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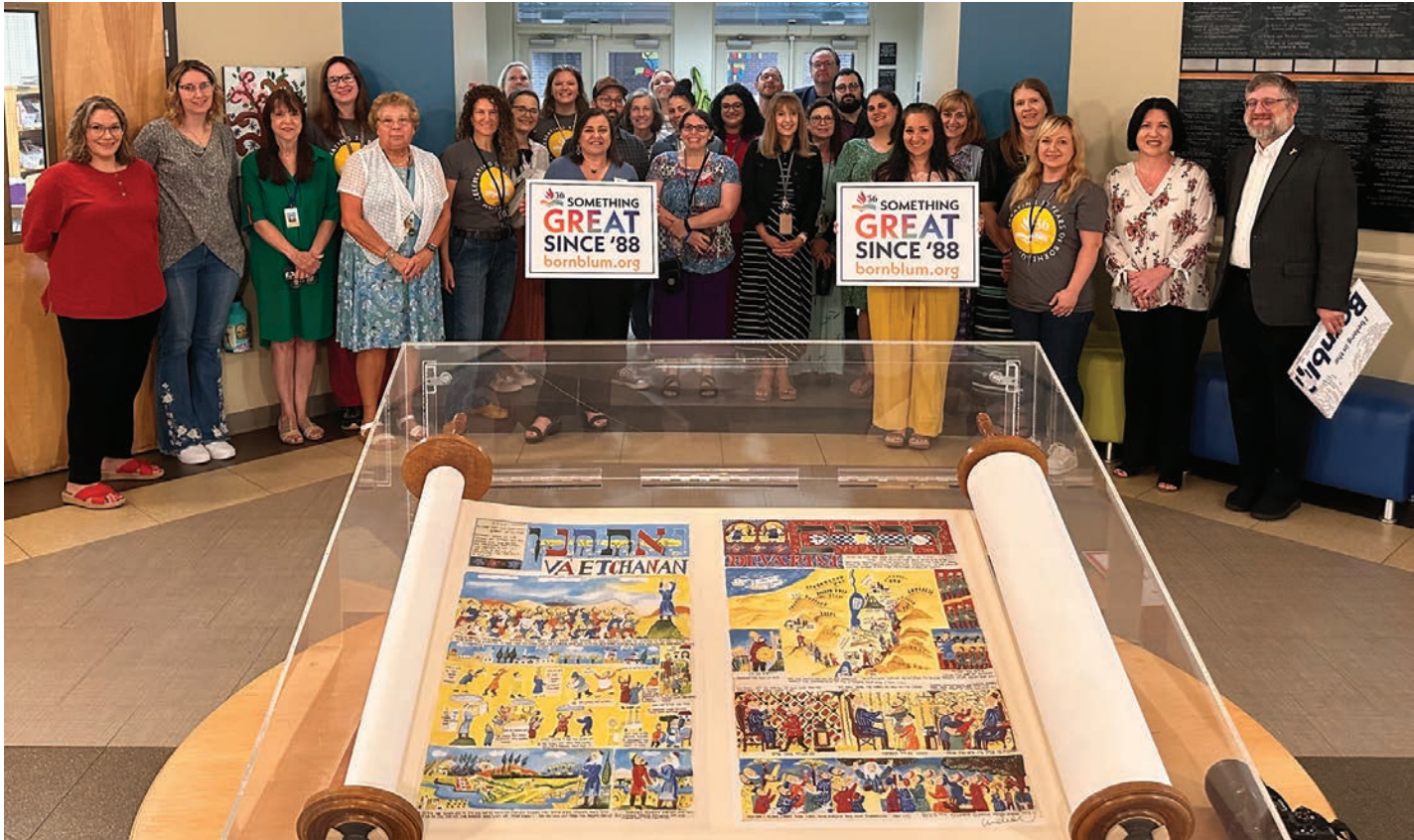
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Bornblum Celebrates Double Chai Anniversary



Bornblum’s faculty and staff members gather behind the Illustrated Torah in Bornblum Jewish Community School’s lobby to kick off the 36th year.

From its humble beginnings as Solomon Schechter Day School of Memphis in 1988, in the old Beth Sholom Synagogue at Mendenhall and Sanderlin, to the thriving school with its beautiful campus at Kirby and Humphreys, Bornblum Jewish Community School has become a key institution in the Memphis Jewish community.

“In 1988, a small group of families began a journey together to create a community institution that could provide a Jewish education for any Jew-

ish child in Memphis. Today, all of our families and the entire Jewish community are beneficiaries of these founders’ vision and commitment,” said Daniel R. Weiss, Bornblum’s head of school.

Guided by its theme for the year – “Something Great Since ‘88” – Bornblum has planned a year of activities that will celebrate the history of the school and its impact on the Memphis Jewish community. The school’s anniversary year events begin with 36FEST, a community-wide celebration of Born-

blum on September 22, 2024. According to Jaclyn Marshall, board member and member of the school’s 36th anniversary committee, “Our 36FEST community event, with great food and lots of activities for the whole family, will bring the Memphis Jewish community together to celebrate Bornblum’s 36 years of providing an outstanding education to Memphis’ Jewish families.”

Other events throughout the year will include the school’s Bourbon and Burgers event in late October, Strikes

for Scholarships in February, and a very special 36th Anniversary Gala at the FedEx Events Center at Shelby Farms on March 30, 2025. The school will also weave the celebration of its 36th year into the curriculum and activities for students throughout the year.

Today, Bornblum’s many alumni live and lead in not only Memphis, but in Jewish communities across the United States and Israel.

“Our alumni are making an impact, applying the education, deep Jewish identity, and lifelong friendships they developed at Bornblum,” says Sally Baer, Bornblum’s director of Student Services and assistant head of school. Baer, who is the only employee of Bornblum who has been with the school since its inception, will be one of the honorees at the 36th Anniversary Gala in March.

Reflecting on the year ahead, Board President Jeri Moskovitz is excited that the school “is taking time to celebrate the accomplishments of our school and our alumni. A majority of the leaders in many of our community’s synagogues and Jewish agencies have some connection to the school, whether they are alumni, or parents and grandparents of our alumni. We are proud of the legacy of leadership and the strong Jewish identity that impacts our Memphis Jewish community because of the existence of Bornblum.”

To honor its 36th year, Bornblum also plans to release a 36th Anniversary Cookbook featuring treasured family recipes from the Bornblum Community. The cookbook, chaired by past Presi-

(See **Bornblum** Page 2)

Tel Aviv’s ‘Hostage Square’ is Coming to Chicago for the DNC — Whether or Not a Pro-Israel March Gets a Permit



Artist Tomer Peretz works on an installation planned for a Hostages Square replica near the Democratic National Convention. Credit: Michael Cannon

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – August 14, 2024 – Pro-Israel activists will mount a “Hostage Square” during the Democratic National Convention in Chicago next week, in a bid to spotlight the plight of Israeli captives at a time when the city is preparing for large pro-Palestinian demonstrations.

The public art installation, organized by the Israeli American Council, will be held on a private lot and does not require a permit, a spokesperson told JTA. They have not disclosed the exhibit’s intended location, though they say it will be close to the convention, which will be held at the city’s United Center.

“Hostage Square Chicago will be a place where all Americans, especially Jewish Americans, can express solidarity and prayer for our hostages who still remain in Hamas hell, condemn the

savage massacre of October 7, and pray for Israel’s victory over her genocidal enemies,” IAC CEO Elan Carr said in a statement. “It will also be a place where we can dwell with pride over America’s strong support of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.”

The installation is set to include six large pieces by Israeli artists related to the Oct. 7 attacks, in addition to eight milk cartons each standing 10 feet tall that echo campaigns in the 1990s to publicize missing children. The cartons will feature blown-up images of the Israeli hostage posters that wallpapered major cities early in the war, with each bearing the name and photo of an American still held captive in Gaza.

(See **Hostages** Page 3)

My Teen Israel Experience



Mollie Wexler (l) and Bella Schreiber on Masada at sunrise.

By Mollie Wexler

During the summer of 2023, on my trip to Israel, my view as a Jewish teen was altered regarding Israel and overall. I learned a lot about myself and Jewish history. I found a community in a place where I knew few people and created bonds with those I barely knew at the beginning of the summer.

As I watched the oldest campers from my camp, Camp Pembroke, head to Israel for each of the previous six summers that I had been a camper, I greatly anticipated and patiently waited for my turn to go. I went to Israel with Dor L’ Dor (meaning from Generation to Generation), a trip organized by the Cohen Camps, a family of three Jewish sleep-away camps in Massachusetts, of which Camp Pembroke is one.

