Cyber-attacks
A former IDF intel officer says foreign cyber-attack units are targeting the U.S. and Israel.

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Digging up the past
Fabric fragments, dating to the Iron Age, with royal purple dye have been found; and more.

Holocaust
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JFNP established Emergency Fund to assist Texas Jewish communities

As each of you know, the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania has participated, on many occasions, in emergency fund-raising efforts in the U.S., in Israel, and around the world to assist in responding to crises of all kinds. Unfortunately, events unfolding in Texas as a result of the recent deep freeze are yet another instance when we are called upon to assist our people.

Our national Federation office in New York has been in close contact with all of the Texas Federations – Dallas, Shalom Austin, the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso, the Jewish Federation of Fort Worth and Tarrant County, the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston and the Jewish Federation of San Antonio, as well as with several Network of Communities offices in Brownsville, Bryan/College Station, Corpus Christi, Galveston, McAllen, Tyler and Waco. Where there is need, they have supplied warm blankets, bottled water and plumbing assistance.

JFNA has already stepped up to help their colleagues in Texas. Within a few hours, the Large Intermediate Federations of North America pulled together to contribute funds to their peers in Dallas and Houston – enough to support 1,000 Shabbat packages along with kosher hot meals at multiple locations. Our national Federation office was proud to contribute to their effort, which highlights the beauty and strength of our people.

In response to this effort, Houston Federation President and CEO Kari Dunn Saratovsky commented that “there’s very little that is warm in Texas right now, but I can tell you that my heart is very warm, thanks to all of you! You are an incredible group of colleagues and friends.”

It was amid these conditions – and despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic – that members of the Jewish communities throughout the Lone Star State mobilized to help people in need. They opened their doors to friends without power, cooked meals, arranged for medication pickups for those homebound, and, in one extreme case, mobilized to ensure that hundreds of doses of critically needed coronavirus vaccines would not go to waste.

“Many members of our community have been without power,” said Rabbi Stuart Sunshine of Congregation Shearith Israel in Dallas. “We’ve also heard about a number of folks who had pipes burst, and in some cases, had flooding damage ranging from minor to quite major.”

“At Shearith Israel, we have been trying to match up congregants in need of resources (hot food, warmth, a warm place to sleep, etc.) with other congregants who have not been affected,” said Sunshine, who, along with his family, took advantage of a member’s hospitality as he had no power for two days.

Now back at home, Sunshine said his congregation is continuing to look after others. “We have initiated an emergency fund-raising effort tied into the mitzvah of matanot l’evyonim for Purim to raise money to help those in our Jewish community and larger Dallas community who are in most acute need,” he said, “with 50 percent of the funds going to Jewish Family Service of Greater Dallas and 50 percent going to the North Texas Food Bank.”

In the first 24 hours of the campaign, which was scheduled to run until Purim started on February 25, the synagogue had already raised nearly $20,000.

“See ‘Texas’ on page 10 by the freezing weather, allowing them to get through the immediate emergency and rebuild from this disaster.”

The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania is participating in this effort and invites each of you to join, as well. Please share this information with others who might be inclined to contribute to this cause.

We will continue to evaluate and address the situation. In the meantime, we send our love and best wishes to all the communities affected by the storm.

Mark Silverberg, Executive Director
Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

Texas Jewish communities mobilize to get food, medicine to those in need

Both initiatives have allowed the Goldfelders to supply even more food – the plan was to provide meals at least through February 19. The GoFundMe effort proved so successful that the couple has been able to set aside some of the funds to provide Passover items to Jews in need, as well as sending funds to help people in Austin who are in need.

Additionally, a truck filled with additional kosher-food provision packages for Shabbat arrived in Dallas on February 19 from the Lev Rochel Bikur Cholim – a Jewish organization in Lakewood, NJ – while a chef friend of Chaim Goldfelder flew down on February 18 from his home in New Jersey to help with the on-site cooking.

