



Mansour Abbas, head of Israel's Islamic Raam party, speaks during a press conference in the northern city of Nazareth, April 1, 2021. Credit: Ahmad Gharabli/AFP via Getty Images

Who is Mansour Abbas, the Arab-Israeli who could hold the key to Israel's next government?

By Ben Sales

(JTA) April 2, 2021 — Following yet another Israeli election, voters are getting to know an unlikely kingmaker: Mansour Abbas, an Arab-Israeli lawmaker who might be the one to break Israel's two-year political stalemate.

Abbas, head of the United Arab List political party, is not the kind of politician who usually wields power in the Jewish state. He's an Islamist who has more in common ideologically with Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood than with any of Israel's establishment political parties. But through unorthodox electoral maneuvering, Abbas has set his small party up as the potential swing vote between longtime Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his broad array of sworn opponents.

Here's a primer on Abbas and his potentially pivotal role in the wake of the latest election.

Who is he?

A dentist by training, Abbas, 46, got involved in political activism while studying at Hebrew University, where he chaired the Arab Students Committee. He later became a leader in the Islamic Movement in Israel, an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood that seeks to draw Arab Israelis to Muslim observance and political activism, in part by providing social services like health clinics, schools, mosques and a sports league. The movement is split into rival Northern and Southern Branches. Abbas is a member of the Southern Branch.

The Northern Branch was outlawed by Israel in 2015 based on accusations of extensive financial and organizational ties to Hamas, the militant group governing the Gaza Strip. The group does not recognize Israel's government and, in the past, organized protesters to harass Jewish visitors to Jerusalem's Temple Mount, which is

revered by Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary.

The Northern Branch's leader, Raed Salah, has been repeatedly prosecuted by Israel for incitement to violence and related crimes. He once said, "The streets of Jerusalem will be purified by the blood of the innocents whose souls were taken by the Israeli occupation soldiers."

In contrast, Abbas has disavowed violence, and his Southern Branch is relatively moderate. It has fielded a party in Israeli elections for the past 25 years, usually in partnership with another Arab-Israeli slate. Until this year, the party, called the United Arab List (or Raam, as it is referred to in Israel), ran as part of the Joint List, an umbrella Arab-Israeli party that's currently the third-largest in parliament.

(Abbas is not related to longtime Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.)

Why is he influencing the race to form a coalition?

Abbas accrued power this year by breaking from the Joint List and saying he would consider allying with any Israeli politician, left or right, Netanyahu or not, as long as they agreed to advance his communal interests. Arabs make up about a fifth of Israel's population, but no Israeli Arab-led party has been part of a coalition in the country's 73-year history.

Abbas' party gained barely enough votes to enter Israel's parliament, the Knesset, last week, winning four seats out of 120. But Israel's political landscape is interminably split, and Netanyahu and his rivals are both looking for as many seats as possible to add to their potential coalitions. Both camps are courting Abbas as the leader who could deliver them a governing majority.

As of now the math is fluid. The pro- and anti-Netanyahu coalitions are both short of a 61-seat major-

ity. Another party, the right-wing Yamina, is also positioning itself as a swing vote, meaning that both sides might need both swing parties to form a government. On Wednesday, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin will task a party leader — either Netanyahu or one of his rivals — with the job of forming a coalition. If that person fails, the opportunity falls to someone else.

So after decades in which Israeli Arabs have been excluded from Israel's leadership, Abbas may be the one who shatters the taboo on forming a joint Jewish-Arab governing coalition.

Who will he support?

Arab-Israelis have long been associated with the country's political left, but Abbas has remained coy about who he will support as the next prime minister.

In a speech Thursday broadcast on Israel's major TV networks and delivered in Hebrew, he instead positioned himself above the fray, urging unity across Israel's ethnic and religious divisions.

"I bring a prayer of hope, and of uncompromising determination for a shared life based on mutual respect and true equality," he said, defining himself as a "man of the Islamic Movement, a proud Arab and Muslim and a citizen of the state of Israel."

"Our common denominator is greater than what divides us," he said.

The Joint List, which held 15 seats in the outgoing parliament, is firmly on Israel's political left and is an outspoken critic of Netanyahu and his allies. In 2019 and 2020, when three earlier rounds of Israeli elections produced similar stalemates, Netanyahu's opponents considered forming a coalition with the Joint List in order to oust the prime minister. But right-wing members of the anti-Netanyahu camp opposed partnering with Arab Israelis whose views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other issues diverged from their own.

His party is not centrist when it comes to the conflict. According to the Israel Democracy Institute, the party calls for evacuating Israel's West Bank settlements, establishing a Palestinian state with a

A German car company keeps reminding us of Hitler's horrific legacy

An ill-conceived marketing stunt done ahead of April Fools' Day touts a rebranding of "Volkswagen" in an effort to draw attention to the lone electric vehicle it's currently selling in the United States

By Gabriel Eichler

(JNS) March 31, 2021 — The world press widely reported on March 19, 2019 that the chief executive of Volkswagen had apologized for evoking a Nazi slogan to describe the importance of boosting the group's profits.

Germany-based auto executive Herbert Diess used the line Ebit macht frei at a company event.

The phrase echoed the words arbeit macht frei, meaning "work sets you free," which was famously emblazoned in wrought-iron on the gates of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Ebit is a commonly used acronym for "earnings before interest and taxes."

In a statement, Diess said he was sorry for what he described as "definitely an unfortunate choice of words."

He explained that he was referring to the freedom afforded to VW brands in strong financial health and added: "At no time was it my intention for this statement to be placed in a false context. At the time, I simply did not think of this possibility."

The German chief executive also acknowledged his company's "special responsibility in connection with the Third Reich."

Volkswagen was founded in 1937 as part of Nazi ruler Adolf Hitler's vision to enable German families to own their first car. On May 26, 1938, Nazi dignitaries gathered near Fallersleben, a district in the City of Wolfsburg in northern Germany, to lay the foundation stone for the Volkswagen Works. Hitler was present, predicting that this Volkswagen, initially known as the Kraft-durch-Freude-Wagen, or KdF-Wagen, would be "a symbol of the National Socialist people's community."

