the programs and more retirees receiving benefits for a longer period of time. In 1960, there were 5.1 workers for each Social Security beneficiary; in 2023 there are 2.7, dropping steadily to 2.2 by 2045.³

Dwindling Trust Funds

WELLS

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Payroll taxes from today's workers, along with income taxes on Social Security benefits, go into interest-bearing trust funds. During times when payroll taxes and other income exceeded benefit payments, these funds built up reserve

assets. But now the reserves are being depleted as they supplement payroll taxes and other income to meet scheduled benefit payments.

Each year, the Trustees of the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds provide detailed reports to Congress that track the programs' current financial condition and projected financial outlook. These reports have warned for years that the trust funds would be depleted in the not-too-distant future, and the most recent reports, both released on March 31, 2023, suggest that the future may arrive even sooner than expected.

Social Security Outlook

Social Security consists of two programs, each with its own trust fund. Retired workers and their families and survivors receive monthly benefits under the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) program; disabled workers and their families receive monthly benefits under the Disability Insurance (DI) program.

The OASI Trust Fund reserves are projected to be depleted in 2033, one year earlier than in last year's report, at which time incoming revenue would pay only 77% of scheduled benefits. Reserves in the much smaller DI Trust Fund, which is on stronger footing, are not projected to be depleted during the 75-year period ending 2097.

Under current law, these two trust funds cannot be combined, but the Trustees also provide an estimate for the combined program, referred to as OASDI. This would extend full benefits another year, to 2034, at which time, in-

coming revenue would pay only 80% of scheduled benefits.⁵

Put simply, the current outlook suggests that Social Security beneficiaries might face a benefit cut of 23% in a decade unless Congress takes action.

Medicare Outlook

Medicare also has two trust funds. The Hospital Insurance (HI) Trust Fund pays for inpatient and hospital care under Medicare Part A. The Supplementary Medical Insurance (SMI) Trust Fund comprises two accounts: one for Medicare Part B physician and outpatient costs and the other for Medicare Part D prescription drug costs.

The HI trust fund reserves are projected to be depleted in 2031. This is three years later than in last year's report, due to lower costs and higher payroll taxes, but still more imminent than the Social Security shortfall. At that time, revenue would pay only 89% of the program's costs 6

The SMI Trust Fund accounts for Medicare Parts B and D are expected to have sufficient funding because they are automatically balanced through premiums and revenue from the federal government's general fund, which provides about 75% of costs, a major outlay from the federal budget.⁷

Possible Fixes

The Trustees of both programs continue to urge Congress to address these financial shortfalls soon, so that solutions will be less drastic and may be implemented gradually.

Any permanent fix to Social Security would likely require a combination of changes, including some of these.8

- Raise the Social Security payroll tax rate (currently 12.4%, half paid by the employee and half by the employer). An immediate and permanent payroll tax increase to 15.84% would be necessary to address the long-range revenue shortfall (or to 16.55% if the increase started in 2034).9
- Raise the ceiling on wages subject to Social Security payroll taxes (\$160,200 in 2023)
- Raise the full retirement age (currently 67 for anyone born in 1960 or later).
- Change the benefit calculation formula.
- Use a different index to calculate the annual cost-of-living adjustment.
- Tax a higher percentage of benefits for higher-income beneficiaries.

Options for reducing the Medicare shortfall include a combination of spending cuts and tax increases. These are some possibilities.¹⁰

• Improve the payment system for

Medicare Advantage Plans (private plans that receive partial funding from Medicare).

- Modernize cost sharing between Medicare and Medigap (supplementary insurance).
- Increase the Medicare payroll tax rate (currently 2.9%, shared equally between employee and employer, with an additional 0.9% on income above \$200,000 for single filers and \$250,000 for joint filers).¹¹
- Broaden the tax base subject to Medicare payroll taxes (there is no income ceiling for Medicare payroll taxes, but certain income is currently not subject to the tax).

Based on past changes to these programs, it's likely that any future changes would primarily affect future beneficiaries and have a relatively small effect on those already receiving benefits. While neither Social Security nor Medicare is in danger of disappearing, it would be wise to maintain a strong retirement savings strategy to prepare for potential changes to America's Safety Net.

All projections are based on current conditions, subject to change, and may not come to pass.