A massive plunge of arctic air and winter storms throughout Texas knocked out power for nearly 4.5 million residents the week of February 14 as the state’s power grid was unable to keep up with demand brought on by the record cold. Power-generation stations and the electric grid in Texas – separate from the rest of the country, and as such, unable to get help from neighboring states – were not properly winterized to handle the below-freezing temperatures. The precipitation made travel outdoors dangerous while indoors, water pipes froze and then ruptured, sending floods cascading down walls and throughceilings. At least 30 people have died since February 14 from the cold. Power has been restored to much of the state, although clean water and even food in some areas remain scarce.

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“See ‘Texas’ on page 10
Unmasking Palestinian “human rights” groups

BY HILLEL FRISCH (BESA Center via JNS) – Recently, an Atlanta-based human rights organization, International Human Rights Advocates (IHRAQ), which was until recently an anti-terrorist investigator at the State Department, claims the attack was carried out by Khalid Al-Qawi, who respectable human rights organization other than Jhad Watch covered the attack on Qumsiyeh or the allegations of systematic maltreatment of Christians in the Bethlehem area, where Christians are a minority. The search only revealed the “occupation forces” – allegations on Christians revealed several times.

The Israeli “human rights” organization B’Tselem takes its name from the biblical verse stating that man is made in God’s image. While the organization’s self-declared aim is to cover Israeli violations of their rights should be a matter of concern to the group. 

A new perspective and, of course, visiting the Bethlehem area, where Christians are supposed to protect have become the victims of their discriminatory focus. 

As educators, we need to always be learning, especially from those around us. Israel education, when done right, is about the people learning, not just the people teaching. In this approach, Israel is a cornerstone of identity development.
**COMMUNITY NEWS**

**Bais Yaakov Holding $100,000 raffle**

Bais Yaakov of Scranton announced a $100,000 grand prize raffle opportunity. One ticket for $100 is an entry into its raffle to win the grand prize, as well as a chance at 10 other prizes. "Due to the fact that our school was unable to engage with the public in our usual fund-raising events this year, your support is needed now more than ever," said organizers of the raffle. The deadline for entries is Monday, March 8. To purchase a ticket, visit https://100k-sweepstakes.com/byscranton/. "Help us reach our goal," organizers added.

Bais Yaakov of Scranton is a private Jewish high school for girls located in the heart of Scranton’s historic hill section. Founded in 1968, the Bais Yaakov stresses academic excellence in both limudei kodesh and limudei chol, with an emphasis on character development, chesed and responsibility to the community. It seeks to prepare its students to exceed in institutions of higher learning both in the U.S. and eretz Israel.

"Bais Yaakov of Scranton has shown what a difference an individual can make," said Esther Elfanit, the principal of the school. "The girls are a veritable whirlwind of good-hearted energy, offering smiles and comforting words. They volunteer and assist at meal times in the Jewish Home of Eastern Pennsylvania, as well as visiting, and delivering challahs at other senior residences. With challah and soup in hand, they brighten hospital stays. They run Shabbos youth groups and a homework help program, as well. Given its success in education, its warm, nurturing environment and its location in a small, wholesome community, the school has become a place for girls from out of town who have benefited from this environment. How can one school accomplish so much? It’s really miraculous!"

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**From JNS.org**

Israel, Germany ink deal to equip tanks with Israeli protection systems

Israel and Germany have signed an agreement to supply the latter’s fleet of Leopard 2 tanks with Rafael Advanced Defense Systems’ Trophy active protection system, the Israeli Defense Ministry announced on Feb. 23. The agreement includes the provision of systems for a company of tanks, interceptors and spare parts, as well as operational and technical training, according to the ministry. The systems will be delivered over the next several years.

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BY ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHERMAN

(Israel21c via JNS) – After two Bedouin teenagers bragged on TikTok about vandalizing a Jewish graveyard at Moshav Nevatim about five miles south of Beersheva in the Negev Desert, a group of about 20 young adults from a variety of Bedouin villages sprang into action.

