

# Expert epidemiologist COVID knowledge — what's new?

No herd immunity without a vaccine  
Too much focus on surfaces  
Optimize ventilation • 'Still a lot unknown'

By CHRIS LEPPEK  
IJN Assistant Editor

What is new in our knowledge of COVID-19, of how it is treated, and of the precautions?

Last summer, Dr. Lisa Miller, a leading Colorado epidemiologist, provided readers of the INTERMOUNTAIN JEWISH NEWS with what was then the most up-to-date information available on the COVID-19 pandemic.



DR. LISA MILLER

Professor, former state epidemiologist

The erratic and largely unpredictable nature of the virus was a central theme.

"It's a changing situation and we need to continue to closely monitor how things change," she said in June.

"The one thing we can predict about this pandemic is that it's going to change."

It remained unknown whether the virus had peaked or was just getting started, what would happen in locations that enhanced or relaxed various restrictions, whether the autumn would bring "a much-dreaded second wave" of the disease

Five months later, well into the autumn, it appears that things have indeed changed. That second wave does seem to have arrived, with regional numbers that can only be considered alarming.

On Monday, Nov. 2, alone, 2,130 new coronavirus cases were reported in Colorado.

The state's positivity rate had climbed to an unprecedented 10.43% of those tested.

The number of Colorado residents who have been killed by the disease since the pandemic began in February has climbed to 2,292. That number is virtually certain to be higher by the time these words are read.

Several Colorado counties, including Denver, have tightened restrictions, as thousands of schoolchildren returned home for remote learning, as hospital administrators publicly worry whether there will be enough ICU beds available come December.

But Miller — a professor of epidemiology at CU Denver, director of the preventive medicine residency program at the Colorado School of Public Health, and the State Epidemiologist at the Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment from 2012 to 2017 — is not a prophet of despair.

She finds rays of hope in prospects for a reliable vaccine in the near future, in knowledge advances in treating the virus, and in the fact that experts are learning more about the virus every day.

While acknowledging in an online interview with the IJN that uncertainty still hovers, Miller's counsel

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# Election 2020

## Jewish voters: Biden over Trump, 77%-21%: exit poll

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish voters favored Joe Biden over President Donald Trump 77%-21% in an exit poll. The poll by GBAO Strategies for J Street, which endorsed Biden,

was of 800 voters who voted early or answered questions on election night, Nov. 3. It apparently did not include Orthodox Jews, who voted heavily for Trump. The margin of error was 3.5%. The poll showed slightly bet-

ter numbers for Biden than an AJC poll last month, which had the percentages, 75% to 22%.

Overall, however, Biden and Trump were locked in an unexpectedly tight race. Polls had predicted a clear victory for Biden.

## From federation to Congress

GREENSBORO, NC (JTA) — Kathy Manning, a former immigration attorney who led two national Jewish organizations, won a congressional seat in North Carolina.

Manning defeated Lee Haywood, her Republican opponent, in an open Greensboro-area district.

The 6th District was redrawn by the courts and became a Democratic stronghold, leading incumbent Rep. Mark Walker to retire.

Manning, 63, was the first female to chair the Jewish Federations of North America, 2009-2012, and was a founding chair of Prizmah, an umbrella for Jewish day schools.



ELECTION NIGHT, NOV. 3, 2020

## Pro-BDS winners: Add Bush to Omar and Tlaib

ST. LOUIS (JTA) — Cori Bush, a Democrat who expressed support for the movement to boycott Israel, is set to become the St. Louis area's next congresswoman.

Reps. Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, who support the movement to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel — known as BDS — were expected to win.

A now-deleted page on Bush's campaign website said she supported BDS. If she still holds those views, it will bring the number of BDS supporters in the Democratic caucus to three.

Projections were showing that Bush would win St. Louis' traditionally Democratic seat handily, defeating Republican Anthony

Rogers.

She defeated Lacy Clay, the longtime Democratic incumbent, in a primary earlier this year.

BDS was not a notable issue in the Bush-Clay race, which hinged on the divide between progressive and establishment politics.

Clay, who had succeeded his father in the seat, had attempted to use Bush's BDS support against her late in the campaign.

Omar of Minnesota last year suggested that Jews pay politicians to be pro-Israel. In August, Omar fended off a primary challenger, Antone Melton-Meaux, who made attacking her Israel comments a key part of his campaign.

## Wyoming — it's back to zoology

CHEYENNE (JTA) — The Israeli-American scientist who mounted a quixotic bid for Senate in Wyoming, the country's reddest state, has fallen short.

Polling organizations called the race against Merav Ben-David even before any votes were recorded. About 70% of Wyoming voters are Republicans.

Wyoming's next senator will be Republican Cynthia Lummis, a former member of the House of Representatives.

Ben-David, an Israeli immigrant who makes matzo balls for Laramie's small Jewish community, will stick with her position as a zoology professor at the University of Wyoming.

## She likes QAnon — and wins

ATLANTA (JTA) — Georgia Republican Marjorie Taylor Greene will become the first member of Congress who has expressed belief in the QAnon conspiracy theory.

