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Jacob Frey, Minneapolis' Jewish Mayor, Returns to the Spotlight After ICE Shooting in His City



Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey speaks at a news conference following a shooting in Minneapolis, Minn. by an ICE agent, on Jan. 7, 2026. Credit: Richard Tsong-Taatarii/The Minnesota Star Tribune via Getty Images

By Grace Gilson

(JTA) – Minneapolis' Jewish mayor Jacob Frey is once again in the spotlight after he delivered a heated message to federal immigration forces last Wednesday after an ICE officer shot and killed a 37-year-old woman: “Get the f–k out of Minneapolis.”

“There is little I can say again that will make this situation better, but I do have a message for our community, for our city, and I have a message for ICE,” said Frey. “To ICE, get the f–k out of Minneapolis. We do not want you here.”

Frey's comments came shortly after an ICE agent fired into a car during a confrontation, killing a 37-year-old Renee Good, a U.S. citizen.

President Donald Trump and other administration officials said the shooting was an act of self defense and that Good had tried to run over the ICE agent with her car. Viral video of the incident does not show her car hitting the agent.

The incident comes as the Trump administration has announced the deployment of 2,000 federal agents and officers to the Minneapolis area amid a crackdown on illegal immigration and allegations of fraud.

“Your stated reason for being in this city is to create some kind of safety, and you are doing exactly the opposite. People are being hurt. Families are be-

ing ripped apart,” continued Frey at the news conference.

Frey's strong stance against ICE in his city is not the first time the 44-year-old Jewish mayor has garnered national attention. When he was first elected in 2017, upsetting an incumbent, he drew attention for his youth and good looks, but he has since intersected with some of the biggest news moments in recent U.S. history.

In 2020, Frey faced condemnation after he declined to throw his support behind abolishing the police in the wake of the killing of George Floyd by four of the city's police officers. The shooting last Wednesday occurred less than a mile from the site of Floyd's murder, which sparked nationwide protests against police brutality.

In February 2024, Frey vetoed his city council's resolution endorsing a ceasefire in the war in Gaza, calling it “a one-sided resolution that adds more division to an already fraught situation.”

While Frey said that he supported a ceasefire at the time, he said that the ceasefire resolution “uplifts the history of Palestinians, and all but erases that of Israeli Jews.”

Frey grew up in Oakton, Virginia, in a Reform Jewish household, the son of parents who both worked as professional ballet dancers.

“We weren't as much religiously Jewish,” he said in 2019, as he first tangled with Trump after saying the city would

not foot the bill for security for Trump's rally there. “I'm not even sure [whether] my mother believes in God or not, but she took tradition very seriously – bagels and lox on Sunday, no questions.”

After Trump tweeted attacks on him at the time, calling him a “lightweight mayor,” Frey received threatening social media messages and phone calls. Some contained antisemitic rhetoric, he said.

Frey attends two Reform synagogues in Minneapolis – Temple Israel and Shir Tikvah – together with his wife, Sarah Clarke, a community organizer and lobbyist who recently converted to Judaism. The couple has two young daughters, and Frey frequently posts about celebrating Jewish holidays on his Instagram account.

The mayor draws inspiration from Jewish values, he said in 2019.

“The moral imperative outlined by tikkun olam,” he said, referring to the Hebrew phrase for the Jewish precept to heal the world, “is something I believe in strongly and is foundational both to Judaism but also my philosophy in government.”

In November, Frey, who is a member of the state's Democratic Farm and Labor Party, won a third term as Minneapolis mayor against a democratic socialist opponent who had said he would not affiliate with “Zionist lobby groups.” His opponent, state Sen. Omar Fateh, drew comparisons to New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani. **HW**

Rabbi Klein Leads Fascinating Course Exploring the Real-Life Questions Jews Have Asked Across the Ages

Chabad of Memphis invites the community to an engaging new winter course uncovering true stories from rabbinic history.



Rabbi Levi Klein

This winter, Rabbi Levi Klein of Chabad of Memphis will lead a six-session course that delves into the real-life questions Jews have brought to their sages throughout history. Captivating Cases in Rabbinic Responsa will meet for six consecutive Tuesdays beginning January 20 at the Chabad Center for Jewish Life.

Drawing on 30 true stories preserved in the rich and fascinating genre of rabbinic responsa, the course offers participants a unique window into Jewish life across centuries and continents.

“You can see the full spectrum of Jewish life imprinted in the responsa literature,” says Rabbi Klein. “From community disputes and agonizing personal dilemmas to encounters with antisemitism – and even questions as simple as, ‘Is my chicken kosher?’” The course also explores how rabbis thoughtfully

addressed new and unprecedented questions, applying timeless principles to ever-changing circumstances.

Developed by the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), the course highlights how Jewish law has evolved in response to shifting historical realities while remaining deeply rooted in tradition. Participants will gain clarity about how halachic decisions are made and the careful process sages have used – then and now – to guide Jewish life.

“Jewish law has been anything but static,” says Steven F. Friedell, JD, professor of law at Rutgers University Law School. He notes that the course “provides insight into how rabbis have met the challenges of a world beset by sometimes drastic changes in culture, science, politics, and economic circumstances,” helping Jewish law maintain its vital role in strengthening Jewish

communities.

Suzanne Last Stone, JD, professor of Jewish Law and Contemporary Civilization at Yeshiva University, adds that students will encounter “fascinating examples of how rabbinic authors of responsa, much like their common-law counterparts, balanced technical legal demands with individual emotional needs, societal change, and ethical concerns.”

Rabbi Klein emphasizes that the course is designed for everyone. “It was created with all Jews in mind,” he says. “If you've never heard of rabbinic responsa before, this course is the perfect introduction.”

For more information or to register, call 901-754-0404 or visit www.Jewish-Memphis.com/JLI courses in Memphis are presented in conjunction with the Chabad Center for Jewish Life. **HW**

My Teen Israel Experience



Daniel Kahane at Masada.

By Daniel Kahane

Daniel Kahane, son of Elana and Josh Kahane, is a junior at the Cooper Yeshiva High School for Boys. Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund provided him with a Teen Israel Experience grant to offset the costs of his B'nei Akiva Mach Hach Ba Aretz 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 2026 are open and can be accessed at Lemsky Endowment Fund | Jewish Community Partners (jcpmemphis.org)

This past summer, I had the incredible opportunity to spend five weeks in Israel with Mach Hach BaAretz. Traveling throughout the Land of Israel with many other Jewish teens just like me made the summer much more memorable. I had been to Israel many times before with my family but experiencing it as a teenager with friends my age made this trip so much better. Every day was a different adventure, from hiking up mountains, going to the Kotel, and Shabbos with all my friends, which is what I loved most about this summer. Every day I think about Mach Hach BaAretz. It was the best summer ever.

One of my most memorable highlights of the summer was hiking Masada and doing Birkat Kohanim (priestly blessing) at sunrise. We woke up very early and climbed up the mountain. Once we reached the top, we were tired, but it was worth it even though it was a challenge. The view of the sunrise was one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen. Standing there, surrounded by my friends, davening to Hashem (God) made my connection to the Land of Israel much stronger. These moments

on top of the mountain made me proud to be Jewish and thankful to be in Israel.

Another place that stood out to me was the Old City of Jerusalem. To get to the Kotel, we walked through narrow streets with ancient stones surrounding us, which were very beautiful. On the first night of camp, the whole Mach Hach BaAretz – all 13 buses – stood in a circle singing in front of the Kotel. It was a truly special moment to see all my friends from previous summers and the kids I met that day come together as one family, singing and praying for Israel.

We also had the chance to go to different parts of Israel that I had never been to before. Visiting Hostage Square was very meaningful as we saw the pictures and the families of the hostages and heard their stories. Floating in the Dead Sea was so much fun, even though it burned all my cuts on my skin. It was still a fantastic experience and something I had always wanted to do. Eilat was one of the best parts of the trip, with beautiful views, water sports and boating. All these places made my trip so much more memorable and meaningful.

