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## Hebrew Watchman

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HEBREWWATCHMAN.COM 20 ADAR I, 5784 FEBRUARY 29, 2024 VOL. 102, NO. 24

## Plough Towers Celebrates 44 Years at Annual Meeting



Immediate Past President Laurie Scheidt, President Harleen Tague, Past President Jason Salomon, Past President David Krueger.

On January 21, 2024, Plough Towers recognized its 44th year with its annual meeting to celebrate those who work tirelessly to provide affordable housing for the elderly and impaired in an environment that enhances self-worth and dignity. The Plough Towers board, executive board, volunteers and friends met to recognize those committed individuals and to celebrate the addition of those new to the Plough Board of Directors. Thanks to a late January snow/ice event, it was decided at the last minute to have our meeting via Zoom.

Outgoing President Laurie Scheidt

welcomed the attendees, and Rabbi Jeff Dreifus of Temple Israel led all in a d'var Torah, discussing the importance of caring of our elders. He emphasized that Plough Towers is an integral part in the services to the aging community and what a large impact they have had over the last 44 years.

In Ms. Scheidt's outgoing speech, she stated that it has been a very proud time in her life being president of Plough Towers. It has been an active and rewarding two years, and she is glad that she will remain on the executive committee for two more years. Other reports



Due to the ice and snow, Plough Towers held its annual meeting via Zoom.

included the House Report presented by Vice President Harleen Tague and Financial Report presented by Treasurer Steve Baer. Volunteer Coordinator/ HUD Specialist Audrey Johnson and Service Coordinator Carol Samuels presented comprehensive reports of their respective positions, and Executive Director Leigh Hendry highlighted the amazing job that all the staff do to assure that things are done "The Plough Towers Way." She read a poem written by a resident that showed the gratitude that residents feel for the staff.

Also highlighted was Plough Towers new partnership with the Jewish Foundation of Memphis as well as the generous funding from Federation for activities, meals and B'nai Tzedek Grants. With the monies that Plough Towers receives, they are able to offer the extra services the HUD funds are not allowed to cover.

The new executive committee is comprised of Harleen Tague, president; Steve Baer, vice president; Julie Boshwit, treasurer; Danny Mansberg, secretary; and Laurie Scheidt, immediate past president. We welcomed five new board members who will begin serving a three-year term. These include Kate Basar, Sandy Friedman, Jennifer Gilbert, Shelly Ostrow and Jerry Siegler.

Also recognized for their outstanding six-year commitment to Plough Towers were the following individuals who rolled off the board: Amy Pallor, Judy Royal, Susan Struminger and Keri Unowsky. HW

## Tennessee Democrats Blame Republicans for Nashville Neo-Nazi March

(JNS) – Dozens of neo-Nazis bearing black swastika flags marched at the Tennessee State Capitol in Nashville last Saturday, drawing widespread condemnation from Jewish and political leaders, including two state representatives who blamed state Republicans for the march.

"Through the weekend, Nashville experienced gross displays of antisemitism and racism," wrote Freddie O'Connell, Nashville's Democrat mayor. "We will not let hateful distractions become dangerous actions."

"Nazism and antisemitism should never be tolerated in any form," wrote Republican Gov. Bill Lee. "As Jewish people around the world continue to face persecution, Tennessee remains unwavering in our support for the nation of Israel and her people."

The Jewish Federation of Greater Nashville called the march "cowardly."

The "masked neo-Nazis displayed disgusting imagery that is painful to

many in our community," it stated. "It is another example of the alarming increase in antisemitic and hate activity in our state. We are not and will not be afraid."

Yad Vashem condemned the march, which it said was deeply troubling. "The message must be unequivocally: There is no place in our society for intolerance, racism or antisemitism," it stated. "The imagery from the march through Nashville's streets evokes painful memories for Jews worldwide."

"The anti-Jewish ideology espoused by the Nazis served as a chilling prelude to the systematic extermination of 6 million Jews," it added. "We urge American leadership to establish national standards for Holocaust education across the United States, ensuring that the messages and lessons of the Holocaust are engrained on the national agenda."

William Lamberth, a state representative who is a Republican, told the "Nazi

thugs" to leave. "This is Tennessee, and you are not welcome here," he wrote. "By the way, why not show your faces so we can all see who you are? I would be willing to bet that none of you are from anywhere near here."

Two state representatives, both Democrats, said the problem struck close to home and that their GOP colleagues were to blame for the neo-Nazi march.

Aftyn Behn wrote that "groups once relegated to the dark corners now feel empowered to spew their noxious ideology out in the open due to our state's leadership refusing to condemn their speech and actions."

Justin Jones was more explicit. "Just left an event honoring a black sorority and spoke of the need to unite against the rising tide of white supremacy, only to be confronted by Nazis marching through downtown Nashville," he wrote. "This is exactly what my Republican colleagues' hate speech is foster-



5:40 PM · Feb 17, 2024 Screenshot: Jonathan Allen (@ jonathanallen44) February 17, 2024

ing and inviting."

NBC reported, citing police sources, that the group left town in a U-Haul truck indicating that "the demonstrators may have been from out of town." **HW** 

### My Teen Israel Experience



Allie Baum, Lelia Samuels, Maya Dickman, and Talya Mendelson after hiking Masada.

#### By Talya Mendelson

Thanks to the generous support of the Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund, I had the remarkable opportunity to embark on an amazing journey to Israel last summer. Engaging in the NCSY Summer Israel/Euro trip, we traveled through Israel, Morocco, Spain, and Gibraltar, exploring the rich Jewish history and culture there. The program's profound impact was evident as it united a diverse group of teenagers, guided us to historic Jewish sites in once-vibrant communities and introduced us to renowned Jewish figures like Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, commonly known as the Rambam.

Exploring Israel and getting a glimpse of my heritage was an unforgettable feeling. Walking through the shuk (market) on a Friday afternoon was like stepping into a whole new world. There were so many people running around as they hustled to get everything ready for Shabbat. Being able to be immersed in the culture of Israel and being able to be surrounded by other Jews, was truly amazing. Everywhere I looked, everything was written in Hebrew, from street signs to shop names. Being surrounded by so many people who shared Hebrew as their language and the same culture as me, made me feel like I was a part of something bigger. I am so happy I was



Talya Mendelson and Brooke Sanderson at Ma'arat HaMachpela in Chevron, Israel.

given the opportunity to visit Israel this summer, and I hope that I will be able to go again soon.

Another one of the most memorable moments of my trip was at the Kotel, where I found myself surrounded by newfound friends, only to be pleasantly surprised by the unexpected arrival of friends from Memphis. The fun times we had amidst the backdrop of our people's holiest site remain a memory that will last a lifetime.

I am grateful to the Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund for their support, which made this experience possible. I will never forget traveling in Israel, making meaningful connections with Jewish communities worldwide, and establishing lifelong friendships.

