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# The Spirit of Civics Comes Alive at Bornblum



**Bornblum Jewish Community School Second Grader decked out in American gear.**

This year at Bornblum Jewish Community School students are engaged with the study of civics more deeply than ever before. According to Bornblum teacher, Cindy VanGunda, “Part of our school’s mission is to inspire students to become ‘socially responsible community leaders with a life-long connection to their Jewish identity.’ Deciding to infuse civics learning naturally into our current curricula across all grades and subjects has allowed our students to develop a better understanding of important peo-

ple, places, and events that helped create our American history.”

The commitment to renewed civic education began at the 2023-2024 Civic Spirit conference in New York, where three Bornblum teachers, including Mrs. Vangunda, Mrs. Stephanie Osher and Morah Michal Almalem, represented Bornblum in the teacher cohort. These teachers became passionate about civics education and brought that civic spirit back to Memphis.

Throughout this school year, classes have studied American civics in ways that mesh with their curriculum. These learning opportunities were interactive and experiential, designed not just to teach civics, but to excite students about being citizens of America. And at Bornblum, students benefitted from the extra layer of learning about what it means to be Jewish Americans and the unique engagement of the Jewish community with American democracy.

According to Almalem, “Infusing students with a sense of patriotism is a challenge in schools these days, and we wanted our civic spirit program not only to teach facts about America, but to challenge students and faculty to explore their patriotism.”

All of the civics lessons and experi-

ences throughout the year were done with the goal of curating a meaningful and interactive Civic Spirit Fair during the winter term. And the students succeeding by creating incredible thoughtful exhibits for the Bornblum community to explore from February 7-14. Students traveling through the fair found five themes. The first two areas were We the People, which explored American foundations and From Many Places, One Nation, which offered perspectives on immigration to America. Following time exploring immigration stories, students explored Journeys and Identities: the American Jewish Experience that focused on the unique experience of American Jews. Next, students turned to Citizenship and Civics: Conservation and Community, through which they explored their responsibility as stewards of America’s land and natural resources. Finally, students explored material under the banner of “Standing for Freedom,” where exhibits challenged students to engage in the fight for freedom for all Americans.

According to Jill Cross, Bornblum’s director of Curriculum and Instruction, the school wanted to dive below the surface and explore people, places and events that are often overlooked in tra-

ditional curricula. “We touched stories like that of Mordecai Sheftall, the highest-ranking Jewish Patriot in the American Revolution, and Medal of Honor recipient David Urbansky. These lessons gave students a deeper understanding of how Jewish individuals have influenced and been shaped by America’s commitment to liberty, equality and religious freedom.”

From VanGunda’s perspective, the goal of engaging with Civic Spirit at Bornblum was to help students understand that, “Whether they are exercising the right to vote, learning skills for civil discourse, or knowing how to protect our environment and help in conservation efforts, as Jewish Americans, our students are now empowered to create the future they want for tomorrow’s generation.”

“I love working in a school where we are constantly looking at the intersections between being Jewish and the world around us” said Cross. “These connections were so evident throughout the fair. For example, students explored George Washington’s letter to the Jews of Newport, allowing them to connect the nation’s early foundations of religious freedom with the contributions of Jewish Americans to its core values.” **HW**

# Stax 910 Band Delivers Soulful Performance at Temple Israel



**Members of the Stax 910 Band took to the aisles to dance with audience members including the youngest folks.**

The spirit of Stax Records came alive at Temple Israel on Wednesday, February 5, as the Stax 910 Band delivered a high-energy performance that had the audience clapping, dancing and singing along.

This electrifying concert launched TIMPO Sessions, a new music series celebrating the rich musical heritage of Memphis.

As the premier ensemble of the Stax Music Academy, the Stax 910 Band

honored the legacy of Memphis’ music with songs by artists such as Otis Redding, Booker T. & the MG’s, and The Staple Singers while bringing their own fresh energy to the stage. Highlights of the night included an exhilarating rendition of “(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher,” which had the crowd on its feet, and a soulful performance of “(Sittin’ On) The Dock of the Bay,” showcasing the deep storytelling and emotion of Stax’s music.



**The audience was moved to dance, even in their seats, as the hits from the Stax 910 Band kept rolling.**

Temple Israel’s Music Director, Emily Groff Heilborn, introduced the series and said bringing Stax to Temple Israel was a natural choice.

“The first place Rabbi Greenstein took me when I visited Memphis was Stax,” she said. “When planning TIMPO Sessions, I knew immediately we had to bring them in – there’s no better representation of the music that makes Memphis who it is.”

Audience members left inspired, in-

cluding long-time Temple Israel member David Bearman. “This was an incredible group of young people, and I can’t wait to see them again,” he said.

TIMPO (Temple Israel Music Programming and Outreach) was created to engage the community through music, offering performances, classes, and educational opportunities. With this exciting kickoff, anticipation is already building for the next TIMPO Sessions event in Fall 2025. **HW**

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# Memphis Jewish and Hindu Communities Unite at Film Festival



Fostering cultural connections, Memphis Jewish Federation’s Community Relations Council, led by Engagement co-chairs Marla Shainberg and Janet Shipman, hosted members of the Hindu community for an Israeli-style dinner and movie. Members of

the India Cultural Center and Temple and BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Temple enjoyed falafel, fellowship and watching “Running On Sand,” the opening film of the MJCC’s Morris and Mollye Fogelman International Jewish Film Festival. [HW](#)

# 56% of American Jews Changed Behavior in the Past Year Over Antisemitism Fears, Survey Finds



Demonstrators in support of Israel gather to denounce antisemitism and call for the release of Israeli hostages, on the National Mall in Washington, DC, on November 14, 2023. Credit: Roberto Schmidt/AFP via Getty Images

By Asaf Elia-Shalev

(JTA) – Most American Jewish adults are altering their behavior due to fears of antisemitism, according to a new survey commissioned by the American Jewish Committee and published last Wednesday. When asked in late 2024, about 56% of respondents said they changed their behavior in the preceding 12 months, up from 46% in 2023 and 38% in 2022. This figure includes respondents who said they avoided wearing clothing or displaying items that might identify

them as Jewish, such as Stars of David; chose not to post content on social media that could reveal their Jewish identity or views on Jewish issues; or stayed away from certain places due to concerns for their safety or comfort as a Jewish person. The AJC said the survey was designed to capture how American Jews have experienced antisemitism in the year-plus following the outbreak of the war in Gaza. The results largely align with findings from other surveys, further