I am so grateful to have had the chance to be part of Mach Hach BaAretz. The memories and experiences I made this summer are ones that I will never forget. From davening at the Kotel and hiking Masada, to the fun activities in Eilat and the Dead Sea, every part of the summer helped me grow closer to Israel and myself. I know that the friendships I made and the things I learned will stay with me forever, and I can't wait for the next time I return to Israel.

Thank you to the Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund for helping make this unforgettable experience possible. **HW**

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. Jan. 16, 2026 / 27 Tevet, 57864:54 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. Jan. 17, 2026 / 28 Tevet, 5786 5:53 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Va'eira

Montana Grants \$20,000 for Project on Jewish History, Holocaust

Montana has awarded nearly \$420,000 in grants to 32 organizations marking America's 250th anniversary, including funding for projects highlighting Jewish history and Holocaust education in the state, according to a state announcement on Jan. 7.

Among the 32 recipients, Montana Jewish Project received a \$20,000 grant for "Living Stories of Jewish Montana," a project that documents and preserves Jewish life and contributions across the state. The initiative is part of the Montana 250th Commission's broader effort

to connect local communities to the national anniversary in 2026.

Billings Public Schools was awarded \$5,497 for "Connecting Then and There to Here," an educational activity that explores the Holocaust, along with U.S. history that involved Indigenous children sent to boarding schools and the internment of Japanese Americans.

The program is designed to help students examine historical injustices and their lasting impact.

Projects chosen fit the commission's themes of "Doing History," "Our Ongoing American Experiment" and "The Power of Place." **HW**



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The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Our regular kosher lunch program begins at 11:30 a.m., followed by speaker and entertainment programs at 12:00 noon, unless otherwise noted.

Monday, January 19, 2026

Sherry Harbur will be our speaker, presenting on the topic “**Scams Targeting Seniors**” Sherry has spoken to the group several times, and her previous talk on real estate scams was extremely popular. This presentation will focus on new and emerging scams that are currently harming members of the senior community. Join us to learn more about this important issue and how to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

This will be our first **Big Monthly Lunch** of the year, featuring the entertaining musical duo **Elmo and Lester**. January’s luncheon is sponsored by The Avaline; entertainment is provided in partnership with Creative Aging.

Formed in 2017 by two former Overton High School classmates, Elmo and Lester have enjoyed a successful run throughout the Mid-South. The duo held a residency at the Graceland Guesthouse and has performed at restaurants, wineries, private parties and senior communities across the region. Their show is a high-energy journey through many

musical styles and eras, including selections from the American Songbook, 50s & 60s rock & roll, country, blues, jazz, rhythm & blues, and more. Elmo and Lester are sure to get the room moving and smiling!

“Elmo” Lee Thomas is a Memphis native best known as the leader of the iconic band Elmo and the Shades. He is recognized as one of the area’s top harmonica talents and is equally skilled at lighting up the stage with his roots-inspired guitar approach. Elmo has performed on NPR’s Beale Street Caravan, appeared in Bud Light’s “Spotlight on Memphis” commercial, and sang two songs in the 2013 motion picture *Crackerjack*, produced by Jeff Foxworthy.

Bruce Lester is widely regarded as one of the finest guitarists in the region. He first gained prominence in the 1980s as a member of the critically acclaimed Beat Cowboys and has since played with numerous local groups. Recently, he has been working as an accomplished studio musician. Mr. Lester’s ability to perform all genres with skill and taste has been a key reason for his lasting success in the Memphis music scene.



“Elmo” Lee Thomas and Bruce Lester

Monday, January 26, 2026

Jason Goldstein, attorney, will be our featured speaker. His topic is “**The Difference Between Wills and Trusts**”

Mr. Goldstein is president and managing partner of Harkavy McDaniel Kaplan & Salomon P.C. Jason focuses his practice on civil litigation, business and corporate law, HOA representation and collections, landlord-tenant matters, real estate law, estate planning and probate. He received his B.A. in Political Science from George Washington University and his Juris Doctorate from the University of Miami School of Law in Coral Gables, Florida. This talk will highlight the technical differences between wills and trusts for those engaged in estate planning and deciding which option best fits their needs. A Q&A session will follow the presentation so attendees can have their questions answered.

Wednesday, January 28, 2026 Team Trivial Pursuit Returns

One of our most popular events is back! The room will be divided into two teams for a lively and friendly competition. Questions will fly, excitement will build and participants may be surprised by just how much they know. Often, those who least expect it provide the winning answers. Special prizes will be awarded! Bring your friends, enjoy a great lunch, and get ready for a fun-filled afternoon of laughs and learning.

Please join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch prepared by the kitchens at the Memphis Jewish Home. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required by 1 p.m. the day before attendance.

To make a reservation, contact: Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator
901-259-9220
stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org
Steve’s hours are Monday–Thursday, 9:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

Reservations may also be made through the MJCC front desk at 901-761-0810. **HW**

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Unity Through Wisdom: Memphis Night of Jewish Learning Returns to the MJCC

By **Laura Kurcfeld**

At a time when many in the Jewish community are seeking connection and solace amid rising global concerns, a local tradition is offering a powerful antidote: gathering in the pursuit of shared wisdom.

The Center of Jewish Life and Learning at the Memphis Jewish Community Center (MJCC) has announced the return of the Memphis Night of Jewish Learning, scheduled for Saturday night, January 24, 2026.

The event, which runs from 7 to 10 p.m., promises an evening of inspiration and meaning from Torah study and Jewish culture exploration through the vast knowledge of our rabbis, educators and leaders.

The Memphis Night of Jewish Learning provides an opportunity for Jews, regardless of background or religious

affiliation, to be enriched on multiple levels, intellectually and spiritually. The evening's format allows participants to customize their experience.

After a 7 p.m. opening featuring dinner and drinks, attendees can choose a speaker in each of two consecutive 45-minute blocks of classes. This setup offers a rare opportunity for participants to study with great minds they always wanted to hear from but may not have had the chance to previously.

The roster of speakers represents a broad spectrum of the Memphis Jewish landscape, featuring 11 prominent leaders including:

- Rabbi Dr. Gavriel Brown (Margolin Hebrew Academy / Cooper Yeshiva of the South)
- Mr. Jason Caplan (The Bridge Institute / Beit Abulafia)

- Rabbi Joel Finkelstein (Baron Hirsch Congregation)
 - Rabbi Ilai & Sarit Grunwald (Torah MiTzion Memphis)
 - Rabbi Cantor David Julian (Or Chadash Conservative Synagogue)
 - Rabbi Levi Klein (Chabad Lubavitch of TN)
 - Rabbi Ross Levy (Temple Israel)
 - Rabbi Akiva Males (Young Israel of Memphis)
 - Rabbi Yehoshua Nissan (Memphis Kollel)
 - Rabbi Sammy Rosenbaum (Beth Sholom Synagogue)
 - Mrs. Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein (Memphis Jewish Federation)
- The final hour of the night will serve as a launchpad for "Partners Memphis," a new community-unifying program set to officially debut on February 23.

The initiative, which has seen success in other major cities across the U.S., pairs participants for one-on-one learning and perspective sharing. During the January 24 event, attendees, paired randomly, will get a first taste of the program by discussing the essays of the late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sachs, zt"l, focusing on the poignant theme of "Community and the Dignity of Difference."

The MJCC encourages all members of the local Jewish community to join for a night of intriguing learning and deep conversations.