Talya Mendelson, daughter of Tracy and David Mendelson, is a junior at the Goldie Margolin School for Girls. Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund provided her with a Teen Israel Experience grant to offset the costs of her NCSY Summer Euro Israel program. All rising juniors and seniors are eligible for grants of up to \$3,000 to attend a recognized teen summer or semester program in Israel. Teen Israel Experience applications for Summer 2024 are open and available at jcpmemphis. org/lemsky-endowment-fund. **HW** 

## Mitzvah for our Memphis Veterans

#### By Chandler King, 8th grade, West Collierville Middle School

This Valentine's Day has been the 11th year that our family prepared treat bags for the patients of the Memphis Veterans Hospital. Each gift bag contained delicious candy (sugar free for the Diabetics) and Menzies DIA-CREW socks. We provided over 130 bags.

Memphis has done an outstanding job in remembering our Veterans. Pictured

to the right is the statute of "The Doughboy" at Veteran Plaza in Overton Park. It can be reserved for military functions with no charges. This plaza has memorials to Memphis and Shelby County Veterans who were killed in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War and Desert Storm.

Temple Israel cemetery has a War

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## Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. March 1, 2024 / 21 Adar 1, 5784...... 5:38 p.m. Havdalah, Sat. March 2, 2024 / 22 Adar 1, 5784...... 6:34 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Ki Tisa

Memorial that was dedicated on September 2014 honoring those from the Temple family who gave their lives for service to our country. Temple also has biographical information for each of the Veterans. Baron Hirsch Synagogue has built a monument at its cemetery honoring Veterans.

Our family is doing one small mitzvah to put a smile on the faces of our Memphis Veterans plus keep their feet warm.

Thanks to Catherine Austin, Retired Food Service Director at the VA Hospital for assisting us in setting up this project. HW



**Chandler King** 



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### Israel Returns to Hostage Talks as Netanyahu Presents Postwar Plan for Gaza Governance

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) - Israeli negotiators have arrived in Paris to participate in hostage talks, in a sign that officials believe, that a deal can be reached with Hamas to secure the release of the 134 Israelis held in Gaza.

Israel had initially sat out this round of talks, reportedly at the instruction of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Now, under pressure from the Biden administration and family members of the hostages, Netanyahu has dispatched a negotiating team that includes the heads of Israel's top security forces, the Mossad and Shin Bet.

It was unclear whether the talks would lead to the release of the hostages, of whom about 100 are thought to be alive. Israeli media is reporting that Hamas is continuing to demand that any deal include the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza, which Israel has said it will not do

The talks come at a pivotal time in the war, which began four and a half months ago, as world leaders including U.S. President Joe Biden have warned Netanyahu against carrying out Israel's threat to invade Rafah, the southern Gaza city where an estimated 1.5 million Palestinians are sheltering, without a plan to protect civilians.

Last Thursday night, Netanyahu presented his cabinet with a formal plan for post war governance of Gaza for the first time, delivering a one-page proposal that would have "local officials" who have never been involved in terrorism play a leadership role. The Palestinian Authority, which governs the West Bank, immediately rejected the plan, saying that it would not move toward Palestinian statehood, which Netanyahu roundly rejects but is gaining favor among other world leaders amid the mounting devastation in Gaza. Netanyahu has also repeatedly rejected placing the P.A. in charge of Gaza, which Biden favors.

The number of Palestinians killed during the Israeli offensive neared 30,000 last Friday, according to the Hamas-run Gaza Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants. Israel recently said it believes it has killed 12,000 Hamas fighters during the war.

The hostage and ceasefire talks are expected to take up to two weeks, with a first phase to settle on a general outline and a second, including Hamas directly, that would hammer out specifics of how long a ceasefire would last, in what order the hostages would be freed and which Palestinian security prisoners Israel would release.

Hamas released more than 100 hostages in November as part of a weeklong ceasefire, in exchange for some 300 women and minors held by Israel. The number and profile of the security prisoners who would be released as part of a new deal is expected to be much higher.

Weekly rallies by families of the hostages and their allies in Tel Aviv have taken an increasingly antagonistic tone against Netanyahu, with chants of "Shame" - familiar from last year's anti-government protests over Israel's judiciary – lasting for over a minute last Saturday. 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. Monthly Luncheon is at noon.

Monday, March 4

Speaker: Rabbi Joel Finkelstein, Rabbinic Scholar at Baron Hirsch Congregation

Topic: "Israel a Focal Point!"

Rabbi Finkelstein always both enlightens and gives the group something to think about. Come and enjoy the lunch and hear Rabbi Joel afterward!

Wednesday, March 6

Field Trip to Baron Hirsch Synagogue for their Big Monthly Luncheon!

This will be the third time the MJCC Seniors join Baron Hirsch for this event. Anyone wishing to go, please call the Baron Hirsch office at 901-683-7485 to make your reservations. MJCC seniors will go on the Center's bus to and from the luncheon, but reservations need to be made by Monday, March 4 for Baron Hirsch to have a count. There will be entertainment from Creative Aging and Bingo!

#### Monday, March 11 Field Trip to Baskin Robbins

The bus will leave the MJCC at 12 p.m. This is always an enjoyable get together and anyone wishing to meet us there is welcome to do so.

#### Wednesday, March 13 Field Trip to Tour Temple Israel with Rabbi Jeff Dreifus

Rabbi Jeff has talked many times with the seniors, so we are really looking forward to the tour. All are welcome to join us, as the bus only holds 14, please make your reservations early. The MJCC Bus should leave by 12:15 p.m. Please call Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220 with any questions.

Please join us from Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch from the kitchens at the Memphis Jewish Home. 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 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org, or calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. **HW** 

## Overton Park Shell Sheds Light on Local Jazz Community

5 Fridays of Jazz Features Bepop, Blues, and more.

What better way to kick off your weekend than with the coolest cats in town? Back by popular demand, in partnership with the Memphis Library Foundation, 5 Fridays of Jazz will be a

showcase of smooth sounds, satisfying sips, and more.

Starting Friday, March 1, and following every Friday thereafter, the Benjamin L. Hooks Central Library will play host to talented artists, which include famed names like Joyce Cobb and Gary Topper. To compliment the tunes, tasty food and beverages will be available for purchase, provided by King Manor Catering and Bar.

The line-up includes:

March 1, 2024 - Memphis Black Arts Alliance presents Joyce Cobb ft. Memphis Jazz Workshop

March 8, 2024 - Memphis Black Arts Alliance presents Lannie McMillian Jr.

March 15, 2024 - Deborah Swiney

March 22, 2024 - Gary Topper

March 28, 2024 - Michael Townsend with special guest Alvin McKinney

Performances will run for 90 minutes, starting at 6:30 p.m. and concluding at

"Our continued partnership with the Memphis Library Foundation allows us to build community outside of the historic park stage," said Yolanda Kelly, Shell on Wheels Outreach Manager. We're excited to see familiar faces, and connect with new entertainers, as we spotlight local musicians and celebrate Memphis' rich music history."

Acting as a component of Shell on Wheels, the Overton Park Shell community outreach initiative, 5 Fridays of Jazz has highlighted a wide array of musical prowess - from budding artists to veteran performers – throughout its nine years of activation. Though the lineup has varied, the overwhelming excitement and support for the series continues to foster an atmosphere for curiosity and creative discovery in the community. HW

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## In New Documentary 'God and Country,' Rob Reiner Shines a Light on Christian Nationalism



In "God and Country," a documentary produced by Rob Reiner, footage from real events showcases the signs and symbols of growing Christian nationalism in the United States. (Screenshot)

#### By Stephen Silver

(JTA) – Rob Reiner, best known for his acting role in the 1970s sitcom "All in the Family" and for directing a series of beloved comedies – including "This is Spinal Tap," "The Princess Bride" and "When Harry Met Sally" – is getting serious in his latest project.