Armed with paint and brushes, they headed to the cemetery the next morning – even though it was Friday, the Muslim Sabbath – and worked for hours to repair damaged tombstones, scraping and painting over hateful graffiti.

“We are sending a message here to both sides – to Jewish society but also inward to the Bedouin society – so that everyone will know that we condemn vandalism and that the youth of our society would see that such acts give them no prestige, but rather the opposite. We will not tolerate it, and we will not let such things slide,” wrote al-Assad.

“We would like all of Israeli society that has heard about the rectification as well,” wrote al-Assad. “We feel that showing the beautiful face of Bedouin society is news that is just as important and that we can continue to spread a message of unity.”

Abu Jaffar notes that the 20-somethings who volunteered came from different villages, and all have jobs or are continuing their studies. Approximately 250,000 Arab Bedouins live in nine Bedouin municipalities and dozens of herding and farming villages scattered throughout the Negev. “Our initiative about 10 volunteers would come, and in the end, it was much more.”

“Because they are connected to social media, they saw the post on TikTok and soon, there was a message that went out on our alumni WhatsApp group,” said Desert Stars co-CEO Yousef Abu Jaffar. That was on the afternoon of January 14.

“They called me when I was on my way home, and by seven in the evening, everyone was ready,” said Abu Jaffar. “I said I would join them in the morning.”

When he got to Nevatim at 8 am on Friday, with fresh bourekas for everyone, they were almost done with the fix-up.

Several volunteers posted on Desert Stars’ Facebook page about why they were almost done with the fix-up.

“We decided to make a show of solidarity. Our actions are making a statement beyond the immediate impact,” wrote Saad.

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Friends and family are welcome to join this fascinating program.

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Please pre-register by e-mailing jonathan1818@gmail.com with your name and e-mail address.

The Zoom link will be sent to registrants prior to the March 18th program.

B’nai Harim is pleased to offer these zoominars at no charge. Voluntary contributions to support B’nai Harim’s efforts during these difficult times are appreciated. Please visit B’nai Harim’s website and consider joining our welcoming congregation, http://www.bnaiharimpoconos.org.

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- The Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage will hold a virtual program connected to the exhibit “Notorious RBG.” On Wednesday, March 24, at 4 pm, there will be a program called “1 Dissent: Discussion on Election and Voting Rights” with Hon. Patricia A. Blackmon, Eighth District Court of Appeals, and Elizabeth Bonham, ACLU. There is a $10 general charge. The program qualifies for CLE credit through the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association for $40. To register, e-mail info@clemetrobar.org.
- The Jewish Museum of Florida will hold “Color and Jewish Identity in India: A Conversation with Dr. Nathan Katz” on Monday, March 15, from 7-8 pm. For more information or to register, visit https://secure.aqv.co/for/jmof/event-827303/.
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- Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies will hold “Ma Nishtana: How are WE different this Passover?” on Sunday, March 14, from noon-4:30 pm. There will be three sessions with different options offered each session. There is no charge to attend, but a donation is requested. For more information or to register, visit www.pardes.org.il/calendar/ma-nishtana-how-are-we-different-this-passover/.
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“Harry Potter” star narrates new Holocaust documentary for British students

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – A new Holocaust documentary narrated by British actor and “Harry Potter” star Jason Isaacs debuted recently for students in the United Kingdom. Holocaust Learning UK commissioned the hour-long film “Out of the Darkness,” which features the testimony of Janine Webber, a survivor of the Lvov Ghetto.

Isaacs, 57, who played Lucious Malfoy in the “Harry Potter” series of films, is Jewish and has spoken about the “Harry Potter” series of films, is Jewish and has spoken about his Jewish heritage.

“We were honored to have Jason Isaacs as our narrator,” said Claire Fox, a Holocaust Education Trust advisory board member. “He did an amazing job bringing the past to life.”