- 1) Gallup, April 6, 2023
- 2) Kaiser Family Foundation, March 2023
- 3–5, 9) 2023 Social Security Trustees Report
- 6–7, 11) 2023 Medicare Trustees Report
- 8) Social Security Administration, February 21, 2023
- 10) Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, June 16, 2022

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Mike Stein
Managing Director – Investments
6075 Poplar Ave
Memphis, TN 38119
Direct: (901) 761-8151
michael.stein@wellsfargoadvisors.com
ttps://home.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael.stein

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7 Ukrainian Teens Will Get a Break from War at a Jewish Sports Camp in California this Summer



Clockwise from top left: Leonid Bereslavich, Mark Sagan, Alexey Kulik, Nikita Novitsky, Ilya Miroshnichenko, Veniamin Rudman and Artur Dotsenko. Credit: Courtesy of Makkabi Ukraine

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) – Almost a year and a half into Russia's invasion of Ukraine, 13-year-old Artur Dotsenko has become accustomed to sleepless nights. With all the bombings and shellings in his hometown of Kyiv, Dotsenko said he gets about 2-3 hours of sleep each night.

For a few weeks this summer, Dotsenko will leave war-torn Ukraine for the Pacific coast, where he and six other Ukrainian teens will spend four weeks at Ramah Sports Academy, the Jewish sports camp operated by Ramah of Northern California.

The trip was orchestrated by Maccabi USA, the American arm of the Maccabi World Union, the Jewish sports organization that puts on the Maccabiah Games in Israel.

After the war broke out last year, Arnie Fielkow, the former head of New Orleans' Jewish Federation and now a vice president at Maccabi USA, approached Maccabi's CEO, Marshall Einhorn, to

suggest ways the organization could support Ukrainian Jewry.

One of his ideas was to partner with the Ramah system to offer a Jewish summer camp experience to Ukrainian teens.

"This initiative is really important to me personally and professionally, and to my entire family," said Fielkow, who adopted two daughters from Ukraine in 2007. "The Ukrainian people are fighting so courageously, and it's important as Americans that we do everything we can to help."

Fielkow said "it took literally one phone call" with Amy Skopp Cooper, the Ramah system's national director, to put the wheels in motion. The sports camp, which opened five years ago in Connecticut, announced earlier this year that it was moving to California and joining forces with Ramah of Northern California.

"We're excited about the opportunity to bring together high-level athletes from Jewish communities all over the world, and we are hopeful that a few weeks on the shores of the Pacific Ocean will be enjoyable for these campers who have survived circumstances unimaginable to many of our campers," Alex Rubin, Ramah Sports Academy's assistant director, said in a Maccabi USA statement announcing the partnership.

The teens range from 13 to 17 years old, plus an 18-year-old counselor who will be accompanying them. Fielkow held a fundraiser in New Orleans to raise money to cover travel expenses, and he said Ramah was waiving their camp tuition.

"For these children, who mainly are now in Ukraine, it's really a good opportunity to have a good rest, to see another country, to speak with teens the same age as they are," said Galina Pechaiko, who lives in Kyiv and serves as Makkabi Ukraine's deputy director.

During a group Zoom with JTA, several of the teens shared their experiences during the 16-month war, and what they're looking forward to during their time at camp – which for many of them included working on their English, relaxing and playing sports.

Ilya Miroshnichenko, 18, will be the group's counselor. He's originally from Kharkov, and has been living in Bratislava, Slovakia, with his parents for the past year. Miroshnichenko studied at a Jewish school in Ukraine and has been involved in the Makkabi organization.

Miroshnichenko recalled being home alone when the war broke out in February 2022. His parents were on a trip, so his relatives came to be with him. Of the many ways life changed with Russia's invasion, one stood out to him: how difficult it became to get groceries.

Nikita Novitsky is also from Kharkov, where he spent four years studying at a yeshiva. Novitsky, 17, said he and his family left Kharkov because of the destruction at the city's center. He's been living in Budapest, Hungary, for a year, while taking online classes from Kharkov.

"I want to get new experiences and meet new people," Novitsky told JTA about the upcoming camp experience. "I want to improve my English and sports life. In my mind, it will be a good experience, this program."

Novitsky runs, swims and plays soccer. He said he hopes to improve his form while at camp.