- When: Jan. 24, 7-10 p.m.
- Where: Memphis JCC
- Registration: Online at jccmemphis.org/JewishLife
- Contact: 901-259-9227 or LKurcfeld@jccmemphis.org **HW**

JD Vance Continues to Minimize Right-Wing Antisemitism as Fringe Influencers Gain Ground

By **Andrew Lapin**

(JTA) – Vice President JD Vance again downplayed the idea that conservatives should safeguard their ranks against antisemitism, a week after his ally Tucker Carlson hosted yet another antisemitic conspiracy theorist on his web show.

Vance's latest brief comments, made last Tuesday during an interview with conservative radio host and CNN pundit Scott Jennings, came in response to Jennings asking, "Does the conservative movement need to warehouse anybody out there espousing antisemitism

in any way?"

"No it doesn't, Scott," the vice president replied, toward the end of their interview.

Vance continued by asserting that conservatives, drawing on Christian influences, were welcoming of all backgrounds.

"I think we need to reject all forms of ethnic hatred, whether it's antisemitism, anti-Black hatred, anti-white hatred," he said. "And I think that's one of the great things about the conservative coalition, is that we are, I think, fundamentally rooted in the Christian principles that founded the United States of America."

He added, "And one of those very important principles is that we judge people as individuals. Every person is made in the image of God. You judge them by what they do, not by what ethnic group they belong to."

Vance's comments follow a series of similar remarks by the vice president over the past month as major right-wing groups such as Turning Point USA and the Heritage Foundation grapple with the growing influence of Nick Fuentes and other openly antisemitic forces. Vance has also indicated his own skepticism in the U.S.-Israel relationship and stated that stopping immigration is the best approach to fighting antisemitism.

One Jewish conservative analyst still employed with Heritage – after a slew of employees left for a competing group – criticized Vance's latest comments.

"Need a better answer from @JD-Vance on why the conservative movement should not tolerate antisemitism than what is effectively the equivalent of @TheDemocrats' '...and Islamophobia' response," Daniel Flesch, a Heritage policy analyst for the Middle East and North Africa, posted on the social network X.

Flesch referenced his contention that Democratic leaders' stock answer to addressing antisemitism is that it must be paired with addressing Islamophobia, rather than treated as its own unique problem.

Among Jewish conservatives' biggest areas of consternation within the party right now: Carlson, the media figure who has platformed Fuentes and other conspiracy theorists while also maintaining close ties with Turning Point, Heritage and Vance himself. This week in Israel's Knesset, a lawmaker in Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu's Likud party denounced Carlson and fellow podcaster Candace Owens by name in an English-language speech.

Last week Carlson continued to fan the flames by hosting Ian Carroll, a conspiracy theorist who has proclaimed "Israel did 9/11"; that "Israel did their best to embellish and enflame the history books" on the Holocaust; and that sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein was "working on behalf of Israel."

Carroll has made inroads in the conservative media sphere for a while. He appeared on Joe Rogan's mega-popular podcast last year and, in 2024, moderated a campaign event for then-presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr., today President Donald Trump's secretary of health and human services. Carroll's appearance on Carlson's show came after both Trump and Vance refused to denounce Carlson for his friendly interview with Fuentes last year.

In their Jan. 2 interview, Carroll and Carlson primarily discussed the 2017 mass shooting at a music festival in Las Vegas. Carroll shared numerous conspiracy theories about the events of that evening, during which the shooter also fired rounds at a jet fuel tank stored at a nearby airport.

"And then there's things happening at the airport that are strange, that there's some shooting happening at the airport. So it's like, is this a gang war between the Italian mob and the Jewish mob? Is this a CIA operation that went wrong?" Carroll muses at one point. "Is this, like, a Mossad operation? Any of those things would need to fit the facts."

Carroll continued, "In lieu of enough facts, you can try to fit a perpetrator to the facts and invent explanations that will work."

Later in the interview, Carlson muses about Carroll directly to him, "I've never seen anybody come to prominence faster, ever, in our world. And that's led to a lot of speculation that you're, like, a CIA officer in disguise."

Carroll then offers, "Or I'm like, Mossad."

To which Carlson concludes, "My personal explanation is you're just an amazing explainer and a diligent researcher, and you're really interested in what's true. And those are the three qualities that make a successful person in our world." **HW**



Tucker Carlson hosted the Holocaust revisionist Ian Carroll in an episode that aired Jan. 2, 2026. (Screenshot)

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OPINION

Candace Owens Slanders Jews as Slave-Trade Masters Using Fake Facts

By Jason Shvili

(JNS) – Far-right political commentator Candace Owens opened a new line of antisemitic attack on Jews a few weeks ago, when she absurdly accused Jews of running the transatlantic slave trade during the 15th and 16th centuries. She said, “Jewish people were in control of the slave trade. They’ve buried a lot of it, but it’s there, and you can find it,” implying a deliberate suppression of this “true history” in order to protect Jewish interests.

Her assertion is absurd, of course, because it’s factually false, based on zero substantive or credible evidence and contradicting all legitimate historical records. In fact, scholarly evidence proves that Jewish participation in the transatlantic slave trade was miniscule.

While it’s easy to defeat Owens’s “argument” with facts and logic, it’s useful to examine her propagandistic methodology since it exposes flimsy but deceptive strategies based on a series of argumentative “cheats,” including the a) use of discredited sources; b) representation of insignificant factoids as dispositive; c) hiding major contextual realities; and d) ignoring a preponderance of painstaking scholarship.

Her assertions are not meant to build factual cases for her biases, but rather to appeal to those already convinced that Jews are evil, those seeking a rickety illusion of “truth” to buttress their irrational hate. Psychologists call this “confirmation bias” – uncritically believing what you already “know” to be true. Basically, Owens tells her audience what they want to hear.

If you don’t care about hard evidence, these deficits won’t bother you, as they clearly don’t daunt Owens’s fabulism about the malevolence of Jews. But let’s be clear, she is like a circus sideshow – shiny and fascinating for the first 15 minutes, then threadbare and tawdry once her cheap rhetorical tricks wear thin. Those who “like” her because she’s “sincere” or “convincing” only betray their learning disorder – failure to think critically, failure to question and verify every source of information.

Jews played only a tiny role in slavery, dwarfed by whites, Arabs and black Africans. The transatlantic slave trade was orchestrated by European colonial powers – primarily, Portugal, Britain, Spain, France and the Netherlands – through state-chartered companies like the British Royal African Company and Dutch West India Company.

Financing came from national treasuries, joint-stock markets and taxes – sectors Jews were often excluded from due to antisemitic laws. Notably, Arab and African Muslims were also heavily involved in the slave trade, transporting 18 million African slaves along trans-Saharan routes. In contrast, mainstream scholars, including David Brion Davis of Yale University, have noted that Jews accounted for less than 2% of Atlantic trade actors. Mainstream scholars adamantly dismiss the utterly nonsensical claims that Jews controlled the slave trade, which is why the American Historical Association (AHA) issued a 1995 resolution condemning such claims.

Owens uses four argument “cheats” to deceive. First, Owens’s arguments on Jewish involvement in the slave trade

are based on discredited sources, including *The Talmudic Jew* (Der Talmudjude), which claims Jewish law permits domination, coercion and exploitation of non-Jews. Consistent with this antisemitic vitriol, Owens said those who describe themselves as Talmudic Jews “think that we’re animals, that they have a right to own us, make us worship them, lie to us, sue us, take everything that we have and deceive us.”

The Talmudic Jew was written in 1871 by antisemitic German theologian August Rohling, who admitted to relying on antisemitic polemics, not verifying citations and lacking sufficient mastery of Jewish texts. While Rohling was still alive, the Catholic Church distanced itself from him, and Catholic scholars were warned against using his book, which later became a staple of Nazi and other antisemitic literature. Yet Owens encourages her audience to read it, presenting it as a “suppressed key” to understanding Jewish practices.

