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Non-profits How will they survive?

By BEN SALES

JTA

NEW YORK — In the weeks after it became clear that the coronavirus pandemic would spark a lasting economic crisis, the Jewish world's leading funder group put together a memo with some back-of-the-envelope projections for how much Jewish non-profits stood to lose. The tally: at least \$650 million, according to the internal document from the Jewish Federations of North America, which was based

Proposed \$1 billion fund . . . iffy

on estimates from several American Jewish umbrella organizations, such as the Foundation for Jewish Camp and the JCC Association of North America.

The document was produced in March and obtained by JTA.

The document says Jewish camps, schools, community centers and other groups like college Hillels will need that much or more to make it through the pandemic, which has already caused widespread layoffs and furloughs at Jewish community centers across the US.

Last week, a coalition of large Jewish philanthropic foundations pledged \$80 million to shore up struggling Jewish organizations.

But now, with it becoming increasingly clear that the world will not snap back to its former shape anytime soon, that number appears to be a fraction of what will be needed.

The sudden financial blow is reanimating a longstanding debate about

NONPROFITS

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Falafel shop owner breaks down on TV

JERUSALEM (JTA) — An Israeli falafel shop owner broke down in tears in a television interview on Sunday, April 19, that resonated across the country as a symbolic encapsulation of the economic toll that the coronavirus is taking on small businesses.

"Look at my wallet, it's empty,"



said the shop owner Yuval Carmi, pulling out his wallet during the Channel 13 interview. "I don't have a shekel in my pocket."

He added: "I'm embarrassed to face my children, to tell them I have nothing I can buy for you. I have nothing to give them. I have

TEARS Continued on Page 16

Gov't in Israel Complicated power sharing

By BEN SALES

JTA

JERUSALEM — Israel finally has a government. On April 20, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and chief rival Benny Gantz signed an agreement to form a coalition government together.

The deal ends more than a year of deadlocked elections and political stalemate.

Since March, 2019, Israelis have gone to the polls three times and, on each occasion, essentially delivered a tie between Netanyahu and

Gantz takes over in 2021, if . . .

Gantz. Neither of the first two elections resulted in a governing coalition and ended up triggering yet another vote.

With no end in sight to the politicking following the latest election in early March, and the coronavirus crisis weighing on the country's citizens, Gantz made the shocking move to join Netanyahu — someone he has called unfit for office due to corruption allegations — and break apart his own centrist political group, Blue and White.

Their deal is multifaceted and involves an agreement that Gantz would become prime minister in 18 months — but Netanyahu got his competitor to accede to many political demands. Here are five main takeaways from the new government.

The Israeli government is back in business — and wants to tackle the coronavirus.

Gantz ran his entire campaign, for more than a year, on the need to unseat Netanyahu. He's renegeing on that promise, he says, so that Israel can overcome a more urgent challenge — the coronavirus pandemic.

Coordinated action on the pan-

COALITION

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A DENVER TALE



ALONE WITH CORONAVIRUS

Charlotte 'Lotty' Stark, now 96, in 2009; inset, her daughter Michele. The two are separated under the restrictions of the coronavirus.

By ANDREA JACOBS

IJN Senior Writer

"That's not snow. Those are ashes. We must be near a crematorium."

— Charlotte "Lotty" Stark

Michele Stark-Hailpern's mother Lotty Stark, 96, has severe dementia haunted by memories of the Holocaust. As the present dissolves, the nightmare she barely escaped survives.

Dementia can be painful for adult children hoping for the slightest sign of recognition — but Michele visit-

ed her mother every day until COVID-19 changed everything last month.

The last time she visited her mother in person was March 13, when assisted living centers and nursing homes shut their doors to the public to curtail contagion.

"Mom fell twice," Michele prefaces. "The first time she broke her back, and the next time she broke her hip. They transported Mom to Rose Medical Center, and I met her there."

The doctors decided to operate

on Lotty the next day, a Saturday. After the surgery, she remained at the hospital for almost a week to recuperate.

"I knew we had to move her from that rest home and find a new place," says Michele, who's married to Kerry Hailpern and the mother of Mitchell.

"On Sunday I ran around looking for nursing homes that also provided rehabilitation and found the facility she's at now."

STARK

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Polis gets emotional

DENVER (JTA) — Colorado Gov. Jared Polis became emotional during a news briefing about the coronavirus crisis in his state when a reporter said that the public has compared his stay-at-home order to Nazism.