Many of the teens already have deep Makkabi connections. Leonid Bereslavich, a 15-year-old from Zaporozhye, participated in the Maccabiah Games last summer in Israel. Alexey Kulik, 13, is the son of the chairman of the Makkabi chapter in Nikolaev. And Dotsenko said his parents, who are involved in humanitarian aid efforts, met at a Makkabi seminar

According to Einhorn, Makkabi Ukraine is also partnering with the JCC Association of North America to send delegations to the JCC Maccabi Games in Israel in July, and to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in August.

As the teens prepare to fly to San Francisco next week, Pechaiko said she is still shocked they pulled it off.

The U.S. Embassy in Kyiv is not currently providing consular support, so Pechaiko said they had to get visas for the teens through the embassy in Bratislava. And they are flying out of Vienna, with a layover in Frankfurt.

"It's proof that one Jew can help another one," Pechaiko said. "We're not even talking about the time when we are happy, it's also when we have a big problem, a war. We have got a helping hand from Maccabi USA in this situation." **HW**

Revenge Attacks after Eli Shooting

(JNS) – Injuries were reported as Jewish residents of Judea and Samaria rioted in Arab towns on last Tuesday night seeking revenge for the murders of four Israelis near Eli earlier in the day.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said that 36 injuries were reported in Huwara, outside Nablus (Shechem). The vigilantes also attacked the villages of Al-Lubban ash-Sharqiya, Qabalan and Beitin, all located slightly farther south of Nablus, and at several junctions.

Nine homes, a gas station, several businesses, 11 cars and agricultural land (burned) were all reported damaged.

"Dozens of Israelis gathered at the entrance to Beit Furik [5 miles southeast of Nablus] trying to enter the village. The IDF force that arrived at the scene dispersed the gathering, using means to disperse demonstrations and firing into the air. The incident will be investigated," an army spokesman said.

The rioting came after four Israelis were killed and four others were wounded in a shooting attack near the town of Eli in the Binyamin region of Samaria. The two Hamas members who carried out the attack were killed.

Hundreds of Israeli residents of Judea and Samaria also headed to the Evyatar outpost overnight in response to the shooting, urging the government to approve a permanent community there.

Community leaders at Evyatar for the protest included Religious Zionism Knesset member Zvi Sukkot, Samaria Regional Council head Yossi Dagan and Hundreds of Jews head to the Evyatar outpost in response to terrorist attack that killed four people.

Samaria Chief Rabbi Elyakim Levanon. "We've returned home to Evyatar," said Sukkot, one of Evyatar's founders. "Terrorists should know that any attack will only deepen the Jewish hold on the territory. Two years after being evacuated, the time has come for us to return forever." **HW**

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The Inheritance Sweepstakes



Editor's note:
This story is being
reprinted in memory
of Ted Roberts in
appreciation of his
longtime service
as a newspaper
columnist.

Ted Roberts

Sometimes I think Moses, the law-giver, was also the world's first literary agent and had a sequel in mind when he gave us our Humash. There are so many uncompleted stories. So many vignettes where a bare narrative skips all the day-to-day details. How much did Jacob pay for Joseph's splendid many-colored coat? Did he pay full price? Why would he choose a blue, red, orange striped coat when the other kids wore drab brown herdsman's robes? No wonder they threw Joseph in a pit.

Is it true that Potiphar's wife was a lousy cook who hoped Joseph was easily satisfied with Take-out?

We have no details on Haman's home life. Was he basically a good man tormented by heartburn?

Did Dinah, Jacob's only daughter, ever find a husband? And if so, can you imagine the astonishment of the groom's family when they found out about a wagon full of brothers? "We'll need a herd of roasted camels for the rehearsal dinner – and tell 'em NOT to bring any second cousins."

We need a little more corroborative detail. Take Jacob's household for example. Thirteen kids, four wives, forty goats, couple hundred sheep. What a house you'd need for that gang. And how was a wandering shepherd gonna get an FHA loan? Can you imagine his difficulty in filling out the form;

Occupation (please print): Shepherd

Salary: All the mutton you can eat, fresh air and sunshine, and one zoftik daughter every 7 years.

Last employer: Laban

Period of Performance: Nissan 1700 BC to Hadar 1686

Reason for Departure: Incompatibility with employer (a Goniff who slipped me the wrong daughter behind the wedding veil).