Owens’s views also echo the content in another discredited source, *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, Volume One (1991), though she doesn’t cite the book by title. It is an anonymous publication by the Nation of Islam’s Historical Research Department, which alleges that Jews disproportionately owned slaves, financed the trade and dominated its operations, drawing on selective quotes from Jewish historians and encyclopedias, such as the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. The book has been widely debunked by historians as “sophisticated hate literature.”

Second, Owens cherry-picks facts to justify her claim that Jews dominated the slave trade. For instance, she mentions that Jews were involved in specific slave-trading firms and plantations. While these facts may be true technically, they don’t remotely prove Jews controlled the slave trade.

Third, Owens hides major contextual realities. For example, she references the Jewish Encyclopedia to support claims of Jewish slave ownership but omits context showing Jewish involvement in the slave trade was marginal.

Lastly, Owens fails to cite any credible scholarship on the transatlantic slave trade. Indeed, she utterly ignores perhaps the most definitive book on the subject, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade* by Eli Faber (1998), which explicitly proves that Jews were a small minority of participants in the transatlantic slave trade.

Confirmation bias makes fools of Owens’ audience. Confirmation bias is flawed reasoning – the habit of interpreting evidence as confirmation of one’s existing beliefs and subconsciously rejecting evidence that contradicts those beliefs. Most victims of this trap are unaware of their cognitive bias, and even when aware of it, they still slip easily into it. Thus, Owens’s audience of millions of fans is inclined to believe her antisemitic conspiracy theories, despite her failure to present any credible evidence.

Owens substitutes passion, supposition and imagination for hard evidence. She represents her “gut” feelings as

(See Owens Page 9)

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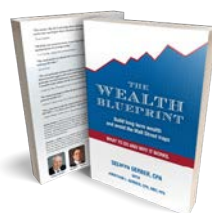
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In 2027, Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR) will celebrate 100 years of serving patients. In honor of this accomplishment and all the people who made it possible, we are telling 100 of their stories.

Over the next two years, we will publish 100 Stories for 100 Years – a weekly column spotlighting resident, staff, and lay leader stories with the Home from throughout our history.



Jo enjoys a meal in the dining room at the Home.

By Baylee Less

This week, we are sharing words from our president of Resident Council, Jo Barton.

1. Tell us about yourself (hometown, education, family, hobbies, career).

I have one son and two granddaughters. Before retirement, I worked in retail as a customer service supervisor. I was born in Mississippi, but I grew up in North Memphis. I loved Mississippi, visiting my cousins, playing outside on the rolling hills. I love playing bingo and going to the casino with my mom. I also love crafting and art, still do even at the Home. I used to make fly swatters with ribbon and flowers on them. Sometimes I would sell them, but just to decorate them, make 'em look nice.

2. How did you become connected to MJHR?

My mother actually lived here before I did. When I got sick and needed somewhere to live, my sister helped connect me here. My mom lived here for several years and passed away in 2019. I've lived here for almost nine years. First, I was shy, didn't talk to anyone, but I met some nice people in the art classes. I got to talking, and now I don't stop talking. I love talking to people.

3. Share your favorite MJHR story.

One time, I was sitting outside on the veranda – my favorite place at the Home – with a few friends, Bonnie, Teresa and Popi. I met Popi in bingo, Bon-



Jo enjoys a meal in the dining room at the Home.

nie and I ate lunch together every day, and Teresa met me on the veranda one day and never stopped. The four of us always talked about life out there, about music, Bonnie loved watching the airplanes go by, we'd get to laughing. One time, there was a bug that landed on the screen, and I tried to swat it, but then it fell and landed on Teresa's lap and she was hollering! It was hilarious, we all laughed about it.

4. What do you wish for the future 100 years of the organization?

I hope they get a vending machine on the second floor so that we don't all have to travel downstairs! Oh, and a microwave too. For the organization, I would like to see them have the Assisted Living built. I would like to see that.

5. How has MJHR shaped you as a person?

It's made me feel like I want to be here. It's made me feel a lot better knowing I have people I can rely on, I can talk to them if I need something. I've been in other places and it's not like that. This place is lovely, I love it, everyone I talk to I tell them about it. It's a five-star.

Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab is a not-for-profit nursing home, Jewish in character and environment, dedicated to providing the highest level of care possible with dignity, compassion, and professionalism. Only through the help of generous donors is the organization able to care for those in need. Find more information at www.memphisjewishhome.org/giving. **HW**

Cooper Union Settles Title VI Antisemitism Case with 10 Jewish Students Who Were Barricaded in Library After Oct. 7



A woman affixes a flier for Israeli hostages to Cooper Union College in New York City, a day after Jewish students sheltered in a library during a pro-Palestinian protest, Oct. 26, 2023. Credit: Luke Tress

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – The Cooper Union has settled a Title VI case of antisemitic discrimination dating back to a highly publicized incident in which Jewish students were trapped in a school library by protesters after the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks.

The Manhattan engineering college has agreed to pay an unspecified sum to 10 affected Jewish students, create a Title VI coordinator position who will monitor cases “including discrimination

or harassment based on antisemitism or anti-Zionism,” and ban masks at protests.

“This landmark settlement is the result of the extraordinary courage of the students who came forward to demand accountability from Cooper Union,” Zipporah Reich, an attorney with the pro-Israel legal group The Lawfare Project, said in a statement announcing the settlement. The Lawfare Project sued the

school on behalf of the Jewish students.

Reich's statement continued, “Jewish students deserve to learn without being targeted, harassed, or excluded because of who they are or what they believe. This case sends a clear message that universities have a legal duty to protect them and will be held accountable when they fail to do so.”

In a statement, Cooper Union's president Steven W. McLaughlin said the settlement “reflects our ongoing commitment to maintaining a campus where every student in our community feels respected, safe, and included.”

McLaughlin, who became president last year following the resignation of the school's previous president, continued, “We are dedicated to continuing our efforts to confront discrimination of any kind, including antisemitism, and to fostering a productive culture of curiosity and compassion. Settling this litigation is an important step as we move forward.”

Cooper Union Hillel/Midrash, a student-run Jewish organization that several of the plaintiffs belong to, did not immediately return a request for comment.

In the immediate weeks after Oct. 7, The Cooper Union was one of the first colleges thrust into the national spot-

light for alleged antisemitic behavior on campus. Viral video showed Jewish students having barricaded themselves in the campus library for 20 minutes while pro-Palestinian protesters pounded on the doors and shouted slogans.

Under President Joe Biden, the Department of Education opened a Title VI civil rights investigation into the school. The Jewish students separately sued the school over their treatment, a suit The Cooper Union attempted to have thrown out. Last year a judge ruled the lawsuit could continue.

The settlement comes as the Trump administration has more aggressively prosecuted other elite colleges for fostering antisemitic environments, freezing federal grants and forcing large payouts. It also comes days after New York City's new mayor, Zohran Mamdani, reversed an executive order for the city to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Association's definition of antisemitism.