The documentary “teaches students about the Holocaust as it contextualizes the survivor testimony and references subsequent genocides and identifies suffering where the victims are selected on the basis of being ‘different’ or ‘other,’” explained the charity. “‘Out of the Darkness’ is fundamentally about encouraging students to learn the lessons from the past to help build a better, safer future for everyone.”

Students and Rabbis Aaron Goldstein of the Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue in the United Kingdom are also featured in the film, which is available free to schools and colleges until May 31. It fulfills the educational requirements of British students regarding Holocaust education.

The charity typically invites students to synagogues to hear the testimony of Holocaust survivors, but due to the coronavirus pandemic, all in-person events have been canceled.
BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – In a groundbreaking discovery, Israeli archaeologists have unearthed scraps of fabric dyed in royal purple from an ancient church in the Lower Galilee in the village of Kfar Kama near Mount Tabor, which Christians believe is the Mount of Transfiguration where Jesus performed one of his miracles.

The excavation was conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority, in collaboration with the Kinneret Academic College and local volunteers. The head of the Greek Catholic Church in Israel also personally visited the site, which was conducted prior to the construction of a playground, at the initiative of the Kfar Kama local council and Jewish National Fund.

According to lead archaeologist Nuri Feig, “the church, measuring 12x36 [meters], includes a large courtyard, a narthex foyer and a central hall. Particular to this church is the existence of three apses [prayer niches], while most churches were characterized by a single apse.”

Additionally, Feig noted that the aisles of the church were paved with mosaics that have partially survived. “Their colorful decoration stands out, incorporating geometric patterns, and blue, black and red floral patterns,” she said.

Feig also said that a “special discovery” was the small reliquary, a stone box used to preserve sacred relics. Additional series of rooms were also partially uncovered adjacent to the church. Ground-penetrating radar indicated that there are more rooms at the site that have yet to be excavated, leading researchers to believe that this large complex served as a monastery.

According to Feig, a church was excavated inside of the village of Kfar Kama, which archaeologists now believe was probably the village church, while the newly discovered church was probably part of a monastery on the outskirts of the village.

The latest discovery in Kfar Kama highlights the importance of the Christian village settlement during the Byzantine period near Mount Tabor.

According to the Christian Gospels, Jesus and three of his apostles – Peter, James and John – go to the Mount of Transfiguration to pray. While on the mountain, Jesus began to shine with bright rays of light with the prophets Moses and Elijah appearing next to him and speaking with him. Jesus is then called “son” by a voice from the sky, assumed to be God. Today, several major Christian traditions commemorate the event as the Feast of Transfiguration.

Latter in the 19th century, Circassian tribes settled in Kfar Kama and used the stones of the ancient village to build their houses.

The discovery of the church in Kfar Kama will contribute to the extensive research project on the Christian settlement in the Galilee that is being carried out by Professor Moti Aviam and Jacob Ashkenazi of the Kinneret Institute of Galilean Archaeology in the Kinneret Academic College.
Israel scrambles to save animals hurt in massive tar spill

BY ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN
(Issrael21c via JNS) – A catastrophic tar spill washing up along Israel’s entire Mediterranean coast may be the worst environmental disaster in Israeli history.

While government authorities investigate the source of the offshore leak of at least 1,000 tons of sticky, toxic tar, many Israeli civilians and soldiers are helping with cleanup efforts that will likely take months.

“When the weekend I, together with thousands of volunteers, were at the beaches cleaning sticky, black tar oil off of dead and dying animals,” Iris Hann, CEO of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, wrote to supporters. “My heart broke as I found dead baby turtles, birds, fish and other marine animals stiff and lifeless. Their bodies were completely coated with a sticky, toxic tar that gave them no chance.”

The Israel National Sea Turtle Rescue Center in Mikhmoret reported on February 20 that it had received and treated 10 injured sea turtles in the previous two days, five of them covered in tar. Volunteers are working around the clock to care for them.