While in Israel, I was able to learn about the many different backgrounds of Jewish people, including Yemenite and Ethiopian Jews. In fact, I learned more about Ethiopian Jews as someone on my bus identified as such. In Israel, I gained a new perspective on people who I did not know well at first, but to whom I grew closer as we experienced Israel together.

While traveling around Israel, it was very meaningful to see the many sites where religious and historical figures from decades to hundreds or even thousands of years ago had walked. For ex-

ample, going to the Negev and camping there for two nights was absolutely amazing. It was especially meaningful knowing that I was in the same place many of my ancestors had been thousands of years ago. It was very peaceful, and a time of reflection on the amazing trip I had had so far.

Also, being able to see the Western Wall in person was one of the highlights of my trip! The pictures I had seen my whole life could not have captured the energy I felt being physically at The Wall – touching it and praying at it. It was truly a life-changing experience.

Growing closer with Jewish people from both Israel and different parts of the United States was also a great part of my trip! Starting with a few things in common and then seeing how the common thread of Judaism helped transform our relationships into those of best friends in just one month, was unforgettable.

That was just another one of the life-changing experiences of this trip. I would not change this summer or my experience in Israel for anything and cannot wait to go back. I also look forward to reconnecting with the friends I made while there in the months and years to come.

Thank you to Memphis Jewish Federation’s Lemsky Endowment Fund for helping make my Dor L’Dor Cohen

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. August 23, 2024 / 19 Av, 5784 7:19 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. August 24, 2024 / 20 Av, 5784 8:15 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Eikev

Camp Israel journey possible for me. Mollie Wexler, daughter of Kathy and Michael Wexler, is a rising senior at St. Mary’s Episcopal School. Memphis Jewish Federation’s Lemsky Endowment Fund provided her with a Teen Israel Experience grant to offset the costs of her Dor L’Dor Cohen Camps Israel program. All rising juniors and seniors are eligible for grants of up to \$3,000 to attend a recognized teen summer or semester program in Israel. Teen Israel Experience applications for Summer 2025 will be open in November. HW

Bornblum... (Continued From Page 1) dent Kara Bierman and alumni parent Shelly Ostrow will be available for purchase in the spring. “Our goal is to fill our cookbook with amazing recipes that reflect the flavors of Bornblum,” says Bierman. Anyone affiliated with Bornblum throughout the years is invited to submit recipes by September 13 at www.bornblum.org/36Years. Weiss, who is in his seventh year as head of school, believes, “It is going to be the best year yet! Memphis is a very special community, and I feel very fortunate to lead an institution that makes such a deep impact on that community every day.”

In addition to all the celebrations, Bornblum also will focus on the next generation through continued growth initiatives and exciting fundraising opportunities. According to Scott Ostrow, Bornblum’s director of Institutional Advancement, “We are grateful to the many donors who support Bornblum including all of our corporate partners. This year, these important corporate friends will have the opportunity for increased exposure, because each of our sponsorship levels will provide benefits at all of our events as well as on social media throughout the year.” Companies interested in becoming 36th Year Sponsors can visit www.bornblum.crowdchange.co/sponsors. HW



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Hostages...
(Continued From Page 1)

Eight Americans are still held hostage; three of them are known to be dead. They include Hersh Goldberg-Polin, 23, whose parents have emerged as a prominent face of the advocacy effort to bring the hostages home.

One of the installations at the planned hostage exhibit, created by the Los Angeles-based artist Tomer Peretz, will include a massive T-shirt that reads “Free our Hostages,” accompanied by a pair of blood-stained sweatpants, reminiscent of a graphic image of a woman kidnapped by Hamas on Oct. 7.

The installation and its name are meant to evoke Hostage Square, an area outside the Tel Aviv Museum of Art that has become an epicenter of advocacy around the hostage crisis. The area showcases constantly evolving public art installations meant to draw attention to the plight of the hostages, and also features an empty Shabbat table, with each chair representing a hostage still being held in Gaza. That installation was replicated in New York’s Times Square and other locations.

Hostage Square has also become a gathering place for relatives and sup-

porters of the hostages, and for actions in support of a ceasefire deal for their release.

Art installations in other cities around the world – including giant milk cartons – have also sought to draw attention to the hostages’ plight.

IAC says it has had trouble acquiring permits to demonstrate outside of the convention. The Department of Transportation offered an alternate location three blocks away that the IAC rejected because it said the space was too far away from the site of the convention, “Jewish Insider” reported.

Pro-Palestinian groups have secured permits for large marches on the first, third and last day of the convention. The marches are slated to start at a park a few blocks away and head to the area of the United Center.

Family members of an American hostage in Gaza, Omer Neutra, spoke at the Republican National Convention last month. “The New York Times” reported this week that family members of hostages had been invited to speak at the DNC but no plans have been announced. **HW**

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is Monday–Friday at 11:30 a.m. All programs start at 12:15 p.m. Monthly Luncheon is at noon.

Monday, August 26
Movie: “Catskills on Broadway”

For the first time, we will watch the movie in the newly renovated Theatre at the MJCC. “Catskills on Broadway,” plugs into timely events of the day while taking the spirit of the Catskill performances of such talents as Woody Allen, Jerry Lewis, Joan Rivers, Danny Kaye, Milton Berle, Joey Bishop and Mel Brooks. In 1991, comedian Freddie Roman and three of his “Borscht Belt” comedian friends became a surprise sensation in NYC with their show “Catskills on Broadway.” In the summer of ‘93, Freddie brought the show to Atlantic City, this time with new cast member Louise DuArt. The show was a smash in AC and returned many times during the 90s. This is the first time this show has been seen since ‘93. Great old fashion Jewish comedy that many of us remember. Free to the general public!

Come for lunch and the show or just for the show! We all need a good laugh nowadays.

Wednesday, August 28
Speaker Rabbi Yosef Braha

Rabbi Yosef Braha will return with his popular program “Ask the Rabbi!”

This gives everyone a chance to ask many of the questions they have been thinking of but were afraid to ask. “Why is this kosher and this is isn’t!” “Why do men need to wear a yarmulke?” Why, Why, and Why!

Come ask any question for the Rabbi you have been wondering about. It couldn’t hurt.

Please join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch from the kitchens at the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required the day before by 1 p.m. by contacting Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org or by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. Steve works Monday thru Thursday 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **HW**

Nassau County ‘Mask Transparency Act’ Could Hit Demonstrators with Fines and Jail Time

(JNS) – A regular sight at pro-Hamas protests inspired the Nassau County Legislature on Long Island, N.Y., to take action curtailing activists’ efforts to conceal their identities.

The “Mask Transparency Act” went into effect in the New York county on Wednesday, having passed earlier this month and then signed by Nassau County executive Bruce Blakeman.

Individuals who use masks to hide

their faces during protests will face as much as one year in prison and a \$1,000 fine. The measure makes exceptions for masks worn for health or religious reasons.

Sacha Roytman, CEO of the Combat Antisemitism Movement said in a statement, called the measure” a pivotal step in combating the rise of antisemitic incidents in the United States since Oct. 7.”

He urged “other jurisdictions to swift-

ly adopt similar measures as part of a comprehensive strategy to combat antisemitism and protect all communities from hate-motivated violence.”

Last Thursday, Inna Vernikov, a Republican member of the New York City Council for the 48th District, announced her intent to introduce the “Unmask the Hate” resolution, which would call for comparable legislation at the state level.

She spoke of facing “an intense uptick

in criminality coupled with anti-American and antisemitic hatred in New York City, and these sick individuals are emboldened by their anonymity to the point of openly spewing hatred and acting violently without worry of any consequences. We have to bring safety back to our streets. Unmask the criminals.”

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said on June 13: “We will not tolerate individuals using masks to evade responsibility for criminal or threatening behavior. My team is working on a solution, but on a subway, people should not be able to hide behind a mask to commit crimes.” **HW**

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Kol Rena SoShuls Luncheons Return to Baron Hirsch

As summer 2024 rolls into autumn, Baron Hirsch Congregation will resume the Kol Rena SoShuls Luncheons at 12 p.m. Wednesday, September 4, 2024.

Kol Rena SoShuls Luncheons are for people, who are 64 years or older, to enjoy a delicious lunch, listen to live music and socialize with new and old friends. The cost for the luncheon is \$5.

Luncheon participants do not have to be members of Baron Hirsch Synagogue.

The musical duo, Turnstyles, will provide entertainment for the luncheon, courtesy of the non-profit, Creative Aging. The duo’s musicians, Seth Moody on guitar and Graham Winchester on the drums, will entertain the audience by combining familiar tunes from local recording studios, Sun Records and Stax Records, with their own original tunes.

