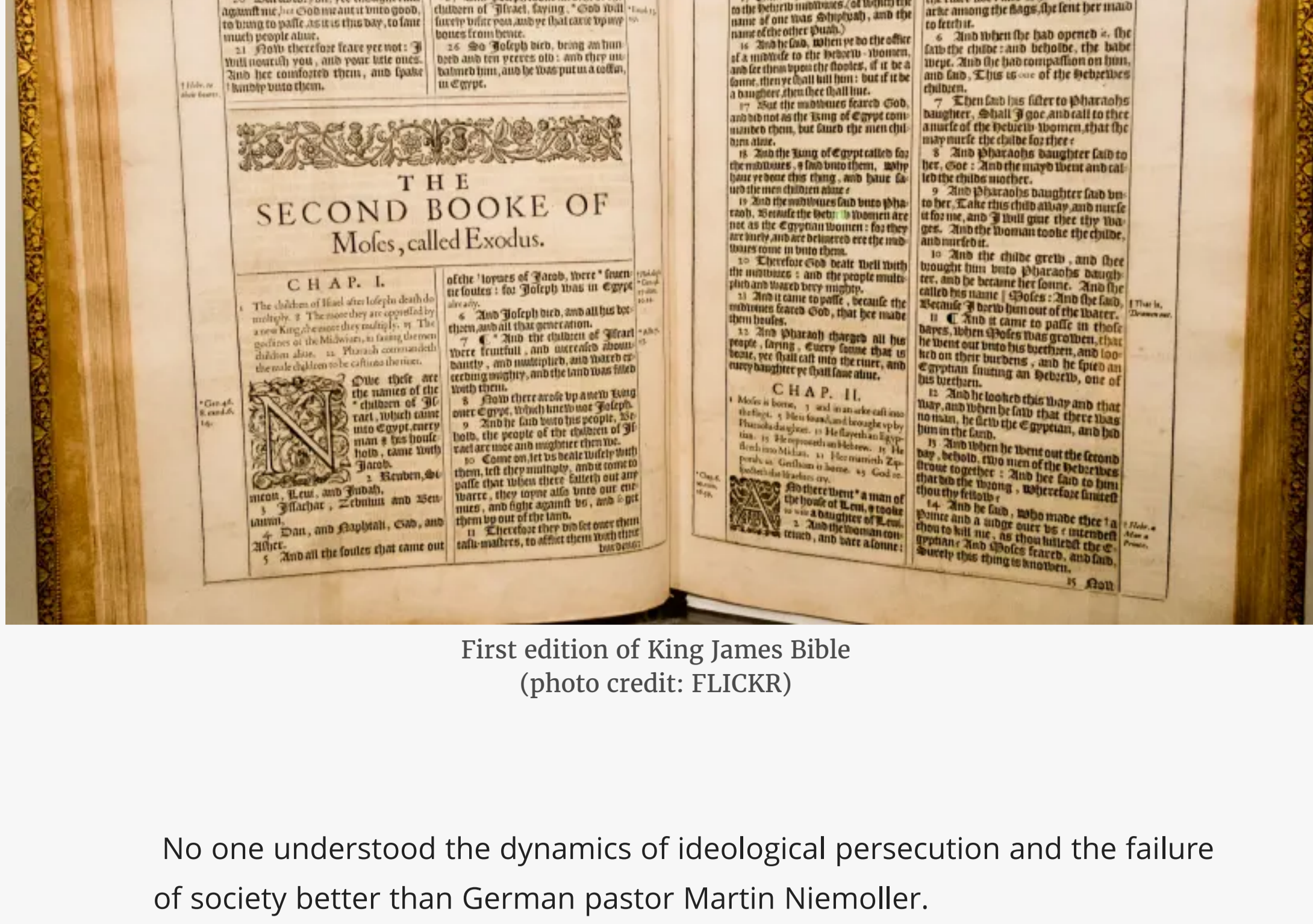
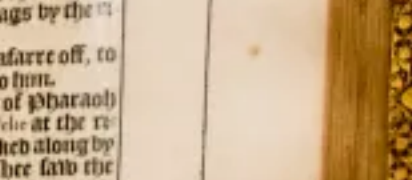


# Could the Bible be cancel culture's next victim? – opinion

The terror of 'woke' cancel culture knows no bounds

By DAVID M. WEINBERG MARCH 11, 2021 20:06



First edition of King James Bible (photo credit: FLICKR)

No one understood the dynamics of ideological persecution and the failure of society better than German pastor Martin Niemöller.