"As a Jewish American who lost family in the Holocaust, I'm offended by any comparison to Nazism," Polis said April 15 during his briefing in Den-

POLIS

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Peaceniks arrested

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Hamas authorities have arrested seven Gaza residents for participating in a videoconference with peace campaigners in Israel.

The arrests, which Hamas confirmed and defended as rooted in national security, have triggered a debate in Palestinian society over free speech and prompted multiple condemnations.

Hamas, which runs the Gaza

HAMAS

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Restrictions eased

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Israeli government started to ease its strict coronavirus quarantine restrictions this week, permitting some regulated outdoor prayer and allowing some retail stores to reopen.

Stores that sell electronics, home appliances and office equipment are back in business, but they must follow specific rules: take the temperature of employees and

EASING

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NEWS

Old and alone with coronavirus

Lotty Stark survived the Holocaust — but her dementia has brought it all back

STARK
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When Lotty moved in that Thursday, her furniture had been set up in the room and photos of her family hung from the walls. “I wanted the new room to look familiar so she had some idea that it belonged to her.”

Michele started unpacking boxes on Friday, March 12, and finished the last box on March 13.

“That was the last time I saw her.”



YOUNG WOMAN

Lotty Stark

While several pieces complicate Michele’s ability to communicate with Lotty — dementia’s unrelenting whip; nursing homes imagined as Nazi death traps — the most painful one is her physical absence.

“The fact that she’s the last person in my immediate family is the hardest part,” Michele says. “I know I have a son. I know I have a husband. But it’s not the same.”

“I know my mother isn’t the only patient at the facility, and I care for all the patients. I support the regulations to control the spread of the pandemic.”

“But I don’t know how long my mother will live. I haven’t seen her for over a month, and it’s so . . .”

An incoherent cry muffles the last word.

Last week, doctors noticed that Lotty, who suffered from asthma for decades, had a bad cough. They ordered a test for COVID-19.

Lotty Stark lived under the Nazi occupation of Belgium, but escaped via boat for the US in 1942. She was 17. With the exception of an uncle, her family perished.

While she was never in a concentration camp, attacks on Luxembourg Jews and her family’s fate at Auschwitz branded her with fear and trembling throughout the ensuing years.

Lotty arrived in New York in 1942 and settled in Kew Gardens. A self-taught milliner, she opened a store and modeled her own hats. Business thrived.

She married Holocaust escapee Walter Stark in Cleveland, where she had moved to take care of friends’ newborn baby, in 1944.

They moved to Denver in 1950. “My parents came here because my mom had very bad asthma. She could no longer climb the stairs.”

The couple owned and operated Furniture Rental, an upscale furniture store that decorated residences for the Parade of Homes. This inspired Lotty to become an interior decorator.

“Mom was gorgeous,” Michele describes her mother in those younger,

active years. “And very private.”

Lotty and Walter were instrumental members of Rodef Shalom; one room at the synagogue is named in their honor.

Michele said her mother disapproved of this because she preferred anonymity, but her affinity for privacy did not negate the ability to enjoy life.

“She wasn’t exuberant, but she could have a good time.”

The Starks openly shared their Holocaust experiences with their children. “They never hid anything from us. We heard all the stories.”

Walter Stark died in 2002.

Michele says that her mother began exhibiting dementia symptoms about seven or eight years ago.

“Three years ago it got much worse. I noticed a decline almost every day. Now it’s very bad.”

Nursing homes caring for Holocaust survivors utilize special treatment guidelines. For instance, preparing patients to shower — a potentially upsetting trigger — must be handled gently.

According to Michele, many nursing homes don’t have a clue about helping dementia patients with Holocaust histories.

“The biggest hole for me is that when the staff looks at my mom, they just see dementia and don’t understand that the illness is mixed in with the Holocaust,” she says.

“My mom sees Nazis running down the streets and shooting Jews; dead bodies are piled in the streets. She’s always packing a bag to get ready to escape, and reports her activities to the front desk so she won’t get in trouble.”

The other day it snowed.

“Oh, they must be ashes,” Lotty said. “We must be near a crematorium.”

Michele says the healthcare worker said that it was just snow. “She had no idea what my mom was talking about.”

The accepted method for responding to dementia patients is not to question them. Contradictions complicate the situation. “You don’t question. You go into their world.”

Michele admits that she tries to rouse her mother from the daylight nightmares — “Eighty years ago, she remembers!” — and usher her back to the present.

“I’ve sat down with supervisors and explained what my mother went through, and they hear me,” she says. “I told them that when my mom says she’s near a crematorium and will be the next one in the oven, you can’t ignore it.”