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# Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. Feb. 21, 2025 / 23 Shevat, 5785 .....5:30 p.m.  
Havdalah, Sat. Feb. 22, 2025 / 24 Shevat, 5785 ..... 6:27 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Mishpatim

documenting the rise in antisemitism. The survey was conducted in October and November via a phone and online questionnaire with 1,732 participants meant to be representative of all American Jewish adults, with a margin of error of 3.3%. Much of the survey focuses on public perceptions and concerns about antisemitism. Nearly eight in 10 respondents reported feeling at least somewhat less safe in the United States following Hamas’ attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, than they did previously. Seven in 10 said Jews are less secure than they were a

year ago, and more than 90% believe antisemitism has increased over the past five years. “Antisemitism has reached a tipping point in America, threatening the freedoms of American Jews and casting an ominous shadow across our society,” AJC CEO Ted Deutch said in a statement. “This is an all-hands-on-deck moment for leaders across the U.S. We must act now to protect Jews – and America – from rising antisemitism.” About a third of respondents said they were the target of antisemitism in the preceding 12 months. This includes people who reported being physically assaulted in an antisemitic attack (2%); targeted with verbal remarks (23%) or social media posts (17%); victims of vandalism or messaging left on your personal property (6%); or subjected to other forms of antisemitism not specifically asked about in the survey (10%). Of those targeted, 78% said they did not report the incident. The AJC also conducted a separate survey to assess attitudes about antisemitism among the general U.S. population. Most American adults expressed concern about rising antisemitism, according to responses from approximately 2,100 participants. About seven in 10 said they had heard of the term antisemitism and understood its meaning. About 95% of American Jewish adults and 90% of all American adults believe that antisemitism is a problem for everyone and that combating it is a shared responsibility. [HW](#)



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# Some Hostages Spent Eight Straight Months in Tunnels



**Former Hamas hostage Emily Damari, 28, is seen after her release at Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan on Jan. 19, 2024. Credit: Maayan Toaf/GPO.**

(JNS) – Some of the seven hostages released from Gaza during the current ceasefire had been held in Hamas tunnels for eight consecutive months, deprived of daylight and human contact, an Israeli medical official revealed last Monday.

“Some of them told us that they’ve been in the past few months, that they’ve been through the entire time, in tunnels, underground,” Reuters quoted Col. Dr. Avi Banov, deputy commander of the IDF Medical Corps, as saying.

“Some of them were alone through the entire time they were there,” he continued. “Those who said they were together were in better shape.”

The Israeli military oversees the initial health assessments of the released hostages.

Banov added that the hostages reported an improvement in their treatment in the final days before their release, when

they were allowed to bathe and change clothes, and were provided with better food.

Some hostages had not received adequate care for wounds sustained during the Hamas-led attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, and a few showed signs of “mild starvation,” Banov noted.

The three civilian women released on the first day of the ceasefire, Jan. 19, were discharged from Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer in Ramat Gan last Sunday, while the four female soldiers freed in the second batch on Jan. 25 are still receiving care at Beilinson Hospital in Petach Tikvah.

Beilinson reported that the released hostages’ health is improving, with noticeable progress in nutritional and other indicators, though medical tests are ongoing.

Three hostages are to be released on Thursday – civilian Arbel Yehud, IDF soldier Agam Berger and an unidentified man. Three more abductees [were] to be freed on Saturday.

Eight of the 33 hostages intended for release during the first phase of the Gaza ceasefire-hostage deal are dead, according to a list provided by Hamas.

Eighty-seven of the 251 captives taken by Hamas during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack remain in Gaza. This includes the remains of at least 34 hostages, confirmed dead by the Israel Defense Forces. Hamas is also holding two Israeli civilians who entered Gaza in 2014 and 2015, as well as the body of an IDF soldier killed in 2014. Another soldier’s remains were recovered earlier this month. **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, February 24**  
**Speaker: Tal Nezry, MJCC Community Shlichah with the Center of Jewish Life & Learning**

Tal was in Israel on October 7, 2023, the day of the horrible attack on the Jewish people by Hamas. She will share stories of her friends, many of whom, unfortunately, were involved. She will also share famous stories in Israel of that terrible day. Tal will also talk about some of the current feelings of Israelis. We would appreciate reservations, so we know how many to plan on. Call Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220. Please leave a message if he is out and he will call you back. This should be a very exciting and informative talk!

**Wednesday, February 26**  
**Rabbi Talk**  
**Speaker: Rabbi Abe Schacter-Gampel, Director for the MJCC Center of Jewish Life and Learning**  
**Topic: When Adar Begins Our Joy Increases!**

Rabbi Abe always has a larger than regular audience for his informative talks. Please call the front desk at the MJCC at 901-761-0810 and make your reservation for lunch and the talk. His talks are always enlightening and very entertaining! A question-and-answer period will follow.



**Monday, March 3**  
**Field Trip to Mid-South Hobbies**

Mid-South Hobbies has been gracious in providing art projects for the seniors for the past several months. They have also been here to show us how to use them! Now we will go there to see all the exciting things they have to offer. They have an incredible mix of things to see and do. They have everything from books, model trains, model kits, toys, games, hobbies, arts and crafts, clothes, and an incredible selection of remote-control cars. Great for seniors and for their kids or grandkids! Should be a lot of fun for everyone. All of the articles about seniors keeping mentally fit mention starting new hobbies and learning new things is a plus. Reservations are required as the bus only holds 14. If anyone would like to meet us there, please call Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220 so we have an idea of the size of the group to let them know.

**Wednesday, March 5**  
**Field Trip to Baron Hirsch for Luncheon**

The group will go on a field trip to Baron Hirsch Synagogue for their Monthly Luncheon. Everyone so enjoyed their last luncheon with great food, terrific entertainment and a lively Bingo game that followed! You can ride the Senior Bus from the MJCC, be picked up if you are in the area, or meet us there. Reservations can be called in directly to the Baron Hirsch office at 901-683-7485 or call the front desk of the MJCC and be put on the list.

Please 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 Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or [stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org](mailto:stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org) or by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. Steve works Monday thru Thursday 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **HW**

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# The ISJL Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary with First-Ever Giving Day

JACKSON, MS – The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) is proud to announce a historic milestone – 2025 marks the organization’s 25th anniversary of supporting, connecting, and celebrating Jewish communities across the South. In honor of this milestone, the ISJL is launching its first-ever Giving Day on February 25, 2025, to ensure that its impact continues for generations to come.

Since its founding in 2000, the ISJL has been dedicated to preserving the rich history and vibrant culture of

Jewish life across its 13-state region. Through its three core service areas – Education, Culture, and Spirituality – the ISJL has provided innovative programs, resources, and community engagement opportunities tailored to the unique needs of Southern Jewish communities.

“We are proud to have attained this milestone – it’s a remarkable feat, and one that we don’t take for granted,” said Michele Schipper, ISJL chief executive officer. “We are proud of our past but focused on the future, making good every day on the ISJL’s commitment to pro-

vide resources for a meaningful Jewish life to everyone, no matter where they live.”

The ISJL Giving Day on February 25 will be a day of celebration, engagement and philanthropy. Supporters and community members are encouraged to follow the ISJL on social media throughout the day for updates, special guest appearances, and inspiring stories showcasing the Institute’s impact on Southern Jewish life.