Letter of Recommendation: No way! Can you see the loan officer sitting across the desk from Jacob, staring at his customer like he's got on a mask and a knife poised to strike. "Lemme see if I got this straight. You wanna buy a 6500-square-foot tent – stream in the front yard and date palms in the back – and you wanna put down three bowls of mutton stew and finance a 99.99% loan?" Well, Holy writ is not at all spe-

cific on this point, but our patriarch overcame the problem.

Now, it's 15 years later and the family's living in a Marriott size tent. Whatta scene; thirteen kids that have to be dressed and breakfasted every morning for school. Plus four wives doing their hair.

Or maybe it's mealtime; twelve sons, one daughter, four mamas, one papa sitting around the breakfast table.

Jacob: "Levi, pass the lamb roast."

Levi: "Papa, I'm down here at the end of the table. That's Reuben you're talking to."

Jacob: "Right. Naphtali, how 'bout the pickled cucumbers?"

Naphtali: "Uh, Pop, you're looking at Dan. I'm the one with the curly hair."

Rachel: "Yeah, if you didn't dress our kids in identical brown shepherd robes, except for Joe, you might get their names straight."

Jacob: "Dinah, you in the dress, please pass the lamb and pickles."

And the bickering got worse when the famine hit and the lamb and cucumber turned into bone soup and onion grass from the field.

Amidst this fraternal chaos there's four wives maneuvering for position on the slippery slopes of power and Jacob's legacy. Think about it. It's several millennia before lawyers and probate courts, and safety deposit boxes. And the basic question is whose son will triumph. The Inheritance Sweepstakes is off and running. Violence is the nego-

was hated by Jacob; because Laben (and maybe desire) blinded him to the fact that the lady in the marriage bed was not Rachel, his true love, but Leah. So, mercifully the Lord "opens her womb" and six strong sons march out – so to speak. Leah reveals her insecurity by naming her firstborn, Simon; meaning "the Lord has looked upon my affliction for now my husband will love me." The last one she calls Zebbulon, "now will my husband dwell with me since I've born him six sons."

Rachel is watching this procession of

tiating tool of choice. A stone released

from a sling has more authority than a

guaranty deed. And remember, Jacob

himself was a practitioner of the fine art

of inheritance. That's why he's got an

embarrassing wealth of kids and wives

and sheep while Esau is a ridge runner

in the Judean hills collecting treyf rab-

A further complication to the do-

mestic situation is the urge within the

female heart – still a universal mystery

undeciphered by physiologists, psychol-

ogists, lovers, or husbands – to exalt its

offspring, at any price. So here are four

women competing for survival and the

The Book tells us that Leah, at times,

bits for his stew pot.

birthright.

sons with dark musing about her own contribution. Oh well, she thinks, why not my maid servant. That's ALMOST me. And sure enough, Bilhah does the job and manufactures two stalwart sons. The first case on record of a surrogate mother.

This limited success on Rachel's part gets Leah's competitive juices boiling. But evidently she's tired – so noting Rachel's stratagem – she sends her hand maiden, Zilpah, into the Tent of Procreation. And her proxy emerges with Gad and Asher, which means – paraphrased loosely – "Happy am I, I've now hooked Jacob." Rachel finished up the scoring with Joseph ("add to me another son") and finally Benjamin. They would all have hated Planned Parenthood.

The syndicated humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the roof, has appeared in newspapers around the U.S., on National Public Radio, and numerous websites. **HW**

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ISRAEL INSIGHTS Winds of Peace, or Hardball Diplomacy?

By Howard Weisband

On June 27, Prime Minister Netanyahu's spokesman announced an upcoming though as yet undated plan for the PM to visit China, based on an invitation from Beijing earlier this year. This occurs on the heels of a Chinese Foreign Ministry announcement in April that it is ready to broker peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

One backdrop is that it was not long ago, in March 2023, that China motivated a peace deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

A second backdrop is that China is looking to be more influential in the Middle East, while the United States has seemingly chosen to reduce its presence and influence.

And there is a third backdrop: the Biden Administration has yet to invite the Prime Minister within his current term to the White House, ostensibly due to settlement policies and judicial reform proposals of his right-wing Israeli Government.

