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Holwitt noted this was a difficult decision to make and wanted to thank those who made the stone possible. “Thank you to all of the women of the Get Together Club – women from the city of Binghamton and the surrounding more rural areas who bonded over their shared German Jewish heritage and who all worked together to raise the funds – for their insight, for their planning and for their foresight to create this memorial,” she added. “We hope that next year we will again, return to this very important tradition.”

Federation offers update on fall programming

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BD to hold virtual lecture on “Connecting Archeology and the Bible” on Aug. 6

Beth David Synagogue will hold the virtual lecture “Connecting Archeology and the Bible” on Thursday, August 6, from 2-3 p.m. Eitan Morell will be the speaker in this second lecture in memory of his father, Samuel (Shmuel) Morell, who passed away in April and had been a Binghamton University professor of Judaic studies until he retired in 2007. Members of Beth David will receive the Zoom meeting information from Rabbi Zev Silber, but all are welcome to attend. Those not on the Beth David listserv can contact Eitan Morell for the information at eitan.morell@gmail.com. “That topic was of particular interest to my father,” Morell said, “and so it is an honor to present my talk in his memory. Born and raised in Binghamton, Morell graduated from Binghamton’s Hillel Academy, and then attended Yeshiva University High School in New York City. He studied for two years in Yeshivat Shalavim in Israel. He received his B.A. in Middle Eastern and Jewish history from Bar Ilan University. He served in the Israeli Army Tank Corps. A licensed Israeli tour guide for the last 10 years with specialization in aspects of Jewish and Israeli history, Morell has lectured to groups in Israel, Europe, Canada and the United States. He and his wife, Varda, have been living in Israel since 1991 and have six children and two grandchildren.

“Eitan’s June presentation on the iconic song ‘Jerusalem of Gold’ was a rousing success,” organizers said, “and we are delighted that he has graciously offered to treat us to another illustrated talk, this time on a topic that was dear to his father’s heart and that continues to fascinate and inspire visitors to Israel.” He will discuss how the discipline of biblical archeology has developed and evolved over the last 100 years. He will share the different perspectives offered, and the kinds of answers archeology can provide to help clarify people’s understanding of the Bible. The presentation will offer time for discussion and questions.

“Eitan looks forward to the time when the monthly luncheon series can re¬sume,” organizers added. “In the meantime, Zoom is helping this program continue, and contributions to the Luncheon Fund are always appreciated.” Donations can be made in honor of or in memory of someone, or to mark a special occasion. Those wishing an acknowledgment to be sent to the person being honored or to the family of someone being remembered can indicate that, along with the necessary information. Donations can be sent to Beth David Synagogue, 39 Riverside Dr., Binghamton, NY 13905, Attention: Luncheon Fund.
In My Own Words

Both sides of an issue

RABBI RACHEL ESSERMAN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

I’m having a hard time getting my head around an issue that’s been featured in recent news reports and opinion pieces. My problem? I can understand both sides of the issue and, while I think each side makes good points, I can also see where their choices are problematic. This might be a bit of a luxury for me, but it also means that I really want to understand what people are feeling.

I’m thinking about what’s been called “cancel culture.” Wikipedia defines cancel culture as “the act of canceling…[which takes the] form of boycott in which an individual (usually a celebrity) who has acted or spoken in a questionable or controversial manner is boycotted.” There are times when people deserve cancelation because they are antisemitic, racist or homophobic statements, although I do believe we need a statute of limitations on some comments. Do any of us really want to be held responsible for something stupid we said in high school or college? I’d like to think I’ve learned a great deal over the past 40 years or so, and don’t want to punish people for years-old problematic statements, as long as they acknowledge they no longer subscribe to them.

However, some people rightly claim that they have been punished for what they believe is a legitimate difference of opinion. These folks have complained about the cancel culture because they see it as stifling conservative voices, saying they are not welcome in Hollywood or on the pages of The New York Times.

There are some instances where cancelation appears to be justified. Numerous Jews have said that showing support of Israel or Zionism is no longer acceptable in many places and that they have been punished for their opinions. Other Jews focus on censoring those who talk about Jewish conspiracy theories and support for fictitious crimes. Both sides want their voices to be heard, but they are cautious about who else can speak.

