

DON'T MISS AN ISSUE
SUBSCRIPTION FORM ON PAGE 11

THE Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

HEBREWWATCHMAN.COM 23 AV, 5783 AUGUST 10, 2023 VOL. 101, NO. 46

Security Measures Credited with Saving Lives at Margolin Hebrew Academy

On Monday, July 31, 2023, at 12:14 p.m., a subject arrived at Margolin Hebrew Academy-Feinstone Yeshiva of the South (MHA-FYOS) property on White Station Road and approached the front door with a gun in his hand. After failing to gain entry to the school, he walked down the side of the school where he encountered a contract worker with whom he had a brief confrontation. The subject fired two shots from the gun while retreating from this worker. He then fired two shots returned to his vehicle and left the property firing an additional two shots towards the front office. He was shot after police approached him nearby, Memphis Police and Jewish security officials said.

The school is still on summer break, with the first day of classes for all students set for Aug. 17. But there were school personnel including construction workers present during the shooting, and the building immediately went into lockdown, according to Michael Masters, CEO of the Secure Community Network. All schools in the Memphis-Shelby County Schools district were also put on a precautionary lockdown, which was lifted at 2 p.m. Throughout the day, MHA-FYOS Executive Director Brandy Flack and Regional Security Advisor Amanda Braswell worked with multiple law enforcement agencies to piece together the details of the incident.

MHA-FYOS, which serves students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade, sent a statement to its community following the shooting. “We are pleased to reassure you that no one was hurt in any way, and our robust security measures did their job in protecting the school, as well as quickly and effectively leading police to the subject.”

Police officials also said during a press conference that the school’s security measures and protocols had averted tragedy. “Thankfully, that school had a great safety procedure and process in place and avoided anyone being harmed or injured at that scene,” said Don Crow, an Assistant Police Chief.

“It’s another reminder that we’re not

going to choose the time and place of the next incident, but we can choose our preparation, and today that preparation paid off,” added Masters.

In the aftermath, MHA-FYOS Administrators shared that they are reviewing their security protocol with local law enforcement and security advisors and will make any changes or modifications necessary based on their assessments. Also, the school has shared mental health resources with families and will partner with Chai Lifeline, an internationally recognized organization that supports families and communities through crises, to conduct a virtual training for faculty during the upcoming teacher in-service. [HW](#)

Proposed Slashes to U.S. Security-Grant Program Cause Concern Across Aisle



Nathan Diamant, the Orthodox Union’s executive director of public policy, speaks alongside Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer at a New York City press conference calling for an increase in funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to \$360 million, so more synagogues, other houses of worship and nonprofits at risk of attack can improve building security, Jan. 26, 2022. Credit: Orthodox Union

By Bradley Martin

(JNS) – In the current fiscal year, \$305 million is available through the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, for “target hardening and other physical security enhancements and activities to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of terrorist attack.”

The current U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee’s Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Bill proposal would trim that by \$18 million – to \$287 million. This proposal from the committee, chaired by Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), president pro tempore, is drawing criticism from Jewish organizations.

Elana Broitman, senior vice president of public affairs at the Jewish Federations of North America, told JNS that

the \$305 million in funding only met 42% of the nation’s security needs.

She told JNS that the Federations are “disappointed” by the proposed cuts from the Homeland Security Subcommittee’s proposed cuts to the “vital” security program, “particularly as antisemitic attacks and other faith-motivated hate crimes are at an alarming high.”

The proposed \$287 million is just about three-quarters of the \$360 million listed in the Biden administration’s budget and the White House’s national strategy to counter antisemitism. “We are grateful that the House has included an increase to \$315 million in its appropriation bill, and we urge Congress to pass a funding level at least at this level for this program that is critical to the safety of our communities,” Broitman said.

Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), who

chairs the subcommittee, declined to comment on the proposed cut. A congressional aide to the senator, who declined to be named, said in a statement to JNS that Murphy supports the \$360 million, but “due to the reduction in our topline spending numbers, we proposed even, across the board cuts in all FEMA funding.”

“This includes reductions in direct response funding, assistance to firefighters, port security grants and flood mitigation, among others,” the aide said. “This was not unique to the homeland security bill; other spending bills also saw cuts.”

JNS asked if Murphy disputes the claim from Jewish Federations that the cuts would result in insufficient funding to keep Americans safe. The aide said the senator’s office “cannot confirm the accuracy of the figure related to security needs due to a lack of available data.”

“The senator will work to get additional funding for the program as part of negotiations on the final appropriations bill,” the aide added.

Sen. Katie Britt (R-Ala.), ranking member of the subcommittee, told JNS that she supports funding the grant program in light of rising antisemitism. “Antisemitism has no place in our nation,” she said. “I support robust funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.”

An aide, who also declined to be named, to Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.) told JNS that the senator doesn’t agree with the cut, saying he has supported the grant program for years and “will continue to fight for more resources.”

None of the other seven subcommittee members – three Democrats and four Republicans – responded to multiple JNS queries. Murray is also a member of the subcommittee.

‘There is a great demand for these resources’

Other Jewish advocacy groups also voiced displeasure with the proposed cut. Nathan Diamant, executive director of the Orthodox Union Advocacy Center, sent out an action alert last Wednesday urging members to contact their elected senators to oppose the cut.

“We’re going to be fighting over the next few weeks to make sure there isn’t a cut,” he told JNS. “There is a great demand for these resources not only in the Jewish community but other faith communities as well.”

Diamant praised Britt’s support of continued funding for the program. “This was a good statement on her part,” he said. “My hope is that we can work with her not only to avoid a cut but also to secure increased funding for the NSGP.”

Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and national director of the Anti-Defamation League, told JNS that he is “deeply disappointed” in the cut after the House Homeland Security Appropriations Bill recommending funding at \$315 million.

“These grants are critical to the safety and security of not only the Jewish community, but nonprofits and religious institutions around the country,” he said.

B’nai B’rith International is “deeply concerned about efforts to reduce funding for the crucial Nonprofit Security Grant Program,” Daniel Mariaschin, CEO of the nonprofit, told JNS.

“We worry for the safety of our community as antisemitism, including threats and attacks on Jewish institutions, is surging and Jews remain by far the most highly targeted religious group among hate crime victims,” he said. “We urge Congress to continue robust funding for this vital program.” [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, August 14
Field Trip to Shelby Farms
At 4,500 acres, Shelby Farms Park is one of the largest urban parks in the country. Shelby Farms Park features more than 40 miles of trails, both paved and unpaved, that are popular for walking, biking, running and hiking. The senior bus will drive around the park and get a good look at this local wonder. Weather permitting, we will stop at one of the picnic areas and have a special dessert treat. The only charge is \$2 for the round-trip bus. Reservations are required since the bus only holds 14 people. Please call the front desk at 901-761-0810.

Wednesday, August 16
Big Monthly Luncheon at 12 p.m.
The August Monthly Luncheon will feature pianist, Tim Stanek. Tim plays jazz, ragtime, country, classical and boogie-woogie piano as well as arrangements of popular tunes from the 30s and 40s. A native Memphian, Tim graduated from the University of Memphis Jazz Piano Performance Program in 2011 and began performing at various venues, including retirement communities, as a solo pianist. Tim’s repertoire stems from audience member’s requests. Al-

You may also join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch from the kitchens at Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required the day before by 1 p.m. by contacting Adult Services Coordinator Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220, stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org or by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. [HW](#)

though Tim does not sing in his performances, he encourages the audience to sing along, hum, or tap on the table with their fingers! Tim is furnished through the help of Creative Aging! Thanks to Hope Hospice and Palliative Care for sponsoring this month’s luncheon. Come enjoy this terrific pianist and enjoy a good kosher lunch all for \$5! The luncheon and Tim Stanek start at noon on the August 16. Reservations can be made by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810 or emailing Steve Kaplan at stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org.