“We call on the public to look for sea turtles that have washed up on shore and report immediately to the 3639* hotline,” the center posted on Facebook. “Live turtles must come for treatment at the rescue center as soon as possible, while the dead turtles are important to document so that we learn the scope of the disaster.”

Israel Defense Forces soldiers cleaned tar off the Palmachim beach on February 22 following an offshore oil spill that polluted much of the Israeli coastline. (Photo by Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

The spill also appears to be responsible for the death of a young 55-foot fin whale found on Nitzanim Beach on February 18. An autopsy found black liquid in the creature’s lungs.

The Israel Wildlife Hospital at Ramat Gan Safari Park is treating many types of animals affected by the disaster. The Israel Nature and Parks Authority is helping to rescue animals and bring them there for treatment.

“Animals come with multiple injuries, and many of them suffer from hypothermia due to the tar that wraps their bodies and prevents them from warming up on these cold days,” the hospital posted on Facebook. “In the hospital, our dedicated caregivers clean the animals gently with special oils that are not dangerous to their health. In addition to cleaning, they receive fluids and vitamins, and treatment against infections and weakness that can develop from poisoning. We very much hope that these animals will also be rehabilitated and can return to nature, like the thousands of animals treated at the wildlife hospital every year.”

Beaches remain closed as Israeli officials assess the damage, formulate a long-range cleanup plan and investigate the source of the spill. Experts fear the damage could take years to undo.

Israel Environmental Protection Minister Gila Gamliel said the incident highlights “how necessary it is to get rid of polluting fuels and move to renewable energies.”

This article was first published by Israel21c.

Israel President Reuven Rivlin (far right) visited a beach in Herzliya polluted with tar with Herzliya Mayor Moshe Fadlon (second from right) on February 22. (Photo by Amos Ben Gershom/GPO)

The Israel Nature and Parks Authority is helping to rescue animals and bring them there for treatment. The spill also appears to be responsible for the death of a young 55-foot fin whale found on Nitzanim Beach on February 18. An autopsy found black liquid in the creature’s lungs.

Animals come with multiple injuries, and many of them suffer from hypothermia due to the tar that wraps their bodies and prevents them from warming up on these cold days,” the hospital posted on Facebook. “In the hospital, our dedicated caregivers clean the animals gently with special oils that are not dangerous to their health. In addition to cleaning, they receive fluids and vitamins, and treatment against infections and weakness that can develop from poisoning. We very much hope that these animals will also be rehabilitated and can return to nature, like the thousands of animals treated at the wildlife hospital every year.”

Beaches remain closed as Israeli officials assess the damage, formulate a long-range cleanup plan and investigate the source of the spill. Experts fear the damage could take years to undo.

Israel Environmental Protection Minister Gila Gamliel said the incident highlights “how necessary it is to get rid of polluting fuels and move to renewable energies.”

This article was first published by Israel21c.
D’VAR TORAH
Finding holiness even when things go wrong

BY RABBI MIRIAM T. SPITZER, TEMPLE ISRAEL, SCRANTON


When it came time for Moshe to go up the mountain again to receive the Ten Commandments a second time, God said to him: “Pesolet lekha shnei luhot avanim kar- shimton.” “Carve for yourself two tablets of stone like the first ones.” (Ex. 34:1)

Our Torah commentators are ever on the alert for an unusual turn of phrase in the Torah. Why does the Torah say “pesolet lekha/carve for yourself”? Surely it would have been enough to have said “Pesolet Carve two tablets of stone like the first ones.” What is the word “leko” doing in that sentence?

Rashi brings a midrash to explain this phrase. According to the midrash, when God said “pesolet leko,” God was saying that the pessol, the cast-away chips from the carving, should be “leko,” for Moshe. Moshe could personally own the pieces that fell off the tablets as he carved them into the tablets. And since the Ten Commandments were made from sapelo, a precious stone, Moshe got wealthy from the pessol of the Ten Commandments.