What needs to be taken into consideration is that those in power have long cancelled the voices of minorities, the poor, the LGBTQ community and anyone else who is not part of the establishment. Those who support this position say that the powerful only object when the cancel culture is used against them. What has changed is how quickly and easily those voices can now spread due to the Internet, especially through social media. The downside is that sometimes people don’t do enough research before voicing their outrage and wrong information spreads quickly—causing harm to innocent people. But when the information is correct, there is probably no faster way for people to make their voices heard.

It is true that the powerful try to limit information, whether because it shines a bad light on them or because keeping the information secret is the key to staying in power. When reading a recent history of the early 20th century, I was reminded that, at that point in U.S. history, it was illegal to offer people information about birth control. Sending a pamphlet on the subject through the U.S. Postal Service was a federal offense and could result in a prison sentence. Newspapers were confiscated and people arrested for sedition because they were demanding fair treatment of all U.S. citizens. By the 1930s, the powers that be time supported those in power, rather than the emerging unions. (That’s ironic now in that police unions are among the strongest in the country.) And who gets to decide who can hold rallies and where? The folks in power do and they don’t always allow those who disagree with them to speak, despite constitutional rights on peaceful assemblies.

These disagreements can lead to the threats of boycott and the question of whether or not boycotts should be illegal. In a free country, though, everyone has the right to buy, not to buy a product or to watch, or not to watch, a TV or film. During the Vietnam War, there were people who would no longer watch John Wayne movies because he supported that war.Boycotts against Jane Fonda, calling her an anti-Caucasian. In the middle was Bob Hope, who entertained the troops in Vietnam, but later said he had no idea what that war was really like for those men who made their own choice. That’s true today: Don’t like someone’s opinions on a talk show? You don’t have to watch them. In fact, no one is forcing you to shop at that store (or watch the TV show we could, some of my favorites would still be running.) You don’t want to eat a particular brand of food or buy from a particular restaurant? Then don’t eat that food or shop there. You can suggest that others shouldn’t, but those who disagree with you may now buy that food or shop in that store on purpose. That’s also their right.

Where does this leave me? I’m still seeing too many shades of grey to totally support one side. I’m for free speech, but acknowledge that some words are unacceptable. I believe people should be able to register complaints against those who denigrate them, but, in some cases, there is a fine line between what is hate speech and what is protected speech. Who makes that judgment about where the line is drawn? Society has always had that line, but has that line moved many times over the past five decades. Unlike most in our very divided society, I think every individual and each individual action should be judged on their own merits. That’s the only way to have a civil and moral society.
Online movie series to feature rescuers and rescued during Holocaust

By JNS staff

(JNS) – The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous has launched a Monday-night movie series, each week airing one of its award-winning documentaries that highlight the heroism of rescuers Melpomeni Ganiopoulou (Greece), which aired on July 27; Master Sgt. Rodney Edmonds (Knoxville, TN), airing on August 3; Andzia Dabrowska (Poland), airing on August 10; and Helena Węglowska (Poland), airing on August 17. The page will also screen a documentary celebrating the life of Roman Kent, the Holocaust survivor and president of the JFR, on August 24. The JFR production team traveled throughout Europe, Israel and North America to interview the rescued, their rescuers and their families. Their goal was two-fold: to share stories of heroism and raise awareness of history during the years of the Holocaust, when six million Jews, among others, perished at the hands of Nazi Germany.

The films have previously been screened in classrooms and at film festivals. This is the first time they will be available to the general public. To see the films, visit the Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/JewishFoundationForTheRighteous/.

The JFR is working to make all films part of an online series on Facebook on Mondays at 8 pm through August 24. The series will feature award-winning documentaries about Righteous Gentiles who saved six million Jews during the Holocaust. To view the movies, visit www.facebook.com/JewishFoundationForTheRighteous/.

The series will feature new Virtual Archive tours covering a variety of subjects, including tours about the lives of Charles Solomon, the 20th century Jewish, Holocaust survivor and judge, Lorin Mazzel, a conductor and music prodigy; Kameit Weitz, the boy cantor; and David Carey, star of the Yiddish stage and Jewish LGBTQ community member. To view the tours, visit www.urban-arch.org/jfford.

The website Alma, which features articles about Jewish issues facing Judaism.