The September luncheon menu includes stuffed chicken breasts, salad, kugel, green beans and homemade apple strudel.

Make your reservations for the luncheon by Friday, August 30, 2024, either by calling 901-683-7485 or by emailing gwen@baronhirsch.org.

We look forward to seeing you there. **HW**

Jewish Solar Challenge Opens 2024 Grant Application Cycle

\$300,000 to be Awarded to Jewish Organizations Across America Pledging to Go Solar

LOS ANGELES – The Jewish Solar Challenge (JSC) is excited to announce the opening of its 2024 grant application cycle on Aug. 21. All Jewish nonprofits including synagogues, Jewish schools and Jewish camps that own their buildings and pledge to install solar panels are eligible for matching grants up to \$50,000. Applications are due by Sept. 20, and winners will be announced at the end of November.

Veteran communications executive and environmentalist Mitchell Schwartz founded the Jewish Solar Challenge in Los Angeles in 2022 with the dream of putting solar panels on the rooftops of every Jewish organization in North America. So far, Jewish Solar Challenge has awarded grants to seven organizations including Temple Israel of Hollywood, Temple Beth Am, Berkeley Hillel and Camp Tawonga.

JSC plans to award over \$300,000 in grants in November, bringing the total amount awarded for solar panels to nearly \$1 million since the organization

launched.

“Our goal is to help combat climate change while also slashing the operating costs for Jewish organizations across America,” Schwartz said. “We know many institutions are reluctant to invest in solar, because it typically takes more than five years to recoup the costs. With the Jewish Solar Challenge cutting those costs in half, it reduces their pay-back time, making solar more attainable to Jewish organizations that want to make a difference.”

Temple Israel of Hollywood, the first recipient of a JSC grant, has abated an estimated 282,326 lbs. of CO2, the equivalent of planting over 13,000 trees or taking five cars off the road.

Berkeley Hillel installed a 36.4 kWh array of panels with a 13.5 kWh Tesla Powerwall Battery in March 2022 and has experienced other benefits.

“We lost power one day, and the lights, Wi-Fi, and refrigeration all stayed on, so we didn’t have to close the building,” said Berkeley Hillel COO

Emily Hirschman. “Thanks to the solar panels, we were able to still welcome students to study here when the rest of the campus didn’t have power.”

The first round of the 2024 application opens to interested groups on Aug. 21. JSC will prioritize organizations with existing quotes for solar that are “shovel ready.” Jewish Solar Challenge is also looking for partners committed to broadening their sustainability efforts beyond solar energy.

“JSC really opened our eyes to focus not only on solar but on institutional sustainability,” said Mark Samuel, the immediate past president of Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles, which received a JSC grant in 2022 and completed its solar installation in March. “We introduced more recycling bins, installed low-flow toilets and faucets, upgraded to LED lighting, enhanced energy efficiency measures, and implemented composting on our site. Our goal is to reduce our carbon footprint overall. This initiative was a great catalyst to

move things ahead, and it provided a meaningful way to focus on Shmita, a year of growth and rebirth.”

Qualified applicants will move on to the final round of the grant process. Before final applications are due, sustainability professionals at JSC will work directly with the organizations to curate specific initiatives aimed at making their community more sustainable. Final applications are due Nov. 1, and winners will be announced at the end of November. Interested Jewish organizations can apply at www.jewishsolarchallenge.com.

ABOUT JEWISH SOLAR CHALLENGE: Jewish Solar Challenge (JSC) is a nonprofit organization that addresses the climate crisis by facilitating the fiscal and environmental sustainability of Jewish community institutions through the installation of solar panels. JSC provides financial support for the installation of solar panels, as well as training, education and advocacy of community members. **HW**

Linking Holocaust Survivors with Lost Family, the Newly Relunched Holocaust Reunion Project Reconnects Families Shattered by The Shoah

Offering Free DNA tests and genealogical consultations to the survivor community

August 15, 2024 – The Holocaust Reunion Project is proud to announce its relaunch, marking a significant milestone in its mission to reunite Holocaust survivors with family. Launched in late 2022 as the DNA Reunion Project at the Center for Jewish History, the pilot program distributed over 1200 free DNA tests to survivors and their children, enabling scores of meaningful connections. This groundbreaking initiative now operates as an independent nonprofit with a new home at holocaustreunions.org.

Co-Founders and Lead Genealogists Jennifer Mendelsohn and Adina Newman remain committed to providing free DNA testing and consultation to survivors and their children, making use of cutting-edge technology to restore family connections severed by the Holocaust and empowering the Jewish community

to reclaim their history through a variety of educational efforts.

“Our relaunch signifies a renewed dedication to giving back to Holocaust survivors what was taken from them: family,” said co-founder Adina Newman. “We are thrilled that we are now able to take our pilot program to full scale and continue the process of securing its long-term future.”

In the wake of the Holocaust, countless families were not only torn apart by genocide but further separated by displacement and severed lines of communication. Recognizing the extraordinary potential of DNA technology to bridge those gaps and bring families back together, the project provides free testing, allowing survivors and their children potentially to connect with previously unknown relatives and reclaim their histories. It also serves as the central gene-

alogical resource for Holocaust-related Jewish unknown parentage and has a proven track record of solving complex cases involving hidden children and concealed Jewish identity, such as identifying the biological parents of a toddler smuggled out of the Bialystok ghetto who searched for decades to learn her true identity.

“Too often survivors and their families believe there is no one left and nothing left to learn, so they never even begin the search” said Jennifer Mendelsohn. “Our work demonstrates the potential of commercial DNA testing and available records to reclaim lost family histories, both for survivors and the greater Jewish community. That process can be incredibly powerful and healing.”

The Holocaust Reunion Project co-founders, Jennifer Mendelsohn and Adina Newman, are speakers and exhibitors at the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) Annual Conference starting this Sunday, August 18 through Thursday, August 22, 2024.

ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST REUNION PROJECT

The Holocaust Reunion Project is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering Holocaust Survivors and their children to find family and reclaim their histories by leveraging and harnessing the power of commercial DNA testing and genealogical research. The Holocaust Reunion Project reunites Holocaust survivors and their children with living relatives and illuminates family history lost to genocide. Since the pilot program launched in 2022, over 1200 survivors and their children have been given free tests, enabling scores of successful connections. For more information about the Holocaust Reunion Project, to apply for a free DNA test, or to support our mission, please visit holocaustreunions.org.

The Project’s financial activity operates through Players Philanthropy Fund, a fiscal sponsor recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3); all donations to the Holocaust Reunion Project qualify as tax deductible. **HW**

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Billboard in New York’s Times Square Seeks to Highlight Iranian Terror

(JNS) – The Israeli Consulate in New York launched a campaign in Times Square this week against Iran and its Hezbollah proxy in Lebanon amid ongoing threats by the Islamic Republic to attack the Jewish state.

“Iran and Hezbollah. Partners in terror. 150k rockets aimed at Israel, 40 years of global terror,” reads the billboard advertisement, which was launched last Wednesday and set to run throughout the weekend.

The calls on passersby to learn more about Iranian terror by scanning a QR code that leads to an Israeli Foreign Ministry website outlining the atrocities committed by Iran and its terror proxies since joining the war in support

of Hamas one day after the Islamist group’s Oct. 7 massacre.

The cost of a billboard on Times Square ranges between \$5,000 and \$50,000 a day, depending on the complexity and location of the ad.

The campaign comes as intelligence reports indicate that Iran and Hezbollah are preparing to drag the Middle East into an all-out regional war by attacking the Jewish state “within days.”

Tehran and its proxies have vowed to avenge both the killing of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas’s “political” bureau, and of Fuad Shukur, a senior member of Hezbollah’s Jihad Council, whom Israeli defense officials have described as the terror organization’s No. 2 man. **HW**

Young Jewish Chicagoans Excited, Apprehensive Ahead of Democratic Convention



U.S. Vice President of the United States Kamala Harris speaks at an event at Desert Diamond Arena in Glendale, Ariz., on Aug. 9, 2024. Credit: Gage Skidmore/Creative Commons.

By Sylvia Miller

(JNS) – With the Democratic National Convention scheduled to take place from Aug. 19 to Aug. 22 in the Windy City, young Jewish Chicagoans told JNS that they worry about potential political unrest around the gathering, during which the party is expected to formally nominate U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris as its 2024 presidential candidate.