"God and Country," which hits theaters this week, examines what Reiner sees as the troubling rise of Christian nationalism. The Jewish filmmaker produced the documentary, along with his wife, Michele, and his friend, Steve Okin, with Dan Partland as director. The film follows the history, and the more recent activities, of Christian nationalism, from the 1950s Cold War to the fight over abortion rights to the rise of televangelist Jerry Falwell to the storming of the Capitol on Jan. 6.

"For decades, I was aware of... what we call now Christian nationalism," Reiner told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in a recent interview. "It's a political movement, really, certainly not a spiritual or religious movement, and it started gaining more and more strength."

He said he knew going into the project that he would have to navigate treacherous territory.

"It was a very delicate subject to take on, because the one thing we didn't want to do was bash Christianity, and the film does not do that," Reiner said. "It's the exact opposite, actually."

Reiner based the documentary on Katherine Stewart's 2020 book "The Power Worshippers: Inside the Dangerous Rise of Religious Nationalism," which defines the movement as a biblically derived effort to take control of all aspects of government and society. Okin gave him the book with the idea of making it into a movie.

"They believe that America should be a white Christian nation, and it is ordained by God to be a white Christian nation," said Reiner, adding that its followers are "willing to go to the lengths of violence to get their way."

Reiner organized and funded the project and helped to shape it. His name has been featured prominently in the marketing, including a recorded message before the film. He does not, however,

appear on camera or in voiceover in the film itself.

"As a Jewish man, Rob Reiner has seen the rise of dangerous tides and is passionate it doesn't happen again," a promotional email about the film states. Reiner elaborated on that idea to JTA.

Thinking about an "autocracy, or a theocracy, where there is a 'my way or the highway,' and things have to be done in an autocratic way," put him in mind of the Holocaust, he said. "My aunt was in Auschwitz, she survived. My wife's mother survived Auschwitz, but her entire family was killed at Auschwitz, and I visited recently there. I'm very well aware of what can happen when an autocrat takes over a country.

"I've gotten a lot of criticism because I'm Jewish: 'How dare you, a Jewish person, have anything to say about what Christians should or should not do," Reiner added. "But I always say, 'I'm not in the film, look at the people we have in the film ... It's not Rob Reiner, the Jewish person, saying this."

Indeed, the majority of the people interviewed in the film are prominent Christians who, for various reasons, are skeptics and opponents of Christian nationalism.

Among those interviewed are North Carolina-based activist Bishop William Barber, "New York Times" columnist David French, "Christianity Today" editor-in-chief Russell Moore, Sister Simone Campbell and Phil Vischer, the co-creator of the Christian cartoon series "VeggieTales."

"We have some of the most thoughtful, devout Christian leaders, people who are in many cases very conservative Christian thinkers and pastors who talk about this movement... not just as a danger to democracy, but also a danger to Christianity itself, and a danger to the church," Reiner said.

Stewart, who is also interviewed in the film, has said the 2022 Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade, which for 50 years guaranteed a woman's right to an abortion, has emboldened Christian Nationalists to pursue an agenda that includes state funding of religious schools, prosecuting abortion providers and "accomplices,"

and defending and even lionizing those who tried to prevent the transfer of power on Jan. 6.

"I am thrilled that my book helped inspire this documentary, and I hope it helps draw attention to the dangerous political movement in our midst," Stewart told JTA. "The main thing I hope people can take away is that Christian nationalism is a political movement, not a religion, and it is profoundly hostile to democracy. With Trump's attempted coup still in the news, the film should be especially helpful in letting people connect the dots."

The conservative Christian embrace of Trump, who was very much not associated with Christian politics prior to his first presidential run, figures prominently in the film. Reiner said Trump has become "the first kind of national visible celebrity mouthpiece for their movement – and he was more than happy to take that on if he had support, and if that could help him politically."

Reiner added, "He's a part of this, but he comes at the end of this rise that has been happening since 1954."

Among the critics of the movement shown in the documentary is Robert Schenck, a Christian reverend who now teaches at a Jewish seminary.

Schenck was raised by a Jewish father and a mother who converted to Judaism, but he went on to become a born-again Christian at age 16. He became an Assembly of God minister and anti-abortion activist. He later broke with the Christian nationalist movement and is now a visiting scholar of Christianity and Religious Leadership at Hebrew College in Newton, Massachusetts. Schenck was the subject of a 2015 documentary, "The Armor of Light."

In the film, Schenck shares that during his career in the pulpit, he would use Trump's name in sermons as "an example of everything a Christian should not be."

"As a minister, I was trained to use real-life examples in my sermons, and I often used Mr. Trump to illustrate what it meant to 'serve other gods,' such as money, self-aggrandizement, and temporal pleasure," Schenck told JTA in an email. "I knew plenty of colleagues who did the same, putting Trump forward as a selfish, egotistical, arrogant, greedy, playboy casino magnate and serial adulterer. For the preachers of my generation, Trump was a living example of Jesus' admonition that it is 'easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter heaven."

Nevertheless, as Stewart has explained, Christian nationalists have embraced Trump, who has delivered on education policy, conservative Supreme Court picks and support for right-wing regimes abroad. In Christian nationalist circles, he is even referred to as the "anointed one."

For many years, Reiner has been one of the entertainment industry's most prominent critics of the former president, on social media and in cable news appearances.

"Trump himself has talked about poisoning the blood of our country, he's talked about putting immigrants in camps," Reiner said. "This is the kind of rhetoric that triggers people who know what can happen when people talk like that. It means a lot to me that this country remain a democracy, that this wonderful experiment that started 246 years ago of self-rule is allowed to continue, that we don't slip into an autocracy, because we know what can happen when that happens."

Reiner and Trump are both natives of New York's outer boroughs, are about the same age, had well-known fathers, and have been in the public eye since the 1970s. But according to Reiner, they've only met each other once. That was when Reiner and the Jewish comedy legend Billy Crystal, a longtime friend, were attending a prizefight at one of Trump's casinos in Atlantic City, and they met Trump in the hotel.

"I said to Billy, after we walked away, 'I've been around actors all my life, they've got enormous egos, and they always talk about themselves. I've never met anybody who talked about themselves more than this guy did.' He wasn't interested in me, he wasn't interested in Billy, he only wanted to talk about himself."

Reiner's wife, Michele, a co-producer of the film and a professional photographer, actually shot Trump's photograph for the cover of his 1987 memoir, "The Art of the Deal."

"So, she has a lot to atone for," Reiner joked. "When Yom Kippur comes around, that's first on her list."

Reiner inherited his comedy and filmmaking chops from his father, Carl Reiner, the late writer, director and actor who was part of Sid Caesar's comedy ensemble, created "The Dick Van Dyke Show" and directed several hit films.

But it was the example of Norman Lear, who created "All in the Family" as well as the liberal advocacy group People for the American Way, that inspired Reiner's own political work, including the documentary.