The ISJL invites everyone – past and present supporters, partner organizations, and those who believe in the

strength of Southern Jewish communities – to participate in this special Giving Day and be a part of shaping the next 25 years. The ISJL will also share information throughout the year about ongoing celebrations of this milestone, including an event at the Southern & Jewish conference this summer.

The Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) supports, connects, and celebrates Jewish life in the South. To learn more about the ISJL and its programs, visit [www.isjl.org](http://www.isjl.org), call 601-362-6357, or follow @TheISJL on social media. **HW**

# Birthright Israel Foundation Announces Launch of the ‘Fund for the Jewish Future’ with a \$25 Million Legacy Gift from Charles Bronfman



**Charles Bronfman with his wife, Rita Bronfman. Credit: Courtesy of Birthright Israel Foundation.**

New York (February 3, 2025) – Today, Birthright Israel Foundation announces the launch of the Birthright Israel Fund for the Jewish Future, a legacy initiative aimed at growing its endowment, to ensure the transformative programs connecting young adults to their Jewish identity and Israel are available for generations to come.

The Foundation is honored to announce that philanthropist and co-founder of Birthright Israel, Mr. Charles Bronfman, has made a legacy commitment of \$25 million to support this new initiative.

“Birthright Israel Foundation is dedicated to building a robust endowment to ensure the growth and sustainability

of our essential programs for generations to come,” said Elias Saratovsky, president and CEO of Birthright Israel Foundation. “With \$80 million already committed from 100 donors, we invite you to join this transformative effort. Including a bequest to the endowment ensures that your legacy will provide vital financial support for Birthright Israel well into the future.”

Mr. Bronfman, honorary chair of the Birthright Israel Fund for the Jewish Future, stated that his gift reflects his commitment to the future of the Jewish people and serves as an example for the entire community. “Birthright Israel is the most important educational program in the Jewish world, and it must continue. It’s everyone’s responsibility to ensure its long-term success. Legacy is about what you leave behind – did you make a difference? Did you create something meaningful for your children, grandchildren, and your people?” said Bronfman.

“By making a legacy commitment, you’re making a lasting investment that will strengthen and empower the Jewish people for years to come. If you take pride in being Jewish and feel a connection to our community, don’t hesitate to express it – take action to support it.”

Mr. Bronfman has also expressed

his deep pride in his involvement with Birthright Israel. “Birthright Israel is one of those phenomena that happen once in a generation. To witness its success makes me feel absolutely wonderful.”

He now seeks to take the next step in his commitment to the State of Israel and to the next generation of Jewish young adults, believing that Birthright Israel’s life-changing programs must be sustained, and that ensuring financial support is a collective responsibility.

“Charles’ \$25 million legacy gift will help ensure that countless Jewish young adults, including many second-generation participants, continue to benefit from this transformative Israel experience,” said Saratovsky.

A legacy gift is a commitment made through an estate plan to support an organization’s endowment. Birthright Israel Foundation has established the Birthright Israel Fund for the Jewish Future to ensure the program’s enduring impact. According to the Jewish Future Pledge, over the next 25 years, more than \$65 trillion will be transferred to the next generation, with Jewish donors expected to direct approximately 20% of that wealth to charitable causes – resulting in over \$600 billion in support for Jewish and Israeli organizations. **HW**

# Netanyahu Holds Security Briefing in Southern Israel as Rocket Fired from Gaza

*The security assessment at the IDF Southern Command base lasted some four hours and focused on “the IDF’s operational plans for various scenarios.”*

(JNS) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a security assessment last Thursday evening at the Israel Defense Forces’ Southern Command in Beersheva as Gaza terrorists targeted the Jewish state with a rocket.

The briefing at the military headquarters in Beersheva was also attended by Defense Minister Israel Katz, Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer, National Security Adviser Tzachi Hanegbi, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzl Halevi, IDF Chief of Staff-Designate Maj. Gen. (res.) Eyal Zamir, OC Southern Command Maj. Gen. Yaron Finkelman, Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) chief Ronen Bar and other senior Israeli officials.

The security assessment at the Southern Command base lasted some four hours and focused on “the IDF’s operational plans for various scenarios,” a political source in Jerusalem told Hebrew media.

As the meeting got underway, Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip fired a rocket toward Israel, the IDF said. The projectile fell short inside the Strip, kill-

ing a 14-year-old Palestinian, according to initial reports.

The military shared surveillance footage apparently showing a rocket falling inside a densely populated area shortly after being launched.

“The rocket fell inside Gaza. The IDF is committed to fully implementing the conditions of the agreement for the return of the hostages,” it added.

In response to the attempted strike, IDF forces attacked the launch pad from where the attack originated, the IDF stated. Netanyahu and Katz reportedly green-lighted the army’s response at Southern Command.

‘A harsh and disproportionate response’

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, whose Religious Zionist Party has demanded that the Israeli government commit to resuming the war to dismantle Hamas following the first phase of the hostage deal, last Thursday night urged a “disproportionate response” to the attack.

“A rocket was launched from Gaza towards the State of Israel. Mr. Prime

Minister, this is a testing moment,” Smotrich wrote in a statement on X.

“A moment for a harsh and disproportionate response that will make it clear that we are not returning to the [security] concept of October 6th,” he continued, referring to the notion that persisted in believing that the terrorist group was deterred before the massacre of Israelis on Oct. 7, 2023.

“And to those of you who are calling for an end to the war – wake up! Our duty to the citizens of Israel and the residents of the Gaza Envelope [border area] is to completely destroy Hamas,” he concluded.

The Israeli military is preparing to possibly resume fighting in Gaza following Hamas’s announcement last Monday that it would postpone releasing hostages in breach of its commitments under the truce deal.

Unless Hamas returns Israeli hostages by noon on Saturday, the ceasefire will expire and the IDF will resume fighting until total victory over Hamas, Netanyahu vowed last Tuesday.

His ultimatum followed remarks by U.S. President Donald Trump, who also named Saturday at noon as the time after which “all hell will break loose” unless the terror group releases all the hostages.

Last Thursday, Hamas reportedly confirmed to Egypt its commitment to the terms of the deal, vowing to release three captives on Saturday. The release is reportedly contingent on Israel supplying caravans, tents, fuel, heavy equipment, medicines and hospital renovation materials to Gaza.

“The Wall Street Journal” reported last Thursday that Israel asked mediators Qatar and Egypt to expedite the release of the remaining six live captives who are included in the 33 slated to be released during the first phase but are not expected to be among those three set to be freed Saturday.

According to the “Journal” report, which cited sources in Doha and Cairo, Jerusalem also told mediators it wants to expand the list of those set to be freed in the first phase beyond the 33 captives already agreed upon. **HW**



# Terrorists Released by Israel Leave Prison as Millionaires



Palestinians rally in support of Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas in Tubas, northeastern Samaria, Sept. 27, 2020. Credit: Nasser Ishtayeh/Flash90.

By David Isaac

(JNS) – Many terrorists released by Israel are millionaires, flush with cash from years of receiving monthly Palestinian Authority “pay for slay” stipends, an analysis by a Jerusalem-based watchdog group revealed last Wednesday.