Chicago is “the perfect place to tell the story of the Democratic Party to the American people,” according to the convention website since it “represents the diversity of the Democratic Party and the country. It’s a union city that sits at the heart of the Midwest, and it’s a Democratic stronghold that was part of the ‘blue wall’ crucial to the Biden-Harris victory in 2020.”

The event is expected to draw 50,000 people to the city, including more than 5,000 delegates and alternates; 15,000 members of the press; and 12,000 volunteers, per the convention’s website.

Harris has indicated openness to discussing an arms embargo against Israel, has told some anti-Israel protesters and hecklers that she respects the articulation of their views, and has troubled senior Israeli officials with her “tone” in a press statement after meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Anti-Israel protests at and around the convention are expected in Chicago.

The city approved an anti-Israel March on the DNC, which accused Israel of genocide and which is expected to draw some 25,000 participants, while it has yet to respond to a permit request from the Israeli American Council, “Jewish Insider” reported.

Some of the six young Chicago Jews who spoke with JNS ahead of the event expressed excitement that the convention was coming to their city.

‘I do not feel heard’

Daniel Sacks of Deerfield, Ill., who recently graduated from Washington University in St. Louis, identifies as “a Jew and as a Democrat,” and thinks that “there is certainly room for me in the Democratic Party as a liberal Jew in America.”

He told JNS that hopes that the convention resembles the Republican National Convention in inviting family members of hostages to address the audience. “It should not become a partisan issue, especially when they are American citizens held hostage,” Sacks said.

Noah Spiro, a Chicagoan who resides in the Streeterville neighborhood, told JNS that he doesn’t even want to be near the convention when it takes place. “While I feel seen, I do not feel heard by the Democratic Party,” he said. “It is not that we as Jews do not exist, but the majority of the Democratic Party does not care about us.”

Spiro told JNS he identifies as “a Republican Jew” and “does not feel excited for the DNC to take place in Chicago.” He has also heard about extra security precautions being taken around the city, he told JNS.

Sacks told JNS that he has also heard of rising security levels in the city and that a building where a friend of his lives plans to increase protection during the convention.

“I certainly have spoken to people who are afraid of protests getting out of hand and becoming violent,” he told JNS. “I do not think that is out of the question.” **HW**

Bar Mitzvah



Benjamin Dylan Loskovitz

Benjamin Dylan Loskovitz, son of Einat and Neal Loskovitz, will be called to the Torah as a bar mitzvah

Saturday, August 31, at Baron Hirsch Synagogue.

Rabbi Ian Lichter will officiate at the services along with Cantor Ricky Kampf.

To mark the occasion, Benji will read from the Torah, chant his Haftarah and deliver a bar mitzvah message to the congregation.

Benji is in the eighth grade at Lausanne Collegiate School.

Benji is a budding artist. He loves playing video games, spending time with friends, going boating at the lake, and spending his summers at Camp Sabra.

Benji is in the Boy Scouts, where he is working towards becoming an Eagle Scout.

He is the grandson of Regina and Aron Misulovin of Aventura, Florida, and Debra and Lewis Loskovitz of Memphis, Tennessee. **HW**

Palestinian Says Condemning Oct. 7 ‘has Put Me in a Very Dangerous Position’

(JNS) – A Palestinian man’s life was turned upside down when he denounced Hamas’s Oct. 7 terrorist attacks and expressed sympathy for those he cared about in Israel.

Last Thursday, “The Free Press” published an 85-minute audio interview with the employee in Israel’s tech sector whose identity it concealed to protect his life.

He had written on social media on Oct. 7, “What sad and horrible news to wake up to and out of words and unable to digest what’s going on right now. I’m Palestinian and firmly stand against this terror. I pray for the safety of my friends, colleagues, their loved ones and everyone else affected.”

The consequences of this statement included the loss of 500 followers on social media, his being blocked by many on WhatsApp, people in real life ceasing to speak with him and ultimately accusations of being a traitor.

The latter, he told Bari Weiss, founder and editor of “The Free Press,” “means they are going to kill you.”

Telling Weiss that speaking out “has put me in a very dangerous position,” the unnamed Palestinian said that “doing this interview, to be honest, I’m afraid. But I know that I had to do it. I think everyone should speak up. Without speaking up, nobody can make a difference or create change.”

In the interview, the man names Austrian neurologist, psychologist, philosopher and Holocaust survivor Victor Frankl’s autobiographical “Man’s Search for Meaning” as having “changed my whole perspective, my whole idea about how I see the Jewish people.”

The Palestinian man said that he feared continuing to live in Judea and Samaria.

“I don’t feel safe here anymore. I cannot be here anymore. I want to be in a place where I can speak up without fearing for my life,” he said. “We need to put our differences aside and make it work. It will take so much time. But I believe we still have hope, and time will prove it.” **HW**



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This Luxurious Jewish Food & Wine Retreat in California in September Aims to Be Mouthwatering



By Suzanne Kurtz Sloan

(The Noshers via JTA) – For foodies and oenophiles looking to indulge in a California wine country weekend getaway, you couldn’t pick a better place for a Jewish culinary retreat than the rolling hills and sprawling vineyards of Sonoma County.

This idyllic Bay Area setting is home to URJ Camp Newman in Santa Rosa, a 500-acre Jewish summer sleepaway camp and year-round luxury retreat center.

Its first-ever Jewish Food & Wine Retreat – featuring, among others, Shannon Sarna, founding editor of The Noshers and renowned cookbook author – will take place on Sept. 13-15.

With a dynamic lineup of world-class vintners, chefs, food writers, rabbis and Jewish educators, the Jewish Food & Wine Retreat, organized in partnership with Congregation Beth Shalom of Napa, will be a mouthwatering celebration at the intersection of food, wine and Jewish culture.

“Connections to food and wine are rich and legitimate ways to be Jewish,” noted Jordanna Flores, director of year-round programs for Camp Newman.

The retreat experience aims to nourish body, mind and soul. Each workshop, gathering and tasting will seek to underscore how participants are deeply connected to what sustains them, what

inspires them and what grounds them.

Among the weekend’s headliners are Shannon Sarna; fromager Omer Seltzer of Mt. Eitan cheese; chef and dietician Micah Siva; Covenant Wines founder Jeff Morgan; San Francisco pickler Sam Paone; artisanal vintner Drew Neiman; food agriculture expert Arielle Dubowe; barbequer extraordinaire BJ Rasmusen; chef and entrepreneur Eliot Swartz; Hagafen Cellars owner and winemaker Ernie Weir, and others.

Weekend all-inclusive packages start at \$675 per person, with special rates of \$475 available for Camp Newman alumni under age 30. Participants who sign up early using the code Nosh50 can get a \$50 discount off registration.

Kicking things off on Friday evening, Camp Newman chef Danny Robinow and Covenant Wines’ Morgan will host a Shabbat dinner with several Moroccan-influenced dishes, each paired with a different Covenant wine – from the salad course to dessert – followed by an après-dinner sipping of Covenant brandy.

If brandy is not your spirit of choice, don’t worry: There will also be a friendly mixology competition to create a signature Camp Newman cocktail – aptly named The Porter Creek for the road leading to camp.

“It will be a fun journey for the participants as we explore our dinner plates

and wine glasses,” Morgan said. “Eating and drinking helps us understand where we come from and each other.”

Throughout the weekend, retreat participants will be able to choose from different gastronomic experiences designed to appeal to a variety of palates, including dairy lovers, meat eaters and vegetarians. They’ll also be able to enjoy a host of other activity options, including a foraging hike, planting lemon trees, creating a communal art project and participating in a service project to fight hunger.

On the dairy front, artisanal cheesemaker Omer Seltzer from Mt. Eitan Cheese will share his familial philosophy and technique for cheesemaking along with a tasting of some of his creations.

“My family heritage is cheesemaking,” said Seltzer, who is originally from Israel. “It’s my calling. I’m intrigued by the process of the milk becoming something so different while drawing out its unique flavors.”

Sarna, founding editor of The Noshers and author of “Modern Jewish Baker” and “Modern Jewish Comfort Food,” will be teaching a hands-on class in babka making.

“Right now, it’s so important to find joy in Jewishness,” Sarna said. “Dough is my passion. I love that it is so much more than its ingredients, and I love to share where food comes from, why it’s a Jewish food.”

A panel discussion on the origin stories of several well-known Bay Area Jewish delis will be moderated by food writer Alix Wall and will include some tastings from those menus.

For those seeking ideas for vegetarian High Holiday meals, recipe writer and chef Micah Siva will lead two classes highlighting trends in Jewish plant-based cooking straight from her new cookbook “Nosh.” Familiar Jewish holiday staples reimaged as mushroom-tofu brisket and vegetarian cabbage roll are some of Siva’s favorites.