At the Emmy Awards in January, Reiner paid tribute to Lear, who passed away in December at the age of 101, describing his mentor with an obscure Yiddish word that he told JTA he remembered hearing his immigrant grandparents speak in the Bronx.

"For all you non-Jews out there, kochleffel is a ladle, a ladle that stirs the pot. And when Norman the kochleffel stirred that pot, he wound up changing American culture," Reiner said at the tribute.

"What I learned from Norman was that you could use your fame, your celebrity, whatever, to actually do some things in the political sphere," he told JTA. "Norman was a tremendous inspiration to me. I got from Norman that this is something you can do, and you can be effective, because you can use your voice to get ideas across."

"God and Country" arrived in theaters on Feb. 16. **HW** 

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## Photographer's Award Praised By 'Times' Same Day He's Named in Lawsuit



صورة قبل قليل حبيبنا ابو براهيم

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Una foto de hace un tiempo de nuestro querido Abu Ibrahim



Hamas senior leader Yahya Sinwar kisses freelance photojournalist Hassan Eslayeh following the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks in southern Israel. Source: X/ Hassan Eslayeh.

(JNS) – Meaghan Looram, director of photography at "The New York Times," praised on Feb. 21 the "fearless and compassionate work" of Yousef Masoud, who just won a George Polk Award in Journalism for his photography related to the Israel-Hamas war. The same day, a lawsuit was filed as a direct result of his and other freelancers' terrorist ties.

One of the leading international wire news agencies will now face more than criticism and pointed questions for its contributors' connections to Hamas. On Feb. 22, the National Jewish Advocacy Center filed suit against the Associated Press due to payments to freelance photographers who have been revealed as Hamas operatives.

Those named in the lawsuit who sold their work to the AP include Hassan Eslayeh, Masoud, Ali Mahmud and Hatem Ali. A photo has widely circulated showing Hamas senior leader Yahya Sinwar kissing Eslayeh following the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks in southern Israel.

Plaintiffs in the suit include those who

Legal action against Polk Award-winner Yousef Masoud was done on behalf of the families of Oct. 7 victims.

survived the terrorist onslaught at the Nova music festival in southern Israel on Oct. 7, in addition to family members of victims. To date, 364 people were recorded as having been slaughtered at the festival that Saturday morning.

The suit states: "There is no doubt that AP's photographers participated in the October 7th massacre, and that AP knew, or at the very least should have known, through simple due diligence, that the people they were paying were longstanding Hamas affiliates and full participants in the terrorist attack that they were also documenting." HW

### Apple+ Drama on Fashion Guru Coco Chanel Glosses Over Nazi Collaboration

(JNS) – "The New Look," a new TV program on the streaming service Apple+, explores World War II decisions made by founders of clothing lines that are worth billions today.

The show dramatizes the lives of Christian Dior and Coco Chanel – both French-born – the latter who is remembered for creating "the little black dress" and the perfume Chanel No. 5.

"A survivor and a pragmatist, she was prone to telling tall tales about her life, but this fact about her is irrefutable: She definitely collaborated with the Nazis," film critic Caryn James wrote for the BBC. "She may also have helped the French Resistance. The woman so determined to control her image and legacy left a messy tangle behind."

James describes the show's approach to the subject as "putting, perhaps, the least-bad spin on it." Chanel's choices juxtapose with Dior, who James described as "steadfastly loyal to France."

Biographies of Chanel differ in their interpretations of the fashion designer, according to James. Some accused her of antisemitism and believing in the Nazi cause, while another, Justine Picardie, said that "it's too easy to say Chanel was a Nazi."

The show reflects this ambiguity and mystery. Creator Todd Kessler said, "It's not inspiring to write villains or heroes. What's inspiring is to explore the grey, because that brings me closer to an understanding of the characters and the decisions they had to make." **HW** 



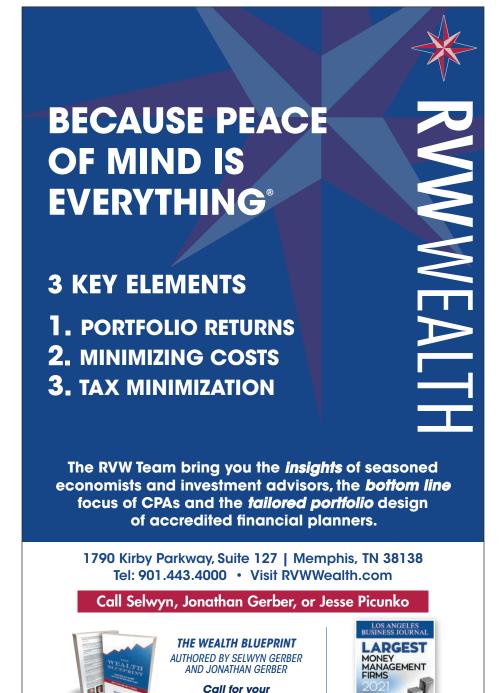


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## Tiffany Haddish Goes to Israel, Visits Hostage Square and Pledges to See Gaza



From left, Rabbi Susan Silverman, Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback, Tiffany Haddish, Aliza Rose Silverman and Billy Crystal at Haddish's 2019 bat mitzvah celebration in Beverly Hills, California. Credit: Emma McIntyre/Getty **Images for Netflix** 

#### By Beth Harpaz

This originally appeared on Forward, reprinted with permission.

Comedian Tiffany Haddish is on a trip to Israel because, she says, "I wanted to talk to the people, I wanted to be with the people, I wanted to see with my own eyes."

Haddish made the comments in an interview with TMZ after flying to Israel earlier last week.

In a video she made during her flight, she said she was "going to the Holy Land. I suggest you all do it." In a happy, singsong voice, she added: "On my way to Tel Aviv, then to Jerusalem, then I'm going to the Dead Sea. Going to have some fun. It's going to be great.

Then I'm going to learn about the politics. Who said I wasn't going to Gaza? I said I'm going to go see with my own eyes."

She also said she "might come back with a Jewish baby!" and later joked, "Gonna find me a man!"

#### Learning that 'a lot of people were kidnapped'

On the call with TMZ, Haddish said she made the trip because "I can't believe everything I read. I need to go see for myself."

She said she planned to meet with families of hostages and that she hadn't previously known that not only were people killed in the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks, but "a lot of people were kidnapped."

She added: "I didn't know that be-

A video of Haddish in a Tel Aviv taxi shows her asking, "Why do they call it Hostage Square?" The tour guides accompanying her explained that's where families of the hostages gather, across from Israeli army headquarters, to "pressure" the military to bring the hostages home.

Haddish responded with what she imagined the families to be saying: "Go get my babies! Go get my damn baby!"

When TMZ asked if she was planning to learn about Israel's war in Gaza, in which thousands of Palestinians have died, she said: "Yes, I'm going over there, too," adding, "I care about both sides. I care about humanity, human beings."

She said making the trip by herself "takes a lot of courage," and that she felt she was doing "something that's kind of scary."

When the TMZ interviewer asked her to share video of her experiences there, she said she'd need to send an invoice for that. "I need a new diamond Star of David," she joked.

#### A bat mitzvah and her Jewish heritage

Haddish was welcomed by a tweet from Israel's official account on X saying that the "one and only is on her way to Israel. Tiffany, can we PLEASE throw you a Bat Mitzvah at the Western Wall?"