During World War II, the Wolfsburg-based firm manufactured vehicles for the German army, using more than 15,000 slave laborers from nearby concentration camps.

The company actively drew forced labor from the concentration-camp system. One VW plant engineer traveled to Auschwitz and selected 300 skilled metalworkers from the massive transports of Hungarian Jews in 1944.

In addition, 650 Jewish women were transferred to assemble military munitions. The official relationship between the Nazi concentration camps and Volkswagen was cemented when the Fallersleben facility officially became a subcamp of the Neuengamme concentration camp. Overall, the Volkswagen plant contained four concentration camps and eight forced-labor camps.

Although popularized by the Nazis, arbeit macht frei was coined by the 19th-century linguist, ethnologist and author Lorenz Diefenbach.

The inscription appeared at the

Dachau concentration camp, set up by Heinrich Himmler in 1933 to use dissidents as slave labor, and later became part of the Nazis' deception for the real use of the concentration camps. The most infamous camp gate under the slogan was at Auschwitz in Poland.

Just when we thought that Volkswagen and its related brands — Porsche, Audi and others — learned their lessons of history, the automaker once again goes ahead and does something deeply offensive, using an April Fool's "joke" to explain it away.

On March 31, press reports criticized the company's newest advertising slogan: VOLTSWAGEN.

In fact, according to news reports, Volkswagen of America lied about rebranding to "Volkswagen" in an effort to draw attention to the lone electric vehicle it's currently selling in the United States, according to Reuters and The Wall Street Journal. It was an ill-conceived marketing stunt done ahead of April Fools' Day.

This all started when Volkswagen of America "accidentally" published a draft version of a press release announcing the change on Monday, which was first reported by CNBC. The company had declined to comment on the report, and spokesperson Mark Gillies repeatedly declined to say whether the name change was a marketing stunt.

The automaker, which pleaded guilty to deceiving regulators about the true pollution levels of hundreds of thousands of diesel vehicles, then published a press release on Tuesday morning saying the change was a "public declaration of the company's future-forward investment in e-mobility." The company said the "Volkswagen" branding would be on all of its EVs going forward.

Volkswagen of America is now expected to reveal that the name change was a stunt, according to Reuters. The larger Volkswagen Group declined to comment.

"We have said, from the beginning of our shift to an electric future, that we will build EVs for the millions, not just millionaires," CEO of Volkswagen of America Scott Keogh proudly boasted in the press release, which, at publication time, remained on the company's website. "This name change signifies a nod to our past as the peoples' car and our firm belief that our future is in being the peoples' electric car."

Slate ran the following headline on March 31: "What Was VW Thinking With Its 'Volkswagen' Prank? A confusing publicity stunt reminds the public of the carmaker's untrustworthiness."

The article penned by Sean O'Kane stated: "Volkswagen's

(See Volkswagen Page 7)

(See Mansour Page 7)



Joel Greenberg, bearing his tax collector badge and a sidearm, appears in a TV news report about his legal troubles in Seminole County, Florida, Jan. 25, 2021. Credit: YouTube

Meet the Jewish Florida politician at the center of the Matt Gaetz scandal

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) April 2, 2021 — Matt Gaetz, the Trump-boosting Florida congressman known for his firebomb rhetoric, is in big trouble — in part because of the alleged foibles of a Jewish buddy, Joel Greenberg, who has earned criticism previously from his local Jewish community.

The U.S. Justice Department reportedly is investigating Gaetz’s alleged sexual relationship with a girl who was 17 years old when the affair took place about two years ago.

The investigation, anonymous officials told The New York Times, stemmed from a federal probe of Greenberg, a friend and political ally of Gaetz. Among an array of charges, Greenberg has been indicted for stalking a political rival, sex trafficking of a child, illegally obtaining information from Florida state databases and identity theft.

So Greenberg has made plenty of headlines considering his sole public role has been tax collector for Seminole County from 2017 until last year, when he resigned because of the indictments.

Scott Maxwell, a columnist for the Orlando Sentinel, said on Twitter after The Times story broke that Greenberg has kept the paper busy, posting a long list of headlines related to his escapades alleged and otherwise. (Sample: “Editorial: Good riddance to Joel Greenberg, Central Florida’s worst politician.”)

Here (from the Orlando Sentinel and others) is a sampling: **Gaetz and Greenberg are close — but just how close?**

The Times said it’s not clear how Greenberg, 35, got to know Gaetz, 38. Gaetz represents the Panhandle in northwest Flori-

da, while Greenberg’s Seminole County is in the state’s center.

Greenberg has posted at least three selfies on Twitter with Gaetz. One is from 2017 with Roger Stone, the adviser to President Donald Trump who has his own history of legal imbroglios. In 2018, he posed with Gaetz and a Florida GOP political operative at the annual AIPAC conference. And in 2019, at the White House, it was with Chris Dorworth, a former Florida state representative. The same day, Greenberg posted a photo of Gaetz, Trump and first lady Melania Trump with Gaetz holding Greenberg’s daughter.

In 2018, Gaetz predicted that Greenberg would one day be a great member of Congress, The Times said. According to the Orlando Sentinel, Gaetz gave \$1,000 to Greenberg’s reelection campaign last year.

That same year, the Republican Jewish Coalition called on Gaetz to acknowledge his gaffe in inviting a Holocaust denier to attend Trump’s State of the Union address.

But then, Greenberg knows the risks of keeping controversial company. Another selfie he posted in 2017 is with Milo Yiannopoulos, the far-right activist infamous for a long article in Breitbart whitewashing white supremacists. “Friday the 13th with Milo Yiannopoulos,” he wrote. “What could go wrong?”

Greenberg has angered Orlando’s Jews.

Greenberg drew fire in 2018 when he peddled Islamophobia on Facebook.