As part of The Cooper Union's settlement, the private school's new Title VI coordinator “will implement all applicable guidance” established under Biden to consider IHRA in discrimination cases, the school's statement said. **HW**



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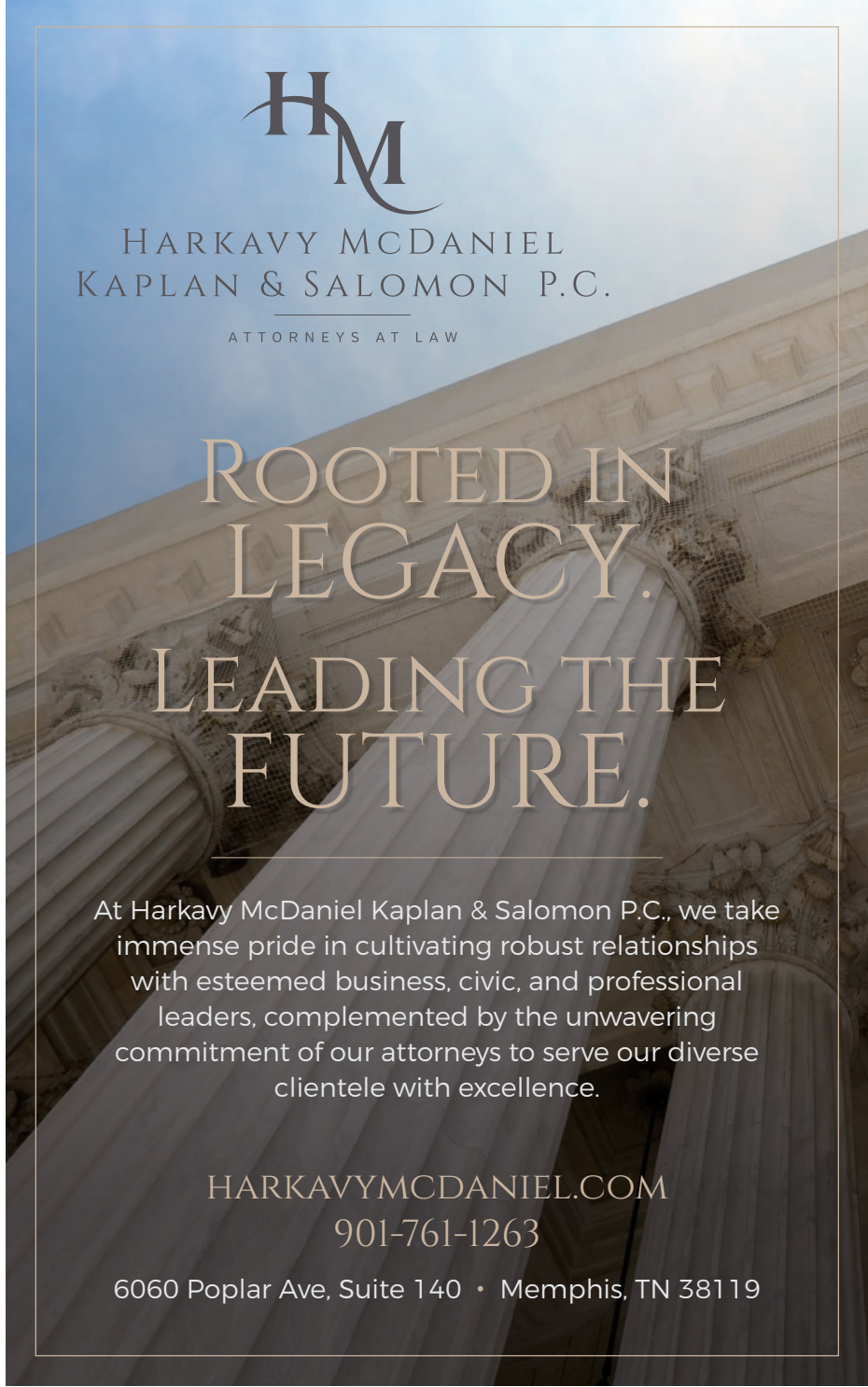
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When Should You Claim Social Security?

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

When it comes to Social Security and retirement, you may have conflicting viewpoints: On one side, you may hope to collect your benefits as soon as you are eligible due to cash flow needs or other goals. On the other side, you know that if you wait, your monthly benefit amount will be greater.

While it may make sense to wait as long as you can, Sherman Hohenberger, lead business growth strategy consultant at Wealth & Investment Management, Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., recommends you reevaluate your situation every year in retirement before deciding whether to continue delaying the beginning of Social Security benefits.

“Because each individual, couple, widow, and widower has a unique lifestyle and unique income needs, I believe a year-by-year evaluation prior to beginning benefits is the best approach,” Hohenberger says.

One item you need for that annual retirement review is a current copy of your Social Security benefit estimate from ssa.gov. This provides personalized estimates of future benefits based on your real earnings and lets you see your latest statement and your earnings history.

Here, Hohenberger outlines a comparison of claiming now vs. later and offers key considerations as you review your strategy each year.

Comparison: Claiming sooner vs. later

Let’s start with a hypothetical example: John Doe was born in 1960, is retired, and he decided to claim benefits as soon as he became eligible at age 62, or five years before his full retirement benefit age of 67. His monthly benefit in today’s dollars is \$2,106. If he had delayed receiving benefits until he was 70, he’d receive \$1,625 more a month, or \$3,731. And he would make up for the eight-year delay in not taking any benefits in about 10 years.

“Unlike personal assets that can be exhausted, Social Security is a vast resource provided by the U. S. government. As long as you are alive, you should continue to receive your Social Security benefits and with a cost-of-living adjustment throughout your retirement years.”

Make wellness a deciding factor

Your health can play a big role in helping determine when you should start taking benefits. Do your loved ones live long lives, or have most succumbed to illness before age 65? “It’s not the most accurate indicator of what’s going to transpire in the future, but it can have some bearing, and therefore should be taken into consideration,” Hohenberger says.

“If you’re in reasonably good health and anticipate a continued healthy life-

style, that usually counsels in favor of waiting,” he continues. “If, on the other hand, you’re in poorer health and have concerns about longevity, that counsels toward drawing benefits sooner rather than later.”

Do you have enough income?

Another key factor is having other sources of income to help you live comfortably in retirement without needing Social Security benefits. He says you should consider the rate of return Social Security offers: 6.25% – 8.00% (plus a cost-of-living increase).

“I ask: ‘Is that an attractive return to you over the next 12 months?’” he says. “And given the current interest rate environment and unpredictability of the securities markets, the response is typically a resounding yes.”

Considerations for married couples

Hohenberger suggests married clients look at multiple factors when determining the timing for each spouse to claim Social Security benefits.

For example, if you’re working part time or seasonally, your Social Security benefits may be dramatically lower if your partner is working full-time. It still may be wise for both of you to wait, if possible.

“Not only does waiting to claim increase the size of the benefit that the [higher earning] individual personally receives, but it also increases the size of what’s known as the survivor’s benefit that the [lower earning] spouse could draw if the other spouse passes away,” Hohenberger says.

Keep in mind that the current average life expectancy of a 65-year-old man is about 84 years, while a woman that age can expect to live until around age 87, according to the Social Security Administration.¹

What about taxes?

When it comes to when to claim Social Security benefits, Hohenberger advises not to focus primarily on the tax ramifications.

“For the vast majority of people, their marginal tax rate in retirement will likely be fairly constant,” Hohenberger says. “If retirees were to take their Social Security benefit at 62, we typically see that their marginal tax rate is the same or approximately the same as it would be if they claimed the benefit at age 70. We want [them] to focus instead on working to help maximize the net cash flow over the remainder of their lifetime.”

1. Benefits Planner/Life Expectancy, Social Security Administration, March 27, 2025, <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/population/longevity.html>

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Qatar is Biggest Foreign Funder of U.S. Colleges, Per Education Department

Qatar has been the largest source of foreign funding for U.S. higher education institutions, according to data displayed in a new U.S. Department of Education portal.

The portal, which went live on Jan. 2, explains that, under Section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, federally funded universities are required to disclose, twice annually, any gifts and contracts from a foreign source that are worth at least \$250,000 in a calendar year.

Rep. Tim Walberg (R-Mich.), chair of the House Education and Workforce Committee, told JNS that “our college campuses are being flooded with foreign cash, but every single dollar given by our adversaries comes with strings attached.”

“America’s adversaries exploit these financial ties to steal research, spread divisive propaganda, push indoctrination and undermine free speech,” Walberg said.

“Enough is enough,” he added. “The Trump administration is making the reporting of foreign funds easier and more transparent so we can protect our students and the integrity of American education.”