“As a kid, I was a vegetarian and often felt left out at the Jewish holidays,” Siva said. “With all the innovations in

plant-based cooking today, we can eat a little differently than our bubbes.”

An exclusive pre-weekend wine tasting at nearby Hagafen Cellars is also offered for an additional fee.

“As Jews, wine is one of our sacramental foods and has historic significance,” said Hagafen Cellars owner and winemaker Ernie Weir. “The Newman retreat participants will have an opportunity to taste exclusive, high-quality wines from Napa Valley that they have probably never tried before.”

The Jewish Food & Wine Retreat will also be something of a restart for Camp Newman, a much-loved institution established in 1947. It moved to its current location in 1997 but in 2017 was almost completely destroyed by the Tubbs Fire, which ravaged Santa Rosa. Reopened in 2021, Camp Newman was rebuilt with the intent of creating a woodsy, spiritual gathering place for the Jewish community replete with luxury hotel-like accommodations and amenities.


“Newman was rebuilt thoughtfully in this special, gorgeous location so we would be able to come together as a joyful Jewish community for a camp experience that is elevated and refined,” Flores said.

Whether they come for the food and wine, the gorgeous scenery or the luxurious accommodations, participants can expect to leave the retreat at Camp Newman wanting more.

“We hope people leave the Jewish Food & Wine Retreat with a sense of fulfillment – not only in their bodies but also in their neshama,” said Flores, using the Hebrew word for soul. “That they feel a sense of awareness that there is still work to be done in the world; that they not only learned something, but that it was mindful.”

This story was sponsored by and produced in partnership with URJ Camp Newman, California’s best Jewish summer camp and premier year-round retreat and conference center. This article was produced by Noshers’ native content team.

This article originally appeared on The Noshers. [HW](#)



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Barbra Streisand, Susie Essman and 30,000 Others Join ‘Jewish Women for Kamala’ Call



Barbra Streisand speaks at the Jewish Women for Kamala Harris Zoom call on Aug. 15, 2024. Credit: Screenshot via YouTube

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – Susie Essman, the “Curb Your Enthusiasm” star who has gained fame from her foul-mouthed tirades, had a message for the more than 30,000 people who tuned into a Zoom event for Jewish women last Thursday night: Embrace Kamala Harris’ laughter.

“Yes, Kamala laughs,” Essman said. Then, using a Yiddish term that translates, roughly, to “sourpuss,” Essman added, “She is not a farbissina punim. This is a woman filled with a life force and humanity.”

Essman was part of a star-studded roster on “Jewish Women for Kamala,” the latest in the Democratic presidential candidate’s series of virtual rallies for specific demographics. It follows “Jewish Americans for Kamala Harris,”

which was held with some of the same speakers earlier this month. Both were organized by the Jewish Democratic Council of America.

The call happened on the same night that Harris’ opponent, former President Donald Trump, gave a landmark speech on antisemitism in which he accused Harris of insufficiently supporting Israel. Speakers on the pro-Harris call, by contrast, raved about the vice president’s track record on Jewish issues, and touted her support for reproductive rights, Israel and fighting antisemitism. The Zoom room filled up after the event began, and organizers said 32,000 people attended.

The biggest name on the call was Barbra Streisand, who urged participants to be “rebellious,” citing Jewish tradition.

“At our Passover seder every year, we

like to expand on the traditional stories of Jewish men to include and celebrate Jewish women, rebellious women like Esther and Miriam,” the EGOT-winning singer and actress said. “Too often the word ‘rebellious’ is used to disrupt women who challenge authority. But without that challenge, change rarely happens. So, let’s all find our own rebellious spirit to fight hard for our country.”

Other attendees included human rights activist Mandana Dayani, actor and equal pay activist Emmy Rossum, Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Sen. Jacky Rosen. It included recorded messages from standup Judy Gold and “Suffs” creator Shaina Taub, who sang “Keep Marching” from the musical.

Presenters also addressed the Biden-Harris administration’s work on hostage negotiations in Gaza, with remarks from activist Alana Zeitchik, who had six relatives taken captive by Hamas on Oct. 7.

Sheila Katz, CEO of the National Council of Jewish Women, focused her remarks on reproductive rights, including access to birth control, abortion, and in-vitro fertilization following the 2022 Supreme Court ruling removing federal abortion protections. Jewish activists have been at the forefront of efforts to forestall or reverse abortion restrictions in several states.

“If there’s one thing I’m certain about, after advocating with the Jewish community for close to two decades,” Katz said, “it’s that Jewish women get shit done.”

Katz referenced this week’s Torah portion, one of two that includes the Ten Commandments, saying that they’re a reminder of “the just world we are called to build.” She told participants Harris would “champion our collective vision for a world where our rights are non-negotiable, our dignity is upheld, and our voices and bodies are fully valued.”

Multiple women present on the call, including Dayani and Rossum, who Zoomed in from the same screen, shared that they had their children with the assistance of IVF, which some states’ abortion restrictions have put at risk.

The final speaker was a Conservative rabbi, Julie Schonfeld, the first woman to serve as the head of a denomination’s rabbinical association. Like Essman, she spoke about the sense of joy she feels from the Harris-Walz campaign.

“The U.S. Declaration of Independence speaks in the language of rights and among others it affirms our right to pursue our own happiness,” Schonfeld said. “The Hebrew Bible speaks in the language of obligations. And it says, ‘ivdu et Hashem b’simcha’ – we have an obligation to serve with gladness.” **HW**

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Saving for College: 529 Plan vs. Roth IRA

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529 plans were created in 1996 to give families a tax-advantaged way to save for college. Roth IRAs were created a year later to give people another tax-advantaged way to save for retirement. Along the way, some parents began using Roth IRAs as a college savings tool. And now, starting in 2024, extra funds in a 529 plan can be rolled over to a Roth IRA for the same beneficiary. Here’s how the two options compare in a few key areas.

Contribution rules
529 plan: Anyone can open a 529 account. In 2024, individuals can contribute up to \$18,000 (\$36,000 for married couples) without triggering gift tax implications. And under a special accelerated gifting rule unique to 529 plans, individuals can make a lump sum contribution in 2024 up to \$90,000 (\$180,000 for married couples) with no gift tax implications if they elect to spread the gift over five years. Lifetime contribution limits for 529 plans are high – most plans have lifetime limits of \$350,000 and up (limits vary by state).

Roth IRA: Not everyone can contribute to a Roth IRA. In 2024, single filers must have a modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) of \$146,000 or less and joint filers must have a MAGI of \$230,000 or less. (A partial contribution is allowed for single filers with a MAGI between \$146,000 and \$161,000, and joint filers with a MAGI between \$230,000 and \$240,000.) In 2024, the annual contribution limit is \$7,000 (\$8,000 for people age 50 and older).

Tax benefits
529 plan: Earnings in a 529 account accumulate tax-deferred and are tax-free when withdrawn if funds are used to pay the beneficiary’s qualified education expenses, a broad term that includes tuition, fees, housing, food, and books. States generally follow this tax treatment, and some states may offer a tax deduction for 529 contributions. If funds in a 529 account are used for a non-qualified expense, the earnings portion of the withdrawal is subject to income tax and a 10% federal penalty.

Roth IRA: Earnings in a Roth IRA also accumulate tax-deferred and are tax-free if a distribution is qualified. A distribution is qualified if a five-year holding period is met and the distribution is made: (1) after age 59½; (2) due to a qualifying disability, (3) to pay certain first-time home buyer expenses, or (4) to your beneficiary after your death. If your distribution isn’t qualified, the earnings portion of the withdrawal is subject to income tax and, if you’re younger than 59½, a 10% early withdrawal penalty (unless an exception applies). One exception to this penalty is when the withdrawal is used to pay college expenses.

So, your age is key. Once you’ve met both the age 59½ and five-year holding requirements, money withdrawn from your Roth IRA to pay college expenses is tax-free. But even though withdrawing funds before age 59½ for college expenses won’t trigger an early withdrawal penalty, you may owe income tax on

the earnings. (Nonqualified distributions draw out contributions first and earnings last, so you could withdraw up to the amount of your contributions and not owe income tax.)



Source: ISS Market Intelligence, 529 Market Highlights, Q4 2023

Investment options and flexibility
529 plan: You’re limited to the investment options offered by the 529 plan. Plans typically offer a range of static and age-based portfolios (where the underlying investments automatically become more conservative as the beneficiary gets closer to college) with varying levels of risk, fees, and management goals. If you’re unhappy with the investment performance of the options you’ve chosen, you can change the investment options on your current contributions only twice per year, per federal law.