Meanwhile, it is reported that President Herzog is being invited to Washington to address a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress next month and meet with President Biden.

It must be remembered that the Israel Presidency, while a respected and often an influential position, is not a part of Government.

The diplomatic slap to the Prime Minister is apparent. So much so that immediately, on June 28, the "Jerusalem Post" reported in an exclusive interview that the retired, venerable ADL leader Abe Foxman slammed Biden for "boycotting" Netanyahu. Foxman explained that Biden not meeting with Netanyahu "also sends the wrong message [not only] to Israel's enemies, but also to its friends and allies." He stressed that "when friends disagree, they need to, and should meet, speak to each other. This lack of invitation has become a politicized issue."

Furthermore, in the interview Foxman refers to "an element of hypocrisy" given that leaders of India and Jordan, referred to as "flawed democracies," were recently welcomed in the White House.

The events as outlined lead to the question: Is Bibi by announcing a forth-coming visit to China playing diplomatic hardball with Biden, or is he truly seeking a peace possibility that begins

in Beijing... or both?

Bibi is certainly known as a consummate politician, even a "hardball" politician. Foxman is correct that this has become a politicized issue. Everybody has different political priorities, domestically and internationally. Geopolitics and realpolitik, even hardball, are no doubt at play.

However, in my opinion, Bibi, even within his hardball diplomacy, is also trying to cautiously open a current slit in a diplomatic window into a much wider opening toward Middle East peace.

Not necessarily with the Palestinians, however. He knows the history, and as the son of the late Prof. Benzion Netanyahu, he respects scholarly assessments. Bibi may well have read a classic article "The Palestinians and the PLO" (read PA, Palestinian Authority) by the late, great historian Prof. Bernard Lewis in Commentary in January 1975. Lewis' assessment and insights conclude in part and buttress the opinions of others:

"The real obstacle to Israel's negotiating with the PLO is not that they are terrorists, nor is it their method, unusual even among terrorists, of choosing the sites and objects of their endeavors. It

is the simple fact that the PLO refuses to recognize the existence of Israel, and makes little serious attempt to disguise its intention of using any West Bank state of which it may obtain control as a first step toward the realization of its aim – the liquidation of Israel.... No Israeli government could conceivably negotiate on this basis."

On the other hand, it is commonly known that the Prime Minister would like to add a normalization agreement with Saudi Arabia to the previous achievements of the Abraham Accords, as the next step toward Middle East peace.

The Saudis – via China – could be Bibi's key, realpolitik target in traveling to Beijing.

Howard Weisband served as Assistant Executive Director (1975-77) and Executive Director (1977-84) of the Memphis Jewish Federation. Following Aliyah with his family in 1986, he served as Secretary General of the Jewish Agency for Israel through 1997, and then in other senior professional positions in Israel. Now retired, he and Kayla live in Jerusalem. He can be reached at hweisband@gmail.com HW

Congressional Bill to Renew U.S.-Israel Development Program, Expand Accords



Representative Lois Frankel By Mike Wagenheim

(JNS) – Reps. Lois Frankel (D-Fla.) and Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) introduced legislation on June 7 to extend and increase U.S.-Israeli international development cooperation.

H.R.3907, the United States-Israel International Development Cooperation Act of 2023, reauthorizes and expands a program that has enabled the United States and Israel – through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Israeli Agency for International Development and Cooperation (MASHAV), respectively – to engage in sustainability projects in developing countries.

In 2019, USAID and MASHAV signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on global development cooperation. This bill fulfills that MoU and enables the two nations to continue that work, but the program must be reauthorized.

The new bill seeks to expand the program so that additional countries, specifically those tied to the Abraham Accords, can join the projects.

The bill also seeks to strengthen Israel's relationship with the existing Abraham Accords signers, Frankle told JNS.

"It's a very common-sense principle. The more people work together and get to know each other, the better the opportunity to like each other and to help each other, especially economically," she said. "This kind of legislation, and these efforts, not only help developing countries with some issues, but it fosters goodwill."

Through the program, Israel can highlight its export of life-saving tech-

nologies – in health care, agriculture and energy and water storage – as the Jewish state faces a barrage of criticism, Frankel told JNS.