Kenneth Marcus, chairman and CEO of the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law and a former assistant U.S. secretary of education for civil rights, told JNS that he’s “glad that the Trump administration is bringing greater transparency to the enormous amount of foreign money that’s coming into our higher education system.”

According to the dashboard, Qatar was the source of around \$6.6 billion to U.S. universities, followed by Germany (\$4.4 billion), England (\$4.3 billion), China (\$4.1 billion), Canada (\$4 billion) and Saudi Arabia (\$3.9 billion).

Of the schools that received funds from Qatar, Cornell University topped the list with \$2.3 billion, followed by Carnegie Mellon University (\$1 billion), Texas A&M University (\$992.8 million) and Georgetown University (\$971.1 million).

“In particular, this portal already shows huge amounts coming in from Qatar,” Marcus told JNS. “It is hard to imagine that this amount of money doesn’t imply some amount of influence, and it’s fair to ask what kind of influence Qatar is obtaining in exchange for its money.”

Overall, the data shows that the value of contracts and gifts from all foreign countries has been \$62.4 billion to 527 U.S. colleges and universities.

Brandy Shufutinsky, director of the education and national security program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told JNS that she has questions about the data, such as whether universities are required to report the specific

funding entities within a country.

“For example, if an international non-governmental organization or governmental department gave funds to an American university, does that university have to disclose the name of that NGO or governmental department?” she said. (JNS sought comment from the Education Department.)

She also asked whether the portal provides information on how foreign funding is used.

“The idea for the portal should not only be to increase transparency around Section 117, but to allow users to truly understand the level of foreign funding and influence taking place in the American higher education system,” Shufutinsky said.

Linda McMahon, U.S. education secretary, stated that “after years of neglect by the Biden administration, the new portal will assist our institutions of higher education in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities and enable us to protect our national security by facilitating improved compliance.”

According to the portal, Yeshiva University in New York has received \$1,097,897 in foreign funding, and Rabbinical College Bobover Yeshiva Bnei Zion in New York received \$1.5 million. Both received foreign funding solely from Canadian sources. Yeshiva had three such gifts and the rabbinical college had two.

The Michigan Jewish Institute, a Chabad-affiliated organization in the Detroit area, received a single \$250,000 contract from an Israeli source between 2011 and 2013, according to the portal. The institute shuttered in March 2016.

The portal reported a total of \$62.4 billion total disclosures to the Education Department up until Jan. 31, 2025, including 117,152 total reports from 194 countries to 527 U.S. colleges and universities.

Brandeis University, which “is animated by a set of values that are rooted in Jewish history and experience,” was listed in the portal as having received \$7,816,216 in foreign funding in 17 transactions from the United Nations (\$3.9 million), Malaysia (\$1.4 million), Hong Kong (\$821,000), United Kingdom (\$570,000), France (\$420,000), Canada (\$405,000) and Switzerland (\$250,000).

About half of the funding for Brandeis came from restricted contracts (55.9%) and 30.1% were gifts and 14% were restricted gifts.

According to the most recent disclosure file, dated Feb. 28, 2025, Israel had 1,323 transactions for a total of \$419,454,891.24 to about 105 institutions. The largest three were contracts to Brigham Young University: \$7 million in 2018, \$6.5 million in 2020 and \$5.2 million in 2019. **HW**

OBITUARIES

Heinda Michelson Borowsky

Heinda Michelson Borowsky, aged 89, passed away peacefully on January 1, 2026, after a short illness.

Heinda graduated from Central High School in Memphis and attended the University of Colorado in Boulder. She lived in New York City in the late 1950s and early 1960s, working in editorial capacities for Time and Stereo-Hi-Fi Review magazines.

For many years, Heinda was the assistant director of the Memphis chapter of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and was responsible for numerous programs that promoted interfaith and interracial understanding. One of her proudest achievements was the creation of Anytown, an annual youth camp that brought together teens and young adults across the Mid-South. Anytown and her other work earned Heinda commendations and awards from the City of Memphis, Shelby County and the State of Ten-

nessee.

She was a lover and supporter of the arts, music and literature. She composed music for WKNO children’s television, wrote poetry and made jewelry. Heinda also was active in several Memphis charitable and civic organizations.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 42 years, Colman Borowsky, and is survived by her children Dana Agranov (Seth), Bruce Borowsky and Mark Borowsky (Dika Lam), and her grandsons Isaac, Colman and Alex. They will remember Heinda’s ample kindness, welcoming nature and generous spirit that made her beloved with family and friends.

The family requests that any donations made in her honor go to the Children’s Defense Fund.

A funeral service took place on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, at the Levy-Cooper Chapel at Temple Israel Cemetery. **HW**



Frida (Friderica) Beck Saharovici

Frida (Friderica) Beck Saharovici, 93, passed away peacefully on Thursday January 8, 2026. She was born on July 26, 1932, in Tirgul Neamtz, Romania to the late Gilbert and Blima Beck. Friderica was a loving and family-oriented wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend.

In 1940, German Nazi troops began crossing into Romania, and the Romanian Iron Guard, which was the sole legal party in Romania began collaborating with the Nazis, which included passing harsh anti-Semitic legislation and placing Jews in forced labor camps. In order to protect her, Friderica’s parents sent her to live with a family in a city that was safe.

Friderica received a degree in organic chemistry at the University of Bucharest. She later married Leonid Saharovici, the love of her life, in 1956. They were married for 62 years and have two sons Alex and Livio. Finally in 1972, they were granted permission to leave Romania and immigrate to Memphis, Tennessee.

Friderica worked for 30 years as a toxicology research forensic chemist for the University of Tennessee. She published numerous papers in scientific journals and as a forensic toxicologist testified in over 150 criminal trials. In 1977 she performed the toxicology screening for Elvis Presley.

Even though she was a dedicated professional chemist, her biggest pleasure

in life was her family, which includes her two sons Alex (Debra) and Livio, five grandchildren, Ryan (Rachel), Adam, Daniel, Steven (Margo) and Brooke and two great-grandchildren, Lucy and Honey.

She attended every school function, as well as all recitals, plays and sporting events in which her children and grandchildren participated. She loved hosting her family and friends for Friday night dinners and holidays, where the family would sing with her and enjoy her amazing cooking.

Friderica’s children and grandchildren could call her any day or time and she would happily welcome them to her home with a greeting at the door and a delicious meal on the table. She made sure to measure every ingredient with the same precision she maintained as a chemist and took great pride in preparing beautiful, tasty desserts.

Friderica sincerely valued her community. She served as president of the Memphis Hadassah Chapter and was a Memphis Jewish Federation Holocaust Committee member and a Tennessee Holocaust Commission member. She was active at Baron Hirsch Synagogue, participating in numerous committees and activities.

After she retired from The University of Tennessee, Friderica spent 15 years auditing classes year-round on a variety of topics such as architecture, classical music and literature at Rhodes College and The University of Memphis with her friends, the Oleos (Only ladies eating out).

Along with her late husband, they enjoyed music, theater and travelling the world. She valued and maintained friendships with her childhood friends and the ones she met once moving to Memphis.

Friderica leaves her family with a legacy of love, hard work and perseverance. She loved her family deeply, and they will cherish her memory forever.

Funeral services were held on Friday January 9, 2026, at Baron Hirsch Cemetery in Memphis. **HW**

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Owens...

(Continued From Page 5)

facts, positions her opinions as morally superior judgments (“If you don’t feel the way I do, you’re insensitive or stupid”) and uses innuendo (“like Jews who worship money”) to imply generalizations. As such, Owens’s passionate claims soon wear thin and sound cheap, like a two-bit sideshow. Thus,

as a social-media personality, she is second-rate. As a journalist, she’s a disgrace. The only difference between Owens and her audience is that she’s smart enough to know she’s lying.