Roth IRA: With a Roth IRA, you generally can choose from a wide range of investments, and you can typically buy and sell investments whenever you like (usually incurring transaction costs and fees), so they offer a lot of flexibility.

There are generally fees and expenses associated with investing in a 529 plan, as well as the risk that investments may lose money or not perform well enough to cover college costs as anticipated. The tax implications of a 529 plan can vary from state to state and should be discussed with a legal and/or tax professional. States offering their own 529 plans may provide their residents and taxpayers with exclusive advantages and benefits, which may include financial aid, scholarship funds, and protection from creditors. Before investing in a 529 plan, consider the investment objectives, risks, charges, expenses, investment options, underlying investments, and the investment company, which are available in the official disclosure statement and applicable prospectuses. Contact your financial professional to obtain a copy.

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France Suspends Olympic Runner for Anti-Israel Posts, Including One Wishing the ‘Most Terrible and Horrible Degree of Hell’ for Zionists

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) – A French Olympian was suspended by the French Athletics Federation last Wednesday after past social media posts resurfaced in which he supported Hamas and wished suffering upon Zionists.

Amélie Oudéa-Castéra, France’s minister for sports and the Olympics, confirmed on X that the federation president had suspended Muhammad Abdallah Kounta, who competed in the men’s 4 x 400-meter relay last week at the Paris Olympics, for remarks that she called “as shocking as they are unacceptable.”

Oudéa-Castéra also thanked the X account “Sword Of Salomon,” which had shared screenshots of some of Kounta’s social media activity. The posts, all of them in French, dated back to 2021.

One post “Sword Of Salomon” highlighted, which Kounta retweeted in May, read, “May Allah grant the most terrible and horrible degree of hell to the Zionists and their supporters, rabbi, may they suffer for eternity.” The word “Zionists” was written with symbols in place of some of the letters.

According to the “Times of Israel,” Kounta also shared a post during the Israel-Hamas war asking Allah to “strike the Zionists,” and one sent on Oct. 7 that praised Hamas while featuring a photo of Shiri Bibas, an Israeli who was taken captive that day with her two young children and who has become a symbol of the hostages. On Aug. 1, during

the Olympics, Kounta also reportedly retweeted a post calling Israeli judoka Sagi Muki a “child killer.”

Another tweet, from December 2021, which Kounta himself posted, quoted the Quran. “O you who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians as allies; they are allies of one another,” the post read. “And whoever among you takes them as allies, he is one of them. Verily, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people.”

Kounta responded to the revelations on X, posting a photo of himself wrapped in the French flag with the caption: “I AM FRENCH, MUSLIM AND PROUD... People have had fun digging through my tweets and taking some of my comments out of context, creating a reputation for me as anti-white, anti-France, antisemitic, and so on.”

Kounta apologized in a subsequent post.

“I sincerely apologize if anyone felt offended,” Kounta wrote. “I am against genocide and any form of racism or injustice, and I don’t think I need to prove how much I love my country. The people present at the Stade de France will be able to testify to that.”

Israeli athletes, who won a record seven medals at the Paris Games, had faced death threats and antisemitic chants from fans during the Olympics. Israel’s delegation received 24/7 security throughout the event. [HW](#)

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Tim Walz Says He has No Personal Relationship with Imam who Shared Pro-Hitler Video



Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz (right) says he has no ‘personal relationship’ with Imam Asad Zaman (left) who praised Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack and shared a link to a pro-Hitler video. Credit: Aaron Lavinsky/Star Tribune via Getty Images. Stephen Maturen/Getty Images

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – For days, Democratic vice-presidential candidate Tim Walz has been dogged by criticism – including from the Republican Jewish Coalition – about his ties to a Minnesota imam who praised Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack and once shared a link to a pro-Hitler documentary.

Now, the Harris-Walz campaign has responded, saying that Walz has no “personal relationship” with Imam Asad Zaman, the executive director of the Muslim American Society Minnesota, a network of seven mosques, despite appearing together in public events on several occasions.

And the Anti-Defamation League is calling on political leaders in Minnesota to avoid appearing with Zaman and to make clear, if they have appeared with him in the past, that they do not share his “toxic views.”

Zaman appeared alongside Walz on several occasions between 2018 and May 2023. When he was running for governor in 2018, Walz called Zaman a “master teacher,” and the imam delivered an invocation before a speech Walz gave in 2019.

Zaman has appeared at public events

over the years with a range of Minnesota officials, and a spokesperson for Walz said the two men do not know each other beyond the public appearances.

“The Governor and he do not have a personal relationship,” a spokesperson for the Harris-Walz campaign said in an emailed statement. “Governor Walz strongly condemns Hamas terrorism.”

The interactions between the two men were first reported by the “Washington Examiner,” a conservative newspaper that also said Zaman’s group has been awarded more than \$100,000 in three state grants, two of which were for mosque security. The ties have drawn criticism from conservative activists, and Jewish leaders have condemned Zaman’s statements.

While some Jewish groups that issued condemnations did not directly reference Walz, this week, the Republican Jewish Coalition said, “It is an outrage to the American Jewish community that Tim Walz would champion Hitler-promoting cleric Asad Zaman.”

The RJC statement was referring to a 2015 Facebook post by Zaman, now deleted, that linked to a website for “The Greatest Story Never Told,” a six-hour

documentary that, according to the website, “reveals a personal side of Adolf Hitler.” The Facebook post, according to a screenshot from the “Washington Examiner,” claimed that large numbers of Jews served in the Nazi army.

Multiple outlets reported this week that Zaman endorsed a post saying “Palestine has the right to defend itself” on Oct. 7 when Hamas’ attack on Israel killed some 1,200 people and took more than 250 hostage. He also shared a statement his organization made that day that “reaffirms its unwavering support for the Palestinian people in their struggle against the Israeli occupation.” The statement also references “Israel’s recent unprovoked attacks on Palestinian areas.”

Zaman told CNN last Tuesday that he and Walz do not have a personal relationship, and that he occasionally posts things on social media “without fully looking at them.”

“I support organizations, leaders and efforts to bring greater justice, equality and wellbeing to all people whether Muslim or Jewish, Christian or Hindu, believer or atheist,” he told CNN. “Desiring harm to people is against my faith and my personal convictions.”

In response to a question on the Harris-Walz position on the Israel-Hamas war, Zaman said he is “unclear on what their stance is” but wishes to see “an immediate end to the enormous human suffering and devastation this war is causing.”

The Anti-Defamation League said Zaman “has a troubling history of playing into classic anti-Jewish themes and justifying violence against Israel.”

“Given his hurtful remarks post-Oct. 7, and absent any recognition of the pain he has caused the Jewish community, we urge all public officials and leaders to avoid meeting with him in the future,” the ADL statement said. “Those who have met with Imam Zaman should clarify that they don’t agree with his toxic views about Jews and the Jewish state.”

Steve Hunegs, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, said Zaman has “toxic views” and endorsed the ADL’s statement.

Walz is not the only senior Minnesota politician to meet with Zaman. In 2018, according to the “Minneapolis Star-Tribune,” Zaman was one of the religious leaders to give an invocation at the swearing in of Jacob Frey, the city’s Jewish mayor. The paper reported that a rabbi, whose name it did not include, delivered a benediction at the same ceremony.

After Walz was selected as the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, Jewish leaders in the state praised his interactions with the community, including his support for Israel and for a Holocaust education mandate in Minnesota.

Morris Allen, rabbi emeritus at Beth Jacob Congregation and a local Democratic community organizer, said the revelations about Zaman, whom he said was “very well connected politically in Minnesota,” don’t change his opinion of Walz.

“The politics of ‘gotcha’ are just unfortunate,” Allen told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. “People meet with lots of people, and I think that we need to really look at results and actions. And I think that Tim Walz’s actions have consistently been actions that promote the best values of the Jewish people and the best interests of the State of Israel.”

He added, “It doesn’t change my opinion on Gov. Walz. ... I have seen nothing from the Harris-Walz team that would suggest anything but continued support and belief in the appropriateness of the State of Israel and concerns to the Jewish community.”

Allen had previously been in a rabbi-imam discussion group that included Zaman but left the group “when it became clear that there was no way to avoid severe disagreement over the legitimacy of the State of Israel,” he told JTA. “But many of the imams with whom we did meet were kind and careful.” **HW**

Tlaib’s Alma Mater Among Two New Schools Under Federal Title VI Probe

(JNS) – The U.S. Department of Education announced last Tuesday that it is investigating Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., and Cooley Law School in Lansing, Mich., for alleged discrimination based on “shared ances-

try” under Title VI of the 1964 Civil Right Act.