Palestinian Media Watch posted a list of all 734 terrorists scheduled for release from Israeli prisons in the first phase of the hostages-for-ceasefire agreement with Hamas, together with their “salaries” – the dollar amounts each terrorist had received from the Palestinian Authority’s “pay-for-slay” program, officially the Martyrs’ Fund, while incarcerated.

In total, the terrorists received

\$141,837,087, or more than half a billion shekels. Of those, 316, or nearly half, received more than a million shekels. (Palestinian Media Watch created a program to crunch the numbers, inputting all the relevant P.A. criteria – crime, marital status, number of children, etc., to determine the size of their stipends.)

“It’s a tremendous force driving terror,” Itamar Marcus, Palestinian Media Watch’s founder and director, told JNS.

First, it signals to Palestinians that these terrorists weren’t working in a vacuum, but were acting in the name of the P.A.

Second, the wealth places the terrorists in an honored position in Palestinian society, in fact, “Palestinian terrorists

are the most honored people in Palestinian society,” he said.

“When they’re introduced, and in interviews, even years after they were released from jail, they’re called Asra [“Prisoner”]. That’s their title. It’s like an ambassador. It’s actually similar to POW [prisoner of war]. They have a different word for criminal prisoners. For the P.A., they’re legitimate fighters, even if they killed women and children,” Marcus said.

“In another society, if a criminal goes to jail for murdering someone, he’s ashamed about it. In the Palestinian Authority, they go around with a crown on their heads,” he said.

The P.A.’s ongoing “pay-for-slay” program demonstrates that Israel’s efforts to curtail it have not succeeded. In July 2018, Israel, which collects tax and tariff revenue of behalf of the P.A., passed a law withholding those funds equal to the amount the P.A. paid to terrorists. The law aimed to put an end to the practice.

The P.A. declared that payments would go on. P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas said in October 2019, “The Martyrs and their families are sacred, [and so are] the wounded and the prisoners. We must pay all of them. If one penny remains in our hands it is for them and not for the living.”

Abbas has made good on his pledge. Marcus told JNS that the P.A. has not paid its employees their full salaries – “at one point they skipped a whole month, which they’ve never made up” – to ensure imprisoned terrorists were paid in full.

“What’s outrageous, of course, is a person who’s living at home, working, who’s got five or six kids and needs the money – his salary you’re cutting to 70%. But the prisoner who’s getting everything – all his food and everything taken care of by Israel – that’s the one who’s getting 100%. So it’s just a message of values,” Marcus said.

In response, Palestinian Media Watch spearheaded a campaign in 2020 together with the IDF to effect a change whereby much of Israel’s Anti-Terror Law would be applied to Judea and Samaria, “rendering banks liable to punishment for facilitating P.A. terror salaries.”

It worked to a degree. It sent the P.A. into crisis as it realized its banks would be exposed to international terror financing laws. “According to the official statements that we got, 33,000 bank accounts were closed,” Marcus said.

As a temporary workaround, the P.A. paid the terrorists’ families through the post office. (The families complained about the indignity of having to wait in line to receive their stipends, Marcus noted.)

Then the P.A. opened a special bank dedicated solely to receiving the funds from the P.A. “The only thing that this bank does is pay terrorist salaries,” he said.

Marcus’s suggestion is to arrest anyone in the P.A. involved in the “pay-for-slay” program, even if that means arresting the entire staff at the P.A.’s Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs.

“They should all be arrested, put in jail, charged. And that would stop it very quickly,” he said. **HW**



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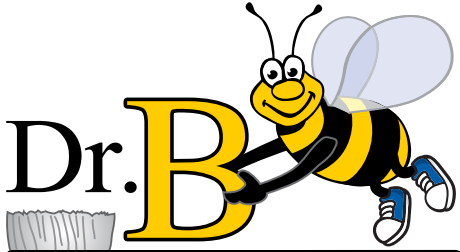
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# A New Nazi Hunters Show is Coming to Netflix



via Getty Images

By Lior Zaltzman

This originally appeared on “Kveler,” reprinted with permission.

“The Crown” creator Peter Morgan is finally drawing on his Jewish roots for an exciting new Netflix series. Morgan, the son of a German Jew who fled the Nazis and wound up in London, will be helming a series adaptation of the 1976 science fiction novel by Ira Levin called “The Boys from Brazil.” The 1978 film adaptation of the book starring Lauren Olivier, Gregory Peck, Anne Meara and Steve Guttenberg was nominated for three Academy Awards.

While we don’t know much about the project yet, we do know its Jewish protagonist, Yakov Liebermann – loosely based on real-life Nazi hunter and Holocaust survivor Simon Weisenthal –will be played by “Succession” star Jeremy Strong, who, like Morgan, has a Jewish father. While Strong does not identify as Jewish, he has spoken about his closeness to his Jewish grandfather, a plumber from Queens with whom he spent much time and celebrated a few Passover seders.


Strong has played many a historic Jewish role, from Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza in the play “New Jerusalem” to lawyer Roy Cohn in “The Apprentice,” a role that recently earned him his first Academy Award nomination. He does seem perfectly poised to star in a trippy and dark project like this.


“The Boys from Brazil” tells the tale of a Nazi hunter who gets a call tipping him off to the fact that the notorious Nazi doctor Josef Mengele, known as “the angel of death,” who experimented on Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz, is alive and well in Brazil. Not only that, but he is trying to enact a sinister plot to bring the Nazis back into power. Liebermann, of course, tries to stop him.

If you feel like you’re getting a bit of TV déjà vu, you’re not alone. Prime Video’s “Hunters,” starring Logan Lerman, Josh Radnor and Carol Kane, told a similar tale of a group of Nazi hunters in 1970s New York trying to foil a sinister plan. While the show was panned by the likes of the Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, I found it to be highly compelling Jewish TV.

For anyone who watched all six seasons of Morgan’s excellent and critically acclaimed “The Crown,” following generations of the British monarchy starting with the rise to power of Queen Elizabeth II, you can assume “The Boys from Brazil” won’t be as funny and camp as “Hunters,” but it will probably be excellently crafted and compelling, and will allow Morgan to do something a little less prim and proper than a show about British nobility.

“I’d like to do something where people aren’t polite, aren’t upper-class British, and they have guns. I want some guns,” Morgan said in an interview with “Variety” back in 2024 in which he revealed that he was working on “The Boys from Brazil.” He recalled enviously listening to fellow showrunners talk about how to deal with scenes where one disposes of a body. Without spoiling much, Morgan has assured us that his new show will indeed feature a lot of (Nazi, we assume) bodies. We can’t wait to see his action-filled TV dreams come to fruition, which will hopefully be ready to binge on Netflix soon. **HW**





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# Super Bowl Performer Ejected after Displaying Palestinian/ Sudanese Flag that Said ‘Gaza’

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – A performer unfurled a banner showing the Sudanese and Palestinian flags and the words “Sudan” and “Gaza” during Kendrick Lamar’s halftime show at Super Bowl LIX in New Orleans last Sunday.