The partnership has already brought smart agriculture and greenhouse technology to Albania and expanded technical knowledge of drip irrigation in Guatemalan coffee production, according to Frankel

She told JNS that the bill also helps recognize 75 years of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

"We are partnering together with our resources, and especially with Israel's technology and advancements, to help underdeveloped countries, in areas such as agriculture and energy and water storage," she said.

The Frankel-Wilson bill requires a report from the U.S. State Department and USAID on how it can expand such efforts, but Frankel told JNS that Foggy Bottom and the Biden administration "are in constant talks and negotiations with other countries to try to foster this relationship."

"The United States and Israel have unique capabilities to confront shared threats and opportunities. As our two countries celebrate 75 years of an unbreakable relationship, this bill promotes strengthened cross-sector collaboration that will truly unleash the full potential of our two countries," Wilson said.

"Countries around the world will benefit from the result of development cooperation," he added.

In the meantime, good projects are underway and others will be expanded, and Congress is authorizing and funding the work and sending it to the State Department, said Frankel.

Frankel told JNS that she and Wilson are working on securing \$2 million for the program this year and hope to double that amount in 2024.

The American Jewish Committee, AIPAC, Hadassah, the Anti-Defamation League and Jewish Federations of North America have endorsed the bill. **HW**

Roseanne Barr Addresses Controversy: 'Of Course I Don't Believe that the Holocaust Never Happened'



Barr addressed the viral controversy on an episode of her podcast, 'The Roseanne Barr Show.' Credit: James Devaney/Getty Images

By Rebecca Salzhauer

This originally appeared on "Forward," reprinted with permission.

Roseanne Barr addressed her controversial comments about the Holocaust, clarifying that the viral clip was part of a joke taken out of context. She made the explanation last Thursday on her podcast, "The Roseanne Barr Show."

Barr came under fire earlier last week after a clip of her appearance on "This Past Weekend," a podcast hosted by comedian Theo Von, went viral on social media last Tuesday. In the clip, which began near the end of a conversation about censorship and the 2020 election, Barr said that "Nobody died in the Holocaust, either. That's the truth." She continued: "It should happen –

6 million Jews should die right now because they cause all the problems in the world, but it never happened."

Barr, who is Jewish, said last Thursday that it was a joke, and refuted the claim that she had denied the Holocaust. "I was raised in an apartment building with Holocaust survivors, so of course I don't believe that the Holocaust never happened," she said. "I actually am a religious Jew, so why don't you go [f***] yourself."

Barr's son, Jake Petland, who also produces her podcast, framed Barr's five-minute public statement in light of the online controversy. "We felt like we should come and address it, so this is my mother addressing it," he said.

Petland saw the podcast as a platform for the actress and comedian to speak her

"mind for the first time," he said. "They always take the joke out of context and paint you however they want, and then they never let you explain the joke."

Barr responded: "Well, there's no freedom of speech in America, and there hasn't been for a very, very long time."

She noted her particular concern for free speech in comedy, likening her recent controversy to those of past comedians. "It's what they did to Lenny Bruce, too," Barr said. "They canceled and arrested and ruined his life because he was talking about the Catholic Church."

Barr continued, arguing that on social media, people would twist Henny Youngman's "Take my wife, please" joke into the comedian's endorsement of human trafficking.

"We are under such heavy Satanic mind control in this country," Barr said. "I'm always trying to break through to get a little God in there."

Barr's original comments about the Holocaust occurred as part of a two-and-a-half-hour interview, in which she also said that Jews run Hollywood like "an organized crime network."

Many people rushed to Barr's defense, assuming it was satire. But Jonathan Greenblatt, head of the Anti-Defamation League, wrote on Twitter that argument made for a difference without a distinction: "Sarcasm or not, Roseanne Barr's comments about Jews and the Holocaust are reprehensible and irresponsible. This isn't funny." HW

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Alan Arkin, Jewish Actor with Uncommon Versatility, Dies at 89



Alan Arkin seen in 1975. Credit: Wikimedia Commons

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

(JTA) – Alan Arkin knew he was going to be an actor from the age of five.

"Every film I saw, every play, every piece of music fed an unquenchable need to turn myself into something other than what I was," he wrote in his 2011 memoir, "An Improvised Life."