The Congress for Jewish Culture honored the Yiddish poet Abraham Cahan, also known as Sholem Aleichem, with the award for Outstanding Contribution to the Yiddish Language on Wednesday, August 5, at 8 pm. For more information, visit buzzsprout.com/1150391. Although sponsored by Koren Publishers, the podcasts do not discuss books, but offer conversations with educators, scholars and leaders about issues facing Judaism.

The Museum at Eldridge Street will host the Zoom talk “Love and Courtship” on Tuesday, August 4, from 3-4 pm. There is a small fee to attend. The talk will feature accounts from 19th- and early-20th-century novels, newspapers and a Yiddish love-letter writing manual that show how turn-of-the-20th-century love and marriage was accomplished. Also included are visits to the former site of a dance hall, Seward Park and Seward Park Library, as well as streets, stoops and shops. For more information or to register, visit https://www.eldridgestreet.org/event/love-and-courtship-2/.

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Resumes should be e-mailed to: rachel@thereportergroup.org with “advertising representative” in the subject line.
Off the Shelf

RABBI RACHEL EISERMAN

Revisiting World War II and its aftermath

During my years as book reviewer for The Reporter, I’ve read more World War II and Holocaust themed novels than I can count. What amazes me is that there are still so many stories, and so many different ways to relate them. Some of the novels in this category take one’s breath away. Not all battles occur on the battlefield. Wars can also be fought – and won – in the laboratory. New, more powerful weapons allowed Nazi forces to quickly seize parts of Europe in the early years of World War II. During the last year of the war, rumors had it that Germany was working on a new super weapon that would reverse its defeats and help it conquer the world. That’s what the Americans believed and was one reason for the top-secret nuclear laboratory in Los Alamos, NM, which is where J. Robert Oppenheimer’s super-powerful and passionate “Hannah’s War” begins.

The plot focuses on two periods in the life of Hannah Weiss: Berlin in 1938 and New Mexico in 1945. The half-Jewish Hannah is barely tolerated while working at a physics lab in Berlin. She puts up with the derision of her colleagues – who are more than willing to borrow her work without giving her credit – because she needs money to help her Uncle Jacob and her younger cousin, Sabine. Although Hannah’s non-Jewish mother is still alive, her father supports the Nazis and looks at Hannah as an embarrassment to be hidden and ignored. Having lost her father in World War I, Hannah’s dream is to create a physics of peace.

The novel actually begins, though, in 1948 when Major Jack Delaney arrives in New Mexico with his Jewish war veteran brother, Abe. The two men are Jews who grew up in the same New York neighborhood but have gone their own separate ways: Abe is working desperately for the US Army. During her stay at one camp, she meets Josef, a short window of time to uncover the spy and leave. Associate to discover the identity of the spy they believe follows her. Hannah is interested in the latter as displayed in her excellent “The Art of the Jewish Family: A History of Women in Early New York in Five Objects” (Bard Graduate Center/University of Chicago Press), which focuses on five Jewish women who lived in New York City from 1750-1850. While this might make her work sound very academic and of interest to only scholars, much of it is relevant today, especially when speaking about issues of race and class.

Leibman looks to past written texts in order to explore the lives of these little known women by focusing on physical objects. She notes “objects made for and by Jewish women help us consider as consumers and creators of identity. Everyday objects such as caps, portrait miniatures, commonplace books, and silhouettes prove windows into those women’s daily lives, highlighting how they were able to cope with the challenges of the day.” A commonplace book – a collection of writings by herself and others – is Hannah’s War, a wonderful novel that offers much for food for thought. Readers will find themselves questioning the morality of the different characters – major and minor alike. However, it is the emotional journey these characters take that creates the greatest depth. The last 50 pages were filled with suspense as I found myself praying for the ending I wanted to see. Eliaberg’s novel is very different from most works about World War II, and I welcome addition to the genre.

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History is defined as “the study of past events, particularly in human affairs.” But what parts of history tell us the most about the past? Sometimes they are the least expected events – for example, wars and revolutions – and the biographies of those who made them happen? Or should we be studying daily life – how people actually lived and the sociological trends that affected them? Laura Arnold Leibman, a professor of English and humanities at Reed College, is clearly interested in the latter as displayed in her excellent “The Art of the Jewish Family: A History of Women in Early New York in Five Objects” (Bard Graduate Center/University of Chicago Press), which focuses on five Jewish women who lived in New York City from 1750-1850. While this might make her work sound very academic and of interest to only scholars, much of it is relevant today, especially when speaking about issues of race and class.