The performer, who was not immediately identified, was detained on the field and will be barred from all NFL stadiums for the rest of his life, the NFL said in a statement. The football organization and Roc Nation, which produced the halftime show, said the flag had not been part of any plan or rehearsal.

“The individual hid the item on his possession and unveiled it late in the show,” the NFL said. “No one involved with the production was aware of the individual’s intent.”

The protester first showed the banner while standing on the hood of a Buick Grand National GNX while Lamar sang “Not For Us,” a diss track targeting the Jewish rapper Drake. He then jumped off the car and ran on the field for about 20 seconds before being tackled by security.

The flag represented the only visible indication of the ongoing Israel-Hamas war at the game, during which the Philadelphia Eagles handily defeated the Kansas City Chiefs. It also represented an unusual public display of protest in support of Sudan, where two years of civil war have led to a humanitarian crisis including famine, sexual violence, collapse of health care systems and mass displacement. Tens of thousands have been killed in the conflict, which the outgoing Biden administration labeled a genocide last month. [HW](#)



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# Data for Sale: Tips to Help Protect Your Private Information

*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*

On December 3, 2024, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) announced a proposed settlement in legal action against a data broker named Mobilewalla, which was accused of using location data obtained through online advertising auctions to identify consumers by factors such as private home address and visits to health-care clinics and churches.

In an online auction, a data broker bids to place “real-time” ads for its clients on a consumer’s cell phone or other mobile device, based on consumer data shared in the auction, which typically includes a unique mobile advertising identifier (MAID) and the consumer’s location at the time of the auction. The FTC alleged that Mobilewalla retained data regardless of whether or not it won the auction and made no reasonable effort to determine if consumers had given permission to use their data.

According to the complaint, between January 2018 and June 2020, Mobilewalla collected more than 500 million MAID/location pairings and sold the raw data to advertisers, data brokers, and analytics firms. The company also used the data to create audience segments for their clients by processing it through virtual “geofences” around specific sites. For example, MAIDs that appeared within geographic coordinates around pregnancy centers were used to build audience segments targeting pregnant women. Other targeted sites included churches, labor offices, LGBTQ+ locations, and political or protest gatherings.

**A gray area**  
Regulation of data brokers is a gray area, and this is the first time the FTC

has alleged that obtaining consumer data from online advertising auctions for purposes other than participating in the auction is an unfair practice. On the same day the FTC released its proposed settlement, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau proposed a rule requiring data brokers who sell certain sensitive consumer information to be considered consumer reporting agencies under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, which would require them to follow more rigorous practices regarding accuracy, safeguards, and consumer access to their own data. For now, however, this rule and the FTC settlement are only proposals.

**Privacy vs. convenience**  
Regardless of government regulations, the burden for protecting your private information falls primarily on you. Personal data is a valuable commodity, and there will always be entities, whether criminals or legitimate businesses, who want to obtain and use your personal information. Protecting your data takes work, and you may have to choose between privacy and convenience.

**Basic security**  
Data brokers like Mobilewalla are not directly stealing data, but there are plenty of criminals who try to do that every day. A sound security strategy starts with creating a unique strong password for every site and using two-factor authorization for any site containing sensitive information. Never click on links in a text, email, or website unless you know exactly where the link is going to take you. Don’t reply to emails unless you know the sender. Criminals can “spoof” an email address by making the name appear legitimate.

Check the actual email address behind the name and look carefully at logos or other content used to make a spam email look legitimate – it’s usually fairly easy to see that it is not. For more tips on data security, see [consumer.ftc.gov/articles/protect-your-personal-information-hackers-and-scammers](https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/protect-your-personal-information-hackers-and-scammers).

**Control what you reveal**  
Basic security measures may help protect you from criminals, but if you are like most people, you are giving away personal data every day. Here are some tips to limit what you offer.

**Turn off tracking.** The MAID number on your mobile device allows it to be tracked across websites. Unless you want personalized ads, there is generally no reason to allow tracking. On an iPhone or iPad, go to Settings > Privacy & Security > Tracking and turn off Allow Apps to Request to Track. This will prevent apps from tracking in the future and prompt you to revoke permission for any apps you have allowed to track. Apple also has its own targeted ad system, which you can disable at Settings > Privacy > Apple Advertising. On an Android device, go to Settings > Privacy > Ads and tap Delete Advertising ID. Or you can tap Reset Advertising ID to delete past tracking and create a new ID for future tracking.

**Limit cookies and delete browser data.** Cookies are small packets of data that allow a website to identify you. Some cookies are necessary, but most are not. Many websites offer an option to limit usage to functional cookies. You can set global rules for cookies in your browser and/or use private browsing mode. It’s a good idea to clear your cookies and other browser data regularly. This option can be found with browser settings, and you will typically be able to choose the type of data and timeframe to delete.

**Limit geolocation data.** Your phone goes where you go, so any app that has access to your location is tracking valuable private information. Some apps – such as a map or compass app – ob-

viously need access to your location. But most apps do not. You can set location permissions for each app in your phone’s settings.

**Be aware that your phone may be listening.** If you use a virtual assistant app like Siri or Google Assistant, your phone has to be listening at all times in order to respond to your questions and commands. Apple and Google claim that those apps only listen for that purpose, but other apps may also be listening. Review the microphone settings for all your apps. If you are really concerned, turn off your voice-activated assistant.

**Do not respond to online quizzes or other online questions.** They may seem like fun, but the purpose is to obtain personal information that may be used to target you.

**Be careful with social media.** Your social media posts and the posts you click are a prime source of information for advertisers and other profilers. Look at the settings in your social media platform(s) and limit access to your posts and your account. But remember that anything you click can probably be tracked and anything you post can probably be found.

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# Let’s ‘Not Get Ahead of Ourselves’ Jordan’s King Abdullah Says of Trump Gaza Plan at White House

By Andrew Bernard

(JNS) – U.S. President Donald Trump hosted Jordanian King Abdullah II at the White House last Tuesday in an attempt to persuade regional leaders to accept his plan to relocate Palestinians out of the Gaza Strip.

Abdullah announced a proposal for Jordan to accept 2,000 children in Gaza grappling with cancer and other severe illnesses for treatment in the kingdom but did not express agreement with Trump’s plan for the United States to “own” the enclave and relocate its population to other countries.

Jordan and the United Arab Emirates are among the Arab countries that have previously accepted medical evacuees from Gaza for treatment.

The king said he and other Arab leaders would meet in Saudi Arabia soon to discuss an Egyptian counter-proposal to the Trump resettlement and redevelopment idea.

“We will be in Saudi Arabia to discuss how we can work with the president and with the United States,” Abdullah said. “Let’s wait until the Egyptians can come and present it to the president and not get ahead of ourselves.”

The meeting is Trump’s first with an Arab leader since he resumed office for a second term.

“He’s a great man,” Trump said of Abdullah, who was accompanied by his adult son, Crown Prince Hussein, when the two entered the White House complex earlier last Tuesday.