Actually, Haddish had a bat mitzvah in Beverly Hills in 2019, officiated by Rabbi Susan Silverman, sister of the comedian Sarah Silverman. Haddish's father was an Eritrean Jew, and she's said she confirmed her Jewish heritage through DNA testing.

Before Haddish's breakout role in the 2017 comedy film "Girls Trip," the Emmy- and Grammy-winning star supported herself as an entertainer working

hundreds of b'nai mitzvah in Los Ange-

In the video she made in flight, Haddish shows herself swirling a beverage in a cup, which she notes is orange juice, "not a mimosa." She's been arrested several times for driving under the influence and was also accused of child sex abuse in a lawsuit over a comedy sketch about pedophilia. That lawsuit was eventually dropped, and Haddish said she "deeply" regretted the skit.

#### Pickles, 'in order to survive'

Another video, posted on TikTok last Wednesday, shows Haddish eating pickles with the Israeli actress and activist Noa Tishby. "I'm here behind the scenes with Tiffany Haddish," Tishby said. "I was shocked because what did Tiffany ask to have backstage? Kosher pickles!"

Tishby said pickles became a "very Jewish food," because when Jews didn't have money for fresh food, they started "preserving everything."

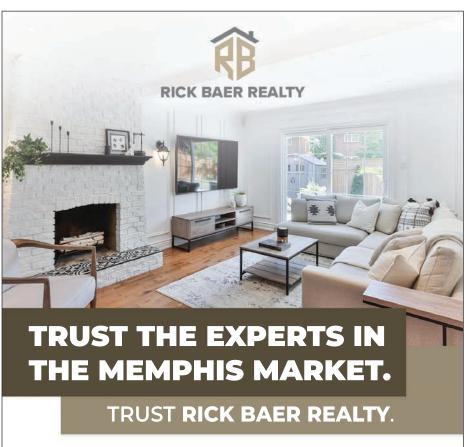
Haddish giddily picked the theme up, saying, "In order to survive, you know, you must pickle the cucumber! The Jewish people, they are a pickled people, and they will last forever, forever and ever!"

"We're both 150 years old," Tishby joked, to which Haddish responded, "Girl, please, I'm 300!" They then toasted with their pickles, saying "L'chaim."

#### SpongeBob meme made her laugh

Last Wednesday, Haddish reposted a fan's graphic of the SpongeBob character Squidward, shown sleeping peacefully next to the words: "Bella Hadid travels to a theocratic authoritarian regime," a reference to the model's trip to the United Arab Emirates. Squidward is then shown wide-eyed and red-faced at the news that Haddish had traveled "to the only democracy in the Middle East."

"I don't know why," Haddish commented on the post, "but I laughed hard when I saw this." HW



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## Kayla and Howard Weisband Volunteer on Israeli Farms



Kayla and Howard Weisband in Nes Tziona.



Kayla and Howard Weisband are former Memphians who made aliyah in 1986. They spent the day, her birthday, picking tangerines in an orchard in Nes Tziona, a town closer to Tel Aviv. Volunteers have been picking up the slack



as foreign workers left to a large extent. "We've volunteered along with many, many others several times now harvesting mushrooms, cauliflowers, plants in hot houses... you name it," said Howard, HW

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## Setting a Retirement Savings Goal

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

It's difficult to reach a destination unless you know where you're heading. Yet only 51% of workers or their spouses have tried to estimate the savings they would need to live comfortably in retirement.<sup>1</sup>

To get a start on establishing a retirement savings goal, use the simple worksheet on this page to compare the income you think you will need (or want) with the sources of income you expect.

#### How much income will you need?

Everyone's situation is different, but one common guideline is that you will need at least 70% to 80% of your pre-retirement income to meet your retirement expenses. This assumes that you will have paid off your mortgage, will have lower transportation and clothing expenses when you stop working, and will no longer be contributing to a retirement savings plan.

Although some expenses may be lower, others might increase, depending on your retirement lifestyle. Perhaps you want to travel more or engage in new activities.

Don't forget to budget for medical expenses. A recent study suggests that a couple who retired in 2022 at age 65 – with median prescription drug expenses and average Medigap premiums – might need \$318,000 in savings to cover retirement health-care expenses (not including dental, vision, or long-term care).<sup>2</sup> This equates to about \$12,720 annually over a 25-year retirement. Future retirees may face even higher costs.

#### **Estimate income sources**

You can estimate your monthly Social Security benefit at different retirement ages by establishing a my Social Security account at ssa.gov/myaccount. The closer you are to retirement, the more accurate this estimate will be. If retirement is many years away, your benefit could be affected by changes to the Social Security system, but it might also rise as your salary increases and the Social Security Administration makes cost-of-living adjustments.

If you expect a pension from current or previous employment, you should be able to obtain an estimate from the employer.

Add other sources of income, such as from consulting or a part-time job, if some type of work is in your plans. Be realistic. Consulting can be lucrative, but part-time work often pays low wages, and working in retirement is less likely than you might expect. In 2023, 73% of workers expected to work for pay after retirement, but only 30% of retirees said they had actually done so.<sup>3</sup>

The income from your savings may depend on unpredictable market returns and the length of time you need your savings to last. Higher returns would enable your nest egg to grow faster, but it would be more prudent to use a modest rate of return in your calculations. Remember that all investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal, and there is no guarantee that any investment strategy will be successful.

Investments seeking higher rates of return also involve a higher degree of risk.

#### Get Started

This worksheet might give you a general idea of the savings needed to generate your desired retirement income.

	Example	You
Annual retirement income desired	\$80,000	
Expected income from sources such as Social Security or a pension	\$30,000	
3. Income you need to generate from savings and investments (line 1 – line 2)	\$50,000	
<ol> <li>Savings needed to provide desired income for 25 years, assuming 5% annual return (line 3 x 14.1 income generation factor)*</li> </ol>	\$705,000	
Savings needed to provide desired income indefinitely, assuming 5% annual return (line 3 ÷ .05)	\$1,000,000	

\*Use a factor of 12.5 for 20 years or 15.4 for 30 years; factors are rounded. This hypothetical example does not account for taxes or inflation and is used for illustrative purposes only. Rates of return will vary over time, particularly for long-term investments. Actual results will vary.

#### **Moving forward**

A rough estimate of your retirement savings goal is a good beginning, and a professional assessment may be the next step. Although there is no assurance that working with a financial professional will improve investment results, a professional can evaluate your objectives and available resources and help you consider appropriate long-term financial strategies.

1–3) Employee Benefit Research Institute, 2023 (Health-care expenses include Medigap premiums, Medicare Part B premiums and deductibles, Medicare Part D premiums, and out-of-pocket prescription drug expenses; projection is based on a 90% chance of meeting expenses and assumes a 7.32% return on savings from age 65 until expenditures are made.)

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## Suspect Arrested for Attack that Left Florida Jew Bleeding from His Face

(JNS) – Police in Lauderhill, Fla. arrested a man suspected of beating a 69-year-old Jewish man, who had just departed from synagogue on Shabbat, causing him to bleed from his eyes.

Rabbi Yaniv Moryosef told NBC6 that his father, Asher Moryosef, was left "all swollen, bleeding from his face from his eyes" and that "his eyes were totally red."