Tim Stanek

Charges ‘Reminiscent’ of Nazi Germany, Trump Campaign Claims

(JNS) – Former U.S. President Donald Trump’s 2024 presidential campaign stated on Aug. 1 that his indictment that day on felony charges was “nothing more than the latest corrupt chapter in the continued pathetic attempt by the Biden Crime Family and their weaponized Department of Justice to interfere with the 2024 presidential election.” The campaign, which noted that Trump is the Republican frontrunner,

added that the charges, which it called “lawless,” are “reminiscent of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, the former Soviet Union and other authoritarian, dictatorial regimes.” The statement drew widespread criticism from Jewish organizations, some of which have been frequent critics of the former president and his policies and statements. “Early in the 2024 presidential cam-

THE Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

Established September, 1925
By Leo I. Goldberg (1902-1989)

MAILING ADDRESS
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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
Memphis and Mid-South \$36
Out-of-State \$50
Payable in Advance

Submissions
Send editorial submissions (calendar items, news releases, event photos, and letters to the editor) at least 9 days prior to publication date to info@hebrewwatchman.com

Advertising
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The Hebrew Watchman is a Member of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, and Jewish News Service

THE HEBREW WATCHMAN (USPS #807-360) is published weekly every Thursday for \$36 per year by JEWISH LIVING OF THE SOUTH, Inc. THE HEBREW WATCHMAN PO Box 770846 Memphis, TN 38177-0846 Periodical postage paid at Memphis, Tenn.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: THE HEBREW WATCHMAN PO Box 770846 Memphis, TN 38177-0846

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. August 11, 2023 / 24 Av, 57837:35 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. August 12, 2023 / 25 Av, 5783 8:32 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Re’eh

by never making a comparison like this again.” Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and national director of the Anti-Defamation League, wrote that “comparing this indictment to Nazi Germany in the 1930s is factually incorrect, completely inappropriate and flat out offensive. As we have said time and again, such comparisons have no place in politics and are shameful.” “Let’s be clear: The Holocaust was an unimaginable tragedy where Nazis and their collaborators committed genocide, murdering 6 million Jews,” wrote Sacha Roytman Dratwa, CEO of Combat Antisemitism Movement. “Nothing can compare to the magnitude of this dark chapter in history.” [HW](#)



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Federal Jury Returns Death-Penalty Verdict for Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooter

(JNS) – A Pittsburgh jury agreed unanimously last Wednesday that Robert Bowers, 50, should be put to death for killing 11 Jewish worshippers at Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha Synagogue in Pittsburgh on Oct. 27, 2018.

“As we collectively process the jury’s decision today, what should always be top of mind is the memory of the 11 people murdered in a synagogue while at prayer by a cold-blooded hater of Jews,” said the American Jewish Committee.

“Ultimately, what is of most significance is not how the shooter will spend the end of his life, but the fact that the U.S. government pursued this case with vigor and demonstrated that such crimes will not be countenanced, excused or minimized,” AJC added.

The Mallinger and Wedner families stated that “although we will never attain closure from the loss of our beloved Rose Mallinger, we now feel a measure of justice has been served.”

“This sentence is a testament to our justice system and a message to all that this type of heinous act will not be tolerated,” the families added.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh expressed gratitude to the prosecution for its “meticulous process to seek justice for the victims,” and to the jury for “their time and dedication in reaching this sentence.”

“This trial shows that our justice system can work by giving a voice to the

voiceless and by ensuring that we, as a society, can bring the perpetrator of this horrendous attack to account,” it stated.

“I hope that we can use this decision to start a new chapter that uplifts and protects our city’s Jewish community,” stated Ed Gainey, the mayor of Pittsburgh.

“But above all, I hope today’s decision provides a measure of peace for the friends and family of Bernice Simon, Sylvan Simon, Melvin Wax, Daniel Stein, Irving Younger, Rose Mallinger, Jerry Rabinowitz, Joyce Feinberg, Richard Gottfried, Cecil Rosenthal and David Rosenthal,” the mayor stated. “May their memories be a blessing today and every day. And may we continue to stand together as one Pittsburgh that’s stronger than hate.”

Erika Strassburger, a Pittsburgh City Council member who represents parts of the Squirrel Hill neighborhood where the shooting took place, said the trial has presented “a test of one’s stance on the death penalty for many in our community.”

“It is easier to say the state has no right to take life in the abstract than it is when the offender has taken the lives of those in your neighborhood, your faith congregation or your family,” she added. “We will never be able to reclaim the lives taken that day, but we will honor their memories, continue the long, uneven process of healing and resolve to fight hate in all its forms, wherever it lingers.” HW

Israeli Study Explains Delay in Tanning after Sun Exposure



Mezizim Beach in Tel Aviv, Oct. 17, 2022. Credit: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90.

(JNS) – Tel Aviv University researchers have proposed a new theory for why the body’s tanning process does not occur immediately after exposure to the sun’s rays, but only after a few hours or even days.

The study found that the body’s initial response to sun exposure is to prioritize repairing DNA damage in the skin cells, which inhibits the mechanism responsible for skin pigmentation, commonly known as tanning.

The research, published in the “Journal of Investigative Dermatology,” was led by doctoral student Nadav Elkoshi and Professor Carmit Levy of the Department of Human Molecular Genetics and Biochemistry at the university’s Faculty of Medicine, and in collaboration with scientists from Wolfson Medical Center in Holon, the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, the Uni-

versity of California and Paris-Saclay University.

“We have two mechanisms designed to protect the skin from exposure to dangerous UV radiation. The first mechanism repairs the DNA in the skin cells damaged by the radiation, while the second mechanism involves increased production of melanin, which darkens the skin in order to protect it from future exposure to radiation,” explained Elkoshi.

“It turns out that the mechanism that repairs our DNA takes precedence over all other systems in the cell, temporarily inhibiting the pigmentation mechanism. Only after the cells repair the genetic information to the best of their ability do they begin to produce the increased melanin,” he added.

To test their hypothesis, the researchers activated the DNA repair mechanism in both animal models and human skin tissues. In both, a tan developed even without any exposure to UV radiation, substantiating their findings.

“The genetic information must be protected from mutations, so this repair mechanism takes precedence inside the cell during exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun,” said Levy.

“The DNA repair mechanism essentially tells all the other mechanisms in the cell, ‘Stop everything, and let me work in peace.’ One system effectively paralyzes the other, until the DNA correction reaches its peak, which occurs a few hours after the UV exposure. Only then does the pigment production mechanism get to work,” she added.

The researchers had previously shown that a protein called MITF, which is activated during exposure, is responsible for regulating these two mechanisms. In the current study, they identified another protein, called ATM, which plays a key role in DNA repair and activates one mechanism while disabling the other.

“This process likely harnesses the pigmentation mechanism’s components to maximize the chances of the cell surviving without mutations following radiation exposure,” said Levy.

The discovery will serve as a foundation for further research that could lead to innovative treatments providing maximum protection of the skin against radiation damage and, in the long run, may contribute to the prevention of skin cancer. HW

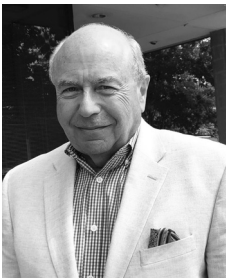
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Workers Circle Quits Conference of Presidents

By Menachem Wecker

(JNS) – The Workers Circle, a 122-year-old progressive Jewish non-profit known in earlier days as the Workmen’s Circle, notified the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations that it is resigning its membership, as of Aug. 2.

It cited the conference’s “failure to condemn the Israeli parliament’s recent steps to erode democracy in Israel” and its silence “in the face of the many attacks on democracy here in the United States.”

The conference, which has 50 other member organizations, was founded in 1956 and received a mandate from President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his administration to unify the U.S. Jewish community.

“For the past two-plus years, the conference has been drama-free as it relates to ideological and political disputes. We’ve been working together,” William Daroff, CEO of the conference, told JNS. “That’s a record that we’re proud of.”

In a letter to the conference, which was provided to JNS, Zeev Dagan and Ann Toback, Workers Circle president and CEO respectively, wrote that they disagreed with the group’s “reluctance to critique Israel, its equation of such critique as antisemitism, its adoption and promotion of the IHRA definition of antisemitism and its failure to condemn the Israeli parliament’s recent steps to erode democracy in Israel.”

“We are further dismayed at the silence of COP in the face of the many attacks on democracy here in the United States,” they added.

The two cited gerrymandered districts; “voter suppression laws obstructing the voting power of millions of Americans;” “right-wing justices” who “are rolling back critical rights;” and white nationalism.

“We cannot be part of an organization that stands idly by in the face of these existential crises,” they stated.

Rebecca Vilkomerson, executive director of the anti-Israel Jewish Voice for Peace, wished Workers Circle yasher koach (“congratulations”) on X, formerly Twitter. Workers Circle shared the post.

Not part of the mission

Morton Klein, national president of the Zionist Organization of America, told JNS that Workers Circle, formerly Workmen’s Circle, is an “extremist socialist group,” which “almost never attended Conference of Presidents meetings” and is now “absconding” from the conference “based on misinformation and falsehoods.”