“Name just ONE society in the developed world that has benefited in ANY WAY from the introduc-

tion of more Muslims,” Greenberg said. “Just one.”

Ben Friedman, the director of community relations for Orlando’s Jewish Federation, said Greenberg’s question was “disgraceful” and that Greenberg was, basically, a shanda.

“I am frequently called on to speak on behalf of the Jewish community,” Friedman wrote in a Sentinel op-ed. “It’s tough — consensus can be difficult to find — but in this case, I can confidently say that Greenberg’s hateful rhetoric does not represent the Jewish community. The vast majority of Jews in Central Florida appreciate our Muslim brothers and sisters and value our shared American experience.”

Friedman made it clear the sooner he didn’t have to deal with Greenberg the better.

“The people of Seminole County deserve better than this. Greenberg’s actions are an embarrassment to the office he holds, and his attitude reflects poorly on the people who elected him and pay his \$150,000 per year salary,” the Jewish leader said.

Greenberg comes from dental money ...

Greenberg is the son of Andrew Greenberg, who in the 1980s founded an empire, Greenberg Dental, which now has over 90 practices across Florida. Joel Greenberg is a millionaire, mostly because of his stake in the dental practice.

Defending himself in 2018 against the Islamophobia charge, Greenberg said that one of his brothers is Black.

“One of my best friends is Muslim, and I have a Black brother,” Greenberg told the Orlando Weekly. “I’m Jewish, which is probably one of the most hated groups. I don’t go out there to be a demagogue against anyone else. I think it’s fun to have a discussion.”

His Facebook page features an undated photo of himself at the Western Wall.

And he has expensive tastes.

Audits show that Greenberg used public funds to pay for \$384,000 in “body armor, unspecified weapons, ammunition, as well as a drone with thermal imaging capabilities,” News13, a local broadcaster, reported. He spent at least \$2.65 million on a security force and for consultants; staffers could not say what the consultants did. Three of the people on the

payroll were in his wedding party.

He spent \$90,000 of agency money to set up cryptocurrency mining devices, and \$15,000 on a sprinkler system that was calibrated to drive away petitioners.

On separate occasions, Greenberg used his tax collector badge to stop a woman he said was speeding and to try and persuade a traffic cop not to ticket him for speeding.

He has mother-in-law issues.

Greenberg broke parole this month when he figured out his wife had decamped from their home to her mother’s house 2 1/2 hours away. Greenberg’s mother-in-law emphatically told police he was unwelcome. He’s back in jail as a result.

He employs the Roger Stone method.

In 2016, then 31, Greenberg used his own money to run a successful Republican primary challenge that accused the 28-year incumbent, Ray Valdes, then 78, of being out of touch.

Greenberg got support in both his campaigns from a Facebook page, Central Florida Post, founded by Jacob Engels, who has been named as an associate of Roger Stone. The page has promoted among others the Proud Boys, a far-right group also associated with Stone.

Engels, according to the Sentinel, engaged in the same political “dirty tricks” that has been Stone’s specialty since the Nixon presidency: In 2016 he filed a report accusing Valdes of assault, but the prosecutor said Engels was only seeking a confrontation.

Last year, the page posted an attack on Greenberg’s primary opponent titled “Creepy Brian Beute.” (Facebook has taken down the page.)

The stalking charge against Greenberg alleges that he used a pseudonym to send letters to the middle school where Beute is a teacher, falsely claiming that Beute had a sexual relationship with a student. Greenberg allegedly set up a fake Facebook page making the same charge and set up a fake Twitter account in Beute’s name promoting white supremacy.

The second indictment against Greenberg alleges that he trafficked a minor female aged between 14 and 18, and used state databases to illegally obtain information about her and others. It also alleges that he produced a fake driver’s license.

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Sabra hummus recalls over 2,000 containers from 16 states over salmonella outbreak

By Gabe Friedman

(JTA) — Beware the hummus.

Sabra, one of the country’s largest makers of the chickpea spread, has recalled 2,100 containers of its 10-ounce “Classic Hummus” because of possible salmonella contamination.

The FDA said no consumers have reported complaints so far, and noted the containers had a “best before date” of April 26, USA Today reported.

The containers were recalled from Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Indiana, Mississippi, Maine, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina, New Jersey, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

Sabra previously recalled batches of hummus for listeria contamination in 2015 and 2016.

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Spring has sprung – a homemade Midrash

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

By Ted Roberts

Huntsville should have a new name: Myrtlesville. Crepe Myrtle and all of its relatives hang out here in the Rocket City like no place on earth.

The Crepe Myrtle population may exceed that of the human species. And notice how clever they are – they are never deceived by a brief February warming. They never break into bloom prematurely, and fatally like the dumb Dogwood does. So does the uninformed Bradford pear.

But not the wise Crepe Myrtle who knows he'll pay the price later. But he also knows spring when it finally comes and celebrates with flags of leaves and blossoms. Thereby calling your attention to nature. And infinity of the soul.

Rely on the Crepe Myrtle to



signal the true arrival of the season resuscitation – when nature revives and laughs at its seasonal pseudo-death of winter.

The Torah doesn't tell us of Adam, who lived in G-d's first garden, winter. Even the flighty birds who fled must have been repulsed by the desolated scene. That first winter everything died – trees, flowers, and the grass at his feet. It's the end, he thought.

Sadly he didn't know a midrash I just made up. "G-d certainly wasted a lot of energy on a short-lived me." He prophesized his own termination in the death of the natural world around him. Who knew of spring in that first cycle of seasons? Life, so short.

The Creator started in disappointment at his newly made creature, and then with a powerful anesthesia still unknown to us put him to sleep and made Eve. Let's see if she grasps the idea of spring and eternity, thought the Creator of an infinite repetition of the programmed seasonal cycle and their meaning to humankind.

Eve communicated this knowledge to a distraught Adam – explaining carefully its meaning to their life span.