Greene, whose Democratic challenger dropped out of the race in September, signed an online posting in 2018 that accused Jewish billionaire George Soros and the Rothschild family of being involved in the conspiracy, which alleges that powerful figures run an international pedophile ring and influence world policy.

The Republican Jewish Coalition endorsed her Republican primary opponent in July.

Greene's eventual Democratic opponent, Kevin Van Ausdal, dropped out of the race.

## 'Islamophobe' loses in Florida

MIAMI (JTA) — Lois Frankel won reelection in her South Florida House district, fending off a challenge by the right-wing self-described "Islamophobe" Laura Loomer.

AP called the race in the state's 21st district shortly after 8 p.m. ET Tuesday evening, Nov. 3.

The race pitted two Jews at different poles of the sociopolitical culture wars against each other — a

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## Muslims and definition of anti-Semitism

NEW YORK (JTA) — Citing recent "peace efforts" between Israel and several Muslim countries, an international council of Muslim religious leaders adopted a definition of anti-Semitism that includes some forms of vitriol against the Jewish state.

The Global Imams Council, a body created in 2007 in a bid to heal sectarian divisions in war-torn Iraq, announced Oct. 29 its adoption of the International Holocaust Remem-

MUSLIM COUNCIL  
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## Students: 'No' to debate on Final Solution

By LIOR ZALTZMAN  
JTA/Koeller

NEW YORK — On Jan. 20, 1942, 15 high-ranking officials from the Nazi party and the German government got together in a villa at Wannsee, a leafy suburb of Berlin. They were there to discuss the implementation of the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question" — the deportation and eventual extermination of Europe's six million Jews.

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## What would have happened if the Nazis had won?

By CHRIS LEPPEK

IJN Assistant Editor

The “Fourth Reich,” as we all know, never happened. It’s fantasy, pure and simple, useful only to writers of dystopian fiction or as fodder for speculative conversation.

Or is it?

Is there something more to the idea that Nazism could have reemerged in postwar Germany, or perhaps in another country — and that the hateful ideas and genocidal actions of Adolf Hitler might have lived on in another form?

The answer is yes, is you happen to be Gavriel Rosenfeld, a professor of history and Jewish studies at Connecticut’s Fairfield University, and the guest lecturer at the Nov. 15 Fred Marcus Memorial Lecture, being held online this year.

In a recent online exchange with the INTERMOUNTAIN JEWISH NEWS, Rosenfeld clarified that the concept of a Fourth Reich has relevance and value in understanding the ebb and flow of 20th-century world

caust might be avoided in the future.

Several of his books — including last year’s *The Fourth Reich: The Specter of Nazism from World War II to the Present*; *Hi Hitler!: How the Nazi Past Is Being Normalized in Contemporary Culture*; and *What Ifs of Jewish History: From Abraham to Zionism* — take readers on fascinating counterfactual journeys.

He promises similar ponderings during his upcoming Marcus lecture, formally titled “The Specter of Nazism from World War II.” Information on the lecture is available at 303-871-2020.

**IJN: Why are the Third Reich and Adolf Hitler central components of your scholarship?**

Nazi Germany is arguably the most important historical era in the first half of the 20th century by virtue of its pivotal role in sparking the Second World War. Ever since the war’s end in 1945, the Nazis (and



**Prof. Gavriel Rosenfeld, the speaker at this year’s Fred Marcus Memorial Lecture, Nov. 15.**

legitimacy of postwar fears of a Fourth Reich. In so doing, I challenge the prevailing postwar view that Germany’s postwar democratization was more or less inevitable.

**What are the inherent dangers of counterfactual, or alternate, history? In this era of rampant conspiracy theories and allegations of “fake news,” is there a risk of people actually believing in, or manipulating, such writing?**

Counterfactual history has been disparaged for centuries. The allegation that it is part of the “post-truth” climate is merely the latest of many such accusations. In fact, counterfactual history is as old as the historical profession itself. I’m currently writing a massive study that documents counterfactual history’s existence all the way back to Antiquity.

History can only be really understood as “that which happened in the context of what might have happened.” History and counterfactual history are really just two sides of the same coin. It’s part of my current scholarly mission to make this fact more widely known (I’ve been doing it consistently since 2013 on my blog, the Counterfactual History Review).

**How do your forays into counterfactual history compare with such overtly fictional alternative works as “The Man in the**

**High Castle” or “JoJo Rabbit”? Are their fantastical elements — or even humorous approaches — similar to more scholarly approaches?**

Historical fiction and counterfactual history are different insofar as the latter actually shows history’s course being altered whereas the former keeps it the same. There’s justification for both approaches and plenty of cultural space for them to coexist.

Both have the merit of engaging readers or viewers with unconventional narratives that go beyond the sober analysis of conventional works of historiography.

Their potential drawbacks, to be sure, also need to be addressed in any thoughtful criticism, but more often than not, these works help engage people in the relevance of history.

