BY AARON BANDLER  
(Jewish Journal via JNS) — The Simon Wiesenthal Center unveiled its list of 2020’s top 10 worst antisemitic incidents on December 29. Rabbi/Abraham Cooper, associate dean and director of Global Social Action Agenda at the Wiesenthal Center, said that while it was tough to limit the list to only 10 incidents this year, the “weaponization” of the COVID-19 pandemic against minority groups, and particularly Jews, ultimately took the top spot.

Because the pandemic has been politi-
cized, there have been countless conspira-
cy theories that have paved the way for antisemitism, said Cooper. He also noted that there have been “elements” of antisemitism in anti-vaccine protests.

“Places like Germany, where they had demonstrations against a vaccine before it was even available... among the protesters were antisemites and those who were missing Holocaust symbols,” said Cooper. He acknowledged that the anti-vaccine movement is by and large not antisemitic, but said antisemitism was evident in the “pernicious nature of individuals and groups who want to take advantage of the virus.”

Second on the list was encrypted mes-
saging app Telegram, which Cooper said is “becoming the weapon of choice, the platform of choice, for extremist groups.”

Rick Eaton, director of research at the Wiesenthal Center, pointed out that neo-Nazi groups like the Atomwaffen Division — a group that has been reported to have encrypted messaging — “is becoming the weapon of choice, the platform of choice, for extremist groups.”

A new breed of bees has been discovered in Israel by Professor Yael Mandelik and Ph.D. candidate Karmi Levy from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem that has the potential to revolutionize the beekeeping industry.

The new species of bee, named Lasioglossum dornchi, was discovered by Achik Dorchin of the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History at Tel Aviv University. The researchers observed that the new bee was different from other honeybee species because it was smaller and more agile, and it was able to pollinate plants that were previously not pollinated by honeybees.

The discovery was recently published in the Belgian Journal of Entomology, and the researchers believe that the new bee has the potential to be used in agriculture to help pollinate crops and improve food production.

Cooper criticized USC’s response to the Ritch incident as “tepid.” “USC, going back to the 1930s, has a very… checkered past when it comes to standing up for Jews and speaking out against Nazis,” he said. Cooper added that any other minority group “would have full backing of the university, as they should,” but that there was a “deeply disturbing double standard when it comes to Jews and Zionist students.”

At number nine was a questionnaire released by the New York City Democratic Socialists of America chapter for candidates running for city council, asking if they would “pledge not to travel to Israel if elected to City Council out of solidarity with Palestinians living under occupa-
tion.” The chapter later clarified that they were referring to how city council mem-
bers are taken on an annual trip to Israel and affirmed that they are not opposed to candidates taking personal trips to the Jewish state. Cooper called the question “a declaration against the Jewish community” and said that voters “need to reject this kind of bigotry.”

See “Worst” on page 6

Wiesenthal Center releases list of 10 worst antisemitic incidents in 2020

A new species of bee has been discovered in Israel, a family of researchers said on Wednesday, adding to the list of new species discovered in the country in recent years.

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See “Worst” on page 6

2021 UJA Campaign Update

Pay it forward & give to the 2021 Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania Annual Campaign!

Goal: $970,000

$589,550

January 22 ... 4:49 pm

January 29 ... 4:57 pm

February 5 ... 5:06 pm

February 12 ... 5:15 pm

PLUS

Opinion ... 2

D’var Torah ... 6
A MATTER OF OPINION
Who says Morocco never persecuted its Jews?

BY LYN JULIUS

(JNS) The news that Israel and Morocco are about to “normalize” their relations has been met with jubilation in Israel — and in the Moroccan diaspora. The first Jewish-Muslim tourism initiatives take off from Tel Aviv, and liaison offices will be opened in both countries, to be upgraded to embassies in due course.

Aware of the new affection has swept over Jews born in Morocco. “There’s a special place in my heart for Morocco,” says Rabbi Shalom M. Schwartz, president of the Rabbinical Council of America. “Especially because my ancestors came from there.”

A diplomat from the U.N. ambassadors from Morocco and Israel marked the beginning of their new era with a Hamakkah candle-lighting ceremony. “They are not only neighbors, but friends,” noted the Moroccan ambassador, Othman Chadidi. “They have never persecuted its Jews. As far as we know, Israel’s ambassador, not Morocco are about to “normalize” their relations.