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Young adult literature (which was called teen literature when I was that age) has certainly changed over the decades. Take, for example, “They Went Left” by Monica Hesse (Flatiron Books). Roza and her 5-year-old younger daughter, Shira, are hiding from the Nazis in the hayloft of a neighbor. Roza is unsure how long they’ll be able to stay, but she is already paying an unpleasant price in order to ensure their safety. To keep Shira from revealing their hiding place, she invents a story – a collection of writings by herself and others – is Hannah’s War, a wonderful novel that offers much for food for thought. Readers will find themselves questioning the morality of the different characters – major and minor alike. However, it is the emotional journey these characters take that creates the greatest depth. The last 50 pages were filled with suspense as I found myself praying for the ending I wanted to see. Eliaberg’s novel is very different from most works about World War II, and I welcome addition to the genre.

One thing that has remained constant is the power of the written word to tell our children our stories – the ones we care about the most. If he had followed his late mother’s wishes and never returned, Shira would be a child who was younger than her brother’s age. Upon returning to Israel, See “Aftershock” on page 7
Frank was found guilty and sentenced to death, and, by April 1915, his attorneys had exhausted all legal appeals. However, despite threats to his own life, Georgia Governor John Slaton commuted Frank’s death sentence to life imprisonment. Slaton had clearly expected that he expected the publicizing of additional evidence and a less heated public environment would ultimately allow a full pardon for Frank. Slaton’s commutation of Frank’s sentence convinced many white Georgians that conspiratorial Jewish money power had corrupted justice. Frank’s sizeable legal and private investigator fees, sympathetic newspaper articles outside the South, massive petition drives and Northern state legislature resolutions condemning the verdict convinced harassed Southerners that a Jewish cabal was in control, overwhelming Georgia sovereignty. Canards asserting Jewish sexual depravity circulated widely. Exploiting antisemitism, the populist newspaper publisher and politician Tom Watson rode the Frank case to new heights of popularity and power. From the press and the podium, Watson’s populist demagoguery inflamed the insecurities and resentments of white Southerners with vile words of incitement: “[S]ee a vivid picture of that little Georgia girl, decoyed to the metal room by this sly-faced New York jew..., see her face purpling as the cruel cord chokes her to death.” After Governor Slaton commuted Frank’s sentence, Watson cried, “Hereafter let no man reproach the South with Lynch law...let him remember the underable[?]oporation.”

On April 16, 1915, 25 gentlemen of property and influence, two former magistrates from Mary Phagan’s hometown of Marietta, entered the争论监狱 prison, met no resistance and kidnapped Leo Frank. They drove to the outskirts of Marietta. A rope, tossed over the branch of an oak tree, was knotted around Frank’s neck, his hands and feet bound, and the body placed upon a table, which was then kicked away. The vigilante lynching of Leo Frank was conducted with efficiency. Although Frank’s corpse was knocked to the ground, its flesh repeatedly stomped and triumphant souvenir hunters took pieces of the victim’s clothing and strands of the hanging rope, The Marietta Journal and Courtier editorialized, “We are proud, indeed, to say that the body hanged for more than two hours amid a vast throng and no violence was done. Cobb County people are civilized.”

The identities of Frank’s murderers were well known; indeed, they granted newspaper interviews, but none were ever arrested. Relatives claimed that several of the vigilantes on their own deathbeds expressed contrition. In life, the murderers of Frank formed the nucleus for a revived Ku Klux Klan in Georgia.