The elder Moryosef had just left the Synagogue of Inverrary-Chabad in Lauderhill, Fla., in the southeastern part of the state near Miami. NBC reported that the attacker allegedly yelled a "racial

slur" at the Jewish victim. (The victim is described as 68 in some news reports.)

Moryosef told the news outlet that a passing Uber driver intervened and told the attacker to stop or he would call the police.

The suspect was named as Trevor Rodney, 42.

"In light of this incident, it is reminded that we continuously strive to encourage a community that retains and promotes improved quality of life, where people of diverse cultural backgrounds peacefully interrelate," the Lauderhill Police Department stated. HW



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#### **OBITUARIES**



Dr. Jean Hayden

Dr. Jean Hayden passed away on February 16, 2024, at the age of 101. He is preceded in death by his parents Bertha and Samuel Hayden and his loving wife, Rosa.

Jean was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on April 17, 1922. He grew up in Fall River, Mass. and Waterbury, Conn., where he graduated from high school before moving with his family to Memphis.

Jean served in the military as a medic in San Francisco during World War II. After serving, he moved back to Memphis where he graduated from Southern College of Optometry. He met the love of his life, Rosa Paller, at a Hillel dance and they married soon after. They were married for 47 years.

Jean practiced Optometry at Gordon Jewelers for over 40 years and retired at the age of 75.

Rosa and Jean raised three children, Marilyn, Marsha and Mark. Their home was filled with family and friends. Later in life Jean found joy in dancing, cooking, baking and exercising. He loved meeting new people and never met a stranger.

Jean delivered meals on wheels with his brother, Allan, and enjoyed having family and friends over for dinner.

Jean is survived by his beloved children Marilyn (David) Arlen, Marsha (Mark) Klaff, Mark Hayden, his precious grandchildren, Michael Arlen, Leah and Eric Cohn, Mollie and Eugene Tunitsky, Jeremy and Evan Klaff, Evan and Tori Klaff, treasured great-grandchildren Ezra, Julia, Max, Lilly and Norri.

The family requests that donations be made to Baron Hirsch Synagogue or the McWherter Senior Center. **HW** 



Arlene Tupper Levine

Arlene Tupper Levine, 75, of Plano, Texas, formerly of Memphis, passed away on February 10, 2024. Funeral services were held at Anshei Sphard Cemetery on February 12, 2024.

She was born in Memphis on October 2, 1948, to the late Herman and Bertha Gruber Tupper. After graduating from Central High School in 1966, she earned a B.S. in Education from Memphis State University in 1970.

She taught elementary school in Olive Branch, Miss., before devoting her time to enhancing the education of her children.

She was lifelong member of Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth synagogue, attending services regularly and participating in its sisterhood.

She moved to Texas with her husband, Donald, in 2013 to be closer to her children and grandchildren. She enjoyed crafting handmade cards and poems for their birthdays, as well as hosting holidays and cooking her family's favorite foods.

She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Donald Levine; her children Suzanne (Cory) Feinberg of Plano, Texas, and Joel (Jessica) Levine of Austin, Texas; and grandchildren Brooke and Hannah Feinberg, Sadie, Lainey and Nathan Levine; as well sisters Lois (Raymon) Brooks and Sara (Ben) Wagerman of Memphis. **HW** 

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### London Police: 'From River to Sea' Projected on Big Ben 'Not Criminal Offense'

(JNS) – London's Metropolitan Police Department is aware that "from the river to the sea" – an antisemitic slogan that calls for genocide against Jews – was projected on Big Ben, one of the world's most iconic landmarks. Yet it didn't do anything about it.

"This is a chant that has been frequently heard at pro-Palestinian demonstrations for many years and we are very aware of the strength of feeling in relation to it," the London police department wrote.

"While there are scenarios where chanting or using these words could be unlawful depending on the specific location or context, its use in a wider public protest setting, such as last night, is not a criminal offense," it added.

"People need permission from both the Commons speaker and Westminster City Council planners to legally project onto the side of the Houses of Parliament," the Daily Mail reported.

"Absolutely appalling," the European Jewish Congress wrote. "This antisemit-

ic chant is a rallying cry used by Hamas terrorists calling for the destruction of the State of Israel."

Absolutely appalling. HW

## Paris Police Arrest Man Accused of Antisemitic Stabbing

By David Swindle

(JNS) – A 35-year-old man is being investigated for attempted murder after making an antisemitic remark and stabbing a 35-year-old Jewish man six times in Paris last Monday, the French language "Le Parisien" reported.

The two had been childhood friends and had reconnected recently. The Jewish man subsequently filed a complaint after the suspect allegedly made insulting calls and directed antisemitic abuse toward him, the publication reported.

Police apprehended the suspect at his residence three hours after the stabbing.

The Union of French Jewish Students (UEJF) wrote, in French, that it is "deeply shocked by the antisemitic attack." It added that "the perpetrator must be heavily condemned."

In France, antisemitic incidents from Oct. 1 to the end of December 2023 increased 1,000% compared to the previous months. **HW** 

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## For the Love of G-D and Man



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

#### By Ted Roberts

Our bible, according to my concordance, tells us repetitively to love G-d. How can we comply with this mandate – Love G-d? I love my wife, kids, a few highly select friends who owe me money, even the cat. And I love lamb chops with garlic and lemon. But my creator and Judge? We live in different dimensions. That's much like asking the tree to love the seed. So inappropriate. They are of different matter. Maybe a better analogy is the squirrel's love of the tree. Still, far-fetched. There's an inter-dimensional enigma here. An emotional warp. How can it be?

Strangely, Leigh Hunt, an English poet who probably never met a Hasid nor knew the term – answered the question with a Jewish slant. He was a Londoner who lived two thousand miles West of Hasid Headquarters in Poland. He was an aristocratic Englishman who, unlike his Polish contemporaries, wore a frock coat and did his best work on Shabbos. Leigh was a good Episcopalian, but somehow saw the world through Hasidic eyes. The poet, in an inspired mood, wrote a poem of 18 short lines; singing the same love thy neighbor theme that's in our prayer book. Unintentionally, it is a very Jewish poem: An angel alights in

the room of Abou Ben Adhem, an exemplary soul who:

".. saw within the moonlight in his room making it rich like a lily in bloom an angel writing in a book of gold the names of those who love the Lord."

Abou Ben Adhem, in a flash, sits up in his bed only half awake, but alert enough to know that his visitor is not his cousin from Cincinnati. Am I in your Golden Book, he wants to know?

("Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold.") The angel sadly shakes his head.

But the man with a heart for humanity is not disheartened. "Well, he says, "put me down as one who loves his fellow man!"

The angel notes the words of Abou Ben Adhem and disappears. Next night he's back in the dim bedroom "with a great wakening light" and his fateful list of those who love the Lord.

"And lo, Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

Loving your fellow man is like loving G-d, an insight initially proclaimed by our Tanach.