“They claim the conference didn’t take a position against Israel’s judicial reforms, yet the COP expressed concerns about these reforms and refused to allow the judicial reform’s leaders to even speak to the COP while giving a podium to opposition leaders,” Klein said.

The Conference of Presidents “generally takes left-of-center positions, which the Workers Circle should favor,” Klein said.

The Workers Circle reveals that it doesn’t understand the mission of the Conference of Presidents when it criticizes it for not taking a position on domestic, U.S. policy, which has nothing to do with Jews or Israel, according to Klein.

“We only concern ourselves with Israeli Jewish issues,” he said. “These erroneous allegations by these extremist socialists make it likely they simply don’t want to continue paying the Conference of Presidents dues.”

Not a larger trend

Sheila Katz, CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women, told JNS that she respects the decision of Workers Circle and that the group will be missed.

“I don’t think it’s a larger trend at this point,” she told JNS.

It’s a good idea for organizations that engage with coalitions to regularly evaluate values, staff time, spending and impact, according to Katz. That meant for Workers Circle that the conference wasn’t a good fit, but for Katz’s organization, which she described as left-leaning, the conference has been very helpful, particularly when it comes to building relationships across the political aisle.

“We’ve found it to be a place of great value,” she said.

The National Council of Jewish Women supports the IHRA definition but tends to be more vocal than some other members of the conference on issues related to democracy in the United States and Israel.

“But we feel respected and heard and seen,” she said, of her group’s membership at the conference. When there have been issues of concern, and she has approached conference leaders quietly, the latter have been responsive, she told JNS.

Katz told JNS she “wouldn’t be upset” if the conference was more vocal about “broader issues of democracy in the U.S. and Israel,” but understands the conference’s purpose to be creating “the broadest tent possible.”

Part of the function of a coalition with diverse voices is that public messaging tends to be compromises. “It’s not meant to make us happy. It’s meant to make us happy enough,” she said. She added that the conference has been deliberate in recent years to elevate diverse voices and that she has been invited to speak at dozens of conference gatherings.

“I’m going to miss Workers Circle and respect their decision,” she said. “And I hope more choose to stay.”

Meeting absences

Daroff told JNS that the conference wishes “that Workers Circle would have expressed their concerns to us before resigning or even attended meetings where these issues were discussed.”

“We note dozens of meetings over the past two years in which Workers Circle chose not to participate, including our two national antisemitism convenings,” he said.

The conference disagrees with Workers Circle’s criticism, “including their characterization of the IHRA definition of antisemitism,” Daroff said. “One need only look at the last six months of vociferous criticism of the Israeli government’s policies, wherein no one is claiming that such criticism is antisemitic, to dispute the preposterous canard that the definition – and the conference, by extension – stifles legitimate criticism of Israel.”

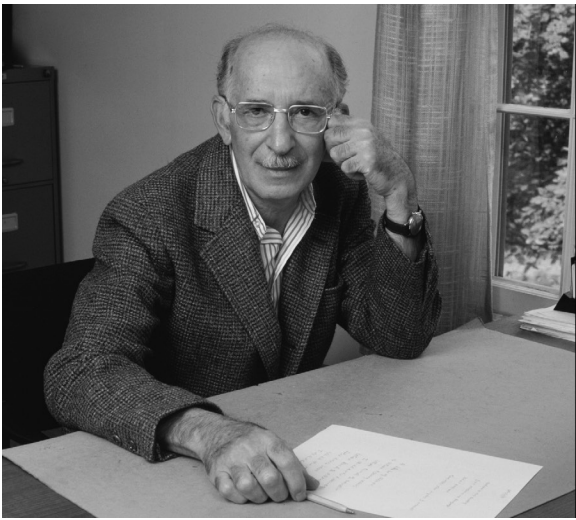
Daroff added that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s working definition of antisemitism has been adopted by 43 countries and hundreds of governments, nongovernmental organizations, sports teams and others.

“It was also adopted by 51 of our 53 Conference of Presidents member organizations, and nearly every representative organization of Jewish communities across the globe, indicating its widespread support by our community,” he said.

He added that the conference’s mandate pertains to the U.S.-Israel relationship and U.S. foreign policy that relates to Israel, as well as combatting antisemitism domestically and abroad.

The conference refrains from commenting on issues, such as religious pluralism in Israel, as part of an agreement between religious denominations. Domestic U.S. politics, like that cited in the letter, “is outside of the purview,” Daroff said. **HW**

South Carolina School District to Return Bernard Malamud’s ‘The Fixer’ to Shelves After Yearlong Removal



Bernard Malamud, author of “The Fixer,” a 1966 novel about an antisemitic blood libel. Credit: Left: Nancy R. Schiff/Getty Images

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – A school district in South Carolina will return Bernard Malamud’s “The Fixer,” a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about antisemitism, to shelves nearly a year after it was removed following a parental complaint.

The decision made last Wednesday by a review committee for the Beaufort County School District concludes another episode in which a Jewish book has gotten caught up in a national book-ban push by conservative parents.

The district pulled “The Fixer” and books from school libraries last fall, citing safety concerns for school employees. Malamud’s novel had been on a long list of nearly 100 books challenged by a

parent affiliated with Moms for Liberty, an activist group powering the book-ban movement. Booklooks.org, a ratings site often cited by Moms for Liberty chapters, says “The Fixer” contains “controversial religious and racial commentary; hate involving racism; violence including self harm; and profanity.”

The committee voted last Wednesday to return “The Fixer” and four other books to school library circulation, according to records of the meeting a district spokesperson shared with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. The school board must sign off on the decision, but the board has so far signed off on all of the committee’s recommendations.

(One other of the reviewed books was removed permanently, while another was placed back in the review process.)

“I’m relieved the committee found the text was appropriate and hope the board agrees to replace it back on the shelves,” Emily Mayer, a Jewish former Beaufort County educator who has been lobbying against the book bans, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

But, she added, “I don’t believe it should’ve been questioned to begin with, as I can’t imagine many students had checked ‘The Fixer’ out of the library as of late anyway. Allowing students access to texts that give them diverse perspectives of historical events helps us make sure history doesn’t repeat itself.”

“The Fixer” is not the first Jewish book to be removed following a parental challenge in schools, nor was it the first time such a removal was overturned. A school district in Texas quickly reversed a decision to remove an illustrated version of Anne Frank’s diary following public outcry last year, while a district in Missouri recently voted to keep Art Spiegelman’s Holocaust graphic memoir “Maus” in schools despite concerns that a state law could put educators in legal jeopardy for doing so.

But restorations are not always the outcome. That same illustrated edition of Frank’s diary, along with “Maus,” a Holocaust novel by Jodi Picoult and a children’s book about Purim featuring LGBTQ parents, have been permanent-

ly removed from other districts, in all cases because of concerns from parents or officials that their content was inappropriate for children.

“The Fixer” holds special historical significance in this battle, as the novel was also at the center of a 1982 Supreme Court case on the constitutionality of school library book bans. That case ended without a clear precedent from the court.

The novel fictionalizes a 1911 case of a Jewish laborer in Kyiv, Mendel Beilis, who was charged with murdering a Christian boy and using his blood to make matzah – a classic example of the blood libel, an antisemitic accusation that Jews murder children and use their blood for religious rituals.

Beilis’ own family has heavily criticized Malamud over the years for his portrayal of Mendel, even alleging that the author plagiarized his diaries. Yet grandson Jay Beilis, who has long campaigned against the book, told JTA, “I’m not going to celebrate the book being banned.”

Malamud himself, who won the Pulitzer Prize for “The Fixer” in 1967, commented on book bans in the lead-up to the 1982 Supreme Court case. “I wish those school board members and others who want to ban books would make an effort to understand them before shoving them off library shelves,” he said in 1976, a decade before his death. “If they read ‘The Fixer,’ they might be clamoring to have more students read it.” **HW**

Teen Discovers 1,500-Year-Old ‘Magic Mirror’ at Galilee Excavation



Youth leader Aviv Weizman holds the “magical mirror” plaque she discovered at Usha. Credit: Emil Aladjem/Israel Antiquities Authority.

By Pesach Benson

(JNS) – A teenage student uncovered a 1,500-year-old “magical mirror” from the Byzantine period last week during an Israel Antiquities Authority excavation at the ancient site of Usha in northern Israel.

Aviv Weizman, from Kiryat Motzkin, near Haifa, was one of 500 students participating in a week-long “Survival Course” that included a 56-mile trek and participation in excavations at archaeological sites around Israel that will be opened to the public in the future.