Moshe got rich off the Ten Commandments? Now that is a bizarre midrash!

The Yalkut Shimoni, in writing in the 1800s, has an interesting take on Rashi. He explains that the “wealth” of Moshe was that he was able to take even the discards of Israel and to extract from it sparks of holiness—and this is a great wealth!” It is easy to find holiness in the finished product. Of course the chiseled tablets of the Ten Commandments were holy. But the chips that fell by the wayside, what was holy about them? Of course, our successes are “holy,” but what of our mistakes, what of the false starts and the wrong turns that we leave on the cutting room floor as we go through our lives? Moshe was given the gift of finding “holiness,” finding value, finding worth, in the actions of the people that he led, even when it was hard to do so.

The Yalkut Eliezer suggests that the ability to see the unusual turn of phrase in the Torah, to see it clearly, was given to him. With the gift of “pesolet” came the gift of seeing the unusual; of seeing the usual in the unusual. In a world of rules and regulations, in a world of restrictions and limitations, how is it possible for us to do. But as parents, as teachers, as managers, as leaders, we have to do just that.

May we learn, like Moshe, to see value even when it is not immediately obvious, to find holiness even in the discards, in our errors, even when things go wrong.
Radio emissions from galaxy challenge black hole theories, say Israeli scientists

Israeli scientists said in research published on Feb. 29 that they had discovered a new black hole, which they said had a mass of 6.6 million times the mass of the sun. This is the first time that a black hole has been discovered in a galaxy outside the Milky Way.

The black hole was discovered by Dr. Assaf Horesh of the University of Haifa, who said in a statement: "This is the first time that we have discovered a black hole in another galaxy, and it is the first time that we have discovered a black hole with a mass of this size."

The black hole was first observed in the galaxy M87, which is located in the constellation Virgo, using the Very Large Array observatory in New Mexico. The team used data from the observatory to create a map of the galaxy, which showed a bright, round object in the center of the galaxy. This was confirmed when the team used the Event Horizon Telescope, a network of radio telescopes around the world, to observe the galaxy in more detail.

The black hole was identified as a black hole because it is a region in space where the density of matter is so high that nothing, not even light, can escape from it. This is known as a "singularity" in physics.

The discovery of the black hole is significant because it challenges our understanding of black holes. In the past, it was believed that all black holes had a mass of less than 100 times the mass of the sun. However, the discovery of the black hole with a mass of 6.6 million times the mass of the sun challenges this belief.

Scientists said that the discovery of the black hole could help us understand more about the behavior of black holes, and how they can be used to explore the universe. This could have implications for understanding the behavior of black holes in other galaxies, and how they can be used to explore the universe.

The discovery of the black hole was announced on Feb. 29. The team said they will continue to study the black hole, and that they hope to learn more about its behavior in the future.

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Polish ruling on Holocaust libel case causes profound concern among Jewish groups

BY FAYGIE HOLT (JNS) – A ruling issued by a court in Poland on February 9 is meeting fierce criticism from Jewish groups and others who claim that the decision will silence further examination of the role of Polish citizens during the Holocaust.

The criticism comes after a court found that the authors of “Night Without End: The Fall of German Jewry Selected Counties of Occupied Poland” – Jan Grabowski, professor of history at the University of Ottawa in Canada, and Barbara Engelking, director of the Research Centre for the Extermination of Jews – must issue a retraction of their work and apologize to the niece of Edward Malomowsky, a Polish man, who was briefly mentioned in the book as being complicit in the murdering of Jews during World War II.

The court’s ruling in today’s Poland who want to deny or deflect the fact that some of their compatriots abused and even killed Polish Jews during World War II. They only want to remember the horrors wrought on the Polish nation by the Nazis, while denying this sordid truth,” Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and global director of its Ed Snider Social Action Institute, told JNS.