Originally published by *Facts and Logic About the Middle East (FLAME)*. **HW**

PAST ISSUES

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Facing Antisemitism and Exclusion, Jewish Authors Get a Lifeline



Author Gilly Segal, left, interviews literary agent Rena Rossner, center, and rabbi and author Angela Buchdahl at the Artists Against Antisemitism 2025 Jewish Writers Mifgash, Sept. 14, 2025. Credit: Rebecca J. Michelson

By Elana Sztokman

(JTA) – Susan Blumberg-Kason, a Jewish author whose work explores Jewish history and identity, was deep into a book about Golda Meir’s Milwaukee childhood when her literary agent abruptly dropped her early last year.

The agent offered only a vague explanation, saying, “We can no longer champion your career.”

Blumberg-Kason was surprised at the 180-degree turn by her agent. But she soon discovered three other Jewish writers in her online community also had been suddenly dropped by their agents with little explanation other than the same phrase she heard: “We can no longer champion your career.”

It didn’t feel like coincidence.

“It wasn’t just that she dropped me,” Blumberg-Kason said. “It was that suddenly several of us were hearing the exact same sentence. It felt coordinated. It felt like something had shifted under our feet.”

It turns out many other Jewish writers have had similar experiences over the past two years, since the beginning of the Oct. 7 war and the boom in anti-Israel and antisemitic ferment that followed. In writers’ groups and forums, Jewish authors describe a sense that their work is being railroaded because they are Jewish. They’ve lost agents, publishers and book events. Some report that editors have cooled the moment Jewish themes appeared in their work.

In May 2024, anti-Israel boycotters propagated a shared spreadsheet called “Is your fav author a Zionist?” that went viral, “outing” Jewish writers for any

kind of connection to Israel.

Author Elissa Wald felt the anti-Jewish sentiment so strongly that she created the Never Alone Book Club for Jewish authors to give one another support. The group now has 3,500 members, a Facebook community and a Substack, and it hosts Jewish book events and shares resources for writers who no longer feel safe in mainstream literary spaces.

The challenging climate prompted UJA-Federation of New York to begin funding projects aimed at helping Jewish authors, awarding a total of \$300,000 in grants to six organizations working in different areas of the literary ecosystem.

“Supporting Jewish writers is an important part of UJA’s overall strategy to confront rising antisemitism,” said Eric S. Goldstein, CEO of UJA-Federation of New York. “Efforts to marginalize Jewish voices in culture and the arts must be met by even greater efforts to ensure they’re heard.”

The organizations receiving UJA grants are helping Jewish writers with everything from publishing logistics and visibility to offering emotional support.

“Jewish writers were being dropped, disinvited, and sidelined – and many were questioning whether they could continue writing Jewish stories,” said Rina Cohen, who manages strategy across UJA’s Combating Antisemitism portfolio. “By supporting them with tools and resources, UJA is sending a clear message: You deserve to create freely, and we’ll stand behind you as you do.”

The Jewish Book Council used fund-

ing from UJA for a unique program to kick off the 100th anniversary of Jewish Book Month: The council designed and distributed 100 Jewish Book Kits to libraries and public spaces across New York City that offer a curated selection of Jewish literature, visual displays, QR codes and author highlights. The aim is to give librarians and community centers an accessible way to showcase Jewish books, helping make Jewish writing visible in the very spaces where many writers feared their work was being erased.

“Jewish books need visibility,” said Jewish Book Council CEO Naomi Firestone-Teeter. “We said: Let’s bring more Jewish books out into the world – into more readers’ hands – and build community around them. That’s what the kits do. They let people see Jewish books where they live their lives.”

It’s not always clear that a Jewish writer’s professional setback stems from antisemitism. Publishing is a brutal industry, and even successful writers experience abrupt and opaque rejection.

But many Jewish writers say that what they’re experiencing suggests something nefarious. They’ve felt their Jewishness was treated as suspect in classrooms, critique groups or conferences. They’ve felt pressure from editors to strip Jewish elements from their work.

When the Jewish Book Council opened a portal inviting Jewish writers to share incidents affecting their creative or professional lives, over 400 authors wrote in.

“Some of what we see is subtle and hard to pinpoint, and some of it is very direct: events canceled, students pushed out of MFA programs for being ‘Zionists,’ bookstores refusing to stock books,” Firestone-Teeter said. “Things are not okay. This is not just the normal difficulty of publishing.”

In addition to the Jewish Book Council, UJA’s other five grants went to Artists Against Antisemitism, PJ Library, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Jewish Life Foundation and 70 Faces Media (the parent organization of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency).

In October, 70 Faces Media held a one-day Jewish Authors’ Summit, offering writers practical tools, digital strategy training and community-building to navigate this increasingly hostile publishing environment.

PJ library will hold a Jewish children’s

book festival for authors and families at New York’s 92nd St. Y on Jan. 11, 2026. In just the first few days, an unprecedented 3,500 registrants signed up.

The Jewish Theological Seminary held a literary festival in September that brought together 450 writers, students and community members for masterclasses, public panels and craft development.

The Jewish Life Foundation is creating a TV and podcast series, “The People of the Book with Josh Radnor,” that will spotlight Jewish authors and conversations about Jewish identity and culture.

Artists Against Antisemitism created a full-day gathering for 140 authors, the Jewish Writers Mifgash, that included pitch sessions with literary agents, professional development workshops, mentorship matching and mental health support. Project Shema, a training and support organization focused on contemporary antisemitism, led a session at the conference on how to recognize antisemitism in creative spaces.

Elizabeth Berkowitz, one of the event’s organizers, said several authors came away with promising leads.

“Agents were asking, ‘Can you send me the full? I want to see more,’” Berkowitz said. “We definitely had some shidduchs made – real follow-ups between writers and agents who were actively seeking Jewish authors.”

Novelist Zeeva Bukai said just being around others experiencing the same challenges was a welcome relief.

“I realized it’s not just me experiencing this; others are too,” she said. “That validation was just as important as the tools we learned to deal with it.”

That’s the point, said the Jewish Book Council’s CEO.

“We want authors to know we’ve got you on the other side,” Firestone-Teeter said. “Your job is to keep writing. Our job is to deal with the industry issues and build a community that celebrates you and your work. Jewish writers need to feel confident writing the books only they can write.”

This story was sponsored by and produced in partnership with UJA-Federation of New York, which cares for Jews everywhere and New Yorkers of all backgrounds, responds to crises close to home and far away, and shapes the Jewish future. This article was produced by JTA’s native content team. **HW**

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Gal Gadot Set for Lead Role in Feature Based on Bestselling Novel

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – Actress Gal Gadot is set to star in the film adaptation of the bestselling “Recovery Agent” book series by Janet Evanovich, after its feature rights were acquired by Paramount Pictures, Deadline reported last Wednesday.

Gadot and partner Jaron Varsano are set to co-produce the project, alongside Paramount, Carol Mendelsohn and Julie Weitz.

“The Recovery Agent: A New Adventure Begins” was released in 2022 and, together with its sequel, “The King’s Ransom,” published in 2025, has become an instant bestseller.

The novels revolve around protagonist Gabriela Rose, a recovery agent who is hired to seek lost treasures, stolen heirlooms, or missing assets of any kind. Her latest job, however, is related to her own family. Needing to accrue a large sum of money and fast, she partners with her ex-husband, Rafer Burke, bouncing from the jungles of Peru to international hotspots, outsmarting criminals and law enforcement alike.

Evanovich has written 46 New York Times bestsellers over the past 28 years and has sold over 200 million books globally. **HW**

U.S. To Build Fleet ‘100 Times More Powerful Than Any Battleship Ever Built,’ Trump Says

By Mike Wagenheim

(JNS) – U.S. President Donald Trump announced plans last month for a “golden fleet” of what he described as “desperately” needed Navy ships, including two “very large battleships” to replace “old and tired and obsolete” vessels.