At the site, the 17-year-old Weizman noticed an unusual pottery shard “peeping out of the ground between the walls of a building,” the IAA said last Thursday. Weizman brought the shard to Dr. Einat Ambar-Armon, director of the Israel Antiquities Authority Northern Education Center, who recognized it as the plaque of a “magical mirror.”

“The fragment is part of a ‘magical mirror’ from the Byzantine period, the 4th–6th centuries C.E.,” said Navit Popovitch, the Antiquities Authority’s curator of the Classical periods.

“A glass mirror, for protection against the Evil Eye was placed in the middle of

the plaque,” Popovitch explained. “The idea was that the evil spirit, such as a demon, who looked in the mirror, would see his own reflection, and this would protect the owner of the mirror. Similar mirror plaques have been found in the past as funerary gifts in tombs, in order to protect the deceased in their journey to the world to come.”

Usha, a national park located near the kibbutz of the same name on the slopes of Mount Carmel in the Western Galilee, was where the Sanhedrin, a supreme judicial council of rabbinic sages, sat for brief periods following the Roman destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. A number of prominent Talmudic rabbis lived there.

Eli Eskosido, director of the Antiquities Authority, said that students also found pottery jars, coins, decorated stone fragments and even an aqueduct.

“History, usually taught in the classroom, comes to life from the ground. A pupil who uncovers a find in the course of an excavation will never forget the experience. There is no better way to attach the youth to the country and the heritage,” Eskosido said. **HW**

ESTATE PLANNING The Price of Neglecting an Estate Plan: Familial Strife

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

The adage goes something along the lines of “everything and everyone changes once money is involved.” Sadly, we have seen evidence of this concept time and time again when a loved one becomes incapacitated or dies without an effective plan in place. After the loss of a loved one, emotions run high and often get the better of children and grandchildren, which can lead to disputes, arguments and contests throughout the family surrounding inheritance and financial issues. Sometimes these disputes can even lead to violence, bullying, harassment, litigation or, perhaps worst of all, never reach a resolution. Unfortunately, many people underestimate the significance of estate planning, leading to a host of potential problems for their beneficiaries, including familial fights and strife.

LOSS OF A LOVED ONE

When a family member dies without a plan in place, disputes and contests often arise between the surviving family members – spouses, children, siblings, grandchildren. etc. For example, children will protest – “daddy told me I was get to the car” or “daddy told me he left you out of the will.” With no plan in place to direct distribution and inheritance, the family is left with chaos and confusion. In addition, when one passes away without a valid estate plan, assets are distributed according to the laws of intestacy. These laws vary from one jurisdiction to another and often do not align with the deceased’s actual wishes. As a result, beneficiaries may be subjected to lengthy legal battles over the rightful distribution of the estate, creating rifts and animosity among family members. Without a clear estate plan, there is ample room for interpretation and misunderstanding, leading to potential inheritance disputes. Greed, jealousy, and miscommunication can quickly



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spiral out of control when emotions run high during the grieving process. In the absence of an estate plan, family members may feel overlooked or slighted, leading to resentment and estrangement. An estate plan is an opportunity for individuals to express their appreciation and love for their family members, and its absence can leave emotional scars that may persist for generations.

LOVED ONE’S INCAPACITY

Families can experience disputes when a family member becomes incapacitated without a plan in place and is unable to manage his or her financial or medical decisions. In these situations, there may be inter-family disputes over who should act as a guardian or conservator over the incapacitated individual. This often leads to family rifts and results in litigation and legal battles. As we have noted in detail throughout previous articles, estate plans are not just about distributing assets as they also serve to establish a plan and decision makers for incapacity.

The bottom line is that by taking the couple of hours or so it takes to have an effective plan in place before incapacity or death, parents and grandparents can reduce, or prevent altogether, needless and predictable strife within the family. In fact, if properly constructed and drafted, an estate plan can achieve the opposite result and bring the family together while grieving over a loved one. **HW**

Pennsylvania’s Presidential Primary Conflicts with Passover

(JNS) – Pennsylvania State Rep. Jared Solomon doesn’t want to have “to choose between celebrating Passover and going to the polls.”

The Jewish Democrat, who represents Philadelphia in Pennsylvania’s General Assembly, is one of many prominent voices in the state pushing to change the date of next year’s presidential primary vote from April 23, the second day of the Jewish holiday.


The state’s governor, Josh Shapiro, who is Jewish and lives in the Philadelphia suburbs, is also supporting a different date.


Shapiro’s press secretary, Manual Bonder, said: “The governor supports moving the 2024 primary to ensure that observers of Passover have every opportunity to exercise their right to vote and looks forward to working with the General Assembly to change the date.”

Solomon sponsored legislation to change the primary date, stating that he hoped voting earlier in the year would increase Pennsylvania’s level of influence in the national primaries.

“I just have always wanted to bump it up so that we’re in the mix with other states,” he said. **HW**

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Ahead of New Netflix Show, Gal Gadot Shares Thoughts on Her Career



Israeli actress Gal Gadot, star and producer of the Netflix film “Red Notice.” Source: Screenshot.

By Yishai Kiczales

(JNS) – Gal Gadot’s first Hollywood audition was for the role of a James Bond girl in “Quantum of Solace,” alongside Daniel Craig. Although Gadot did not get the role, now, a decade and a half later, she finds herself playing a female version of 007 in “Heart of Stone” – a big-buck action thriller that will air on Netflix on August 11 (and which will be, if all goes as planned, the first installment of an ongoing series). The days when she was regarded as “the girl of” are long gone.

Today Gal is the main attraction. “It’s true,” the Israeli superstar told “Israel Hayom” in a special interview. “My first audition was for a James Bond girl. It’s funny how life turns around sometimes, isn’t it?” Even though she has already starred in several Hollywood blockbusters – including “Wonder Woman,” “Justice League,” “Red Notice” and “The Fast and The Furious 6” – the current movie is actually the first project that Gadot

and her husband, Yaron Varsano, developed and produced themselves with their own company, Pilot Wave. “It was an extremely empowering and educational experience,” she said. “It was something I always wanted to do. I’m a person who really likes to create. When Yaron, my husband and partner, and I saw ‘Wonder Woman’s box office success it gave us a boost of confidence and we said to ourselves, ‘Okay, we can do it. Let’s try. What have we got to lose?’ So we decided to work on our idea and joined Skydance, which is a very large production company. They have done all the Mission: Impossible movies, for example. Together we embarked on this journey. “We started working on this project in 2018, and it took us five or six years from the moment we thought up the idea until we could sit and talk about the movie.” In “Heart of Stone,” which also features the Irish hottie James Dornan (“Fifty Shades of Grey”) and Bollywood superstar Alia Bhatt, Gadot plays intelligence agent Rachel Stone, who is tasked by a peacekeeping operation known as “Charter.” Along with her partners, she is chasing after a deadly and all-powerful Artificial Intelligence tool that has fallen into the wrong hands. As you can guess, on the way there, Stone encounters plenty of dizzying and hair-raising confrontations with her opponents and countless opportunities to prove her physical and mental skills. “When we started producing the movie,” said Gadot, “there was already talk about AI, but we had no idea that by the time the film came out the matter would be so developed and pertinent.”

Q: I know you’ve already managed to make quite a few action films during your career, but it seems that this time you’ve really outdone yourself with stunts. Besides punches and shootings, you also race on motorcycles, jump from mountains and airplanes and much more, to such an extent that while watching the movie I was often reminded of Tom Cruise. A: Physically, it was undoubtedly the most intense film I’ve done. It’s funny, because every time I make a film like this, I say to myself, “Wow! That was the most physical and challenging film I’ve ever done!” Then the next film comes along and proves me wrong. So, yes, this movie undoubtedly raised the bar very much. When we started, we clearly knew that there was going to be lots and lots of action. But seriously, the director responsible for the stunts took us to literally very, very high levels.” Q: You said in past interviews that when it comes to your Hollywood career, you have taken the approach of “fake it till you make it.” Now that you’re going to have your own star on the Walk of Fame and you have so many high-budget films on the way, do you feel that you’ve “made it”? A: I don’t walk around thinking about this all the time, but it’s definitely a feeling that pops up every now and then. I don’t think it’s necessarily related to a star on the Walk of Fame or some other kind of validation, but with all the things I am experiencing, it’s very human and basic, at least for me, to ask myself, “How did all this happen to me? How do I actually do all this?” So yes, it still happens sometimes. Originally published by “Israel Hayom.” HW



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Antisemitic Incident Report: July 29-Aug. 4

By David Swindle

(JNS) – JNS publishes a weekly listing of antisemitic incidents recorded by Jewish, pro-Jewish and pro-Israel organizations, as well as international news media. By the Anti-Defamation League’s count, an average of seven instances of varying measure occur daily in the United States. (Dates refer to when the news was reported, not when the events took place.) News items detailing efforts to combat antisemitism and research illuminating anti-Jewish bigotry will also be included.