Created in the year of Frank’s arrest, the Anti-Demofa - nation League, originally affiliated with B’nai B’rith, evolved from its initial mission to combat antisemitism to a more universal commitment “to secure justice and fair treatment to all.” The ADL survives, but so do antisemitism and other forms of bigotry. It is not just Jewish-American history’s signature events that mark domestic antisemitism. Cer - tainly, the June 1964 Mississippi Ku Klux Klan murders of three civil rights workers – James Chaney, an African American, and Jewish colleagues Andrew Goodman and Mickey Schwerner – as well the October 27, 2018, Shabbath massacre of 11 congregants at Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life synagogue are grim reminders. Continuing, indeed resurgent, assaults, threats, defacements, vandalism and bile, however, mar our own day. The legacy of the Frank case instructs us to remain vigilant, preserve history and oppose irrational scapegoating of any group. Bill Simons is a professor of history at SUNY Oneonta, whose course offerings include sport and ethnic history. He is also the co-director of The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, and served as a speaker for the New York Council on the Humanities.
when we wake up, as we lie down in bed at night and as faithf

It may, therefore, come as a surprise to learn that not only do the words of the root shva-shin-mem-ayin (Shem
forms of the word Yisrael appear side-by-side at least two other times in parashat Vaatchan, but the exact phrase “Shema Yisrael” actually appears in the context of “Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them: Hear, O Israel, the laws and rules that I proclaim to you this day! Study them and observe them diligently!” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Before we are told that the Lord is our one and only God, we are exhorted to follow the rules that Moses shared with us.

For upcoming services and events on Zoom, visit www.tikkunvor.org. For more information, visit www.JewishU1.com/3201Partnership.
Listen . . . . . . Continued from page 6

in the desert can understand. After all, they can see him and hear him, and are used to following a human leader. The Israelites are also used to living under a leader who lays down the law, even when that law makes them more than a little uncomfortable. They were, after all, slaves.

When we remind ourselves of the fact that the Israelites were not used to participating in their own governance, Moses’ injunction to study the laws before obeying them signifies a radical shift that carries over into our relationship with God. As a free people, we are much more likely to follow the rules that we understand (or are familiar with) than ones that seem nonsensical to us. Only once we have studied the laws that Moses shared with us and deemed them ones that help us begin to build the type of society toward which we are willing to work were we ready to start following the laws. Listening to Moses’ wisdom and recognizing the value of the laws, in turn, enabled us to transfer our allegiance from Moses to acknowledging and following God.

“Shema Israel” is a rallying cry signifying that we as a society need to make a radical shift in how we approach the world. Moses called out to us to “listen up,” to recognize that we are all responsible for one another, and that one of the best ways we can care for and protect one another is to follow the set of laws laid out for us in the Torah. Blindly following laws, however, is not enough. So, the call rings out again, “listen carefully, Israel” and don’t lose your moral compass. Remember that we all follow the same God and are bound together as one people.

“Shema Israel”: we are at a crossroads in time once again. What will you do to study the laws to find the good to follow so you can heed the call to follow in God’s footsteps and care for all the wide varieties of people who make up the society around you?

Aftermath . . . . . . Continued from page 4

he speaks to his older sister, who tells him the true story of his life. However, what occurred during World War II is only slowly revealed to the reader after Blum returns to Amsterdam in order to write a new novel, one that will allow him to better understand his mother’s life.

Blum is the heart of the novel and a fascinating character in that he learns as much about himself as he does about this mother, including the reason why he refuses to connect to other human beings, even his three daughters and his grandchildren. During his time in Amsterdam, Blum explores what life was like for Jews under the Nazi invaders. He wants to know what they felt and why they made the decisions they did. He also meets Jews who were hidden children – those who lived with non-Jews in order to escape Nazi persecution – and how those times still affect them now, years later.

Eilon writes low-key, unemotional prose that echoes Blum’s inner life. However, the suspense and tension build as he comes closer to revealing what really happened. The ending leaves readers with questions to ponder – ones that make you wonder what you might have done in similar circumstances.

“The Light After the War”

While neither its narrator, Maya Duran, nor its other major character, visiting Professor Maximilian Wagner, are Jewish, Zulfi Livaneli’s “Serenade for Nadia” (Other Press) does contain several Jewish themes. Livaneli writes about the Jewish professors who were allowed emigrate from Germany and teach in Turkey during World War II, and a ship of 800 Jewish refugees who lost their lives off the coast of Turkey in 1942 when help for their almost-wrecked ship was denied.