I've heard it said that the hardest part of being a good Jew is loving your fellow Jews. Now I didn't originate that – it's probably in the Talmud or maybe in the Tanach from some bitter prophet like Jeremiah. But sadly, it's true. Didn't G-d, himself, tell us we're a stiff-necked people? Easy going, sweet, lovable people don't cure polio, don't split the atom, and don't win Nobel prizes. They're too busy displaying their love. There's some furnace going in the core of great people that keeps them from election as

most popular kid in school or fraternity/ sorority presidency. You wouldn't have enjoyed a beer and a bowl of pretzels with Einstein. Your Uncle Louie was probably much better at small talk.

In all the English vocabulary the hardest word to define is love. It has no synonym - only an antonym. It thinly communicates when it describes our relationship with our fellow creatures - even the four-legged ones. But it miserably fails to describe our feeling to our Creator. Even though my concordance counts it over 150 times in the Tanach. In nature, love flows down, not up. A river originating in a mountain peak flows down to water the animal and plant life at its base. Survival of the species demands it. Our limited human understanding comes closest to defining divine love by loving our fellow human creatures. And while we're talking about love and G-d and man and English poets, let me remind you of Alexander Pope - another famous English Bard. He's clearly on my side; "The proper study of mankind is man," he says. "Presume not G-d to scan," which to my understanding says the creator lies beyond our telescopes.

What is love? Biblically – I say – that's not an irrelevant question since our bible tells us countless times to "love" the Lord your G-d. We understand friendship – we know all about lust, we understand why your heart glows when your wife makes Kreplach in chicken soup, your favorite. And even closer to your emotional warmth is the sensation of holding in your arms your newborn child. But words fail when we

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try to cozy up to the Lord. There is awe, respect, and reverence – but love! How to love G-d?

I've never met anyone who loved G-d and could explain that exotic emotion. It cannot be expressed any more than a fish expresses his love for water – his medium. A cat will die fighting to defend its kittens. But does it love them? The cat must have something in her we call love; a very imprecise word. Its offspring – like its kindred mammal, man – never gives, only takes.

Maybe the prophets and Leigh Hunt were onto something. The word for "love" of G-d, as the passion itself, is not in our lexicon. Love thy fellow man. That, itself, is an awesome challenge.

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 The Elephant in the Room is....

By Howard Weisband

A report in the "Washington Post" titled "U.S., Arab nations plan for postwar Gaza, timeline for Palestinian state," authored by three reporters, dated February 14, says that a coalition of countries – Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Palestinian representatives, in addition to the United States – are working "to reach agreement among themselves," and "are rushing to complete a detailed, comprehensive plan for long-term peace between Israel and Palestinians, including a firm timeline for the establishment of a Palestinian state, that could be announced as early as the next several weeks."

"To reach agreement among themselves?" "For the establishment of a Palestinian state?" For a "long-term peace between Israel and Palestinians?"

Intriguing. But where in such discussions is Israel? The answer:

"The elephant in the planning room is Israel, and whether its government will acquiesce to much of what is being discussed: the withdrawal of many, if not all, settler communities on the West Bank; a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem; the reconstruction of Gaza; and security and governance arrangements for a combined West Bank and Gaza. The hope is that Israel would also be offered specific security guarantees and normalization

with Saudi Arabia and other Arab states that would be hard to refuse."

Fascinating. Israel is identified as the elephant in the room, yet Israel literally is not even in the room!

Therefore, is it any wonder that on February 18 the Israeli Government unanimously approved a statement saying that "Israel categorically rejects international diktats around a permanent settlement with the Palestinians. A settlement, if it is achieved, will come about only through direct negotiations between the sides, with no preconditions. Israel will continue to oppose a unilateral recognition of a Palestinian state. After October 7, such a move would be a massive, unprecedented prize for terror."

The Knesset approved this decision on February 21 by a massive majority, 99-9.

Where is the recognition that the elephant in the room is Hamas? And Hezbollah? Even Iran for that matter? Perhaps this elephant is alluded to when the "Washington Post" article reports that: "The key is the hostage deal," said one U.S. official among several American and Arab diplomats who discussed the subject on the condition of anonymity to avoid derailing the plan before it is completed."

Yes, the hostages must be returned home. And Israel must decisively win the current war, eliminating the military and governance capabilities of Hamas in Gaza, thereby permanently creating a safe and secure border. Hamas has threatened to repeat October 7. That possibility must be eradicated entirely.

True, one article does not create the complete picture, but it is rather symptomatic of current Middle East diplomacy, especially since October 7.

Where does that diplomacy fall short? In Dan Senor's February 19 podcast "Is a peaceful Palestinian State even possible?" Haviv Rettig Gur stated that the Palestinians must understand and accept "my story," ie, that of Israel and the Jewish people. Perhaps that is another way of saying they must accept the existence of Israel. To date of course that acceptance has yet to happen, from the time of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 to the UN Mandate in 1947 to the Oslo Accords in 1993, and various times in between until today.

The Palestinian society and culture is permeated by a militant jihadist vision of domination over the other. President Biden speaks of a "revitalized Palestinian Authority" in order to create a Palestinian state. But it requires much more. A radical educational, cultural,

and political reform is necessary within the Palestinian society so that the people and the leadership can understand the benefits and necessity of living in peace and harmony, and ideally in full cooperation, with the Jewish State.

Such a radical reform can only happen within the Palestinian society. It cannot be imposed upon them. The current generation of Palestinian leadership is seen as corrupt and ineffective. A younger, enlightened leadership must emerge and take the reigns of leadership, establish a democratic system, and also recognize the benefits of living side by side with Israel and within a global community.

Rather than taking aim at Israel, radical reform of the Palestinian Authority should be the objective of the Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Palestinian coalition named in the "Washington Post."

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

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## Jewish Service Can Support Recovery Efforts in Israel and Sustain Jewish Life in North America



Repair the World volunteers restore a community garden in Pittsburgh. Credit: Repair the World

#### By Cindy Greenberg

It's not hard to feel a sense of despair in these extraordinarily difficult times for Jews in Israel and around the world following the horrors of Oct. 7, the upsurge in antisemitism close to home, and the continuing loss of human life.

In times of despair, Jewish tradition offers us a path to hope, repair, and connection: service. In times of brokenness, we are called upon to ask: "What can I do to make things better?" Through service, we can address the most pressing needs in our communities, build connections, and restore our own sense of purpose.

Since Oct. 7, we have seen an unprecedented mobilization of mutual aid work in Israel. Volunteers are meeting urgent needs: identifying housing for people who have been displaced, running schools for displaced children, and supporting farms that have lost their agricultural workers. People are cooking meals for soldiers, displaced neighbors, and families impacted by the call-up of army reservists. In the early days of the war, numerous volunteers mobilized to collect, organize and distribute everything from food and toiletries to mobile phone chargers and clothing for those who needed it.

Service has a critical, long-term role to play not just in this time of crisis and in supporting recovery efforts in Israel, but in sustaining Jewish life and community in North America.

American Jews, too, have turned to service as a meaningful response to the crisis. At Repair the World, the organization I lead, the number of Jews turning to Jewish service since the start of the war has surged. Some have organized supplies to directly support Israelis and others have contributed to their own communities. Some are seeking out Jewish community because they are feeling less comfortable in other spaces. Others cite the rise of antisemitism and the importance of building bridges with their neighbors. All are looking for a way to find meaning and purpose.