July 29

Los Angeles officers arrested Ryan Bradford after finding illegal guns and explosives (and Nazi paraphernalia) in his house. A Planet Fitness in Maine banned Christopher Pohlhaus, who leads a neo-Nazi group, for unspecified “clothing” – namely, for wearing a swastika necklace and other items with hateful messages. Last week, New York police officers arrested a man accused of vandalizing a non-Jewish yoga studio, including its mezuzah. Jewish House Democrats called to censure Rep. Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.) for “a clear pattern of engaging in antisemitism and extremism.”

July 30

Racist and antisemitic fliers were distributed in Marin County, near San Francisco, and spray-painted swastikas were found on cars in Orange County. In Texas, two police officers were fired for drawing a swastika during a meeting and sharing the image. The Campaign Against Antisemitism released a video countering an anti-Jewish video, posted (and then deleted) by someone with nearly 1.7 million YouTube subscribers.

July 31

Antisemitic fliers were distributed to numerous communities in Calaveras County near San Francisco. In England, someone painted a swastika on a sign at

a beach in the town of Morecambe. In Maine, swastikas were found at a park. In Wisconsin, a group of 10 masked neo-Nazis waving swastika flags disrupted an LGBTQ event and made death threats. Twitch got a “B” and Snapchat an “F” in an Anti-Defamation League grading of social-media platforms’ support for online victims of hate and harassment.

Aug. 1

Ryan Scott Bradford, a 34-year-old neo-Nazi, was arrested in California and faces 30 years on drug charges and for manufacturing “ghost” guns. Hate crimes against Jews are up slightly in Canada. A swastika was painted on a bus-stop advertisement, featuring a woman in a hijab and the text “Toronto for All.” Ye (Kanye West), who has promised Elon Musk not to post anything antisemitic after returning to X (Twitter), has so far only deleted all his prior posts. Zahra Billoo, executive director of the San Francisco CAIR chapter who has her own antisemitic history, condemned the antisemitic fliers in Marin County (see July 30). Gab won’t turn over information to the German government about a man who posted antisemitic memes, said its CEO. In Pensacola, Fla., police are investigating a spray-painted swastika on a building. (On July 28, someone threw bricks through a Chabad center synagogue window in Pensacola – the fourth antisemitic incident there in two weeks; one event there made a Combat Antisemitism Movement’s list of “most shocking” antisemitic incidents.)

Aug. 2

In the United Kingdom, a neo-Nazi was sentenced to three years after pleading guilty to distributing racist materials, and a man was convicted for sending antisemitic messages to a Jewish sports journalist. In West Virginia, a car was vandalized with a swastika and the message “Die Jew;” “This is just too

far. Me and my family, we aren’t even Jews. But we stand up for the Jewish community,” the car owner said. The FBI is investigating the four antisemitic crimes –six, including two acts of swastika graffiti – in recent weeks in Pensacola, Fla. (see July 29). The American neo-Nazi Robert Rundo was extradited to the United States (from Romania) to face charges from 2017.

Aug. 3

More than 800 antisemitic incidents were recorded in the first six months of 2023 in the United Kingdom, according to a report by the Community Security Trust. In California, antisemitic fliers were found on the Iron Horse Trail in Danville and graffiti at a San Francisco playground proclaimed an expletive against Jews with an X-ed out Star of

David. Gab users attacked the company’s CEO – who has made antisemitic statements – with antisemitic insults of their own. In Canada, someone scrawled swastikas at a school playground.

Aug. 4

Synagogues associated with the Bnei Menasseh – an Indian community that self-identifies as Jewish, and that the Israeli rabbinate recognizes with conversion – have been destroyed amid a recent wave of violence. The Chelsea Football Club has banned for life a fan, who sent antisemitic messages to a Jewish journalist (see Aug. 2). Eight members of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps delivered antisemitic speeches to Muslims in the United Kingdom.

Today in 1944, the Nazis captured Anne Frank. [HW](#)



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Transformative Tech: Will AI Upend the American Workforce?

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors
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A chatbot with uncanny human-like writing abilities has become the post-child for artificial intelligence (AI) since it was released in late 2022, inspiring new levels of attention, excitement, and concern about recent advances in this life-changing technology.

As the race among tech companies to monetize AI picks up speed, it’s worth considering how widespread adoption of AI-enabled technologies might affect the economic prospects of workers and businesses.

How AI Changes the Game

Artificial intelligence uses advanced algorithms to sort through data to detect and react to patterns. This allows AI-enabled applications to “learn” from experience. As artificial intelligence has advanced and joined robots, sensors, and other technologies, many tasks have already been automated in ways that were once unimaginable. Smartphone apps map out the fastest routes from place to place and connect drivers-for-hire to people who need a ride. In some cities, driverless cars are being tested on the roads.

Generative AI is powered by large language models, which are deep learning algorithms trained with immense data sets to recognize, summarize, translate, and generate text. These models can create original content in response to questions posed by users, and millions of people are already using them to help write essays, articles, and business communications, code software applications, conduct scientific research, and

even craft works of art such as illustrations, graphic designs, and music.¹

A known flaw of generative AI systems is that they sometimes “hallucinate,” or make up facts, when they can’t find enough relevant data to inform a reasonable response. They can also perpetuate the biases of their human developers. But experts say performance can improve as software is “trained” over time.²

Productivity Gains and Job Losses

Advances in technology and automation have been displacing workers for a long time, but the capabilities of generative AI suggest that many more human jobs – including those for skilled professionals – could be eliminated. And the people who still have their jobs will likely be expected to use AI-enabled tools to work faster and more efficiently.

When researchers used AI-powered models to assess the potential effects of generative AI on the workforce, they concluded that 80% of human workers would have at least 10% of their tasks affected, and 19% would have more than half of their tasks affected, which puts them at greater risk of being replaced.³ The long list of occupations that are most exposed to advances in AI includes many types of knowledge workers, such as postsecondary teachers, analysts, lawyers, mathematicians, accountants, human resources specialists, sales representatives, journalists, and other communications professionals.⁴

By one estimate, generative AI could complement two-thirds of jobs by helping

workers complete tasks in less time. Over the next decade, AI adoption could boost labor productivity by about 1.5% per year in the United States (to roughly double the current rate) and 1.4% globally. Productivity, or output per hour of work, is a good indicator of society’s prosperity and economic well-being. A surge in productivity of this magnitude would also improve employers’ profit margins and raise the world’s gross domestic product by 7% - or about \$7 trillion.⁵

However, if large-scale deployment of AI forces too many displaced workers into lower-paying jobs or out of the workforce completely, it could cause a downward spiral of reduced consumer spending that stifles economic growth.

It’s also possible that obsolete jobs will be replaced with different types of work, similar to the way agricultural workers shifted into manufacturing and other new industries in the past. If productivity gains bring widespread prosperity, it could raise living standards for society overall. Workers would have more free time and money to spend on leisure pursuits.

Implications for Investors

The expected cost savings and higher profit margins to be unlocked by productivity gains is one reason global corporate investment in AI was up from about \$80 billion in 2018 to nearly \$190 billion in 2022, even before generative AI burst onto the scene in 2023. Large tech companies are investing billions in their quest to integrate AI-enabled features into their existing products (such as social media platforms and search engines). Smaller start-ups are raising money from venture capitalists and working quickly to develop new business models.⁶

A speedy and successful implementation of AI systems could deliver a competitive advantage, and the prospects of companies that fail to deliver could suffer. Financial markets are likely to reward the winners and punish losers much like they did when other transformative technologies (such as personal computers, the internet, and smartphones) were invented.

Investors have been pouring money into the stocks of companies that they expect to profit from AI, which has helped drive the recent performance surge of large tech stocks.⁷ But even if the hype around AI turns out to be warranted, investors should keep in mind that new technology ventures tend to be risky. Some AI projects may turn out to be viable and profitable, but many others could fail.

How Dangerous Could It Be?

