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WHAT'S DRIVING THE AMERICAN JEWISH CONVERSATION

Forwarding the News

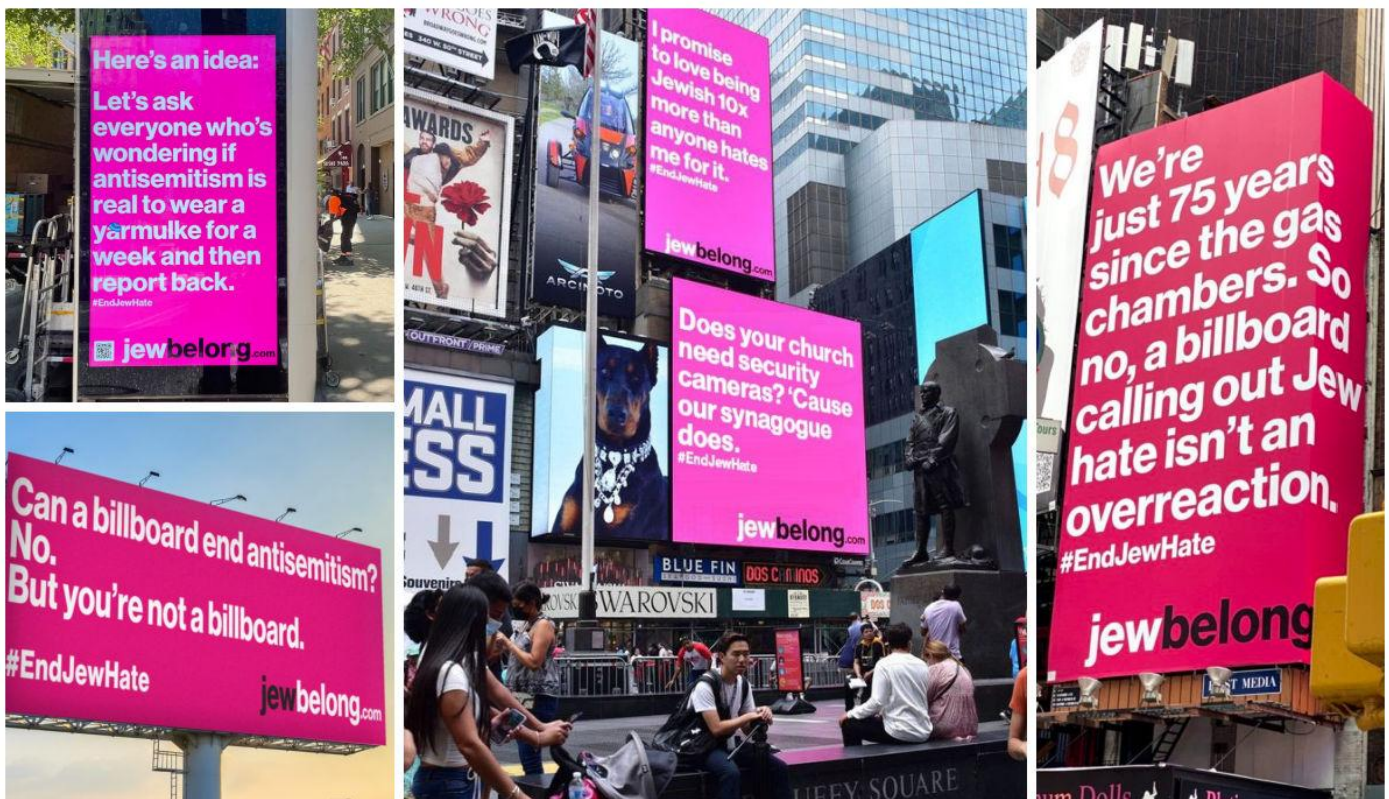
with Benjamin Cohen



Supreme Court won't hear antisemitism case, comparing China to Nazis, centuries-old farm unearthed in Israel, our Bintel podcast wades into real estate wars, and a 'hot rabbi' gets a reality show.

[Plus: Play today's Verlt puzzle, the Yiddish Wordle](#)

OUR LEAD STORY



[JewBelong's billboards are everywhere. But what are they selling?](#)

You may have been walking through Times Square or driving down a highway in Miami and seen a hot pink billboard. Sure, the bright color choice caught your attention. But it's likely the snarky slogan that had you doing a double take: "Does your church need security cameras? 'Cause our synagogue does."