Zionism became a crime and a pretext for imprisonment once Morocco became a member of the Arab League, and Jews born in Morocco have been frequently harassed or threatened. Morocco is a Jewish state, and anti-Jewish attitudes were frequent in the region.

The Moroccan government has committed to protect the rights of Jews and to ensure equal treatment for all citizens. The government has also taken steps to promote interfaith dialogue and coexistence, such as organizing interfaith events and meetings.

The Moroccan government has also taken steps to preserve and celebrate Jewish heritage and culture, such as restoring synagogues and promoting Jewish studies in schools. These efforts have been recognized and praised by the international community.

Recently, the Moroccan government has also taken steps to promote Jewish tourism, including the opening of liaison offices in Israel and Tel Aviv. These moves have been welcomed by the Jewish community and have helped to promote positive relations between Jews and non-Jews.

The Moroccan government has also taken steps to support the Jewish community, such as providing financial assistance and scholarships to Jewish students. These efforts have helped to ensure that the Jewish community remains strong and vibrant.

The Moroccan government has also taken steps to promote Jewish culture and heritage, such as organizing cultural events and festivals. These efforts have helped to promote positive relations between Jews and non-Jews and have helped to ensure that Jewish culture and heritage remain strong and vibrant.

In conclusion, the Moroccan government has taken steps to protect the rights of Jews, promote interfaith dialogue and coexistence, and support the Jewish community. These efforts have helped to ensure that the Jewish community remains strong and vibrant, and have helped to promote positive relations between Jews and non-Jews.

The Moroccan government has also taken steps to promote Jewish culture and heritage, such as organizing cultural events and festivals. These efforts have helped to promote positive relations between Jews and non-Jews and have helped to ensure that Jewish culture and heritage remain strong and vibrant.
Second flight from Ethiopia arrives in Israel carrying 219 new immigrants

BY JNS STAFF (JNS) – A plane carrying 219 new immigrants from Ethiopia to Israel landed at Ben-Gurion International Airport on December 22. Their arrival was overseen by the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, the Jewish Agency for Israel, and the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews. It marks the second flight of “Operation Tzar Israel” (“Rock of Israel”). The group was welcomed by Pnina Tamano-Shata, minister of aliyyah and integration; Yael Eckstein, president and CEO of the Fellowship; and Amira Ahronoviz, director general of the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Tamano-Shata said that “through the end of January, and in accordance with the government decision I approved last October, a plane carrying hundreds of Ethiopian immigrants will land in Israel almost every week, as 3,000 people who have waited many years to arrive are reunited with their families.”

She was referring to Government Resolution 429, which provides a framework to bring 2,500 Ethiopian Jews to Israel by the end of the year. The December 22 flight – the second to arrive under the operation – brought in 219 immigrants, including 136 adults, 70 children and 13 babies.

Holocaust museum to be inaugurated in Oporto, Portugal

BY ISRAEL HAYOM STAFF

Israel Hayom via JNS – Oporto, the second-largest city in Portugal after Lisbon, plans to inaugurate a new Holocaust museum. It will be the city’s first museum of this kind. Oporto Jewish community President Dias Ben-Zion and the mayor of Oporto, Rui Moreira, will preside over the opening ceremony, which was scheduled to take place on January 20.

It was to be attended by a host of dignitaries, including UNESCO Focal Point for Holocaust Education program official Karel Frapacani, head of the Portuguese delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Ambassador Luiz Barreiros, commissioner of the Never Forget National Program for Holocaust Remembrance Marta Santos País, the bishop of Oporto and the president of the city’s Muslim community. The government was to be represented by the secretary of state for culture.

The Oporto Holocaust Museum, the brainchild of the local Jewish community, portrays Jewish life before the Holocaust. It also delves into the Nazi expansion in Europe, labor and extermination camps, the Final Solution, and the post-war period and the founding of the state of Israel.

Eckstein said her organization will make “every effort to assist them and the entire Ethiopian community.” “This is the closing of a particularly moving circle,” said Ahronoviz. “After years of not seeing one another, entire families are being reunited. Since the establishment of the state, the Jewish Agency has brought 95,000 immigrants from Ethiopia and helped absorb them into Israel. I wish to thank our partners in Israel and around the world for their joint participation to end their suffering after many long years of waiting.”

The new arrivals will go into quarantine, as is the procedure for incoming passengers during the coronavirus pandemic. They will then be reunited with family members. As part of the absorption process, they will receive support and guidance in all aspects of Israeli life, including learning Hebrew and preparation for employment and education.

