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No, Mr. Segal, We Are Not “Traitors”

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Hagai Segal is a veteran Israeli journalist and the former editor of the religious Zionist weekly *Makor Rishon*. In a recent article he took aim at some six million Jews whom he accuses of abandoning the central obligation of Zionism.

“Dear brothers, you are traitors”, Segal wrote. “You are betraying us, and you are betraying yourselves. When you pray three times a day, ‘Sound the great shofar for our freedom and raise a banner to gather our exiles,’ you do not truly mean it—for the shofar has already sounded, and there is no longer any technical or political obstacle to the ingathering of our exiles—only a selfish obstacle on your part.”

Segal is, we acknowledge, following in the tradition of like minded Israeli leaders and thinkers who have insisted that only by making *aliya* can a Jew avoid a life that is empty and meaningless. “Settling the land,” David Ben Gurion wrote to his father in 1909, “that is the only real Zionism: the rest is just self-delusion, idle chatter and time wasting”. “It is simply not true,” writes Rabbi Dr. David Harbater, educator, author and public speaker, “to suggest that Jewish tradition equates life in the Diaspora with a life lived in Israel.”

Accusing Diaspora Jewry of “denying redemption” will do little to sway the *aliya* needle. Yes, the current wave of antisemitism sweeping across North America and Europe, what Hungarian director László Nemes calls an “orgy of antisemitism”, may be leading to an increase in the number of Jews making and considering *aliya*. And even in the best of circumstances we are conscious of the difficulties we face living unfettered and uninhibited as a Jewish minority among a preponderantly non-Jewish population. We recognize the conscious and unconscious pressures towards a *gleichschaltung*, a conformity which would eliminate not only the differences which can safely be eliminated but also those differences which give us our unique position as Jews. We accept the truth that only in Israel can Jewish life develop freely without those pressures towards spiritual and religious fusion which might ultimately lead to complete assimilation.

But be that as it may, and however much we should encourage *aliya* for those for whom it is practical, most Jews in the Diaspora will keep hoping to be able to lead a meaningful Jewish life where they have their families, friends and careers. Why expand JCCs or build additions to synagogues for a community about to pack up and leave? And the recent high profile Canadians fleeing the antisemitism running rampant in this country are not making *aliya*. Dr. Emmanuel Moss and Professor Gad Saad are headed to Georgia and Mississippi.

Segal would do well to remember that for many of the early Zionists Jewish nationalism within the Diaspora was a perfectly acceptable, if not the logical, choice. The creation of a Jewish homeland was only partly to serve as a refuge for Jews who needed refuge. The Jewish state was a goal projected on a grand scale, designed to revitalize all of Jewish life, wherever it lived. Zionism would be the instrument which would bind Jews into a single unit, one and indivisible. It would ensure that the Jewish People remained imbued with a common set of ideals and a common set of moral goals. The destinies of Israelis and the Jews of the Diaspora should be inseparably bound one with the other. Inflammatory rhetoric on the part of those for whom the “minutiae of observance” dictates their lives will do little to bridge a chasm which many see as a dangerous threat to what should be a common purpose. MK Simcha Rothman’s proposed amendments to the Law of Return, which would accept conversions “only in accordance with halacha”, will inevitably lead Reform and Conservative Jews to wonder why they should even consider making Israel their permanent home.

The position Israel occupies in Jewish life is the product of thousands of years of inexpressible yearning, arising out of the conviction that Jewish life without a homeland is empty and meaningless. This applies especially to those who now find in Israel the fulfilment of their spiritual and cultural needs and who also make it their physical home. But it is only slightly less important to those to whom it represents the realization of an ideal which is part of the enrichment of Jewish lives, even if those lives are lived thousands of miles away.

DOES POVERTY REALLY LEAD TO TERRORISM

ISLAMIST TERRORISTS ARE HARDLY ESCAPING A LIFE OF HARDSHIP

By RAFAEL MEDOFF

The Islamist terrorists who struck in Michigan, Virginia, and New York recently didn't know each other. They didn't belong to the same terrorist group. And they attacked three very different types of targets.

But they had one important thing in common: they didn't fit the stereotypical profile of a terrorist.

For years, certain politicians, diplomats and pundits have promoted the theory that poverty is the main cause of terrorism. That belief has been the basis for some major U.S. foreign policy initiatives, such as aid to the Palestinian Authority.

Rafael Medoff is an American professor of Jewish history and the founding director of The David Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, which is based in Washington, D.C. and focuses on issues related to America's response to the Holocaust. The following article appeared in the Jewish Journal of Los Angeles. The Editor

Give people jobs—these “experts” say—and then they will have something to lose, so they won't resort to terrorism.

According to that view, the typical terrorist is young, unemployed, and single. But again and again, the actual biographical details of terrorists tell a different story.

The terrorist who attacked the synagogue in Michigan, Ayman Mohamad Ghazali, was 41. He had children, he was gainfully

employed at a local restaurant, he had a house, and he had a car. Yet he packed his car with explosives and went looking for the nearest Jews to blow up.