"See, there's more," she told him, thereby originating an expression to be worn out by marketers. "Just as the trees and their kin revive and thrive in spring, we too triumph over death and winter of the soul."

It's an old legend. I hope a true one. Are we not an integral part of nature? So says my legend.

The syndicated humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the roof, appeared in newspapers around the US, on National Public Radio, and numerous web sites.

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Pfizer vaccine found effective against COVID-19 variants

By Abigail Klein Leichman

(Israel21c via JNS) — Israeli researchers report that the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is as effective against B.1.1.7 variant of the virus, aka the U.K. variant, as it is against the original SARS-CoV-2 strain. The vaccine was found to be moderately less effective against the B.1.351 (South African) variant and the combined British-South African variants of the coronavirus.

The study was published on March 20 in the journal Cell Host and Microbe.

"Our findings show that future variants could necessitate a modified vaccine as the virus mutates to increase its infectivity," said principal investigator Ran Taube of the Shraga Segal Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Genetics in Ben-Gurion University's Faculty of Health Sciences.

The researchers are continuing to test other circulating variants as they emerge, consisting of mutations that could possibly pose a challenge to the Pfizer vaccine's effectiveness. A recently detected Israeli variant is "of no clinical or epidemiological significance," according to the Israeli Health Ministry.

The ministry is conducting ongoing studies regarding the known coronavirus mutations, sending samples from every hospital and the four national health maintenance organizations to the Central Virology Lab at Sheba Medical Center.

Thus far, these studies support the Ben-Gurion research, showing that no currently circulating variants are significantly resistant to the Pfizer vaccine.

This article was first published by Israel21c.

1 in 4 American Jews has experienced anti-Semitism since 2016, ADL finds

By Ben Sales

(JTA) — An annual survey from the Anti-Defamation League found that a quarter of American Jews have personally experienced anti-Semitism in the past five years, and that most American Jews have witnessed anti-Semitic comments targeting others.

In that same time period, 9% of Jewish respondents said they have been the victim of an anti-Semitic physical attack.

In total, 63% of Jewish respondents reported that they had either witnessed or experienced anti-Semitism in the years since 2016, an increase from 54% last year. The survey was taken in early January and includes responses from 503 Jewish-American adults.

The margin of error is 4.4%.

The proportion of Jews who said they have experienced anti-Semitism or been the victim of a physical attack are slightly higher than they were last year but are within the margin of error. Last year, 20% of Jews said they had experienced anti-Semitism over the past five years, while 5% reported being the victim of a physical attack.

In addition, 40% of respondents said they heard anti-Semitic comments directed at someone else over the past year. Some 59% of respondents said they feel Jews are less safe in the United States than they were a decade ago, similar to the figure from last year's survey.

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Edith Kaplan named to Team Israel Softball



Edith Kaplan

Edith Kaplan, 14-year-old daughter of native-Memphian Justin Kaplan, has been selected to represent Team Israel in the Triple Crown International Challenge softball tournament in Colorado this summer. Edith is the only eighth grader among the 28 high school softball players who will comprise two teams representing Israel in the tournament. A graduate of the Chabad preschool and the N.E. Miles Jewish Day School in Birmingham, Edith attends Mountain Brook Junior High School. She is the daughter of Brooke and Justin Kaplan and the granddaughter of Mary Anna and Michael Kaplan of Memphis and Jack and Beth Schaffer of Birmingham.

Edith has been making a name

for herself and rising in the softball world. Her first national recognition was an All-American ranking by USA Softball when she was 12. As a 7th grader last year, she was a starter for the varsity softball team at Mountain Brook High School. This year, as an 8th grader, while maintaining a 4.0 GPA taking advanced Latin, Math and English, she again is a starter for the high school team, at shortstop or third base whenever she is not pitching; and lately, she has also started clearing high school distance fences with her bat, something her father wishes he had been able to do in high school baseball or when he played in the Independent Sports Association (ISA) softball men's fastpitch league during a college year at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

The Alabama high school season lasts about three months. During the other nine months of the year, Edith trains with and plays travel softball for a talented Birmingham Thunderbolts Premier 2024-Kaplan team, assembled by Justin to be part of the prestigious Birmingham Thunderbolts (Bolts) Organization. Before the start of the high school season, Edith already had a busy 2021. In January, she was invited to attend a national combine in Viera, Fla., where her excellent play resulted in selection as a Top 30 player in her 2025 graduating class. Against top talent from around the country, Edith pitched in four games, al-

lowed zero earned runs, and was selected as the starting pitcher for the final all-star select game. In February, she was named one of USA Softball's High Performance Program athletes in Alabama; and in March, despite only being in 8th grade, she received the Team Israel selection. Then in the latest Extra Inning Softball national rankings, she was in the top 100 of the 2025 graduating class.

After an undefeated fall 2020 season, Edith's Bolts Premier team will be traveling to compete in some of the most prestigious national softball tournaments this summer, including the TCS Colorado Sparkler Tournament in June/July, USA Nationals in July, and PGF National Championships in California in August. Edith will spend a week in Colorado at the end of June with her Team Israel group for the International Challenge tournament. On the Bolts Premier 2024-Kaplan team, Justin and his co-coaches have nine players, including Edith, ranked in the top 100 nationally in their respective graduating classes; and a coach, Justin, who is ranked by Extra Innings Softball as one of the top 100 club softball coaches in the nation. And, they have high expectations for the season's coming challenges. In a family with many visits and experiences in Israel and having celebrated her bat mitzvah in Israel just a couple of years ago, Edith says that she is excited and honored to be a part of Team Israel.

Award-winning writer Bess Kalb to Zoom on April 13

Award-winning writer Bess Kalb will speak virtually about her new memoir, a tribute to her grandmother, entitled "Nobody will Tell you This But Me: A true (as told to me) story," on Tues., April 13, at 7 p.m. in the MJCC's Zoom room.