The flights were made possible by the Jewish Agency; the Jewish Federations of North America and Keren Hayesod; and the support of international donors and foundations.

Resources...

Continued from page 2

new book “The Blessing and the Curse: The Jewish People and Their Books in the Twentieth Century,” which covers literary classics from Kafka to Ozick and A. B. Yehoshua, as well as works of Jewish thought. For more information or to register, visit https://jewishviewofbooks.com/conversation/adam-kirsch/.

The Tenement Museum will hold the virtual tour “LOVE at the Tenement” on Friday, February 12, at 6 pm, or Sunday, February 14, at 7 pm. The tour will offer shared stories of romantic and platonic relationships of 97 Orchard Street, from forbidden to familial love. Learn about dating, courting and marriage traditions observed in different times and cultural groups. The cost is $15 per device or free with museum membership. For more information or to register, visit www.tenement.org/tour/love-at-the-tenement/.

The Stroum Jewish Community Center will hold a “Book Fest in Your Living Room: Zoom Conversation + Q&A” with Jonathan Sarna, editor of “Cosella Wayne,” in conversation with Judith Rosenbaum, of Jewish Women’s Archive, on Wednesday, January 27, from 6:30-7:30 pm. Sarna will discuss the newly published version of Cora Wilburn’s “Cosella Wayne, Or Will and Destiny,” originally published in 1860, which is considered the first American Jewish novel. Tickets are $5-10. For more information or to register, visit https://sjcc.org/event/virtual-sjcc-book-fest-jonathan-sarna/.

For additional resources, see previous issues of The Reporter on its website, www.thereportergroup.org.
Every generation builds on the work of the previous generation. The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania has been blessed with many bequests and lifetime gifts that have been received over the years by the Federation as Unrestricted Endowment Funds, Perpetual Annual Campaign Endowment Funds, Restricted Funds and Donor-Advised Philanthropic Funds.

But the overriding principle that motivated the generosity of these benefactors was the simple premise that as our parents planted for us, so must we, in our turn, plant for those who will follow us. It is that tradition that has sustained the Jewish people throughout the eons of time.

For information on our Legacies for Life Program, call Mark Silverberg, Executive Director at 570-961-2300 (ext. 1) or e-mail him at mark.silverberg@jewishnepa.org if you have questions.

"Legacies for Life" Endowment Program

The following list of endowed gifts to the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania is published in recognition of the debt owed by the Jewish communities of Northeastern Pennsylvania to those whose legacy is sustaining our People and our faith here, in Israel, and throughout the world.

This list does not include donations to the Federation’s annual UJA Campaign from non-Federation-owned Funds.

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Every generation builds on the work of the previous generation, and every generation gives its resources to the one that follows.

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Moving forward with God

BY RABBI PEG KERSHENBAUM, CONGREGATION B’NAI HARAM
Bo, Exodus 10:1-13:16

Can a grammar lesson enhance our spirituality? Come and learn!

This week’s Torah portion is called Bo, the first significant word of God’s utterance to Moses in chapter 10 of the Book of Exodus: “The Lord said to Moses, “Bo to Pharaoh.” “Most translations show “Go to Pharaoh.” That is, the Lord is in one place with Moses and is sending Moses away from the Divine Presence to confront the ruler of the whole land of Egypt who has spent the entire previous Torah portion absorbing plague after plague, and whelching his way out of the devastation caused by them. But bo does not mean “go.” When Moses was first sent to confront Pharaoh, God did say, “Go.” But that word was lech – the same word God had used when directing Avram to leave home and go to an unknown land. Indeed, neither Avram nor Moses knew exactly what to expect at the other end of the going. After many trials, Avram gained the land of Canaan as a dwelling place. Moses hasn’t gained much yet. The people are disgruntled with him, the courtiers are uncomfortable and Pharaoh is hostile. Moses might very well have lost his nerve had God actually said “go” at that point.

God deliberately says, “bo,” “come” to Pharaoh. Semantically, that implies that Moses will be moving toward the speaker very much in the same place as the Pharaoh. That is, as Jacob once discovered, “God is in this place and I did not know it.” (Gen. 28:16) Unlike the first foray when Moses didn’t know what to expect, this time he has the tacit promise that God will be there when he confronts Pharaoh.