Trump said he and Abdullah would have a longer, private discussion about the plan to “own” and rebuild Gaza, which according to the U.S. president would include the resettlement of some 2 million Palestinians living in the coastal enclave to Egypt, Jordan or other regional countries.

“I believe we’ll have a parcel of land in Jordan,” Trump said. “I believe we’ll have a parcel of land in Egypt. We may have someplace else, but I think when we finish our talks, we’ll have a place where they’re going to live very happily and very safely.”

**‘I think we’re above that’**

Hosting large numbers of Palestinian refugees would not be unprecedented for Jordan though is potentially explosive politically.

Jordanians of Palestinian descent are thought to make up more than half of the population of Jordan, and the country hosts 2.4 million people registered as refugees with the U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, or UNRWA. Most, but not all, of those registered refugees have Jordanian citizenship. Jordan does not officially track Palestinian origin in its census data. The country also hosts hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees.

Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar have previously written to U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio that they reject any plan to deport Palestinians from Gaza.

Trump said last Monday that he might be willing to withhold U.S. foreign aid from countries if they don’t agree to his plan, though ruled that option out last Tuesday in Jordan’s case.

“I don’t have to threaten that,” Trump said. “I think we’re above that.”

Details of Trump’s relocation and redevelopment plan remain sketchy, and Trump administration officials have given contradictory answers about whether

**The Hashemite leader agreed to accept 2,000 severely ill children into his country, but stated that Arab leaders would present a counter proposal to the president’s idea to “own” Gaza.**

the displacement would be temporary or permanent.

In an interview with Fox News released last Monday, Trump said displacement would be “permanent” because the reconstruction of Gaza would take “years.”

“I’m talking about building a permanent place for them because if they have to return now, it will be years before you could ever – it’s not habitable,” Trump said. “It will be years before it could happen.”

Last Tuesday, however, the president seemed to suggest that Palestinians could eventually return to a rebuilt Gaza.

“A lot of those people that you’re talking about are going to end up maybe living there and maybe working there, but it’ll be in a different form,” he said.

Trump administration officials have also been vague about what would happen to Palestinians who refuse to leave Gaza.

**‘I think it’s going to be great’**

One reporter asked the president if what he was describing was “ethnic cleansing.”

“We’re moving them to a beautiful location where they have new homes, where they can live safely, where they have doctors and medical and all of those things,” Trump said. “I think it’s going to be great.”

Trump took shouted questions from reporters as Abdullah arrived at the White House complex, but answered only one about whether he intended to stick to a deadline he announced last Monday that Hamas had until noon on Saturday to release all its remaining hostages or he would “let hell break out.”

“Yes,” Trump said. He also appeared to answer a question about whether Hamas would listen to the deadline, but his response was inaudible.

In the Oval Office, Trump said he didn’t expect Hamas to be able to meet the Saturday deadline.

“I think they want to play tough guy, but we’ll see how tough they are,” he said.

Other topics of concern Trump and Abdullah might discuss include the potential extradition or expulsion of the convicted terrorist Ahlam Tamimi.

Tamimi is under criminal indictment in the United States for her role in orchestrating the Sbarro Pizza bombing in Jerusalem in August 2001 that killed 16 people, including U.S. citizens.

Tamimi was convicted in Israeli courts but released to Jordan in the 2011 prisoner exchange with Hamas that freed Israel Defense Forces soldier Gilad Shalit. Jordan has refused to extradite her, despite a U.S.-Jordanian extradition treaty signed in 1995.

The speaker of Jordan’s parliament denied Israeli reports this month that Jordan was considering expelling or extraditing Tamimi. **HW**

## OBITUARIES



Melvin Lester Goldin

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Melvin Lester Goldin on February 7, 2025. Melvin was born on March 8, 1950, in New Orleans, La. He married Robbie Lowitz in 1971. They moved to Jackson, Miss., where he attended Medical School at Ole Miss. In 1975, he moved to Nashville, Tenn. to complete his Residency and Fellowship in Psychiatry at Vanderbilt University. In 1980, he moved to Memphis where he began his almost 30-year career at Lakeside Hospital and his private practice of 41 years. During this time, he helped innumerable people and their families while also raising his

3 children, Kayla, Josh and Bethany. After being retired for a few years, he decided to again share his gift of helping people and recently began working with Thistle and Bee.

Mel enjoyed Star Trek, science fiction, and his weekly poker game. He took great pride in his children and grandchildren. He was a gentle soul who deeply cared about others and had a gift for making them feel comfortable. He was described often as a “Mensch.”

Mel was remarried to Ronna Waldman in 2004. They were married for almost 21 years.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Robbie Goldin, his father, Jack Goldin, and his brother-in-law, Glenn Lowitz.

He is survived by his wife, Ronna Goldin, his children and stepchildren Kayla (Jason) Salomon, Joshua (Nadine) Goldin, Bethany (Marc) Levee, David (Mariella) Rachelson, 9 grandchildren, his siblings, Alan (Hope) Goldin, Martin (Amy) Goldin, Steve (Debbie) Goldin, Ellen Lowitz, many nieces and nephews, and his mother, Florence Goldin.

The family kindly requests that any donations be made to Memphis Jewish Federation or Baron Hirsch Synagogue in his memory. **HW**

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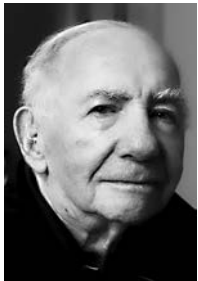
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# Tu B'Shevat



*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

Tu B'Shevat – the 15th of Shevat – is my favorite holiday. My Rabbi laughs (he is blessed with great tolerance). He cites Pesach, the High Holidays, etc. I answer with the miracle of nature and the proof certainty of nature as a display of G-d's power. Yes, G-d gave us Torah from a mountaintop in the Sinai Peninsula, so I'm told and so I believe. But there are skeptics who might retain 10% doubt of this miracle. And Clisha restored the dead to life, and the Red Sea split in two to create a passage for our fleeing ancestors. And so forth. Events reported to us in the Humash, which the good Jew believes. But believing is one

thing and seeing is another thing. Nobody has to tell me that a seed becomes a tree. I see it myself. I don't have to rely on holy books or a prophet to tell me. I know a field sown with seed corn will soon be decorated with splashes of green. I can cite 10,000 more examples from the birth of a child from a microscopic speck of sperm to the wings on the back of the Maple seed. I have seen both, and they make the parting of the sea a stage set. These are true miracles. Why aren't we impressed with the power of such a Creator? That's why I love Tu B'Shevat – and its celebration of trees. Its proofs lie in my world – observable, tangible, non-disputable. In terms of credibility, it dwarfs all of our holidays.