In his famous post-World War II confessional speech, he said (in paraphrase): “First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out, because I was not a communist. Then they came for the socialists, then the trade unionists, and I did not speak out, because I was not a socialist nor a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out, because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me.”

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Jump 80 years forward, and ask yourself this: After “canceling” one literary, musical, artistic, and theatrical classic after another, will be anybody left to speak for the Bible when the “woke” movement inevitably goes after the canonic text of Jewish (and Christian) civilization?

After all, isn't there slavery in the Bible, alongside discrimination against women, the handicapped, and non-Jews? Isn't there intolerance of gender-fluid identities and racism regarding certain nations? The Bible even calls for genocide against the seven Canaanite nations, and Amalek!

So why shouldn't the small group of “intellectuals,” “progressives,” and radical kings-and-queens who rule today's “cancel culture” approach the Bible censoriously too? What would better amplify their (illusion of) power than twitter-shaming all Bible-believers, or even burning entire chapters of that “culturally offensive” book?

In their power game, nothing is sacred (except for progressive political correctness itself) and nothing is immune from their “enlightened” rampage. Theirs is an imperialistic revolution, where violent ends justify violent means – which is what Marx really taught.

Marx was obsessed by class struggle. The weaponized “woke” are obsessed with race and sexual orientation. Defining everyone by their skin color and robotically deeming whites as evil and guilty of “systemic racism” – a dangerous new term that purposefully inflates personal bias into built-in inequity that must be demolished with totalitarian force – the woke have forced everybody but them onto the defensive.

As Natan Sharansky and Gil Troy have written, we are today living in a Western version of “fear society”, where pressure to conform does not come from the totalitarian top (as was the case in the Stalinist Soviet Union) but from the fanatics around us – on campus, at work, and in the media – who bully people into silence or into politically-correct compliance.

How else to explain the rash of wild book banning and movie cancellation of late?

First they came for Jean and Laurent de Brunhoff's books on Babar the Elephant, which were deemed as “celebrations of colonialism” because the title character leaves the jungle and later returns to “civilize” his fellow animals.

Then they came for H.A. Rey's Curious George books, targeted for cancellation because the premise of a white man (with a yellow hat!) bringing home a monkey from Africa was said to be demeaning to Africans and especially African Americans.

Then they came for children's movies, leading Disney Plus to pull Peter Pan, Dumbo, Aristocats, Lady and the Tramp, The Jungle Book, and Swiss Family Robinson from its offerings for children under seven. Disney labeled these as movies that contain “stereotypes and negative depictions of people or cultures” that could corrupt the souls of young people. (PBS also has put “sensitivity warnings” on Sesame Street's Muppets).

In Dumbo, you see, the crows “pay homage to racist minstrel shows.” Peter Pan “portrays Native people in a stereotypical manner that reflects neither the diversity of Native peoples nor their authentic cultural traditions. Peter and the Lost Boys engage in dancing, wearing headdresses and other exaggerated tropes.”

In Swiss Family Robinson, the pirates who antagonize the Robinson family are portrayed as a stereotypical foreign menace. “Many appear in yellow face or brown face and are costumed in an exaggerated and inaccurate manner with top knot hairstyles, queues, robes and overdone facial make-up and jewelry, reinforcing their barbarism and otherness.”

Then they came for Mr. Potato Head, and forced Hasbro to make the doll gender neutral. It is amazing how the woke are worried about the sex of a plastic potato!

THEN THEY came for Dr. Seuss, including his iconic books, And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street, If I Ran the Zoo and McElligot's Pool – because of “racist and insensitive imagery.” What is “insensitive” here? An Asian person wearing a conical hat, holding chopsticks, and eating from a bowl, and a drawing of two bare-footed African men wearing what appear to be grass skirts with their hair tied above their heads.

An “academic” journal ridiculously has published “The Cat Is Out of the Bag: Orientalism, Anti-Blackness, and White Supremacy in Dr. Seuss's Children's Books.” Theodor Seuss Geisel was accused posthumously of “racial transgressions across his entire publishing career.”

Undoubtedly next on the guillotine will be Berenstain Bears. Why? Well, here is a famous (and certainly-offensive-to-the-woke) paragraph from this beloved series of books by Stan and Jan Berenstain: “I'm a father. I'm a he. A father's something you could be. I'm a mother. I'm a she. A mother's something you could be.” Such horrible gender stereotyping. Burn all the Berenstain Bear books!