Some believe the rise of artificial intelligence will make it harder for people to make a living, leading to greater inequality and social unrest. But workforce disruption is not the only threat posed by AI. Another major concern is that bad actors could use deceptive images and video altered by AI (called deepfakes) to cause harm and/or spread misinformation, making it harder for the public to tell the difference between falsehoods and the truth. Even worse is the fear that AI might be used to design deadly weapons that fall into the wrong hands.

Industry leaders have testified before Congress about the potential benefits and dangers of AI, and lawmakers are currently discussing a framework for regulation, including the possibility of a new agency to monitor the industry, set up guardrails, and issue licenses for new AI platforms.⁸ With AI advancing at a dizzying pace, policymakers may need to act quickly to keep up. And tomorrow’s human workers may need to learn new skills more often – and be capable of adapting to change more quickly – than previous generations.

The return and principal value of stocks fluctuate with changes in market conditions. Shares, when sold, may be worth more or less than their original cost.

- 1, 7) The Wall Street Journal, May 9, 2023
- 2) Axios, May 22, 2023
- 3) University of Pennsylvania, March 2023
- 4) Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, and New York University, March 18, 2023
- 5) Bloomberg, March 27, 2023
- 6) Artificial Intelligence Index Report, Stanford University, 2023
- 8) The Wall Street Journal, May 18, 2023

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Demolition of Terrorists’ Homes All But Stopped in 2023



Palestinians inspect the home of terrorist Muhammad Dar Yusuf in Kobar, Samaria, which the IDF demolished on Aug. 28, 2018. Dar Yusuf murdered 31-year-old Yotam Ovadia in the town of Adam. Credit: Flash90

By Hanan Greenwood

(Israel Hayom via JNS) – The painstakingly long process for demolishing the homes of terrorists who carried out brutal and deadly terrorist attacks is demonstrated by the figures for 2023.

An “Israel Hayom” investigation carried out with Zionist watchdog Im Tirtzu reveals that since the beginning of 2023, 12 severe terror attacks were carried out in which 26 people were murdered. However, the home of only one of the 17 terrorists involved in those terrorist attacks, and whose identities are known for sure, was demolished.

Even though most of the terrorist attacks occurred six and seven months ago, the terrorists’ homes stand. This is despite the fact that demolishing terrorists’ homes is one of the significant deterrence measures in the hands of the IDF and the Ministry of Defense.

According to the analysis conducted by “Israel Hayom” and the Im Tirtzu movement’s research department, Israel’s security establishment issued demolition orders for only four homes of terrorists who murdered Israelis this year. But in actual fact, only the home of the terrorist who murdered Or Eshkar in Tel Aviv was demolished, and the home of the terrorist who murdered the Paley brothers and Alter Shlomo Lederman in a vehicular terror attack in the Ramot neighborhood in Jerusalem was sealed closed.

It also became clear that a demolition order was issued in February for the home of Alqam Khayri, the terrorist who murdered seven people in the Neve Yaakov neighborhood in Jerusalem, but the demolition did not come to fruition.

The family members of terrorists Abdel Fattah and Muhammad Kharousha, who killed Hallel and Yagel Yaniv in

Samaria, received a demolition order for their home in May, but their home has yet to be demolished. This is also the case regarding the home of the terrorist who murdered Elan Ganeles the same day in the Jordan Valley.

The homes of the terrorists who murdered the three Dee family members at Hamra Interchange had an engineering mapping done, but as was mentioned, four months after the horrific attack the homes remain intact.

Mapping without demolishing

The demolition of terrorists’ homes has been a subject of controversy for years. Although the security establishment believes that demolishing them is fundamental for deterrence and the prevention of further terrorist activity, they are torn down only when Israelis are murdered.

Therefore, an attack in which one Israeli is killed would eventually lead to the destruction of the terrorist’s home, while an attack like the one that occurred outside a mall in Ma’ale Adumim, in which a terrorist opened fire and wounded six Israelis, two critically, would not result in the destruction of the assailant’s home.

It should be noted that 10 terrorist homes have been demolished since the beginning of the year, the most recent of which was in Nablus (Shechem), a day after the attack at the gas station near Eli. However, these were homes of terrorists who carried out attacks in 2022, and their demolition was also significantly delayed.

So, the home demolished in Nablus belonged to the terrorist who murdered Givati Reconnaissance Unit soldier Ido Baruch in October 2022, meaning that it was torn down eight months after the attack.

The IDF maps a terrorist’s home

shortly after an attack, but the process significantly slows down afterward. A study by Im Tirtzu published in “Israel Hayom” at the beginning of this year determined that a terrorist’s home is demolished after about three months. However, there are often longer and more significant delays.

Im Tirtzu says that in the attacks that took place since the beginning of the year, not counting the most recent ones such as the one at Eli and the one in Tel Aviv in which a pregnant woman lost her unborn child, the demolition of terrorist homes has been delayed for an average of 115 days long and counting.

The IDF argues that the demolitions will occur according to “operational considerations.” While there is a need to gather significant force for demolishing a terrorist’s home, including the use of the Yahalom Combat Engineering Corps unit, the fact remains that only one terrorist home has been demolished so far, raising doubts.

Who decides?

Alon Schwartz, head of Im Tirtzu’s Research and Policy department, places blame on the policy framework of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

“The findings are very troubling, and the delay in demolishing the terrorists’ homes is unacceptable and undermines Israeli deterrence. Given that this is not an isolated event but rather a sequence of more than 10 homes of terrorists who carried out attacks in 2023 and have not been demolished yet, the question arises: Is there a directive from above to halt the demolitions of the homes of terrorists that carried out terror attacks in 2023?”

“The defense minister cannot ignore the matter and can certainly not evade responsibility. We expect him to instruct the security establishment to stop delaying and immediately demolish all the homes of the terrorists that committed terror attacks in 2023. This is not how an effective security policy looks like,” Schwartz said.

The IDF Spokesperson’s Unit replied: “There is no change in the IDF’s policy in the confiscation and demolition of terrorists’ homes. The decisions regarding the demolition of terrorist homes are made according to the recommendations given by bodies in the security establishment. Every case is examined thoroughly, taking into account the circumstances and operational and security considerations, aiming to deter potential terrorists.” **HW**

U.S. Approves Sale of Israeli Missile Defense System to Finland



Israel’s David’s Sling missile defense system. Credit: Israel Ministry of Defense Spokesperson’s Office.

(JNS) – The U.S. government last Wednesday authorized the sale of Israel’s David’s Sling missile defense system to Finland, according to the Israeli Defense Ministry.

The procurement deal, worth some \$345 million, is expected to be ratified soon during an official signing ceremony, Jerusalem said in a statement.

David’s Sling, developed by Israel’s Rafael Advanced Defensive Systems together with U.S. defense giant Raytheon, is designed to intercept ballistic missiles, UAVs, enemy planes and other aerial threats.

“The approval granted by the U.S. government today for the sale of the David’s Sling, a co-developed system by Israel and the United States, marks a significant step towards the realization of a historic agreement between Israel and Finland,” said Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant.

“I’d like to extend my gratitude to my esteemed colleague, General Lloyd Austin, the United States Secretary of Defense and the American administration for their support in this important agreement,” the minister added.

Finland’s intention to acquire the David’s Sling system was first announced on April 5, mere hours after the Nordic nation became the 31st member state of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Under the deal submitted to the U.S. government, Rafael and Raytheon, in partnership with Finnish defense industries, will jointly develop Finland’s version of David’s Sling. The air defense system will ultimately be integrated into the country’s command and control systems.

Notably, the Finnish Defence Forces will become the first foreign purchaser of David’s Sling.