What's the scoop? The signage, and social media posts with similar color schemes and sass, are the brainchild of Archie Gottesman and Stacy Stuart, who launched the nonprofit JewBelong in 2017. "We have a branding problem," Gottesman said of their effort to sell Judaism to disengaged Jews. Early posts were light-hearted, mocking mothers-in-law or comparing antiviral masks to a "kippah for your mouth."

From hot pink to hotter: Over the last year or so, the organization has become a lightning rod, because of a shift to call out antisemitism and advocate for Israel. On social media, where the group has tens of thousands of followers, and on billboards in major cities, new slogans equate anti-Zionism with antisemitism and pointedly remind audiences of the horrors of the Holocaust. Gottesman herself apologized for tweeting: "Gaza is full of monsters. Burn the whole place."

Jew vs. Jew: After Russia invaded Ukraine, JewBelong tweeted a photo contrasting President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a camouflage vest with Sen. Bernie Sanders in his iconic mittens. "What type of Jew are you?" it asked. Some accused the group of slandering Sanders and pitting Jews against Jews. Others complained JewBelong was invoking antisemitic tropes with posts like this one: "If we actually controlled the banks, Ruth Bader Ginsburg would be on the 100-dollar bill."

Backlash: Jason Rosenberg, a marketing professional who used to work alongside Gottesman at 92Y, called JewBelong hypocritical for purporting to be all about a big tent and then alienating those who have different political views, especially about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

[**Read the story**](#) ➤

ALSO FROM THE FORWARD



On the top row, concentration camp prisoners during the Holocaust. On bottom, captive Uyghurs in China. (Photos: Auschwitz Memorial Museum, Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation; Design: Jake Wasserman)

We've got three powerful new essays to share today...

To anyone familiar with the Holocaust, these Chinese documents are full of disturbing echoes: The BBC published a slew of internal police files on Tuesday, that clearly prove a genocide targeting the Uyghurs, a Muslim ethnic minority group. The files include more than 5,000 images of detainees, detailed police training manuals for “re-education camps,” and classified speeches by government officials. “The strongest evidence of Nazi crimes came after the war,” notes our columnist, Rob Eshman. He asks: Now that there is proof of such crimes in China, how will we respond? [**Read his column**](#) ➤

What will it take for Orthodox Judaism to hold sexual abusers accountable? The Southern Baptist Convention dropped a bombshell this week, revealing a secret list of ministers and church workers who committed sexual abuse. Asher Lovy, a survivor of abuse in the Haredi community, writes that while many investigations are conducted in religious denominations — including Reform and Conservative Judaism — “Orthodox Judaism continues to actively resist accountability.” [**Read his essay**](#) ➤

What we talk about when we talk about Uvalde: “Thanks to the quickening pace of Americans murdering other Americans en masse, we have murdered the meaning of tragedy,” writes our contributing columnist Rob Zaretsky, a history professor at the University of Houston.

“Tragedy is not simply something that happens to us, the way that, say, a meteor happened to dinosaurs 65 million years ago.” [Read his essay](#) ➤

Related: [‘Never felt a pain quite like this’: Jews react to the Texas school shooting](#)

A message from our sponsor: Yaffed

Every Jewish Child Should Get A Basic Education



It takes two minutes to speak up for tens of thousands of Jewish children who are being denied a basic education in ultra-Orthodox and Hasidic Yeshivas across New York.

Submit your letter to the State Education Department NOW.

SUBMIT A LETTER NOW

WHAT ELSE YOU NEED TO KNOW TODAY



Rabbi Becky Eisenstadt meets her clients through social media, where she goes by @myhotrabbi. (Alex Korolkovas)

❤️ **She's single and calls herself a "hot rabbi."** She got her ordination online and doesn't belong to any denomination. She's an on-demand bar and bat mitzvah tutor to wealthy families. Oh, and now Reese Witherspoon's media company is making a reality show about her love life. ([NY Jewish Week](#))

⚖️ **The Supreme Court has decided not to hear a case** brought by two congregants against protesters who gather at their synagogue each week with antisemitic signs, citing freedom of speech. Jewish groups had filed friend-of-the-court briefs on behalf of the plaintiffs, one of whom is a Holocaust survivor. ([JTA](#))

😱 Invoking "Man's Search For Meaning," Viktor Frankl's book about surviving Auschwitz, **a Fox News panelist compared the Uvalde mass shooter to Holocaust victims.** The shocking comments drew wide condemnation. "May be the worst take on this ever," one person [wrote](#). ([Twitter](#))

✡️ **Steven Dettelbach, President Joe Biden's nominee to lead the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, highlighted his Judaism during his confirmation hearing on Wednesday.** "Mass shootings are increasing, hate crimes and religious violence are increasing," he said, recounting his experience "raising Jewish children as a religious minority in

this country.” Dettelbach was endorsed by two officials from Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life synagogue. ([Forward](#))

A 2,100-year-old farmstead has been unearthed in Israel's Galilee.