The problem here is not the cultural effort to diversify children's book characters and their creators. The problem is the “cancellation” of well-meaning works out of an uncritical and violent embrace of “critical race theory.” It's one thing to take a few truly bad books off the shelves. It's another thing altogether to see racism and “gender-backwardness” everywhere and try to impose a new “woke” ideological straitjacket on society.

Indeed, New York progressives now seek to introduce a state-imposed curriculum that will teach kindergarteners about “gender fluidity.”

The legislation of State Senator Samra Brouk of Rochester would teach eight-year-olds that there are multiple, fluid gender choices. They would also be instructed about the opportunity to receive hormone blockers that would allow little children to avoid having the “wrong puberty.” Children as young as 11 would learn about different kinds of sex, and about “queer, two-spirit, asexual, and pansexual identities.”

Higher grades would be fed more overtly political lessons, such as the need to lend support to religious believers and others who hold fast to traditional morality, including sexual abstinence before marriage. The concept is to produce kids with preprogrammed “woke” ideas.

Writing in The National Post of Canada, John Robson warns in Seussian verse of the curse at hand:

“There is nothing, no nothing, that (the woke) find in the past, That they won't burn to ash with a self-righteous blast.

When they're done with their work then a wasteland you'll see, Not a book will be standing, and not a movie.

There are some who once thought they could gain from PC, It will strike down my foes but it won't target me.

Sadly now it is clear that its rage knows no bounds, And upon its old friends it will set its hell-hounds...

I'm no racist, no hater, but this I decree, Others too had their faults but all's not well with me.

So please fix what you can and repent what you can't, But don't ever let loose with a paranoid rant.

That the past was a plot and that all things were wrong, Until history ended and you came along.

Thus to Seuss at the close of this poem I return, And I say with conviction his books must not burn.”

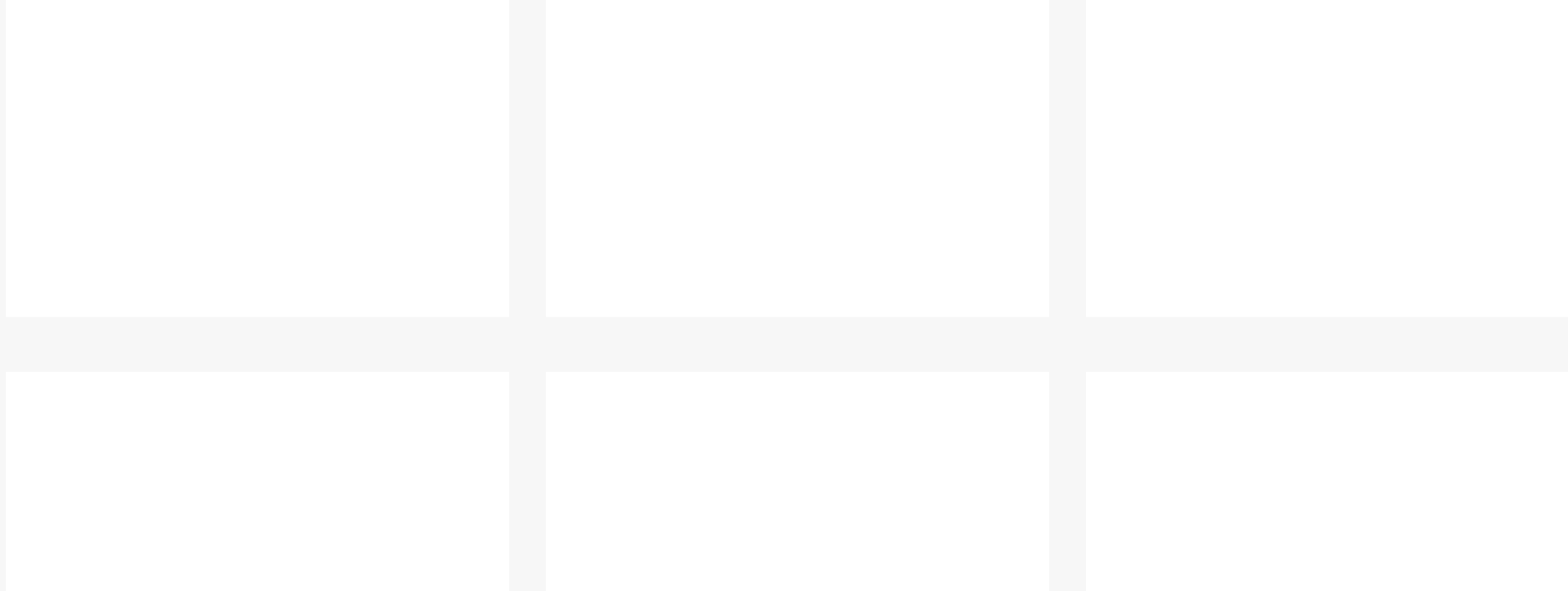
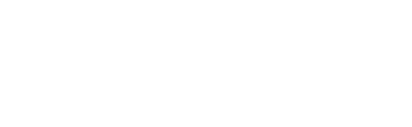
*The writer is vice president of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, jiss.org.il.*