It is frightening to have to confront our fears and past failures alone. They seem so much more powerful than we are. They have defeated us over and over in the past. Why should we expect a different outcome this time? One definition of madness, they say, is to do the same act repeatedly and expect a different outcome. But if we have a strong ally or advocate in our corner, it’s easier to stand up for ourselves; the odds have shifted to our favor.

Moses can come into Pharaoh’s presence with confidence that God will be there to meet him and make sure that his mission is ultimately successful. Imagine what we could accomplish if we knew that in any particular endeavor God would be at our side! We would take heart and take part in efforts for social justice or environmental equity, or for any of dozens of improvements.

But wait! God is with us in our quest for righteousness and fairness just as God is present “wherever we let God in,” as Menachem Mendel of Kotzk taught. In the New Year, let this be in the front of our minds when we strive to pursue righteousness. When we enter the halls of power to put forward our notions of justice, we may draw more allies who are also aware of the Divine presence.

May we come together soon, with courage and com- mitment and in good health.
Friends of The Reporter make big news!

The Federation is asking members of its communities to support its “Friends of The Reporter” Campaign which seeks to raise $5,000 to assist in funding the newspaper.

The newspaper is delivered twice a month (except for December and July which are single issue months) to each and every identifiable Jewish home in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The Reporter is the primary intercommunal newspaper of the Jewish communities of Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties. Supplementing synagogue newsletters, bulletins and e-mails, The Reporter is issued to hundreds of Jewish households throughout our region. Over the past several years, the publishing cost of the newspaper has increased dramatically although the newspaper continues to be provided at no charge to members of our Jewish communities in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Federation has assumed the financial responsibility of funding the newspaper at a cost of $23,990 per year and asks only that its readers assist in raising $5,000 as part of its “Friends of The Reporter” Campaign to offset a small share of these expenses.

Your gift to fund our regional Jewish newspaper matters a great deal to our readers and we would be very grateful for your financial support.

As always, your comments, opinions & suggestions are always welcome.

With best wishes,
Mark Silverberg, Executive Director
Jewish Federation of NE Pennsylvania
601 Jefferson Avenue
Scranton, PA 18510

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“... to rescue the imperiled, care for the vulnerable, support Israel and world Jewry and perpetuate Jewish life in Northeastern Pennsylvania.”

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You will be able to look back and say: “I’m just doing what my People have always done for each other.”

For further information on gifting stocks in payment of your pledge to our Annual UJA Campaign, please contact the Federation at 570-961-2300 (ext. 3) for details.
Israel, Slovakia to sign $180 million defense export agreement

The Slovak government has approved the purchase of 17 radar systems produced by Israel Aerospace Industries, Israel’s Defense Ministry announced on Jan. 14. The deal, worth some 150 million euros ($182 million), will include technology transfer from Israel to Slovakia, as well as industrial cooperation between the two countries, and is being led by the ministry’s International Defense Cooperation Directorate. The radar components will be manufactured in collaboration with defense industries in Slovakia under the professional guidance of IAI and the ministry. The flagship Multi-Mission Radar (or MMR) manufactured by Israel Aerospace Industries subsidiary ELTA systems is combat-proven with extensive operational experience in Israel and around the world. The radar detects and classifies airborne threats, calculates the threat level and provides tools, resources and gravitas necessary to apply much-needed pressure on foreign surelty benefit from today’s action, which affords the Office of the Special Envoy the status of the U.S. special envoy on antisemitism. The Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Act, which was one of the last bills to pass the 116th Congress, upgradesthe status of the special envoy for monitoring and combating antisemitism, a position at the U.S. State Department, to an ambassadorship, thereby requiring U.S. Senate confirmation. The president will be required to fill the position within 90 days. Having been vacant at the start of the Trump administration, the special envoy was designated in February 2019 with the appointment of Iraq war veteran and attorney Elan Carr. Barring a nomination by Trump of someone to the upgraded position, President-elect Joe Biden will have the first opportunity to fill the role after he is sworn in. Hadasa advocated for the passage of what is now law. “Future ambassadors will surely benefit from today’s action, which affords the Office of the Special Envoy the levels, resources and gravitas necessary to apply much-needed pressure on foreign governments to address antisemitism as part of their relationships with the United States,” the organization said in a statement.

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania is to rescue the imperiled, care for the vulnerable, support Israel and world Jewry, and revitalize and perpetuate Jewish life in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

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MARK SILVERBERG AND DASSY GANZ, CO-CHAIRS OF THE 2021 UJA CAMPAIGN. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.