For almost 15 years, Repair the World has been mobilizing Jews to serve, grounded in the idea that through service we can both strengthen our Jewish community and also make social impact. Our research clearly demonstrates that meaningful acts of service, grounded in Jewish learning and designed to address true community needs, can transform people and communities.

In Israel, several organizations, most notably Birthright Israel, MASA and Yahel already have mobilized Jews from North America to volunteer in Israel. This work should expand dramatically in the coming months. We know that service is one of the most powerful ways to build bridges across lines of difference. By volunteering in Israel

in partnership with Israelis, American Jews can contribute to Israel's recovery while building meaningful connections with their Israeli counterparts, deepening their own connection to Israel and providing a spiritual boost to Israelis by showing them that world Jewry is with them. Serving in Israel also can inspire an ongoing commitment to service once volunteers return home, which is a meaningful way for them to continue to live their Jewish values.

We must ensure that the American Jewish service in Israel holds true to what we at Repair the World have learned is most effective: that the service meets real needs, is done in partnership with those impacted and includes Jewish learning. Service is a universal value, but Jewish tradition has much to say about how we offer it, and participants should explore Jewish wisdom about how service should be approached.

Service that combines these components – that actually contributes to relief and recovery efforts and cares about the experience of American Jewish volunteers – will have the biggest impact.

Back in the United States, we're seeing young American Jews who may be feeling alone or distressed seeking new ways to connect to Jewish life and Jewish community. We need to recognize that service is a form of deep Jewish expression and do everything possible to welcome these young Jews into our Jewish community of purpose that focuses its time and energy on making the world better.

And at this time of rising antisemitism, there are young Jews expressing a newfound desire to be part of a movement that connects Jewish communities with other communities. Most of our organization's service work is done in deep partnership with non-Jewish communities, including those that are low-income, largely immigrant, on the socioeconomic periphery or communities of color. We're building bridges by working arm in arm in places like soup kitchens, food pantries, after-school programs and organizations supporting those experiencing homelessness.

Finally, service gives those who participate a sense of well-being, purpose, and connection to their peers. Among volunteers who have served in our programs, 90% indicated that Repair programs contributed to their overall health and well-being.

In these challenging times, service is a powerful statement of hope – a statement that our actions matter. Tikkun olam isn't just about repairing the world, but repairing ourselves.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media [nor The Hebrew Watchman].

This story was sponsored by and produced in collaboration with Repair the World, which mobilizes Jews and their communities to take action to pursue a just world, igniting a lifelong commitment to service. This story was produced by JTA's native content team. HW



# Anti-Israel Protester Hits Milwaukee Police Officer of Palestinian Descent

(JNS) – One of about 20 anti-Israel activists who protested a fundraiser held last Sunday by Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-Wis.) punched a Milwaukee police officer.

The protester, a woman, asked the officer about his ethnicity. When he revealed that he had a Palestinian background, she struck him and told him that he was on the wrong side then "Milwaukee Journal Sentinel" reported.

It wasn't known if the assailant was arrested at the Sunday event. The paper reported that the officer was hurt but not seriously.

"Striking a police officer is never acceptable," stated Andrew Mamo, a spokesman for the senator. HW





### Kugels & Collards:

Stories of Food, Family, and Tradition in Jewish South Carolina

Sunday, March 10th at 2:00 p.m. Memphis JCC Social Hall

Meet South Carolina authors Rachel Gordin Barnett and Lyssa Kligman Harvey as they share stories that illuminate the richness of the southern Jewish table. Their book *Kugels & Collards* is a tribute to the Jewish families who settled in South Carolina and melded their traditions and foods with the local ingredients and techniques of the South.

Come prepared to share your favorite memory from the kitchen or dining table of your parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents. Books will be available for purchase and kugels will be available for tasting!

Program is open to the community.

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## IDF Could Complete High-Intensity Phase of Gaza War 'by May'



Israeli troops at war, Feb. 20, 2024. Credit: IDF/X.

#### By Yaakov Lappin

(JNS) – The Israel Defense Forces will likely begin maneuvering in Rafah, southern Gaza – the last Hamas stronghold – towards the end of February and could complete the high-intensity phase of its war against Hamas by early May, a senior former Israeli defense official says.

Maj. Gen. (res.) Yaakov Amidror, senior fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, said during a call organized last Monday by the Jerusalem Press Club that by the start of March, the IDF will likely complete its operations in Khan Yunis and begin moving units into Rafah, assuming no hostage release deal is reached with Hamas, which would alter this timeline.

Amidror served as national security adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and as chairman of the National Security Council between 2011 and 2013. He is also a former head of Research Department in the IDF's Military Intelligence Directorate.

"There are four battalions of Hamas" in Rafah, Amidror said. "All of them will be dismantled by the IDF. This will take the whole March and maybe to the end of April.

"In the meantime, we have to be sure that part of the population, which is concentrated in Rafah will move slowly but surely to designated areas, which would be kind of a safe haven for this population." he added.

Many displaced Gazan civilians headed to Rafah "because they had the hope that they will be allowed to cross the border into Egypt," Amidror said, add-

ing, "The Egyptians do not want any Palestinians in Egypt. That was my, by the way, my assessment from the beginning – that they would not allow any Palestinian to enter Egypt."

#### The targeted raids phase

According to this rough assessment, by the start of May, the IDF will complete its high-intensity stage of operations against Hamas in southern Gaza, gain operational control of the entire Strip over and underground, and shift into the targeted raids phase, as it has already done in northern Gaza.

This next phase, according to Amidror, will entail "specific raids of battalions or brigades into specific areas based on intelligence that we will have." He estimated that it would take another six months to a year to "clean out the Gaza Strip totally" in this next phase.

"And then it will be 'the day after' in which someone will have to take responsibility for Gaza," he said.

Amidror added that the IDF is gleaning a great deal of intelligence from "papers" and other data sources confiscated from Hamas sites in Gaza, including from Hamas headquarters, and the interrogation of Hamas terrorists.

"Many of them are now instead of fighting and being killed, they are surrendering," he said.

Professor Eyal Zisser, vice rector of Tel Aviv University and chair of Contemporary History of the Middle East, told JNS that when the IDF completes the destruction of the remaining Hamas battalions, this would indeed constitute "the elimination of Hamas as an organized military force – akin to a regular

Absent a hostage deal, the army will likely dismantle four Rafah Hamas battalions by end of April, senior former official assesses.

army – with its headquarters, training camps, bases and weapon depots.

"But it turns it into a guerrilla organization – essentially like what happens in Judea and Samaria, where there are lone terrorists and cells carrying out terror attacks, and in Gaza, there is a vacuum and anarchy so it is more difficult to control than Judea and Samaria, hence it is a challenge for the IDF but a lesser challenge than dealing with the Hamas army with which we started the war."

Addressing the senior Hamas leadership, Zisser said, "They certainly did not anticipate this happening, and certainly relied on their past experience that there would be fighting for several weeks and that the IDF would not enter the Strip.

"Currently, they essentially do not control anything but are hiding in a bunker. However, the Hamas units operate independently and in a disconnected manner, as they were trained to do. So there is no management of the war, there is hiding and concealment, and I assume they are hiding in the hope of surviving and that eventually, the IDF will leave the Strip, and they will come out of the bunker – and for them, to survive will be to win." HW



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