And how effectively can it be demonstrated to affect the faith of our young ones? Be as dramatic as you choose about the miracle of manna (say it was sugared, lo fat, no cal, and it lowered their cholesterol) and a six-year-old will politely listen and think that's nice. But show him the Oak tree you planted from

an acorn 10 years ago and he'll say, "WOW!! You mean G-d transformed that pea-sized acorn into a condo for squirrels? That's a miracle – that's magic."

Yes, it is and bears witness to the transcendent ability of He who made Oak trees, fathers, and sons and daughters. An obscure Midrash says that on the 6th day of creation the Holy One practiced his seed-to-human metamorphosis magic with the birth of a Fig tree for those that would follow Adam and Eve.


The New Year of Trees, we call it. And if you wandered – only half shod – for 40 years over the hot sands of the Sinai, you'd develop the same love affair with trees that initiated Tu B'Shevat – because a tree meant more than an interruption of a vacant landscape. It meant shade, maybe fruit, and often a well. A prayer for trees would be on your lips when it was only a dot on the horizon.

And you might want to remember that on this modest holiday even the Tsadiks put down the Talmud and marvel that the creator put wings on maple seeds.

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By Ted Roberts

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*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*

## 'Starved' and 'Tortured,' Freed Hostage Kieth Siegel Describes Time in Captivity



**The Hamas military unit, Al-Qassam Brigades, hands over Israeli hostage Keith Siegel to the Red Cross as part of the ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas, in Gaza City, Feb. 1, 2025. Credit: Ali Hassan/Flash90**

(JNS) – For the first time since being released on Feb.1 as part of the ceasefire deal, former hostage Keith Siegel,

an American-Israeli, released a video last Friday detailing his experience in captivity.

"My name is Keith Siegel, and I am a 65-year-old American citizen," the video began, featuring Siegel in a blue sweater with a yellow hostage pin. "I love country music, and I love pancakes on Saturday morning. But that was my previous life. Since Feb. 1, I am a newly released Hamas hostage. I am a survivor."

He described his conditions as "unimaginable," feeling that "every single day" could be his last.

"When I was in Gaza, I lived in constant fear, fear for my life and my personal safety," said Siegel. "I was starved and tortured both physically and emo-

tionally. When the war intensified, the terrorists who held me treated me even worse than usual. The terrorists kicked me, spat on me, and held me with no water, no light, and no air to breathe."

He also repeatedly thanked U.S. President Donald Trump for his release.

"President Trump, you are the reason I am home alive," he said. "You are the reason I was reunited with my beloved wife, four children and five grandchildren. Thank you for your continued fight against terror and for your bold leadership that has brought me and many others back home to our families, to safety and security."

"I trust your leadership, Mr. President," he added. "The helpless hostages in the dark, cold tunnels of Gaza also

trust you. Please bring them home."

Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) reacted to the testimony by Siegel, originally from North Carolina, in captivity in the Gaza Strip.

"It's heart-wrenching to hear of the pain and torture Hamas inflicted against Keith," wrote Tillis. Siegel is from North Carolina. "Thank you, President Trump and his administration, for bringing him home. Hamas is pure evil, and I will continue to support efforts to fully eliminate them and stand by Israel."

"A chilling video from Hamas hostage Keith Siegel on his time in captivity," wrote Matt Brooks, CEO of the Republican Jewish Coalition. "It's heartbreaking what he and his family had to endure. He is a hero." HW

# ISRAEL INSIGHTS

## President Trump's Gaza Plan: Israeli Reactions

By Howard Weisband

This past Friday, late afternoon, I received an important question from a good friend in the U.S.: How are Israelis reacting to Trump's Gaza plan? My quick response was: Generally positively, for multiple reasons. Can't write too much now. Shabbat here very soon.

An important question deserves a better response. Following a bit of research and hopefully some clear thinking, I thought I might use this column to more fully respond.

Herb Keinon in Friday's "The Jerusalem Post" was the first to help me respond. His analysis in print was titled: "Not a blueprint, but a bombshell; Trump's Gaza comments reshape the debate."

Keinon wrote following the press conference in Washington with the President and Prime Minister Netanyahu, wherein the President's "plan" as announced made the headlines, thus the "bombshell." Keinon delved into the geopolitical limitations. but then noted that for Israelis Trump hit the proverbial nail on its head: "But do take him seriously – meaning that he believes new ideas are needed to address the Gaza issue, that old solutions need not be recycled repeatedly, and that creative thinking is required."

I suggest that such thinking from the

American President is genuinely welcomed by the vast majority of Israelis post October 7, 1923, and the brutal realities of that day... leading of course to the cynical tragedy of our hostages in Hamas captivity, and enduring 16 months in Israel's longest war engaging several fronts simultaneously. The loss of thousands of soldiers who have fallen in battle and those badly injured, plus the plight of the hostages, have had critical impact on Israeli thinking and behavior.

Surveys support these reactions. On February 3, "The Jerusalem Post" reported that "a Jewish People Policy Institute Israel Index survey revealed that 43% of all Israelis believe Trump's plan is "practical" and should be pursued, while an additional 30% of Jewish Israelis responded that the plan is "not practical, but desirable," meaning they support the idea but do not see it as realistically feasible.... However, 13% of Israelis believe Trump's proposal is "immoral." This group includes 54% of Arab respondents and only 3% of Jewish Israelis."

On February 7 the Middle East Monitor reported that: "A survey published by "Israeli Maariv" newspaper today found that 47 per cent of Israelis believe there is a chance of U.S. President

Donald Trump's proposed plan to expel Palestinians from the Gaza Strip being implemented."

These findings were updated in the "The Jerusalem Post" on February 11: "Almost two-thirds of Israelis (65%) support U.S. President Donald Trump's plan to take over Gaza and believe it is the best solution to end the war in the coastal enclave.... The poll, carried out by Menachem Lazar's Panel4, all over the past two days, included responses from 500 Israeli Jews and Arabs 18 years old and over. Only 16% of respondents stated that they do not support the president's plan, with 10% saying the plan is morally reprehensible due to it necessitating the forced displacement of Palestinians, while 6% say there are more preferable solutions to be implemented."

These polls and their reading of Israelis' strong support of President Trump's Gaza plan are buttressed by the President's recent show of force in getting our hostages released from captivity, as well as his continuing efforts in that regard.

I believe too that there is another powerful factor at play within this entire situation: the remembrance and reminders of the Holocaust.

Often it was said over and over again

in reporting and in conversation that October 7 was the bloodiest day in Jewish history since the Holocaust, with more Jews killed and taken captive on that single day since the Holocaust.

Moreover, Israelis and the world were deeply shocked just a few days ago when Hamas released three men... severely emaciated and weakened from their maltreatment in Hamas captivity. Pictures of the three men in good health prior to their having been taken hostage 16 months earlier placed side by side their current images filled the Israeli media and likewise around the world. The reference over and over again was that they appeared to be Holocaust survivors. Even President Trump was shocked into saying the same.

It is no wonder that Israelis by and large are identifying positively with the President's "out of the box" Gaza plan.