The program is sponsored by the Memphis Jewish Community Center's Jewish Literary and Cultural Arts Series and is in partnership with the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South and the Jewish Community Centers of Nashville and New Orleans.

"We are so excited to hear Bess Kalb speak and to once again partner with the MJCC and our sister JCCs," said Lorraine Wolf, president of the Jewish Historical Society.

The book is a 'moving and hilarious tribute' to Bess Kalb's grandmother who died at 90.

Ms. Kalb saved every voice mail that her grandmother Bobby Bell ever left for her and uses them to help tell her story.

In her own unique style, Ms. Kalb expertly becomes the voice of her deceased grandmother who was a "force – irrepressible, glamorous, unapologetically opinionated. Bobby doted on Bess and Bess adored Bobby... Then she died."

The book highlights four generations of Jewish women: great-grandmother Rose, who escaped pogroms and who traveled on her own from Belarus to make

her way to America; Bobby Bell, her grandmother, who is the main character; Bess's mother, Robin, a 1970's rebel, who fought to find her own voice, and Bess herself, who grew up in New York and made her way into the world of television in Los Angeles.

Marcy Stagner, MJCC's program director for Cultural Arts, Adult Services and Special Events will engage Ms. Kalb in conversation and give her the opportunity to share her family in a way not done before and in what promises to be a 'not to be missed event!'

Bess Kalb has written for Jimmy Kimmel Live! and was awarded a 2016 Writers Guild Award for her efforts. She has contributed writing for the Oscars and the Emmy and is a writer for The New Yorker's Daily Shouts. She has also been published in The New Republic, Grantland, Salon, Wired, The Nation and many other places. She lives in Los Angeles.

For more information and to Zoom for the event visit www.jhsmem.org.

Bar Mitzvah



Teddy Charles-Leon Alexander

Teddy Charles-Leon Alexander, son of Celia Alexander, of Memphis, Tenn., will celebrate his bar mitzvah on Sat., April 10, 2021, at Temple Israel. Rabbi Jeremy Simons will officiate the service.

Teddy is in 7th grade and being homeschooled by his mother. He is the grandson of Louis and Debbie Alexander, also from Memphis.



Art in The Loop

ArtWorks Foundation presents its 4th annual edition of Art in The Loop, the Art Festival in East Memphis, April 16 - 18, featuring works of Fine-Craft in metal, glass, wood, clay and fiber, as well as 2-D disciplines. In addition to the juried artists market, guests may enjoy the fare of the town's top food trucks and plenty of fresh air.

Art in The Loop will take place

on Ridgeway Loop Road, between Briarcrest Avenue and Ridge Bend Rd., Fri. April 16, 1 to 6 p.m.; Sat. April 17, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and Sun., April 18, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Art in The Loop is sponsored by WKNO TV, WKNO FM and Memphis Magazine and is presented by ArtWorks Foundation: admission is free. For more information, visit www.artworks.foundation or www.artintheloop.org.

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**The Conflict Over the Conflict:
The Israel/Palestine Campus Debate**

Sunday, April 11th at 2 p.m. CDT
A Virtual Presentation followed by Q&A
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Award-winning author Kenneth S. Stern will discuss his new book, *The Conflict Over the Conflict: The Israel/Palestine Campus Debate*, which chronicles one of the most divisive and vexed issues globally and on today's college and university campuses: Israel/Palestine. In this passionate book, Stern examines attempts from each side to censor the other at a time when some say students, rather than being challenged to wrestle with difficult issues and ideas, are being quarantined from them.

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Temple Israel and Kehilat Shoham Congregations Unite from Israel to Memphis

Another special Memphis-Israel experience will unfold on April 10 at 12-1:30 p.m. CST, following Temple Israel's weekly Shabbat Torah Study and bar mitzvah of Teddy Alexander. At 12 p.m. CST / 8 p.m. Israel Time (intentionally on the Shabbat between Holocaust Remembrance Day/Yom HaShoah and Israel Independence Day/Yom Ha'atzmau), Temple Israel will join Shoham's sole non-Orthodox synagogue, Kehilat Shoham, for their inspiring Havdalah program – including a 45-minute film on the bridge between the Holocaust and State of Israel. A discussion via Zoom will follow for anyone from the Memphis Jewish community who is able or wishes to join.

For nearly seven years, Rabbi Micah Greenstein and Temple Israel, and Rabbi Rinat Safania and Shoham, have partnered with the Israel Movement for Reform Judaism led by Rabbi Gilad Kariv in synergizing our parallel spiritual communities through ongoing programs and building deep relationships among the hundreds of adult and youth who belong to Kehilat Shoham. Rabbi Safania and her lay leaders have spent Shabbat and holidays visiting TI-Memphis and Temple Israel members have



Rabbi Micah Greenstein

made five pilgrimages to the Shoham congregation – which did not have a physical site to call home until a seven-year-long effort was finalized last month. For the first time in the State of Israel's 73 years, there will be a Reform synagogue in Shoham, and a Reform Rabbi in the Knesset, Rabbi Gilad Kariv. TI-Memphis has been an integral part of the Israel Movement for Reform Judaism since its inception, and the blossoming of indigenous Israeli Reform congregations like Temple's sister synagogue in Shoham continues on April 10 with another meaningful program between Memphians and Shohamites.

To register, please contact Lynn Owen at lynno@timemphis.org.

Exciting Virtual Tournament for 13th Annual Hillel Yiddishe Cup Fundraiser

It's time to polish up on your trivia skills for Hillels of Memphis Annual Yiddishe Cup.

This year's leading Hillel fundraiser will be held as an online trivia tournament via Zoom on Sun., April 18, at 2 p.m.

Designed for players of all ages, the six categories of trivia questions are: general Memphis history, Jewish Memphis history, Memphis music, Memphis sports, Rhodes College and University of Memphis fun facts, and Hillels of Memphis History.

Yiddishe Cup co-chairs Daniel Snyder and Carolyn Schrier, in cooperation with the University of Memphis Hillel Advisory Council, chaired by Hal Fogelman, and the Rhodes College Hillel Advisory Council, chaired by Wendy Rotter, are excited to bring this annual event online this year.