The Islamist fanatic who murdered a professor on the campus of Old Do-

minion University, in Virginia, likewise was considerably older than the so-called typical terrorist. He wasn't in his teens or early 20s, and he wasn't unemployed. Mohamed Bailor Jalloh was 36, and he had respectable job, serving in the Virginia National Guard.

The extremist who threw a bomb at protesters near Gracie Mansion in
(Please turn to page 10)

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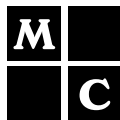
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BLINDED IN GAZA, GUIDED TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

ISRAELI GUIDE DOG CENTRE CHANGES THE LIVES OF THOSE IN NEED

By CHAD DERRICK

"It's very hard for me to imagine how I was able to live my life without a guide dog."

Achiya Klein's journey as a visually impaired Israeli army veteran spans more than a decade. In 2013, the then 22-year-old military commander was severely injured when an improvised explosive device detonated as Klein's unit attempted to dismantle a booby-trapped tunnel in Gaza.

Despite his extensive training, the explosion caught him completely off guard.

"My upper face was hit first. I was basically completely burned and had

seven broken bones in my face," he recalled.

Klein was evacuated to the hospital, placed in a medically induced coma, and put on life support. Weeks later, after eye surgery, Klein faced the devastating reality that he had lost his sight, after asking doctors to remove his bandages.

"I realized, because one of the doctors said, 'I already did.'"

Klein struggled to understand that he would no longer be able to drive, read, or manage daily tasks independently.

"Nobody prepares you to understand how to deal with this kind of injury.

But I feel very lucky that somehow, something in my mind, my body, was pushing me forward."

Klein decided he wouldn't let his disability define him.

"Whatever happened, happened. This is a new situation, and I needed to understand how to deal with that," Klein said. "And that was my first step towards recovery."

During rehabilitation, Klein met another visually impaired veteran with a guide dog and immediately recognized the difference it could make.

"I never used the cane. I didn't like it. And I knew immediately that was

the missing part that I needed."

In 2015, Klein was matched with his first guide dog from the Israel Guide Dog Center (IGDC), a Black Labrador named Night. The two of them formed a life-changing bond.

"The first time that I walked with him, I felt like, wow, I'm now able to do stuff, but by myself. I don't need anyone next to me to control my pace. I can just take the dog with me and go wherever I want."

Founded in 1991, the IGDC provides guide, service, and support dogs trained to respond to Hebrew commands. The or-

(Please turn to page 10)



ACHIYA KLEIN SHOWN WITH HIS GUIDE DOG "NIGHT"

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AN ART FORM BUILT BY JEWISH WRITERS AND COMPOSERS

ACTRESS LAUREN NATHENS SHARES HER VIEWS ON WHAT JEWS HAVE MEANT TO MUSICAL THEATRE

By MARVIN SELICSON

Something that has always been a staple of musical theatre is Jewish artistry. The impact Jewish artists have had on the form cannot be overstated. From the early days of the Ziegfeld Follies to the modern Broadway stage, Jewish composers, lyricists, writers, producers, and performers have helped shape what musical theatre is today.

It would be nearly impossible to discuss the history of musical theatre without discussing Jewish artists. The American musical was built in large part by people whose stories were informed by family, displacement, humour, resilience,

and reinvention. Whether it was Irving Berlin writing songs that became part of the American cultural vocabulary, the Gershwins transforming popular music, or Stephen Sondheim redefining what a musical could be, Jewish artists were not simply participating in the industry, they were helping create it.

In conversation with established musical theatre performer Lauren Nathens, she explains that being a Jewish performer is not simply about representation. It is a reminder that the art form she loves has always been connected to

people who understood what it meant to exist slightly outside the mainstream. Musical theatre is full of characters searching for something: love, belonging, freedom, acceptance, understanding. While those themes are universal, Nathens believes they also connect deeply to Jewish storytelling traditions.

That connection is part of what makes *Fiddler on the Roof* such an important work. Nathens credits the musical with helping develop her love of theatre because it placed Jewish characters at the centre of the story rather than behind the scenes. For gener-

ations, Jewish artists had shaped Broadway from the creative side. *Fiddler* allowed Jewish audiences to see themselves reflected in starring roles on one of the world's biggest stages.

What makes the musical so effective, Nathens argues, is that it does not attempt to present Jewish life as simple or idealized. The people of *Anatavka* are flawed, complicated, and deeply human. At its heart, the show follows parents who want better lives for their children than they had for themselves. Tevye spends the musical working to pro-

(Please turn to page 16)



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AMMUNITION HILL

REMEMBERING A KEY BATTLE IN THE SIX DAY WAR

By JACK SILVERSTONE

In the north of the city of Jerusalem stands an elevated position known as Ammunition Hill (Givat Hachmoshet in Hebrew). It got its name when the British in mandatory Palestine used it for munitions storage. The Jordanians took it over after the British withdrew in 1948 and converted it into a formidable fortification crisscrossed by long, narrow trenches, bunkers and machine gun positions.