However, in 2001, Maya, who works at Istanbul University, is more concerned with helping Maximilian enjoy his stay than she is with the history of Turkey – at least, at first. Her job becomes complicated when security forces follow Maximilian and the army, including Maya’s military brother, warn her to carefully note what the professor is doing. Why they are interested in the professor and what Maya learns about hidden parts of Turkish history makes for complex, impressive reading. It also shows that Jews were not the only victims of human cruelty during the 20th century.

“Serenade for Nadia”

Building a new life from scratch: that’s not an easy thing to do. Vera Frankel discovers in “The Light After the War” by Anita Abriel (Atria Books). Vera and her best friend, Edith Ban, leave Hungary for Italy after the war because neither can bear to return to their former homes. With no family left but each other, they look for a way to stay than she is with the history of Turkey – at least, at first. Her job becomes complicated when security forces follow Maximilian and the army, including Maya’s military brother, warn her to carefully note what the professor is doing. Why they are interested in the professor and what Maya learns about hidden parts of Turkish history makes for complex, impressive reading. It also shows that Jews were not the only victims of human cruelty during the 20th century.

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However, in 2001, Maya, who works at Istanbul University, is more concerned with helping Maximilian enjoy his stay than she is with the history of Turkey – at least, at first. Her job becomes complicated when security forces follow Maximilian and the army, including Maya’s military brother, warn her to carefully note what the professor is doing. Why they are interested in the professor and what Maya learns about hidden parts of Turkish history makes for complex, impressive reading. It also shows that Jews were not the only victims of human cruelty during the 20th century.
Holocaust survivor stabbed to death in Moscow

A 90-year-old Holocaust survivor was discovered stabbed to death the week of July 24 in her apartment in Moscow. An unidentified 69-year-old woman was arrested in connection with the murder of Shur, a former professor at the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography. The former chair of the Synagogue of the Jewish Community of Racine, WI, last September. He was also planning other acts of vandalism toward people where Chevron also has business, but emphasized that it is “apolitical” and “a commercial actor.” “We engage with all of our different stakeholders as we go through every little thing like this,” he said according to the report. Chevron is active in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Iraq in Kurdistan.

German drone’s Israel test flight hailed as “historic phase” in Jerusalem-Berlin ties

In a joint program of the German Air Force and the Israeli Air Force, the German Heron TP UA V was modified in record time and incorporates advanced Israeli technology. German Air Force personnel thus are training with their Israeli counterparts in an IAF base in central Israel. The training is part of a wider project to develop and improve the Israeli security cooperation framework with Germany and other European countries.

German House representing a bill on July 24 that includes the continuation of American assistance to Israel, the restoration of humanitarian and development assistance to the Palestinians, and the doubling of funding for the U.S. State Department’s office that develops and implements policies to combat global antisemitism. The vote tally was 224-189. The annual State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations bill for 2021 would allocate $3.3 billion in annual U.S. security aid to Israel in accordance with the U.S. Defense Department appropriations bill (which would make it the first oil major to enter Israel. Besides boosting its investment in the West Bank and Gaza, despite the Trump administration slashing funding in that category to virtually zero. The appropriations bill now heads to the U.S. Senate.

Chevron to buy Noble Energy for $5 billion

Chevron Corp said on July 20 it plans to buy Noble Energy for $5 billion in stock, a deal which would make it the third biggest oil major to enter Israel as the country boasts booming Israeli oil and gas fields. Chevron CEO Mike Wirth told Reuters that the company was confident of the future and that it is a political, economic and strategic advantage. It would be the first time that a U.S. company has invested in the Israeli energy sector.

Reform Movement. The use of head coverings was broken from traditional Sephardic practice and justice, as well as human conscience and credibility. China’s position on the issue, said Xi, was consistent and clear: China firmly supports Palestine’s just demands, and all efforts continue to resolve the conflict. The “two-state solution” is the right approach to the problem, he said, adding that China is prepared to continue to contribute to a “comprehensive, fair and lasting settlement” of the conflict, according to the report. The Chinese and Palestinian were friends and good partners, said Xi, and supported each other’s core interests. For his part, Abbas thanked China for its support during the COVID-19 outbreak and for its efforts with regard to the Palestinian issue, calling China the most reliable friend of the Palestinian people, according to the report. The Palestinian support comes at a sensitive time for the Chinese interest, and expects China to play a greater role in the Palestinian issue.