The department does not typically disclose the nature of its investigations, but it stated that the complaint against Liberty – a Christian school founded

by Jerry Falwell Sr. – relates to alleged “national origin discrimination involving religion.”

JNS sought comment from Liberty and Cooley – which was formerly associated with Western Michigan Uni-

versity and which holds the nation’s lowest bar pass rate for an American Bar Association-accredited school. Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.), a member of the so-called “Squad” in Congress, holds a J.D. from Cooley. **HW**

Pittsburgh Jewish Leaders, Officials Decry Proposed BDS Ballot Measure

(JNS) – A measure potentially slated to appear in Pittsburgh on November ballots that would penalize entities that do business with Israel and nonprofits aligned with the Jewish state has provoked an immediate backlash from local Jewish groups and government officials, including a legal challenge.

The boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) measure – backed by Pittsburgh Democratic Socialists of America and an organization that calls itself “No War Crimes on Our Dime” – would not allow the city to invest in, provide public funds or grant tax exemptions to “entities that conduct business operations with or in the State of Israel” to last until the war in Gaza concludes.

The now 10-month-old war began after Hamas infiltrated the southern border with Israel on Oct. 7 and slaughtered 1,200 people, wounded thousands

and kidnapped as many as 250 others to Gaza, where more than 100 are still being held captive.

“I strongly condemn this referendum, which targets Pittsburgh’s Jewish community and Jewish organizations,” Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) wrote on X. “As antisemitic incidents are on the rise across the nation, I will always stand with the Jewish community in Pittsburgh and across the Commonwealth.”

Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pa.) said, “I unequivocally condemn this referendum. It’s rank antisemitism and is an affront to the region’s Jewish community.”

Jewish community leaders have spoken out explaining their objections.

“This referendum is the latest action against our community,” said Jeff Finkelstein, president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. “The circulators of the referendum

claim that it’s not targeting a specific group, and we believe it is actually their goal.”

Finkelstein said “the creators of this referendum are only targeting Israel. That makes this clearly an undeniably antisemitic.”

Pittsburgh saw the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in the fall of 2018 when 11 Jewish worshippers were shot and killed during Shabbat-morning services at the Tree of Life*Or Simcha Synagogue.

Rabbi Seth Adelson of Congregation Beth Shalom in Pittsburgh noted that the legal challenge could impact police protection of Jewish organizations. “I have to say that the most important item from my perspective about this referendum is that it would, in fact, make Pittsburgh less safe for Jews, because we rely on the safety provided by the Pittsburgh

police,” he said.

Municipal leaders have also expressed concerns.

“We’re not challenging the referendum’s position on the ballot, but have serious concerns about conflicts with state and federal law that would prevent it from being enforceable, if it were to be passed,” said Olga George, Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey’s press secretary, in a statement. “The city is reviewing whether the ballot referendum would create an irreconcilable conflict with state law and be subject to preemption.”

The city’s controller, Rachael Heisler, has also submitted a legal challenge to the referendum, with her office saying “the proposed ballot question should be set aside because it violates state law” and that it could “have a significant negative impact on essential services, including public health and safety.” **HW**

A SHTETLE SUCCESS STORY



*Editor’s note:
This story is being
reprinted in memory
of Ted Roberts in
appreciation of his
longtime service
as a newspaper
columnist.*

Ted Roberts

It was just another dismal supper for the Shliksas family. No fat fowl, no Perch from the river. Not even chicken necks and feet. The usual, potatoes. And to make it worse, it was the Erev – Friday night before Shabbos meals. Papa Shliksas had a stricken farm that sullenly grew two crops, potatoes and rock. And more rocks than potatoes – though sometimes you couldn’t tell one from another. The other villagers had fertile acres where if a groschen fell into the soil – next week a ruble!

Somehow Papa Shliksas had been allotted this acreage that broke plow heads, splintered hoes, and yielded very little but frustration and poverty. Who knows G-d’s ways?

And so it happened. That Friday night found the entire Shliksas family – two sons and a daughter (who had already this season broken two plow heads) at home. So poor she was that she wore a potato sack for a dress. The old man and his wife were in the kitchen in their usual Friday night ceremony of peeling potatoes. Except this night was different from all other nights, Papa joked, because his neighbor had brought him a pickled carp to vary their starchy menu.

But in the middle of kitchen preparation there was a loud klop on the door. Unusual since they had few visitors.

(Why visit? The best hospitality a guest could glean was mashed potatoes.)

It should be noted that the only social beverage of the village was muscadine wine loosened from the grape by the muddy feet of the joyous ladies of the village. “Let’s dance,” they chorused. “Just a minute,” said the practical men of the shtetle. And covered the floor with thick clusters of purple grapes. They then gathered up the liquid and observed that “wine gladdens the hearts of men” was an absolutely accurate quotation.

But the scene tonight was interrupted by the pounding on the door. Who would visit the Shliksases where one was guaranteed only potatoes, a depressed atmosphere, and a cold draft, which penetrated the very walls of their hovel?

Naturally, Papa could barely make a living. Every meal was a maybe and even on Shabbos the family wore ragged, patched clothing. A cloud of poverty and hopelessness hung over the family. They lived on a daily diet of gloom.

But the door. It was shaking under the hammering of someone. Upon opening, Mama Shliksas encountered a small, shivering creature who introduced himself and asked for a meal in a single sentence.

“Yes, of course, come in,” said Papa. He was never one not to share the little he had. “Our food is your food.”

The stranger stepped in and saw the family females peeling and chopping potatoes – their daily fare. His sharp eye also detected the pile of potato peelings in the corner. The stench of poverty filled his nostrils.

“We are the Shliksas family,” said Papa. “What is your name?”

“Smirnoff,” said the small, shivering creature, “Sammy Smirnoff.”

Smirnoff was known for his shrewd eye and healthy appetite. Many of the villagers invited him over for a nice, fat chicken in return for his observation on their economic situation. You wouldn’t believe how many families had climbed into prosperity due to a remark or two over the dining room table. He was, you might say, a 19 Century financial advisor whose pay consisted not in percentage of investment, but in chicken, Gefilte fish, and noodle kugel.

“See that pile of potato skins over there?”

Papa Shliksas nodded mutely. More potato peeling that had to be carried out to the garbage. So what?

“Well, let me tell you, my friend, that’s not a pile of potato peelings, it’s a pile of dreams. If you add a cup of this powder and let it sit for two weeks, it turns into a magic fluid that transfers every man into a king and every woman into a queen. Oh, not really but that’s their perception. And if you think like a king, you act like a king and you conquer kingdoms undreamed of.”

Papa Shliksas gazed in awe at his visitor. This was the Hochum who turned rocks into gold? Dreams and kings and queens out of potato peelings? Why not turn eggshells into platinum?

“Some call it dreams and some call it 90 proof Vodka,” replied Papa Shliksas. “What a degrading occupation. I wouldn’t consider. . .”

But the visitor interrupted. “Shliksas, ever heard of Noah?”

“Of course I’ve heard of Noah.”

“Well, does not our Holy book say, ‘I have seen that you are righteous before me’ and Noah was a just man perfect in his generation. “Noah walked with G-d.” And what did he do – this man selected by G-d, himself, as the only

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member of the human family worthy of survival – when the ark landed? What was the first thing he did after kissing the earth?”

“I don’t know. Probably laid out in the sun to dry out.”

“No,” said Smirnoff with a sly, sideways look at Shliksas. “He planted a garden, and not of wheat or rice, but of grapes. He planted grapes – he made wine – he got drunk. G-d’s favorite – winner of the “Outstanding Human” Award – he gets drunk! And you think it’s degrading to deal in dreams? Well, evidently your Creator doesn’t agree.

Papa Shliksas’s eyes grew wide. “How long does the distilling process last? Do I add water? How much can I charge for a small bottle?” He was on his way to riches. Papa distilled, Mama peeled potatoes, and the children brought the product to thirsty travellers. Fittingly, they made a big sign and nailed it over the door, “The House of Noah,” it said.

The syndicated humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the roof, has appeared in newspapers around the U.S., on National Public Radio, and numerous websites. HW



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ISRAEL INSIGHTS A Different Tisha B’Av

By Howard Weisband

Most commonly people will say to one another prior to Yom Kippur, Tisha B’Av, or one of the other fast days on the Jewish Calendar, “Have an easy fast.” In recent years it has often been added, “It should be a meaningful fast.”