“We are hopeful that Finland’s expression of confidence in the Israeli missile defense system, along with the American approval of the sale, will encourage additional European countries to enhance cooperation with Israel’s defense establishment and defense industries,” said Israeli Defense Ministry Director General Maj. Gen. (res.) Eyal Zamir. **HW**

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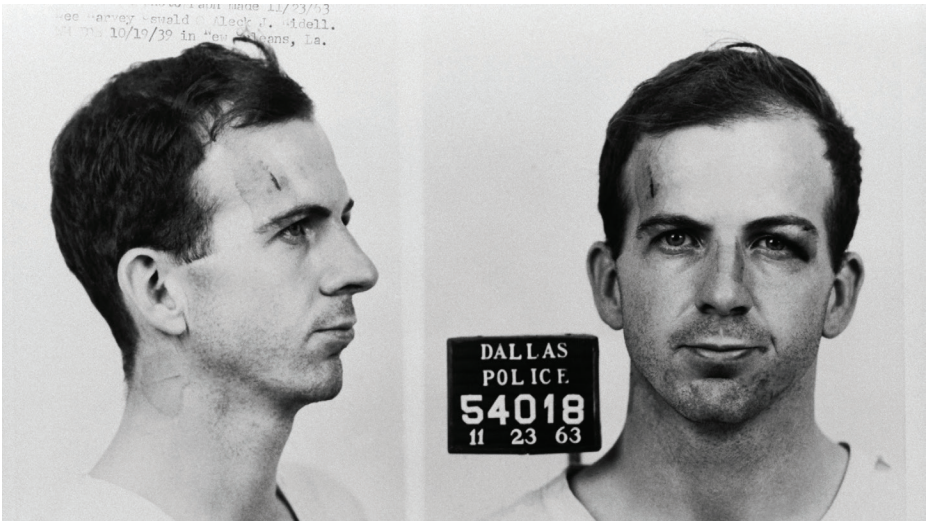
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JFK Documents Reveal Assassin’s CIA Monitor was Reuben Efron, a Jewish Spy Who Loved Midrash



The Dallas Police Department mug shots of Lee Harvey Oswald following his arrest for possible involvement in the John F. Kennedy assassination and the murder of Officer JD Tippit. Credit: Corbis via Getty Images
By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – For decades, armchair analysts scrutinizing the mysteries of the President John F. Kennedy assassination have fixated on who, exactly, opened his future assassin’s mail while he was under CIA surveillance.

As the conspiracy theory went, that person would have understood Lee Harvey Oswald’s relationship with the Soviet Union and thus could unlock new information about a possible Communist plot against Kennedy – or a U.S. government plot to obscure his true killer.

Last month, a new document dump in the ongoing declassification of Kennedy documents revealed the identity of the CIA screener: one Reuben Efron, a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army and a Jewish immigrant from Lithuania.

“The New York Times” was the first to report Efron’s identity. “And that means – what, exactly?” the newspaper asked in its report. “A tantalizing clue to unraveling a complicated conspiracy that the government has sought to cover up for decades? Additional proof that the C.I.A. knew more about Oswald than initially acknowledged? Or a minor detail withheld all this time because of bureaucratic imperatives irrelevant to the question of whether Oswald was the lone gunman on the fateful day?”

A deep dive into Efron’s Jewish identity does not answer those questions. But it does reveal that Efron not only worked as a spy but had a deep knowledge of the spies in Jewish tradition.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency has confirmed that Efron spent time living in Israel before dying on Nov. 22, 1993 – 30 years to the day after Kennedy’s assassination. While there, he contributed five articles in the 1970s to the “Jewish Bible Quarterly,” a World Zionist Organization-affiliated publication based in Jerusalem, that channeled his expertise in espionage.

“Rahab and her premises were under surveillance of a counterintelligence team of the king of Jericho who soon established that the two men visiting Rahab

were actually Israelite spies,” he writes in one of the essays, referring to a Jericho courtesan who, according to the Book of Joshua, assisted the Israelites in preparing to rout the Canaanites. Efron called Rahab “a prototype of a Mata Hari,” the World War I-era exotic dancer-turned-spy.

In one of the essays, Efron directly addresses the problem of spies incorrectly assessing their surveillance target – a critique that has been leveled about his read of Oswald. About the 10 spies who, in the Book of Numbers, returned to the Israelites unsettled by their venture into Canaan, he writes, “The militarily inexperienced scouts apparently had been unduly impressed with the prowess of the enemy and, as is frequent among Easterners, exaggerated his capabilities.”

The essays, three of which appeared in a series called “Military Intelligence in the Bible,” do little to illuminate either the Kennedy assassination or the inner life of the man who read Oswald’s mail. But they do shed light on how he spent his retirement.

Efron was born Ruvelis Effronas in Simnas, Lithuania, on April 12, 1911, and attended a Jewish high school there (a “Hebrew gymnasium,” in his words), followed by Vytautas Magnus University in what is now Kaunas. He practiced law for five years in that city – a thriving hub of Lithuanian Jewish life that would become the site of the country’s largest ghetto under the Nazis – before emigrating, as his brother had done previously.

Efron immigrated to the United States in December 1939, arriving in Miami via Cuba. U.S. immigration documents list his profession as a salesman. According to a family history compiled by a relative, the following fall he enrolled at the Atlanta Law School, a night school that closed in the 1990s. He worked at a clothing store in downtown Atlanta until graduating in 1943.

He spoke Russian, Lithuanian, Hebrew, Yiddish and German and enlisted in the Air Force during World War II as

an interpreter, according to a death notice published in the “Miami Herald.” After the war, the death notice said, he played a role in peace negotiations and in talks related to the resettlement of war refugees – among them, perhaps, members of his own family, but not his mother, who according to the published genealogy was murdered in the Holocaust.

For decades, Efron worked for the U.S. government, playing roles that are only now coming to light as secret government documents are made available to the public. His family history says only: “Reuben worked for the Pentagon.”

In addition to his now-revealed role reading Oswald’s mail, Efron pops up in another declassified document dealing with an area of amateur sleuthing that has garnered a following as intense, if not more so, than the Kennedy assassination.

In October 1955, Efron was traveling by train in the Soviet Union with U.S. Sen. Richard Russell, a Georgia Democrat, and a senior U.S. army official. The three men reported seeing two “circular and unconventional aircraft resembling flying discs or flying saucers ... taking off almost vertically one minute apart.”

“After sighting, Soviet train men became excited and lowered curtains and refused permission to look out windows,” says the 1955 report, declassified in 2004. “U.S. observers firmly believe these unconventional aircraft are flying saucer or disc aircraft.”

In retirement, Efron apparently enjoyed the freedom to opine. Living in Washington, D.C., in 1971, he wrote to “The New York Times” urging the Nixon administration to reject proposals of a joint U.S.-Soviet force to police Egypt-Israel peace, saying it would “communize the whole area.”

It’s not clear if he ever officially immigrated to Israel using its Law of Return, which grants automatic citizenship to Jews who move to the country. But the obituary in the “Miami Herald” said that Efron “commuted between Israel and the United States for many years, during which he studied Israeli law and was admitted to the Israeli bar.” The obituary said Efron was inspired by his mother’s work in Lithuania with Jews who were immigrating to Palestine.

In 1982, Efron lived on Keren Hayesod street in Jerusalem bordering the neighborhood of Rehavia, genealogical records show. Rehavia, now a neighborhood bursting with ostentatious wealth, much of it American, was then a leafy and somewhat decayed enclave of aging “yekkes,” or German Jews, many of them from the university-educated class that had fled the Nazis, arriving in Palestine in the 1930s.

The address would have been a pleasant 10-minute walk from the offices of

the “Jewish Bible Quarterly.” A staffer at the quarterly checked with surviving retired staff who worked during the late 1970s; no one could recall working with Efron. But his contributions to the quarterly are mostly preserved: JTA was able to locate three of the five essays.

In them, Efron comes across as an enthusiast of the ancients with a fundamentalist’s belief in the Bible as relaying an accurate historical narrative.

“The Bible relates truthfully David’s charismatic personality, physical charm, as well as frailties and ethical shortcomings,” Efron writes, reviewing the clandestine means David and Jonathan employed in the Book of Samuel to determine whether Jonathan’s father, Saul, planned to assassinate David.

As befits someone writing for a World Zionist Organization publication, Efron draws parallels between ancient and modern Israel, and finds much to praise in both national expressions.

“It should be noted that in ancient as well as in recent times the people of Israel adhered to their promises and covenants with their neighbors,” he writes in describing Joshua’s sticking to his pledge to protect the Gibeonites despite their deception, the spycraft that is the article’s focus.

Efron deploys accounts of Israel’s modern spycraft to establish a continuum between biblical times and the 20th century.

“A recent example of such a secret encounter in Israel’s international relations is the now well publicized, but at that time very guarded meeting between the former Foreign Minister, Moshe Dayan, with the then Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister, Muhammed Hassan al-Tohami, in September 1977, in Morocco, which laid the groundwork for Egyptian President Sadat’s historic visit to Jerusalem,” he writes in the article about David and Jonathan.

Details about Efron’s identity and background exercised the community of JFK assassination theorists to a much lesser degree than the fact that a senior CIA official was tracking Oswald – and the tantalizing prospect that there was more to learn.