What he was was the son of Ukrainian and German Jewish immigrants in Brooklyn, where he was born in 1934. But over the course of a long and unusually peripatetic career, he managed to turn himself into a conflicted Russian submarine officer ("The Russians Are Coming," 1966), a struggling Puerto Rican widower ("Popi," 1969) and a mild-mannered Manhattan dentist recruited into an unlikely espionage scheme by his daughter's future father-in-law ("The

In-Laws," 1979).

His versatility was honed by his study of the "Stanislavski" method taught by Benjamin Zemach, an American modern-dance pioneer who specialized in Jewish themes, and his stint as an early member of the Second City improvisational comedy troupe in the 1960s.

"It's improvisation, and some are terrific, and some are terrible," he told an interviewer about his days with Second City. "The ability to fail was an extraordinary privilege and gift. ... You don't learn anything without failing."

Arkin, who became the sixth-oldest winner of the best supporting actor Oscar in 2007 for his part in "Little Miss Sunshine," died last Thursday at his home in San Marcos, Calif. He was 89.

Over a nearly seven-decade career, he imbued comic roles with pathos and serious roles with a touch of sardonic humor. He was working until nearly the end of his life, co-starring with Michael Douglas from 2018 to 2019 in Chuck Lorre's Netflix comedy series "The Kominsky Method." That role, as agent Norman Newlander, earned him two consecutive Emmy Award nominations.

His other well-known roles included a paranoid salesman in the film adaptation of David Mamet's "Glengarry Glen Ross" (1992) and a deaf-mute in the Southern Gothic drama "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter" (1968). He also played Yossarian, the reluctant airman in "Catch-22," the 1970 film adaptation of the Joseph Heller novel. Although the character was technically Armenian, most critics agreed that he was a "cod-

ed" Jew.

Arkin also voiced J.D. Salinger, or at least a character purporting to be the famously reclusive Jewish writer, in the cult Netflix animated series, "BoJack Horseman."

He made his directorial debut with the darkly comic "Little Murders" (1971), based on the stage play by Jewish writer and cartoonist Jules Feiffer. In 1975, Arkin directed the Broadway production of Neil Simon's "The Sunshine Boys," a comedy about elderly enemies based on the Jewish vaudeville team Smith and Dale.

Arkin was the son of David I. Arkin, a painter and writer, and Beatrice Wortis, a teacher. He wrote that he grew up in a Jewish family with "no emphasis on religion." The family moved to Los Angeles when Alan was 11; his parents were accused of being communists during the Red Scare" of the 1950s and struggled for work. He attended Los Angeles State College and Bennington College.

Arkin won a Tony for best featured actor in 1963 when he appeared on Broadway in "Enter Laughing," a comedy based on an autobiographical novel by the Jewish comedian, writer and director Carl Reiner.

Arkin made his film debut – and received his first Academy Award nomination – opposite Reiner in "The Russians Are Coming, the Russians Are Coming," about a Soviet sub that runs aground off New England. The phrase he teaches his comrades – "Emergency! Everybody to get from street!" – became a catchphrase.

Thirteen years later, "The In-Laws" would spawn another catchphrase, after Arkin and his co-star Peter Falk avoid a hail of bullets by running zig-zag and yelling "Serpentine!"

In 1987, he starred in the television film "Escape from Sobibor," portraying Leon Felhendler, a Polish-Jewish resistance fighter who organized the 1943 prisoner uprising at the Sobibor extermination camp. The role earned Arkin nominations for an Emmy Award and a Golden Globe award for best supporting actor.

In "Little Miss Sunshine" (2006) he played the cranky, vulgar grandfather to a little girl who dreams, improbably, of winning a beauty pageant. Arkin's character spends hours working on her dance routine with her in the independent comedy, which was a surprise hit.

On receiving his Academy Award for the role in 2007, Arkin said: "More than anything, I'm deeply moved by the open-hearted appreciation our small film has received, which in these fragmented times speaks so openly of the possibility of innocence, growth and connection."

Arkin was also an accomplished folk singer, forming a group, The Tarriers, that had a modest 1956 hit with a version of "The Banana Boat Song," a traditional Jamaican calypso folk song that Harry Belafonte would make more famous.

Arkin was married three times. He had three sons, all actors: Adam Arkin, Matthew Arkin and Anthony (Tony) Dana Arkin. **HW**



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