“The Jewish people simultaneously recognize the truth that millions of Righteous Poles who, often at great personal risk, saved Jews during this period, while at the same time denouncing the people who abused and killed Polish Jews. Polish history is complicated, and the only ones who should be apologizing are those who seek to rewrite it,” he said.

The libel case in Poland stems from a controversial 2018 law passed by Poland’s government that made it a civil offense to make false accusations about Polish history in the Holocaust. The law originally included criminal penalties, but was amended after an international outcry from Jewish groups, as well as outrage in Israel, which led to strained relations between the countries at the time. Despite the passing of some 75 years since the end of the war, Poland still struggles to come to grips with its history from 1939 to 1945.

In 1939, the country was home to 3.3 million Jews; in 1945, it had been reduced by 90 percent to an estimated 300,000 survivors.

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and the World Jewish Restoration Organization issued a joint statement on February 9, saying, in part: “The history of the Holocaust requires independent scholarly research that must not be subject to inappropriate efforts at pressure by politicians and the courts. This verdict is a concerning example of Holocaust distortion against which the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, of which Poland is a member, has taken a stand.”

Gideon Taylor, president of the Claims Conference and WJRO’s chair of operations, added that, “Poland must encourage open inquiry into its history, both the positive and negative aspects, in order to build a solid society for the future, based on solid ground and a genuine understanding of the past.”

Prior to the ruling, officials from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum weighed in on the case and said that lawsuit “raises serious concerns about the future of independent Holocaust scholarship in Poland and elsewhere. This is one of several troubling trends in the region and beyond. … Honestly reckoning with Holocaust history is essential to the health of societies. Unfettered scholarship and open public discourse are necessary in order to uncover the full scope of Holocaust history and understand its continued relevance.”

Reunited childhood friends torn apart by Holocaust now Zoom regularly

BY JNS STAFF (JNS) – Two Jewish friends from Berlin who believed that each other had been killed during World War II and the Holocaust recently reunited with the help of the USC Shoah Foundation.

After Ana Maria Wahrenberg and Betty Grebenschikoff said goodbye to each other in a German school year in May 1939, Wahrenberg’s family fled to Chile, while Grebenschikoff traveled to the United States via Shanghai. This past fall, they saw each other again via Zoom for the first time in 82 years.

“In her [USC Shoah Foundation] testimony, Betty said she had been actively searching for her long-lost friend for her entire life,” she even specifically mentions Ana María’s name in the hopes that this will help her find her best childhood friend,” said Rachael Cerrotti, who works as a creative producer for the USC Shoah Foundation, which has more than 55,000 “Friends on page 11

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In Houston, the winter weather and resultant issues proved a test of the Jewish community’s resilience in the face of an increasingly relatively new Jewish Response and Action Network. “One thing about living in Houston is that we have had plenty of practice when it comes to natural disasters,” said Jackie Fisherman, director of government relations at the Federation and organizer of JRAN. “This is different. Even in Hurricane Harvey, there were areas of Texas that were unaffected” and could send aid. “This is widespread. But we were prepared, and we have risen to the situation as best we could.”

Part of JRAN’s mission was to create a network of Jewish communal leaders – synagogues, rabbis, heads of local organizations, etc. – who could provide real-time, in-person assistance to those in need on emergency conditions and what was most urgently needed. That network was put to the test during this storm. For instance, when word came that a senior residence was about to run out of fuel for its generator, Fisherman was able to connect them to the proper authorities to make sure they got what they needed.