**Are social media giants (Face-**

**What is your opinion about the oft-heard charges that President Trump has, through his comments, appeared to legitimize, or at least to encourage, white supremacy and neo-Nazism?**

President Trump is undeniably “soft” on far right groups in the US.

I can’t comment about his personal views, but he is perfectly content to accept political support from the most odious rightwing corners of the political spectrum. He is willing to excuse nearly anything that helps keep him in power and refuses to draw any line anywhere.

Honestly, if representatives of Antifa expressed their support for him tomorrow, he would stop criticizing them immediately.

**What is new about today’s white supremacy and neo-**

**President Trump is undeniably ‘soft’ on far right groups in the US**

**book, Twitter, TikTok et al) correct in their recent efforts to ban Holocaust denial on their platforms? What are the free speech implications?**

I continue to struggle with this, but given the current political climate, I’m warming up to the European approach, which is to take a closer and more restricted stance toward obvious forms of hate speech.

Where we get into dicier territory is with respect to borderline cases in which “hate” becomes extremely subjective and where state authorities start using a hair trigger response to ban anything and everything that may or may not cross the line of acceptability.

This is part of an ongoing debate that has no easy answers.

**Nazism in America, or is this just another manifestation of traditional American racism, anti-Semitism and extreme nationalism?**

It’s mostly old wine in new bottles.

The new bottles are the delivery mechanism of social media and the World Wide Web.

The content is just as deranged, unhinged and conspiratorial as ever, but its packaging is more superficially benign (in the form of snarky/ironic memes that claim to be merely “jokes”) and so ends up having a much broader reach that can radicalize unsuspecting people quite effectively.

Chris Leppek may be reached at IJNEWS@aol.com.

“By examining what could have happened, we better understand what *did* happen

history and in considering present day America, which is experiencing a resurgence of neo-Nazism.

Rosenfeld, in his teaching, writing and online presence, is a both a student and an advocate of alternative, or “counterfactual” history, which presents and discusses “what might have been” scenarios in historical research.

Think: What might have happened had the Confederacy won the Civil War?

What might the world look like if the Communist revolution in Russia had failed?

How would the world look today if Lee Harvey Oswald had missed his target in Dallas?

Or, in Rosenfeld’s case, what if there had been a Fourth Reich?

In presenting such never-happened but could-have-happened scenarios, Rosenfeld feels we can better understand what actually *did* happen, how it happened, and how such disasters as world wars and the Holo-

Hitler in particular) have served as the Western world’s symbol of ultimate evil. Since the era remains a moral and historical touchstone for contemporary society, it’s imperative that we understand the Third Reich’s origins and legacy.

**Your book, *The Fourth Reich*, explores alternative historical possibilities had the Nazis won WW II. Why do you feel that counterfactual history is an effective approach to Nazism and the Holocaust?**

Actually, I explored the Nazis winning World War II in an earlier book, *The World Hitler Never Made* (2005).

In *The Fourth Reich* I used counterfactual methods to examine how after 1945, unrepentant Nazis sought to return to power and how they might have been more successful than they ultimately were.

By showing how this was possible, I intend to underscore the

## Denver Academy addresses diverse learners



### Denver Academy

Denver Academy, dedicated to teaching diverse learners, including those with dyslexia and ADHD, will hold a virtual open house, Nov. 14, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Attendees will view a presentation by Head of School Mark Twarogowski, followed by a virtual Q&A

with current DA students and teachers, who will provide information about the school’s student-centered approach to learning.

Denver Academy offers differentiated instruction for each student.

Information: denveracademy.org/openhouse or 303-777-5161.



**HANNAH AND BENJAMIN GREEN** are the parents of Abigail Green, born October 8, 2020 in Denver, Colorado. Maternal grandparents are Vicki and Craig Eskanos of Aurora, Colorado. Paternal grandparents are Andrea Weiss and John Green of Silver Spring, Md. Maternal great-grandparents are Jackie and Marvin Cooper of Denver.

New Baby?  
Mazel Tov!  
Spread the joyous news.

Send your announcement to shana@ijn.com

## Ben Gurion’s Negev home — virtual tour, Nov. 15



**The house where Ben Gurion lived.**

Boulder Hadassah will present a virtual tour of the desert home of David and Paula Ben Gurion in Kibbutz Sde Boker in Ramat HaNegev, the sister city for both JEWISH-colorado and the city of Boulder, Sunday, Nov. 15, 9 a.m.

Ben Gurion was the first prime minister of Israel, declared the independence of the State of Israel, established the IDF and built the foundations of Israel and the connections between Israel and world Jewry.

He and Paula Ben Gurion resided

in the desert home from 1953, when he left his position as Prime Minister of Israel to live in the Negev, until his death.

This private tour will allow us to “hop over the ropes,” discuss Ben-Gurion’s vision of the Negev, and see exhibits otherwise not seen on regular tours, such as his gifts from overseas visitors, life with his wife Paula, and his library of 5,000 books.

Information: <http://www.hadasah.org/events/benguriondesert-house>.