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



# Syrian Curriculum Changes Harbinger of Islamification Plans

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – A raft of planned changes to Syria’s educational curriculum reveals a trend toward Islamification, while antisemitic, anti-western, and terror-glorifying material from the Assad-era curriculum remains in place, a watchdog group said last week.

The proposed adjustments, which were first made public last month, have raised alarm bells in the West, especially after promises of reform and inclusiveness by the new Syrian government following the ouster of the decades-old Assad regime.

The study by the London-based NGO Impact SE finds that the directives issued by the new Syrian government at the start of the year call for the removal of secular scientific concepts from school textbooks, the erasure of depictions of women, and the addition of new content describing martyrdom as a godly endeavor.

Syrian Education Minister Nazir al-Qadiri had previously said that the proposed changes are limited to “inaccuracies” in Islamic education, but the 50-page report reveals that the planned revisions are far more extensive.

In a grade 1 science textbook, for example, the chapter entitled “The Gift(s) of Nature” is set to be Islamized by changing it to “The Gift(s) from Allah,” according to the review. An entire grade 8 biology textbook chapter on evolution, titled “The Origin of Life and its Development on Earth,” has been removed, the study finds, because it is perceived to be un-Islamic.

Martyrdom is reframed from a national to a religious perspective in a grade 9 lesson where “a person giving away his soul to defend his homeland” becomes “a person giving away his soul for the sake of Allah.”

The changes come after a shift in

leadership following the ouster of Syrian President Bashar Assad with the new government having ties to Islamist factions, including one that formed an Al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria during the civil war.

At the same time, in a first-grade Islamic education exercise, an existing reference to “those who have gone astray from the path of goodness” is to be replaced with an explicit mention of Jews and Christians.

“This change introduces an overly negative portrayal of Jews and Christians to young, impressionable students,” the report states.

Moreover, a 12th-grade history textbook describes Zionism as a “racist and expansionist” worldview, which “believes that all the world’s resources must be employed to serve the Zionist Entity and protect it,” linking Zionism with control and the exploitation of

global resources, evoking antisemitic conspiracy theories about Jewish world domination.

A grade 10 history textbook describes Jews as adhering to the “extremist idea” that they are “God’s chosen people,” presenting Judaism as “ethnically exclusive,” and self-referentially superior.

“The dramatic fall of the murderous Assad regime heralded the opportunity for a new beginning in Syria,” said IMPACT-se CEO Marcus Sheff. “However, the textbook reforms introduced by the new regime less than a month after assuming power, demonstrate an increasing Islamization – and are concerning.”

This shift in Syria stands in stark contrast to efforts by other Muslim nations, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which have sought to revise textbooks to remove negative portrayals of Jews, Christians and Israel, signaling a move toward more inclusive education. [HW](#)

# The Only Jew in Oświęcim, Poland, Can See Auschwitz from Her Bedroom Window



Hila Weisz-Gut, 34, an Israeli researcher in Holocaust studies who relocated to Oswiecim to be with her Polish husband, walks on the street in Oswiecim, Jan. 13, 2025. Credit: Wojtek Radwanski/AFP via Getty Images

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – A parade of dignitaries and dozens of Holocaust survivors came to Oświęcim on [January 27, 2025] to pay tribute to the 1 million Jews who died there.

Some of them encountered the single Jew who lives there.

Hila Weisz-Gut, 34, moved from Israel to Oświęcim, the Polish town where the Auschwitz memorial and museum is located, in 2023 to join her boyfriend, a Pole whom she met on a Holocaust education trip.

Since then, she has drawn attention from international journalists and townspeople alike for being the only Jew living in the town that most starkly symbolizes the Nazis’ murder of millions of people just like her. Many members of her family were killed at Auschwitz, and her grandmother survived the camp.

“For me, it’s a statement that they tried to break us and exterminate us, but they failed,” Weisz-Gut told CNN this week about living in Oświęcim, where she can see Auschwitz from her bedroom window. “We are the generation that is here to say ‘you didn’t succeed. No more. Not again.’”

Weisz-Gut, who has a master’s degree in Holocaust studies from the University of Haifa, works at the local Jewish museum, which aims to draw attention to the town’s once-thriving pre-Holocaust Jewish community.

She married her Polish husband last year in the museum’s cafe, which is also the former living room of the town’s previous sole Jewish resident, a survivor named Shimson Kluger who died in 2000.

On Jan. 27, as Auschwitz hosted ceremonies to mark the 80th anniversary

of its liberation, the museum and its synagogue – the only one in Oświęcim – opened their doors for attendees who wished to pray with a Jewish commu-

nity.

Weisz-Gut told the “Forward” last year that she frequently visits the synagogue alone and also asks visitors to the

museum to help her say the Mourner’s Kaddish, a prayer that requires a quorum of 10 Jews, for her father. “I am my own community,” she said. [HW](#)

BARON HIRSCH CONGREGATION

Pesach Takeout Menu

SOUPS

Matzah ball soup

\$30/quart

Zucchini soup

\$18/quart

Mushroom soup

\$18/quart

STARTERS

Chopped liver

\$20/lb

Gefilte fish

\$24/loaf

Extra matzah ball

\$2.25/ea

ENTREES

Meatloaf (6-8 slices)

\$28/loaf

Chicken marsala

\$12/pc

Onion-braised brisket

\$30/lb

BBQ brisket

\$30/lb

Chicken tenders

\$22/lb

Ground beef eggplant lasagna

\$45/pan

Vegetarian eggplant lasagna

\$35/pan

Sweet & sour meatballs

\$22/lb

Apricot & honey glazed chicken

\$9/pc

(Specify breast or thigh + leg)

Grilled chicken fillets

\$19/lb

Basil lemon salmon (1/2-lb fillet)

\$13/pc

SIDES (9" x 13" pan, feeds approx. 15)

Roasted broccoli

\$28/pan

Roasted cauliflower

\$28/pan

Roasted mushrooms

\$18/pan

Yukon Gold & sweet potato, twice-baked

\$9/ea

Stuffed peppers with farfel

\$10/ea

Broccolini with grape tomatoes, baked

\$32/pan

Sweet potato souffle

\$34/pan

Yellow squash souffle

\$34/pan

Roasted sweet potatoes & beets

\$28/pan

Potato kugel

\$34/pan

Butternut squash kugel

\$34/pan

Matzah apple kugel

\$34/pan

DESSERTS

Macaroons

\$22/dz

Meshuga-nuts (candied almonds)

\$22/lb

Almond cookies

\$22/dz

Brownies (8" x 8" pan)

\$25/pan

Farfel cookies

\$18/dz

EXTRAS

Pesach rolls

\$25/dz

Charoset

\$18/lb

Seder fixings (feeds 10)

\$27

Email all orders to [catering@baronhirsch.org](mailto:catering@baronhirsch.org) by Tuesday, April 1.

Order pickup will be on Thursday, April 10 at the Baron Hirsch kitchen.

All food is prepared in the Baron Hirsch meat kitchen under the supervision of Rabbi Ian Lichter.





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