I am writing on Tisha B’Av, the ninth day of the Hebrew month of Av, corresponding this year to August 13.

For me and for most Israelis, perhaps in different ways, and many Jews worldwide, Tisha B’Av this year, post October 7, has been much more meaningful than that which we have observed in recent years.

There are hundreds of descriptions of Tisha B’Av. Rabbi Susan Talve wrote in the “Forward” on August 10 that: “... the message of Tisha B’Av, (is) the Jewish holiday that commemorates the tragedies that have marked Jewish history, beginning with the destruction of the Temples and running through the horrors of the Holocaust. The holiday is a vessel crafted to hold our personal and collective grief and trauma as we remember the times that humans have failed at being our best selves.”

Her description is very accurate. I would only add that the destruction of the First and Second Temples marked

the end of the first and then the second Jewish commonwealths. It was not until 1948 with the creation of the State of Israel, some 2000 years later, that we, the Jewish People, were able to re-establish a Jewish commonwealth.

As one who proudly believes in the integration of Judaism and Zionism, given that we have the privilege to live at a time when the State of Israel exists, I admit that Tisha B’Av had become less meaningful to me personally, even as I would fast each year and participate in synagogue rituals of reading Eicha, the Book of Lamentations, and accompanying Kinot, Laments.

October 7 and its aftermath vastly influenced my personal perspective. In Jerusalem on that Shabbat/Simchat Torah we heard two or three sirens and rushed into synagogue shelters to finish our prayers. It wasn’t until after the conclusion of Shabbat and the holiday that we learned the entirety of the terrible tragedy that took place on the Gaza border perpetrated by the barbaric Hamas terrorists.

I learned too that our two sons and a son-in-law were immediately called into IDF reserve duty, along with 360,000 other reservists. The war that began that

day continues to this day, inclusive of Tisha B’Av. Our population is under serious attack on three borders, and now threatened with the possibility of imminent attack from the “big daddy” of jihad and terror, Iran itself.

However, I must stress that at no time have I or do I currently feel that there is an existential threat to the State of Israel, as happened to the Jewish commonwealth 2000 years ago.

The strength of the Israel Defense Forces, the IDF, alongside our allies led by the USA, ultimately protects the State.

In the days leading up to Tisha B’Av numerous rabbis, journalists, writers, artists and others have been sharing their thoughts and expressions of the difference, or better, renewed meaning of this Tisha B’Av post October 7.

Rabbi Moshe Taragin, Har Etzion Yeshiva, wrote powerfully, including: “After October 7th everything changed, and suddenly Tisha B’Av feels more real and more relevant than ever. Darkness has once again cast its shadow over Jewish history. We are waging a relentless struggle for survival against fanatical murderers, intent on erasing us from the map. Fierce antisemitism rages

across the globe, as furious mobs hunt down Jews with unchecked hatred. In the post-October 7th world Tisha B’Av resonates with relevance and urgency like never before.”

Musician Yagel Harush wrote, “The Lament of Be’eri,” a new lament to accompany those that are traditionally read in the synagogue on Tisha B’Av. Be’eri, which means “my well,” was one of the communities and locations savagely and tragically attacked on October 7. I share here the translation of only Harush’s first and last lines:

***How did Be’eri turn into my tomb
Let us water Be’eri from the well of
our tears.***

Be’eri will be rebuilt. The author expresses both the realism and the optimism of Tisha B’Av today.

Howard Weisband served as Assistant Executive Director (1975-77) and Executive Director (1977-84) of the Memphis Jewish Federation. Following Aliyah with his family in 1986, he served as Secretary General of the Jewish Agency for Israel through 1997, and then in other senior professional positions in Israel. Now retired, he and Kayla live in Jerusalem. He can be reached at hweisband@gmail.com HW

In Speech about Antisemitism, Trump Blames Harris and Focuses on Anti-Israel Forces



Republican presidential candidate, former U.S. President Donald Trump holds a fighting antisemitism event with Miriam Adelson at the Trump National Golf Club Bedminster, in Bedminster, New Jersey, Aug. 15, 2024. Credit: Adam Gray/Getty Images

By Ben Sales, Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – In a speech about antisemitism, Donald Trump said Jews are facing a climate akin to the run-up to the Holocaust due to the actions of anti-Israel forces – and placed the blame squarely on his opponent while omitting any mention of antisemitism from the far right.

“What’s going on now is exactly what was going on before the Holocaust,” Trump said in the speech last Thursday evening at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, attended by some of his most prominent Jewish supporters. “Instead of aggressively confronting these venomous antisemites in her party, Kamala Harris has maneuvered for their support.”

The speech came as Trump, by his own admission, is trying to “define” Harris, the vice president and his Democratic opponent, as she is beginning to lead him in the polls nationally and in swing states. And it served as a rejoinder to years of accusations that Trump accepts support from far-right figures in his party and by his own conduct evokes the run-up to Hitler seizing power – a charge leveled at him in his last campaign by Jewish Democrats.

In his speech, Trump repeated several of his most frequent claims, including a review of his actions on Israel as president – such as withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal and recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital – and complaints that

most Jews in the United States vote for Democrats.

He also repeated his claim that Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on Israel wouldn’t have happened had he been president. He pledged to give Israel the resources it needs to win the war – though he added, multiple times, that he believes few Israeli hostages remain alive.

And he promised to put university presidents “on notice” over campus antisemitism, as well as to withdraw federal funding and accreditation from campuses where antisemitism is allowed to fester.

“The toxic poison of antisemitism now courses through the veins of [the] radical Democrat Party,” he said. “We’re here tonight because we believe that this vicious outbreak of militant antisemitism is very militant, must be given no quarter, no safe harbor, no place in a civilized society. We must reject it in our schools, reject it in our foreign policy, reject it in our immigration system and reject it at the ballot box this November.”

Also last Thursday, the Trump campaign launched a formal Jewish outreach, “Jewish Voices for Trump,” listing his pro-Israel accomplishments and endorsements from Jewish Republicans, some of whom have worked for him.

“He will ensure that Israel and the Jewish people have a secure homeland, and finally finish our war on terror,” the

dedicated website says. “By re-affirming our support for President Trump, Jewish voices across the country are working to deliver President Trump a second term and put a stop to radical antisemitism.”

Among the endorsers were Trump’s former ambassador to Israel, David Friedman. “Campuses have exploded with antisemitic protests, and Iran-backed proxies represent an existential threat to the State of Israel, all because of the failed policies of the Harris-Biden administration,” Friedman said in a release.

The speech also included a moment, early on, in which Trump denigrated the appearance of decorated military veterans while praising Miriam Adelson, the Republican megadonor who introduced him at the event and has pledged up to \$90 million to his reelection. Mentioning that he gave her the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Trump said that Adelson looked better than some of the wounded veterans who received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

“Everyone [who] gets the Congressional Medal of Honor, the soldiers, they’re either in very bad shape because they’ve been hit so many times by bullets or they’re dead,” he said. “She gets it, and she’s the healthy beautiful woman.”

He made several unsubstantiated claims throughout the speech, including that Harris had considered imposing an arms embargo on Israel (pro-Palestinian activists said she was open to meeting to discuss an embargo. but her campaign said she opposed one) and that she wanted to rush out of her meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu (they met for 40 minutes). He also alluded to his false claims that he won the 2020 election, noting that he got more votes in 2020 than in 2016.

He also mispronounced Harris’ first name and said he would not recognize her if she were referenced by her last name. “I really don’t call her Harris because nobody knows who Harris is,” he said. “You say to people ‘Harris,’ who the hell is Harris?”

He accused the Biden administration of “betray[ing]” Israel and said he would provide it his full support.

“I will give Israel the support that it needs to win, but I do want them to win fast, wouldn’t it be nice if they could win fast?” he said. “And we have to let them win fast. We will restore civility and peace to the Middle East.”

But he was pessimistic that many hostages remain alive. “I think you’re gonna have very few people left. A lot of people that they think are alive are not going to be alive,” he said.

The event did not touch on antisemitic violence on the far right, which the FBI and Anti-Defamation League say continues to proliferate and poses a grave threat. The “great replacement theory,” a baseless conspiracy theory alleging Jews seek to replace whites with migrants of color, has fueled some of the most serious antisemitic violence of recent years, including the deadliest attack in history on U.S. Jews, the 2018 massacre at a Pittsburgh synagogue. Trump and top Republicans have peddled versions of the theory.

Trump also praised Hungarian leader Viktor Orban, who has drawn accusations of antisemitism from Hungarian Jews, as “a very strong person.” **HW**

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