“The memo shows that high-level CIA officers were interested in the smallest details of Oswald’s life 17 months before Kennedy was killed,” Jefferson Morley, an author of multiple books about the CIA, and about Kennedy, said on his blog, JFK Facts, after the revelation. “If Oswald was the ‘lone gunman,’ as a substantial minority of Americans believe, the clandestine service had much more access to his personal information than most know.”

Efron had a wife, Edna, a brother, Irving, and no children. Said the death notice in the “Miami Herald:” “He was a most diligent and modest person.” **HW**

Newly Discovered Film Footage Shows U.S. Soldiers Liberating Jews from Train

(JNS) – The Nazis were supposed to drown in the river the 2,500 human beings on the train – a third of them children – if they did not reach Theresienstadt. Instead, on April 7, 1945, U.S. soldiers from the 30th Division found the train abandoned and released the occupants trapped inside the cramped boxcars.

While photos from the rescue have long been available, American history teacher Matthew Rozell recently discovered a three-and-a-half minute film clip

documenting what came to be known as the “Miracle at Farsleben,” named after the village where the train stopped.

The footage begins by showing the recently freed Jews resting, sleeping and eating outside the train. Many are emaciated, matching Cmdr. George Gross’s description that “everyone looked like a skeleton, so starved, their faces sick.”

At the 1:15 mark, the film shows soldiers being mobbed – pushed to and fro by starving people – as they distribute chocolate and cigarettes while hands

raise desperately. The final haunting minute documents the surrounding scenery as smoke rises in the distance.

After making his discovery, Rozell began sharing it with survivors and their families. Jacob Barzilai, 90, was on the train and recognized himself, saying, “It was very emotional to see the footage” and “I was at a loss for words.”

Miriam Mueller, 82, who was 4 years old when rescued, said after seeing the film: “I had a hard time breathing afterward.”

“I was at a loss for words,” said Jacob Barzilai, a 90-year-old Holocaust survivor, after recognizing himself

Bina Schwartz, 83, a 5-year-old at the time, reflected on the discovery: “It teaches me that there are always good people in the middle of the road.” **HW**

From the Kitchen of Seth Feibelman

Cooking with No Water: Poached Salmon



Last month there was a water ban in my neighborhood. It is scary to know that drinking the water is harmful to your health. Especially when you have Cancer and are undergoing treatment like me.

I try to use as few dishes as possible when there is no water, so I will not have to wash them. Using recycled disposables to cook comes in handy as well, like using old sour cream containers as measuring bowls and storage. When you're finished cooking, just toss them in the recycle bin instead of washing.

Poaching is easiest defined as cooking in a liquid over low heat. Since the water is unusable, I decided to poach salmon in butter. Then use the same pot and butter to cook zucchini with artichoke hearts and fresh tomatoes.

You can watch me make this dish on my YouTube site @seththerobotchef

Please visit my GoFundMe page @gofundme/chefseth **HW**

Poached Salmon (feeds 1)

- 4 oz Salmon Filet
- 1lb Unsalted Butter
- Fresh Thyme
- Fresh Oregano
- 3 tbsp Minced Garlic
- 1 each Jalapeno Pepper Sliced
- 3 tbsp Salt



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'Pee-Wee's Playhouse' Star Paul Reubens Dies at Age 70



Paul Reubens, aka Pee-Wee Herman. Source: Twitter.

"Please accept my apology for not going public with what I've been facing for the last six years," a post on Paul Reubens's Instagram account noted last Monday. "I have always felt a huge amount of love and respect from my friends, fans and supporters. I have loved you all so much and enjoyed making art for you."

Reubens's comic character – an upbeat, innocent-acting man-child donning a suit and bowtie – began as a stage performance

and later succeeded in an HBO comedy special, multiple films and an award-winning children's television program that aired in 1981, "The Pee-wee Herman Show." Five years later showcased the Saturday-morning comedy series "Pee-wee's Playhouse," which ran from 1986 to 1991. They were all accompanied by an assortment of related merchandise.

The actor was the son of Milton Rubinfeld, an American Jewish pilot who served in World War II before joining the first Israeli Air Force in 1948.

Reubens's public profile took a hit in 1991 after he was arrested for exposing himself in an adult theater in Sarasota, Fla., followed a few years later by allegations of child pornography that were later dropped. for years, he was mired in sexual scandals. The comedian gradually rebuilt his career with Emmy-nominated guest appearances on "Murphy Brown" and a "comeback" role in the 2001 Johnny Depp crime drama "Blow."

In the last 20 years, Reubens appeared in film and on television, including the final return of his creation in "Pee-wee's Big Holiday" on Netflix in 2016. **HW**

OBITUARIES



Steve Allan Goler

Steve Allan Goler, ex Memphian, passed away on July 29, 2023, in Wilmington, N.C., after a long illness. He was born September 15, 1948, at Baptist Hospital in Memphis to Rose and Nathan Goler.

In his early years he attended Volintine, Snowden and Central High Schools. He was a gifted basketball player. He later attended Memphis State University and after the untimely death of his mother, Rose Goler, he took over management of the Bonnie Shops. He then moved to California and Utah and managed an athletic equipment company. He frequently traveled to Hong Kong to construct/manage the first in-door skiing recreation site.

He ultimately settled in Wilmington, N.C. and worked as a mortgage broker and was part owner of the bar/restaurant "Live on Grace." He initiated the first venue that provided nightly live music in Wilmington. (Currently "Rum Cow" bar/restaurant.) After his retirement, he became known for working with the

Cape Fear rescue league, working tirelessly with Patricia Lambert to raise funding for this organization. He organized annual fund-raising events known as "Players for Puppies" and "Poker for Puppies" bi-yearly. He also volunteered each year with film work for Cucalorus and the Jewish film festival.

He was known by all in Wilmington and especially the musicians and poker players in the region.

Steve also had a lifelong interest in Classic Rock and the Blues where he frequented the local epic blues home, "The Rusty Nail."

Steve was an avid basketball fan and could name every NCAA basketball statistic. His brother, sister-in-law and nephew enjoyed their annual NCAA tournament trips with him and picking brackets, which were set up by Steve. Every March madness, his family recalls watching, often through binoculars, Steve walking around arenas all over the country with his clipboard talking to trainers, coaches and fans.

It can be said with love that Steve was quite the character. His charisma and enthusiasm for all he did was contagious. He will be missed by the entire Wilmington community.

He is mourned by brother and sister-in-law, Dr. Bernie and Bonnie Goler, niece Julie Goler (Paul LeZebnik) of Los Angeles, Brian (Lori) Goler of Menlo Park, Calif., niece Alissa Chariton (David) of Los Angeles, and six great-nieces and -nephews. He is also mourned by his longtime companion, Anita Ford, of Wilmington, N.C. **HW**

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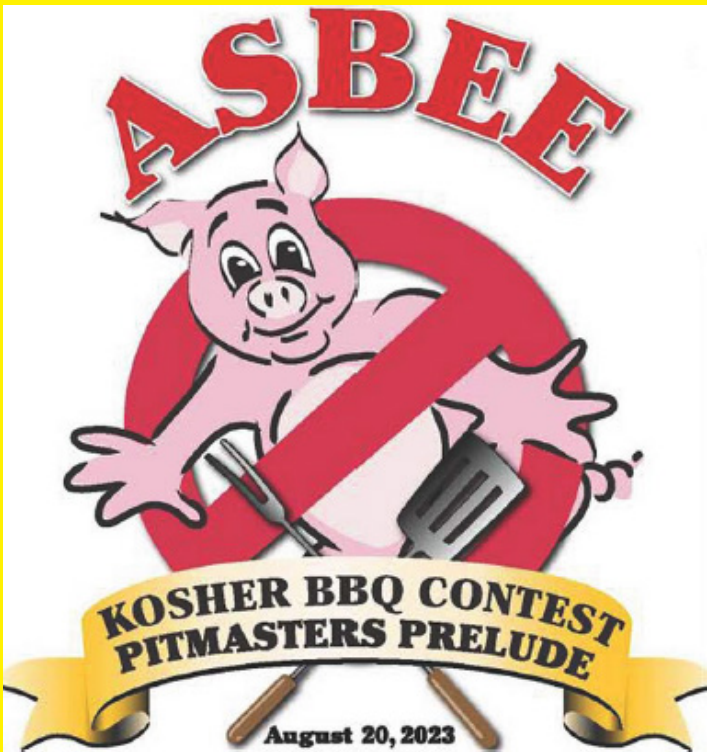
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