"We may not be able to gather in person, but that doesn't mean we can't have fun together! The Yiddishe Cup format this year will allow everyone to keep their competitive juices flowing with a robust Trivia Competition and raise funds for Hillels of Memphis at the same time," said Mrs. Schrier.

"The Yiddishe Cup is the only fundraiser each year to directly

support programming at Hillels of Memphis," Mrs. Schrier continued. "The students attending University of Memphis and Rhodes College have benefited so much from the Memphis Jewish Community, and we can't stop that support now. Having the funds to allow us to continue to think outside the box and meet students where they are is key to maintaining and growing the strong commitment to Jewish life that we have modeled the entire community on."

There are multiple ways to participate in the Yiddishe Cup Online Trivia Tournament. Sponsor the event for \$5000, a team for \$1000, a round for \$500 or a question for \$118. Or register a player pod with the people in your household for \$36 and choose to represent either Rhodes Hillel or University of Memphis Hillel. Each player pod will sign on to the live trivia event and harness their general trivia expertise to win points for their respective team. Player pod registrations are included in each sponsorship level.

The team whose cumulative player pods earn the most combined points will win trivia gold – a special treat for the Hillel students at the "winning" school.

Robert Irwin Jewelers is generously sponsoring store gift cards to first (\$250) second (\$150) and third (\$100) place player pod winners.

The Yiddishe Cup serves as the primary community fundraiser for Hillels of Memphis, a program of Memphis Jewish Federation. Both Hillels serve as a home away from home for Jewish students. All proceeds from the event benefit students on both campuses through educational programming, social events, Shabbat meals and communal programming and events throughout the year. Approximately 85% of Hillel's operating budget is funded through a generous endowment. The remaining 15% comes primarily from funds raised through the Yiddishe Cup fundraiser.

The event is open to people of all ages and will make for a fun, Sunday afternoon activity for singles, couples or families.

Registration, sponsorships and detailed information about the event may be found at www.hillelsofmemphis.org/yiddishecup. Or contact Hillels of Memphis executive director Sophie Bloch at 901.452.2453 or email sophiebloch@hillelsofmemphis.org.

Kenneth S. Stern discusses his new book, The Conflict Over the Conflict: The Israel/Palestine Campus Debate

On Sunday, April 11, at 2 p.m. CST, attorney and award-winning author Kenneth S. Stern will discuss his new book, "The Conflict Over the Conflict: The Israel/Palestine Campus Debate." Free and open to the public, the event is part of the Memphis Jewish Community Center's Lit Fest Live! In Your Living Room and the Rhodes College Communities in Conversation lecture series. This virtual event will feature a presentation from Stern followed by a Q&A moderated together by Dr. Jonathan Judaken and Marcy Wurzburg Stagner.

The "Conflict Over the Conflict" chronicles one of the most divisive and vexed issues globally and on today's college and university campuses – Israel/Palestine. In this passionate book, Stern examines attempts from each side

to censor the other at a time when some say students, rather than being challenged to wrestle with difficult issues and ideas, are being quarantined from them.

As director of the Bard Center for the Study of Hate, Stern is a voice for social justice and an expert on contemporary antisemitism, hate crimes, extremism and debates about free speech. He served previously as executive director of the Justus & Karin Rosenberg Foundation and prior to that as director of the division on antisemitism and extremism at the American Jewish Committee, where he worked for 25 years.

For more information and to register for this free event, go to www.jccmemphis.org/litfestlive or contact Marcy Stagner at mstagner@jccmemphis.org.

The last known Jew in Afghanistan is leaving

By Gabe Friedman

(JTA) — The man who has been known as the last Jew in Afghanistan for well over a decade is leaving for Israel, fearing that the U.S. military's promise to leave the country will leave a vacuum to be filled with radical groups such as the Taliban.

"I will watch on TV in Israel to find out what will happen in Afghanistan," Zabulon Simantov told Arab News on Sunday.

Simantov, 61, said he will leave after this year's High Holidays season in the fall.

His wife, a Jew from Tajikistan, and their two daughters have lived in Israel since 1998. But Simantov has stayed in his native Afghanistan to tend to its lone synagogue, located in the capital Kabul, through decades of violence and political turmoil,

including a period of Taliban rule and the country's war with the U.S.

"I managed to protect the synagogue of Kabul like a lion of Jews here," he said to Arab News.

Simantov, a carpet and jewelry seller, was born in the Afghan city of Herat, which decades ago was home to hundreds of Jews. He eventually moved to Kabul but fled to Tajikistan in 1992 before returning to the capital city.

Without him around, the synagogue will close, ending an era of Jewish life in the country that scholars believe began at least 2,000 years ago.

"If the Taliban return, they are going to push us out with a slap in the face," Simantov told Radio Free Europe last week for an article on the exodus of many of the country's minority populations.

Biden removes Trump era sanctions

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) — The Biden administration removed sanctions that President Donald Trump had imposed on International Criminal Court officials while continuing to decry the ICC's work targeting U.S. and Israeli personnel.

"These decisions reflect our assessment that the measures adopted were inappropriate and ineffective," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday in a statement.

"We continue to disagree strongly with the ICC's actions relating to the Afghanistan and Palestinian situations," Blinken said, referring to separate investigations into alleged war crimes by U.S. and Israeli personnel.

"We maintain our longstanding objection to the Court's efforts to assert jurisdiction over personnel of non-States Parties such as the United States and Israel," he said, referring to the fact that neither Israel or the United States have accepted ICC jurisdiction. "We believe, however, that our concerns about these cases would be better addressed through engagement with all stakeholders in the ICC process rather than through the imposition of sanctions."

Trump last year imposed economic sanctions and travel restrictions against ICC workers directly involved in investigating American troops and intelligence officials for possible war crimes in Afghanistan. In the same executive order, Trump said he may extend the sanctions against investigations into U.S. allies, naming Israel.