Archaeologists were shocked to find precious tools and intact pottery jars, leading them to believe the inhabitants left in haste. “We were very lucky to discover a time capsule, frozen in time,” said the director of the excavation. ([Algemeiner](#), [Haaretz](#))



A new book explores the toys, music and kids' books found in Orthodox homes.

Readers will learn about a Lego-like set featuring tiny rabbis in their studies; children's songs that teach sexual restraint and the power of prayer; and an adaptation of "The Babysitters Club." ([JTA](#))



When Becky Tahel's sister got engaged to a non-Jew, she asked herself: Why marry Jewish?

She turned to experts, among them Rabbis David Wolpe and Susan Goldberg, and Eric Andre, an actor who grew up in a mixed family. Instead of a notebook, **Tahel brought along a film crew.** **The result? A new documentary, “American Birthright.”** ([Kveller](#))

What else we're reading ► A Jewish teen put her baby up for adoption in WWII. [They just reunited](#) ... In Uruguay, a ritzy resort city's [Jewish population has doubled](#) during the pandemic ... Watched Netflix's 'Beauty Queen of Jerusalem'? Here are seven other movies and shows [that feature the Ladino language](#).

NEW EPISODE ALERT



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A Bintel Brief

The Jewish Advice Podcast

Season 2, Episode 3 - "On the Fence" streaming now!



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This just in: In the latest episode of our advice podcast, released this morning, we hear from “On the Fence,” a man with a real estate quandary. Houses go quickly in his town, he explains, and his neighbor is putting his house up for sale soon. A friend and a friend of a friend have both asked for help getting connected to the seller in advance. Our hosts, Ginna Green and Lynn Harris, talk through the ethical questions about how to balance the interests of someone you know and someone you don’t against your own concerns about the neighborhood. Plus: a property-dispute letter from the archive and real estate advice from the Talmud. [Listen now ►](#)

ON THE CALENDAR



Ted Oates, seen here in 2015, was a member of the British military and took part in the evacuation from Dunkirk. (Getty)

On this day in history: On May 26, 1940, the British began pulling troops out of Dunkirk, France, where German forces had them surrounded. Under the codename “Operation Dynamo,” a flotilla of privately owned small boats known as the “Little Ships” sailed to Dunkirk to help round up the troops who were stranded on the beaches. The successful evacuation saved the lives of British Jews, Hugh Sebag-Montefiore [wrote in a 2006 article in the *Forward*](#). “There is little doubt that a well-planned invasion would have been successful, and once Britain was in German hands it was likely that all British Jews would have been transported to concentration camps,” he wrote. [Read more on how Dunkirk saved the Jews ►](#)

The Beatles released their “Sgt. Pepper” album 55 years ago today. Its iconic cover [featured a minyan of Jews](#), including Albert Einstein.

Last year on this day, we reported that the San Francisco public teachers’ union [became the first in the nation](#) to endorse the movement to boycott Israel.

Today: Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt will speak this morning at a conference on antisemitism at the Jewish Heritage Museum in Manhattan. This afternoon, Lipstadt will also be the keynote speaker at Yeshiva University’s commencement ceremony.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



Three actresses who met while performing “Fiddler on the Roof” at the National Yiddish Theater Folksbiene were looking for their next passion project. They created The Memales, a Yiddish band. They launched a GoFundMe to finance a debut music video, which you can watch above. “We’re hoping for nichely viral,” joked Maya Jacobson, a member of the trio. “I hope it brings some joy and I hope that grandparents can share it with their grandkids and can show them how fun this language is. Because it’s a part of all of us.” [Read more about the Yiddish trio ►](#)

Thanks to Mira Fox, Louis Keene, Amanda Rozon, Eliya Smith, Jake Wasserman and Talya Zax for contributing to today’s newsletter. You can reach the “Forwarding” team at editorial@forward.com.

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