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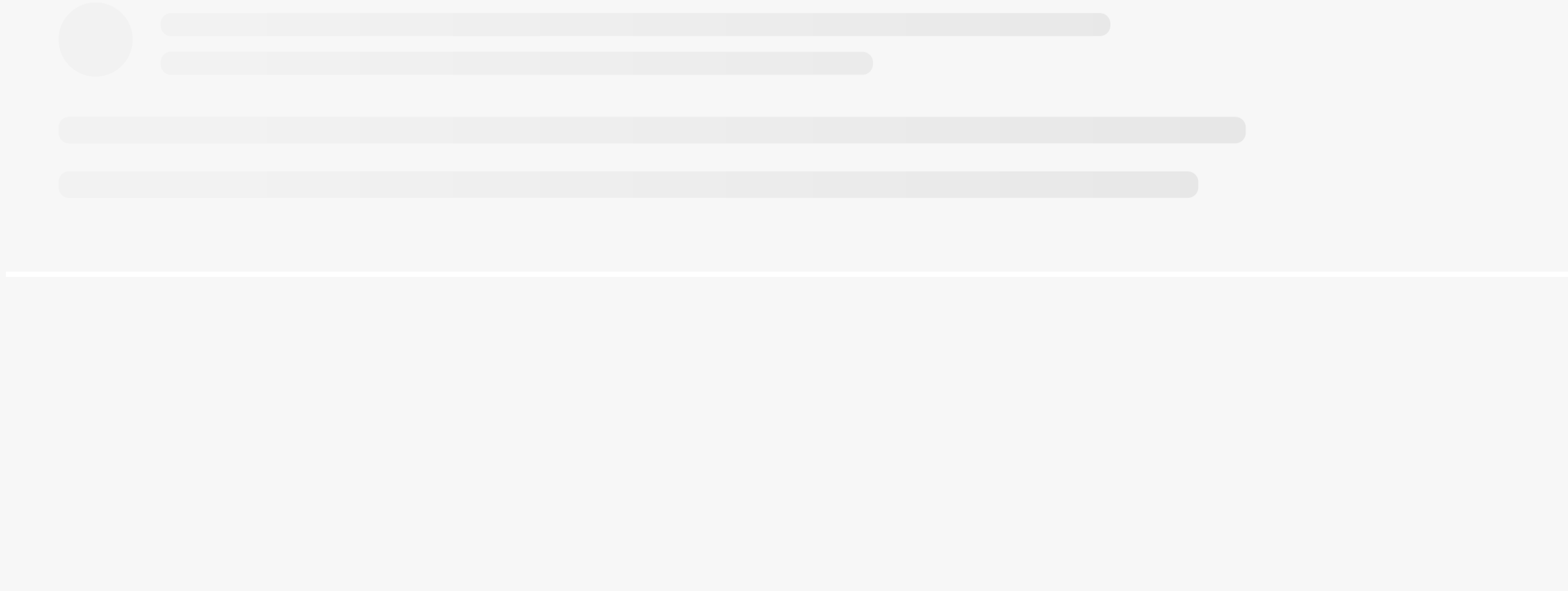
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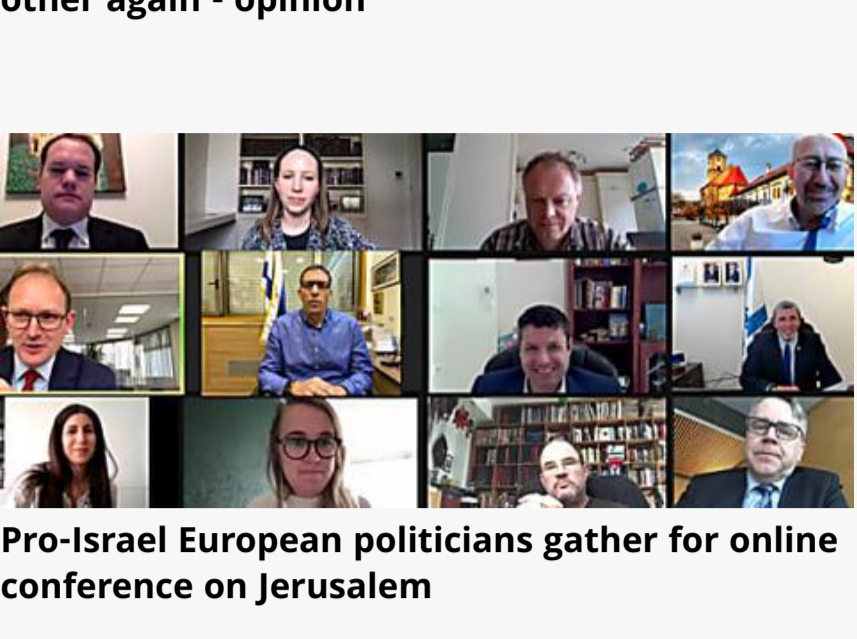