Israel backed Trump's sanctions and reportedly asked Biden not to remove them.

The Palestinian Authority in February cleared a major hurdle to getting the ICC to prosecute Israelis when an ICC panel decided the court has jurisdiction to investigate Israelis and Palestinian terrorists, including from Hamas, for alleged crimes during the 2014 Gaza War.

THE HEBREW WATCHMAN wants to know what is going on within the Mid-South. Please send press releases and calendar of events to info@HebrewWatchman.com

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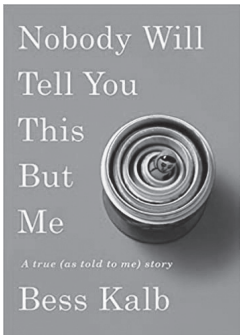
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JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MEMPHIS AND THE MID-SOUTH

US and Iran to join talks aimed at rejoining nuclear deal

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) — Iran and the United States will join talks in Vienna next week that aim to return all parties to the terms of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

There will not be direct contact between Iran and the United States at the in-person meeting, according to a European Union statement issued after a virtual meeting Thursday of the countries left in the deal — China, Russia, Iran, Britain, Germany and France.

Instead, a coordinator will make “separate contacts” with “all JCPOA participants and the United States.”

The Trump administration pulled the United States out of the deal in 2018.

The New York Times, which first reported on the resumption of talks, quoted a U.S. official saying

that the indirect talks would sketch out a sequence for the parties to return to the original agreement. Once the sequence was in place, Iranian and U.S. officials would meet directly.

President Joe Biden has said he wants a return to the deal, which traded sanctions relief for a roll-back of Iran’s nuclear program. But Iran wants the Biden administration to first end the sanctions that President Donald Trump imposed after leaving the deal.

Biden wants Iran to first return to full compliance with the deal. Iran, retaliating against Trump, broke components of the agreement relating to enhanced uranium enrichment.

Israel continues to vehemently oppose the deal in any form, and

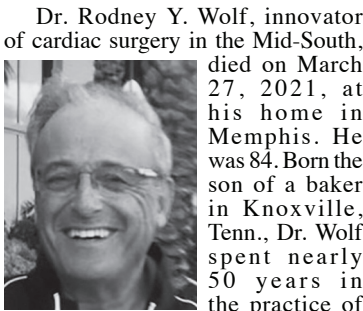
Biden’s aim to rejoin it has been the first point of tension between him and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The U.S. official told The Times that the United States would not seek to keep in place the sanctions Trump imposed as a means of leverage. Republicans, a number of Democrats and the centrist pro-Israel movement have pressed the Biden administration to maintain some sanctions.

The EU statement said that the virtual meeting Thursday was at the level of deputy foreign ministers. The parties “emphasized their commitment to preserve the JCPOA and discussed modalities to ensure the return to its full and effective implementation,” the statement said.

OBITUARIES

Dr. Rodney Y. Wolf



Dr. Rodney Y. Wolf, innovator of cardiac surgery in the Mid-South, died on March 27, 2021, at his home in Memphis. He was 84. Born the son of a baker in Knoxville, Tenn., Dr. Wolf spent nearly 50 years in the practice of cardiac, thoracic and vascular surgery at Baptist Hospital in Memphis, where he performed over 10,000 open heart procedures. He was known as a surgeon of the highest integrity who took no shortcuts – one who accepted and succeeded in critical, high-risk cases.

Dr. Wolf worked tirelessly over the years to champion quality and innovation in the operating theater. Early in his career, when cardiac surgery was in its infancy, he was the first to employ cutting edge technologies in the operating room and beyond. He pioneered minimally invasive coronary bypass surgery and minimally invasive heart valve surgery at Baptist and established the first cardiac ICU in Memphis. It is because of his efforts that the Baptist cardiac program is recognized as the finest in the Mid-South. He also served as Chief of Surgery and Chief of Staff during his tenure at Baptist, and upon his retirement served as president of the Baptist Memorial Healthcare Foundation.

Dr. Wolf also loved teaching young doctors, and for 30 years trained countless vascular surgeons, many

of whom are still in practice in all parts of the country, including his son, Dr. Bradley Wolf. He started the cardiovascular programs at hospitals in Jonesboro, Ark., Bowling Green, Ky., and Florence, Ala.

Dr. Wolf received his medical degree from the University of Tennessee, where he also served his general and cardiothoracic internships. He also trained at the Mayo Clinic under Dr. Dwight McGoon. After his training, he served as a Major in the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. As an avid aviator from the age of 15, Dr. Wolf used his Air Force GI Bill benefits to become instrument qualified on twin-engine aircraft.

After leaving the Air Force, he established the Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery Association with Brewster Harrington and Glen Crosby, which grew to be the largest cardiovascular surgery practice in the Mid-South.

A lifelong Tennessee Volunteer, Dr. Wolf was a fixture at the University of Tennessee’s Neyland Stadium during football season. In 2002, the Wolf-Kaplan Center was dedicated at Neyland Stadium. In 2014, the Rodney Y. Wolf, M.D. and Brenda C. Wolf Scholarship Endowment was founded by his children at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

Dr. Wolf is survived by his wife, Brenda Cook Wolf, sons Dr. Bradley Wolf and Gary Wolf, daughters Kelly Wolf Burkholder and Dory Wolf Sims, and eight grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Baptist Memorial Health Care Foundation, Temple Israel or St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

Gerald David Sher

Gerald David Sher, formerly of Memphis, passed away March 14, 2021, at the age of 84, after a short illness. He spent his early life in Memphis, graduating from Central High School and beginning a career in the retail business, first with the Emporium Department Store. He and his wife later opened his own women’s clothing store, “Get Thee To The Nunnery,” which was very successful for over 40 years. He was known for his great gift of personal style and in attiring many women. He had a great appreciation for the arts and took advantage of the culture San Francisco had to offer. One of his fondest pursuits was to be a tourist guide to anyone who came to visit his beloved city.