“It’s been so heartwarming to see how the community has come together,” she said.


dated to March 10

Has been sent, and folks from all walks of life flooded to UOS,” said the rabbi. “We saved lives today!”
The American Jewish Committee and the National Association of Attorneys General were to partner for a virtual training session on Feb. 24 about combatting antisemitism in the United States. The AJC-led session, titled “The People v. Hate: Standing Up for Human Rights,” will include workshops with both the Israeli Attorney General Karl A. Racine’s 2021 NAAG Presidential Initiative to have attorneys general in the U.S. train against hate crimes and hate-related violence. Participants were to learn about antisemitic conspiracy theories, tropes and symbols, and the range of antisemitism stemming from religious extremists, as well as from the right and left sectors of politics. They were also be presented with the findings of AJC’s “The State of Antisemitism in America 2020” report and “Translate Hate,” the committee’s glossary of commonly used anti-Semitic terms and tropes, both to help identify and respond to such incidents. “Educated, motivated law enforcement agencies are critical for effectively combating rising antisemitism in the United States,” said Melanie Maron Pell, AJC’s chief field operations officer. “Attorney general officials are elected officials uniquely positioned to lead in confronting this societal problem, the late targeting Jews.”

Syrian U. tables resolution to adopt IHRA definition

Syracuse University’s Student Association tabled a resolution on Feb. 22 to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s working definition of antisemitism after several members expressed concern regarding the definition’s language. SA President Justine Hastings, along with others, said antisemitism should not be equated with anti-Zionism and worried about how the IHRA definition affects Palestinian rights. Some members were also concerned about a clause in the bill that denounces BDS.

The bill was introduced on Feb. 15 by SA member Noah Wagner. Hastings and SA members suggested that the bill adopt only certain parts of the IHRA’s definition, but Wagner and the bill’s co-author, Kate Berman, co-president of the Chabad House at Syracuse University, were unwilling to change the language. “Anti-Zionism is antisemitism. Not denouncing BDS is antisemitism,” said Wagner.

The bill will be tabled until May, which is when the next legislative session begins.

Israeli Cabinet approves proposal to recognize, compensate for Yemenite “children affair”

The Israeli Cabinet on Feb. 22 approved a proposal to recognize the “Yemenite, Mizrahi and Balkan children affair” and provide financial compensation to the affected families, the Prime Minister’s Office said in a statement. The “children affair” refers to the disappearance of an estimated 1,500-5,000 babies and toddlers of new immigrants who arrived in Israel between 1948 and 1954. The majority of these hailed from Yemen, though a considerable number were from the Balkans, Iraq, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya. Jews from these latter countries are known as Mizrahi or, “eastern.”

The parents of the missing children have claimed over the decades that they were told by authorities that the infants had died, either at birth or subsequently, yet were given no documentation and were informed of no places of burial. This aroused suspicion that the children had been taken and put with families of European origin – Ashkenazi – particularly Holocaust survivors. “This is among the most painful affairs in the history of the state of Israel,” said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. “The time has come for the families whose infants were taken from them to receive recognition by the state and government of Israel, and financial compensation as well.”

Such compensation “will not atone for the terrible suffering that the families went through and are going through,” said Netanyahu, adding that he has asked the education minister to include the “Yemenite children affair” in the school curriculum. The compensation approved by the Cabinet, according to Netanyahu’s office, totals 162 million shekels ($55 million), to be allocated as follows: 150,000 shekels ($45,977) to the families of children whose death, or cause of death, was not revealed or whose burial place was not disclosed. In the case of the children whose fate remains unknown, the families will receive up to 200,000 shekels ($61,300). Those families determined to be eligible for the compensation by

Friends......Continued from page 10

point in my life, I am boundlessly grateful for,” declared Wahrenberg of reuniting with her childhood friend in November. “Betty and I have had several encounters by WhatsApp and Zoom. We [now] talk every Sunday for about an hour … we will never give up! Our conversations are great; we still have common interests and, of course, many, many memories that we still share,” she said. “As soon as we get out of this horrible pandemic, we will try to get together in some corner of the world.”

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Kosher Fresh Chicken Items

Fresh Kosher Boneless Chicken Breast Fillets $5.99 per pound

Fresh Kosher Cut Up Chicken Fryers $2.49 per pound

Fresh Kosher Whole Broiler Chickens $2.49 per pound

We have a selection of Kosher for Passover cakes and cookies made by Molly’s Bakehouse.