The new ships will be “100 times more powerful than any battleship ever built” and would feature both missiles and more traditional naval guns, Trump told reporters at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, alongside Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Navy Secretary John Phelan.

The battleships, which are to weigh 30,000-40,000 tons and to be completed in the “early 2030s,” are to be equipped

with advanced weapons, such as hypersonic missiles, electric rail guns, high-powered laser systems and nuclear-capable cruise missiles, as well as updated defensive systems, per the Pentagon.

The president said that the aim is to have 20 to 25 such ships.

“The future Trump-class battleship, the USS Defiant, will be the largest, deadliest and most versatile and best-looking warship anywhere on the world’s oceans,” Phelan said.

“We haven’t built a battleship since 1994,” Trump said. “These cutting-edge

(See Fleet Page 11)

UN Report Accuses Israel of 'Systematic' Racial Segregation, Apartheid

(JNS) – A new report released last Wednesday by the office of Volker Türk, U.N. high commissioner for human rights, claims that “Israel is violating international law requiring states to prohibit and eradicate racial segregation and apartheid.”

The report, titled “Israel’s discriminatory administration of the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem,” argues that unequal treatment and abuses of Palestinians have intensified since the Hamas-led terrorist attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, and Jerusalem’s subsequent military response.

“There is a systematic asphyxiation of the rights of Palestinians in the West Bank,” Türk stated, using the international term for the Judea and Samaria region. “Whether accessing water, school, rushing to hospital, visiting family or

friends or harvesting olives – every aspect of life for Palestinians in the West Bank is controlled and curtailed by Israel’s discriminatory laws, policies and practices.”

“This is a particularly severe form of racial discrimination and segregation that resembles the kind of apartheid system we have seen before,” Türk added.

The Israeli mission to the U.N. in Geneva condemned the publication of the report, stating that Türk’s office “abuses its position and dire resources to issue yet another unmandated report against Israel” while “other mandates remain nixed on account of budget cuts.”

The Israeli mission said the report itself contains “absurd and distorted accusations of racial discrimination” which ignore “fundamental facts that lie at the basis of the conflict.” **HW**

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Fleet...
(Continued From Page 10)

vessels will be some of the most lethal surface warfare ships.”


Work will begin right away to have two ships operational within two-and-a-half years, Trump said.

The Navy has been plagued by ship-building delays, and experts have long warned of its aging fleet. Some analysts say that large surface ships are a liability, due to their vulnerability to modern missiles, and favor smaller, more mobile ships with the capability to launch drones.

Some saw the announcement as a message to China, but Trump said that the new fleet is “a counter to everybody.”

“It’s not China,” he said. “We get along great with China.”

Trump sent additional warships to the Middle East in June to protect Israel from Iranian attacks. Last month, a U.S. Navy warship in the Middle East launched a one-way attack drone for the first time. **HW**



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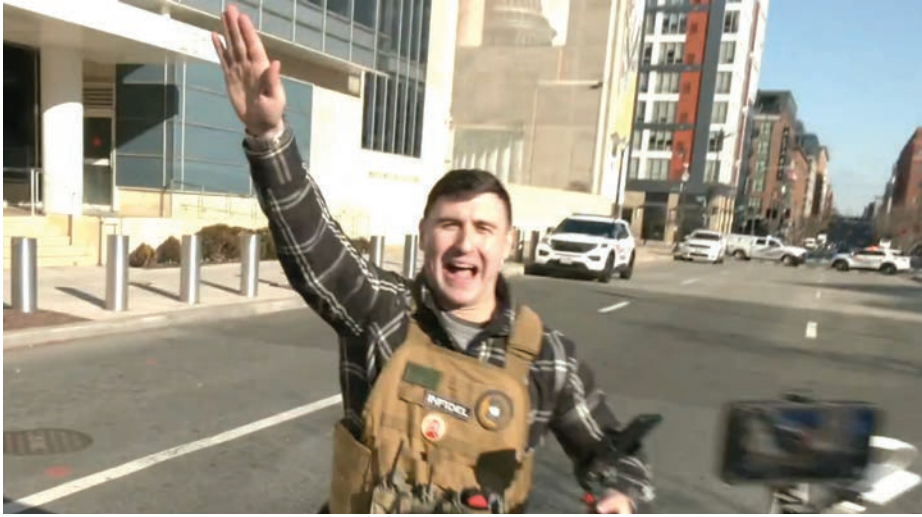
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Pardoned Jan. 6 Protester Jake Lang Throws Chocolate Coins, Nazi Salute During Anti-AIPAC Demonstration in DC



Far-right Florida Senate candidate Jack Lang throws a Nazi salute outside of the AIPAC headquarters. (Screenshot/Ford Fischer via X)

By Grace Gilson

(JTA) – Pardoned Jan. 6 protester Jake Lang staged an antisemitic demonstration last Sunday outside of the headquarters of the pro-Israel lobby AIPAC where he threw chocolate coins and gave a Nazi salute.

As he stood before a banner reading “Make Jerusalem Christian Again,” Lang made a series of threats against AIPAC-funded politicians and peddled a slew of antisemitic tropes, including the Great Replacement Theory, which holds that Jews are orchestrating mass immigration.

“White people in America, you will be replaced, and your children will be Black Muslims if you don’t stand up now,” said Lang, according to a video of the protest posted on X by journalist Ford Fischer. “AIPAC is one of the main components to the people at the head of Hollywood that are brainwashing your children to vote Democrat, to take your guns and to take your freedom. It’s time we fight back.”

The demonstration hosted by Lang, who is currently vying for a Senate seat in Florida, comes as watchdogs have

warned that alt-right figures are increasingly finding a foothold within mainstream conservative politics.

In recent months, far-right influencers like Lang, including livestreamer Nick Fuentes, have garnered mainstream attention within the Republican party, a trend that has sparked outcry among both Jewish and non-Jewish Republicans. But Vice President JD Vance has indicated that while he opposes antisemitism, he is not inclined to draw a line against rising antisemitism in his party. At the same time, AIPAC, which Lang targeted, has become anathema in both parties as support for Israel has plummeted in recent years.

Lang’s Senate candidacy in Florida is not considered serious. He has raised very little money in his quest to unseat an incumbent who has President Donald Trump’s support.

But Lang has benefited from Trump in the past as well. He had spent four years in federal custody in Washington, D.C., after being charged for allegedly beating a police officer with a bat during the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol protest when Trump pardoned 1,600 people charged with crimes committed by his supporters that day. Earlier this year, he went free.

Since then, Lang has frequently staged incendiary protests in other cities across the country. In November, Lang

travelled to Dearborn, Michigan, where he attempted to burn a Quran, the central religious text in Islam, and slapped bacon on it. (He later filed a lawsuit against the city claiming that police did not intervene in a confrontation with counter-protesters.)

During the protest last Sunday, Lang also made a series of racist remarks towards immigrant children, including that “they’re anchor babies sent in as chemical weapons by the Talmudic Jews.”

Lang also warned that lawmakers who have received AIPAC donations would be “hung for treason.”

“Congressmen and women that have been taking AIPAC money, we suggest you stop now before the Crusades really start, you will be on the menu,” said Lang. “These people have sold our country out. Treasonous traders will be hanging from the gallows rightfully and just fully prosecuted and hung for treason.”

Later, when asked by a person in the crowd whether he believed that “the Holocaust happened,” Lang replied, “Not at that level, no.”

Before leading his group away from the AIPAC headquarters, Lang gave a final Nazi salute and said, “That’s the APAC building right there. White Christian men are not gonna sit around while you turn our children into a bunch of n—er lovers.” **HW**



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