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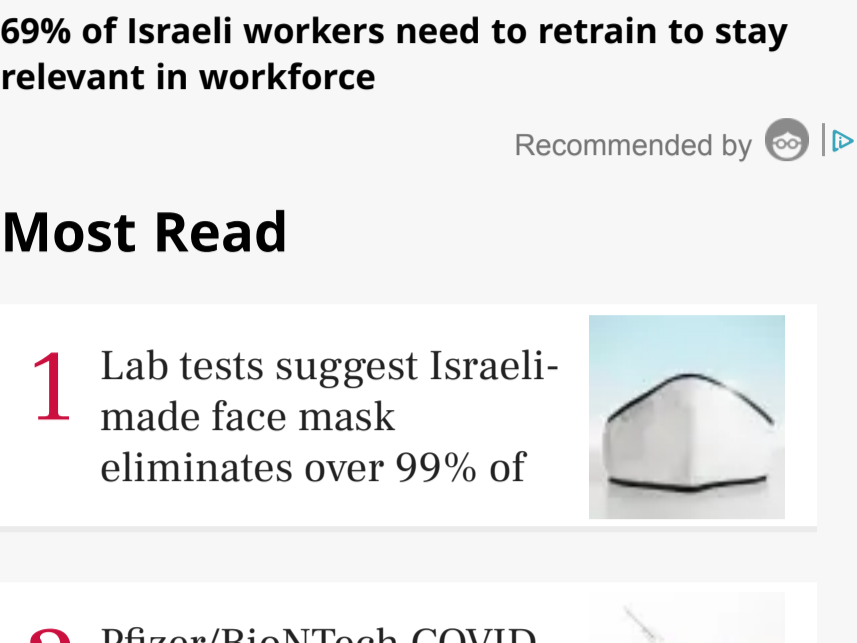
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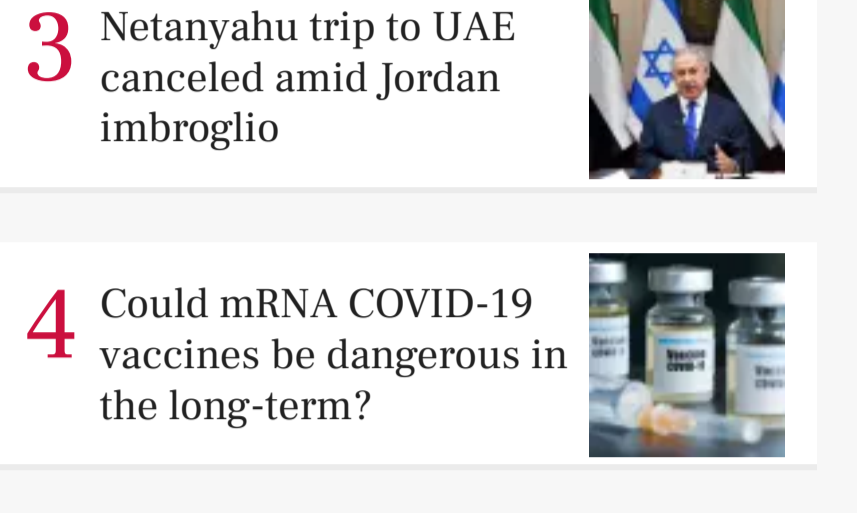
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