“You can’t just say it’s the snow. That’s not what she sees.”

Michele says that the most professional staff might overlook the Holocaust aspect of dementia.

“It’s hard enough for people to lose their minds and not know who they are or where they are,” she says. “But add this dimension and it becomes a Holocaust all over again — right back where it started.”

Michele discusses facts with dry-eyed objectivity and occasional anger — but when the conversation shifts to the barriers separating mother and daughter, anguish is her only language.

“I may never have the opportunity to talk to my mom again,” she says shakily. “That’s what kills me. She went through so much in her life already.”

“Why is she being punished again? What is the point? So she can’t see her child? Her grandchild? Hasn’t she been through enough? Why does



CHILD

Lotty Stark with her father, who died in the Holocaust.

she have to be alone, unable to be with the only family she has left?”

Michele realizes that thousands of families trapped in the pandemic are going through the same thing. Phones, Skype and iPads have replaced intimate goodbyes or stroking a hand.

These devices enable families to express a lifetime of gratitude — but recipients must be capable of understanding the gift.

Michele is also aware that no amount of love will rescue her mother from dementia’s oblivion.

“It’s possible she’s already made her decision to die — that’s she’s ready to go,” she says. “I want the opportunity to tell her it’s OK. She

gets to hear that from me: It’s OK to let go.”

“And that I love her and I’ve always loved her,” she chokes. “And that Daddy will be waiting for her. But now I don’t even get to choose.”

She reiterates that she “gets” the pandemic and why enforced separation is necessary.

“The other part is that I just want my mom. There’s a little kid in me who just wants her mom, and for her to know how much I love her.”

Michele learned the day after this interview that her mother tested positive for COVID-19.

Polis gets emotional

POLIS
From Page 1

ver. “We act to save lives. The exact opposite of the slaughter of six million Jews and many gypsies and Catholics and gays and lesbians and Russians and so many others.”

His voice cracked and tears welled up in his eyes as he responded to the question.

“We’re hearing a lot of reports around here,” the reporter said, “and I know I’ve seen some stuff going on statewide about neighbors reporting on other neighbors for not following the orders, seeing a lot of rebellion out here against your orders, which have been called tyrannical, against local health department orders, being equated to Nazism. How do you react to that? What do you say to those people who are clearly getting frustrated with this stay-at-home order?”

Colorado House Minority Leader Patrick Neville also referred to Nazism during an interview to describe the stay-at-home orders. In an interview on March 25, the day Polis issued the month-long order, Neville in an interview on a conservative radio program said that orders like that lead to a “Gestapo-like mentality.” ■

Peaceniks arrested

HAMAS
From Page 1

Strip, bans many forms of communications with Israel and what it calls the “normalization” of relations with the Jewish state.

“We absolutely condemn arrests of individuals because of practicing their right to peaceful expression and assembly,” Saleh Hijazi, the Amnesty International human rights group’s deputy director for the Middle East, told the London-based **Asharq al-Awsat** newspaper.

Rami Aman, 36, the founder of the Gaza Youth Committee, and the six others were accused of treason after speaking on Zoom to the dozens of Israeli activists last week, the newspaper reported last week. The participants discussed their daily lives and expressed hopes for better leadership for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Hind Khoudary, a former Amnesty International activist, reportedly played a key role in having the seven arrested, according to **Asharq al-Awsat**. She criticized Aman on Facebook over what Khoudary called “normalization” with Israel and also tagged several Hamas officials in the online post, prompting them to monitor the call, according to **Asharq al-Awsat**. ■

Restrictions eased

EASING
From Page 1

customers; limit the number of customers in a store at one time; implement spacing and a physical barrier between customers and cashiers at the cash register; and frequently disinfect their spaces.

People may now also participate in outdoor prayer groups of up to 19, standing six feet apart. That can take place no more than 550 yards from people’s places of residence or work, and only in open areas.

In addition to prayers, circumcisions and weddings can be held in open areas, with no more than 10 people, distanced six feet apart.

Everyone in Israel is still required to wear a face mask outside, and not wearing one carries a fine.

Some technology and other kinds of businesses will be permitted to operate with up to 30% of its staff present at a time. Special education programs will also reopen, for up to three children per group.

In a nationally televised address on April 18, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the new regulations will remain in place for two weeks and more restriction could then be relaxed if the coronavirus situation continues to improve.

Netanyahu called on Israel’s Muslim citizens to avoid family gatherings during Ramadan, which started on Thursday, April 23, just as Jewish Israelis did during Passover. ■