Gerald overcame both types of polio as a child, only to discover later in life that he had what came to be known as Post-polio syndrome.

There was little known about this affliction early on, and he became a study for the doctors at Kaiser Hospital who treated him. Although this was a debilitating illness, he had a great joy of life and lived it to its fullest.

He was the son of Samuel and Mary Sher, of blessed memory. He leaves his wife, Billie, along with his daughter, Bari Lynch (Michael), and two grandchildren, Ryan and Payton. He was preceded in death by a greatly loved granddaughter, Mikeala. He leaves also a brother, Ray Sher (Gary Edmondson), and a sister, Shirley Gruen (Gordon). He also leaves a nephew, Todd Gruen, and nieces Stacy Hanan, Joselyn Dean, Amy Cumagen, and many great-nieces and -nephews. He had a great many friends from both his Memphis and San Francisco days.

Donations can be made to SPCA, Autism Association of America or the Epilepsy Foundation.

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Mansour...

(Continued From Page 1)

capital in Jerusalem, and giving Palestinian refugees the right to return to Israel — positions that are anathema to Netanyahu and his right-wing allies.

But Abbas emphasized pragmatism in his campaign, saying he would work with anyone who committed to addressing bread-and-butter issues in Arab-Israeli society, like combating crime and providing economic development. “We need to attempt to bargain and negotiate in order to bring about achievements for our people,” he told the Jerusalem Post in November.

What could get in the way?

In the past, Netanyahu has made opposing Arab parties — and voters — a piece of his election campaigns. In 2015, he controversially posted a video warning that Arab-Israelis (who have the right to vote) were “heading to the polls in droves.”

But this year, Abbas’ offer may

be tempting to Netanyahu, who is contending with a corruption trial and may seek whatever support he can get to pass a law giving him immunity from prosecution until he leaves office. But one of Netanyahu’s allies, the far-right Religious Zionism party, has ruled out working with Abbas in any capacity.

Netanyahu’s opponents likewise may not be able to find a way to include Abbas in a coalition. The anti-Netanyahu parties include some right-wing lawmakers who likewise have opposed partnering with Arab-Israeli parties.

Both sides need every vote they can get in parliament, and if neither side is able to form a coalition, Israel will head to a fifth round of elections, throwing Abbas’ future into the air. But should Abbas convince the prime minister or his opponents to work with him, he could decide the future of Israel — and break a major barrier for its largest minority.

Volkswagen...

(Continued From Page 1)

various social-media accounts also promoted the lie on Tuesday. The @VW account tweeted an image of the fake ‘Volkswagen’ logo and wrote ‘66 is an unusual age to change your name.’”

That’s a nod to the age of the American subsidiary—not the larger Volkswagen Group, which was founded in the 1930s before it became part of the Nazi war machine. Volkswagen of America so straightforwardly represented the name change as real that it was reported by The Associated Press, the BBC and dozens of other outlets, including The Verge. Even the Wall Street firm Wedbush published a note about the change. NBC News reported that: “Volk-

swagen’s name change of U.S. ‘Volkswagen’ operations was marketing prank-German automaker Volkswagen will not be changing the name of its U.S. operations to ‘Volkswagen of America.’”

The skillful spinmeisters working on behalf of the company will undoubtedly try to sweep this latest incident under the rug.

It still leaves a bad taste in the mouths of millions of people who, upon hearing the names “Volkswagen,” “Porsche” or “Audi” (formerly Auto Union), are once again forced to look at the company’s deeply troubling history.

It’s hard to forget the suffering, death of their slave labor victims who were forced into inhu-

mane conditions behind electrified concentrations camp barb wires. The world should still remember vividly the horrific war crimes committed by the company in the service of the Third Reich.

In fact, Volkswagen and Porsche cars originator Ferdinand Porsche was a prominent member of the Nazi Party and an officer of the Schutzstaffel, Adolf Hitler’s murderous “SS,” as well as the Nazi leader’s personal confidant throughout the Holocaust.

Conjuring up electrified fences in an ill-conceived marketing stunt in 2021 in order to sell automobiles is not very smart business, especially for a company with the blood of so many innocents on their hands.

British court sentences Holocaust denier to prison time for ‘baiting Jews’

(JNS) A woman in Britain said to be a virulent anti-Semite has been found guilty of spreading offensive messages and material over the internet and was sentenced to 18 weeks in prison by a magistrate court there.

Reports say that Alison Chabloz, 57, who is known for promoting Holocaust denial, is expected to serve nine weeks in prison for violating the country’s communications act after she promoted anti-Semitic rhetoric and ideas on the GAB social-media service in two interviews she did with far-right online sites.

GAB has been under fire for being utilized by far-right extremists. “Today’s verdict and sentence finally give the Jewish community justice and protection from someone who has made a vocation out of denying the Holocaust and baiting Jews. It also sends a clear message to those who might be tempted to go down the same path,” said Stephen Silverman, director of investigations and enforcement at Campaign Against Antisemitism, in a statement. “This is not the end. Ms. Chabloz now faces even more serious charges on other matters that we have brought to the atten-

tion of the police. We will not rest until all anti-Semites like Alison Chabloz are behind bars, where they belong.”

In 2018, Chabloz received a suspended sentence for singing songs that claimed the Holocaust was a “bunch of lies.”

According to the Daily Mail, in issuing his ruling, District Judge Michael Snow told Chabloz: “I’m not sentencing you on the basis that you are anti-Semitic, I’m not sentencing you on the basis that you are a Holocaust denier. I’m sentencing you on the basis that on two separate occasions whilst

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A photograph of a backyard. A wooden fence made of horizontal planks runs across the middle ground. Behind the fence is a large, leafy green tree. In the foreground, there is a grassy lawn. To the left of the fence, there are some large rocks and a small black garden lamp. To the right, there is a large, bushy plant with vibrant red flowers. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.