In the Six Day War in June 1967, Ammunition Hill became the site of a pivotal and terrible battle between a company of Jordanian soldiers and a force of Israeli paratroopers determined to capture the site. It must be remembered that in 1967 Jerusalem was a city precariously divided between Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan. When the war broke out on June 5, 1967, the Jordanians began shelling west Jerusalem causing casualties and material damage. As full scale hostilities erupted between the two countries, Israel was acutely aware that Ammunition Hill was the dominant position in east

Jerusalem and would have to be taken in order to liberate the entire city.

At 2 AM on June 6th an Israeli force of reserve paratroopers and combat engineers began the attack. After a brutal and terrifying battle lasting some four hours, the strategic location was in Israeli hands, thereby ensuring the collapse of the other Jordanian positions in northern Jerusalem. Thirty six Israelis soldiers and about double that number of Jordanians were killed in the encounter. To this day, there remains a special bond between the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) Paratroops and Jerusalem's Ammunition Hill and it serves as a primary induction centre for new paratroopers.

Today it is the site of The Six Day War Heritage Centre at Ammunition Hill. I recently had the opportunity to visit the facility in the company of a close friend, Ezra, himself a decorated hero of the Six Day War where he was severely injured in a battle on the Sinai front. We were escorted by the Head of Operations of the Heritage Centre, Alon, an orphan of the battle for Ammunition Hill where his father fell when Alon was but an infant.

The area is not very large and as we walked by the trenches, two things stood out: they were sturdily constructed and that they were very narrow-only wide enough for one person at a time.

It is hard to imagine the scene that unfolded that monumental night. Brave

soldiers from both sides facing each other and firing with virtually nowhere to find cover in the overnight darkness. Gradually after bitter fighting, in some instances hand-to-hand, the Israeli force prevailed and by dawn the position was taken. Our guide referred to the perfectly and reverently preserved area as "sacred

ground". Besides the trenches, there are other significant markers of the intense battle on the hill including a concrete water tower with a large shell hole near its base attesting to the ferocity of the engagement. There are also 182 olive trees planted there as a memorial to the troops
(Please turn to page 15)

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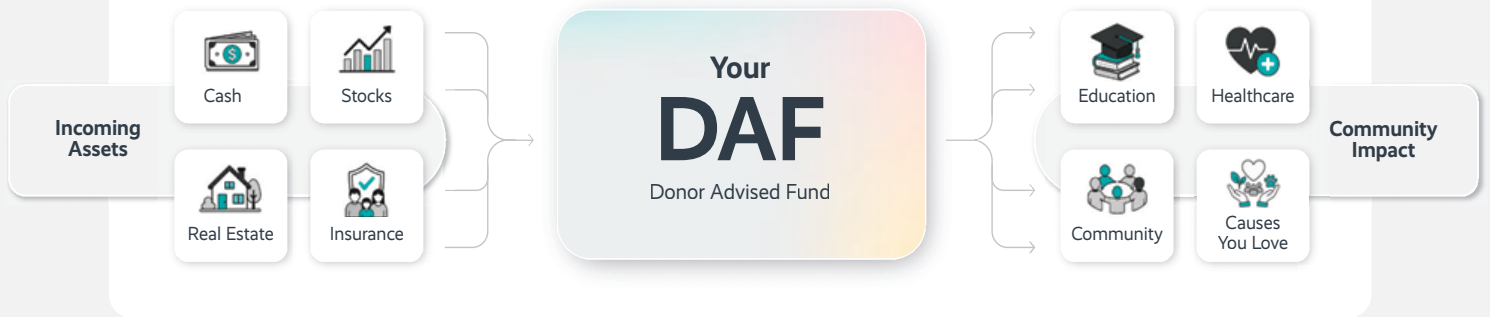
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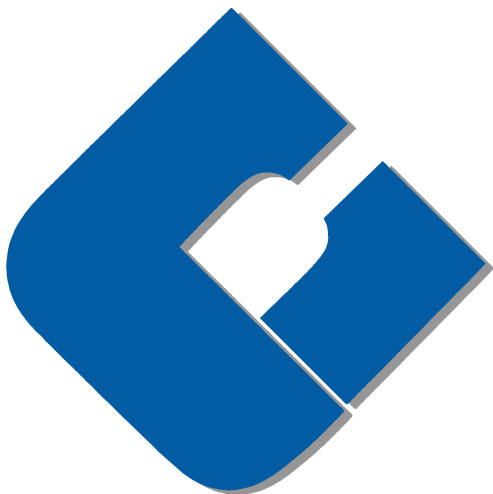
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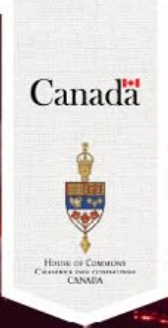
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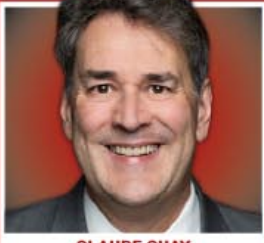
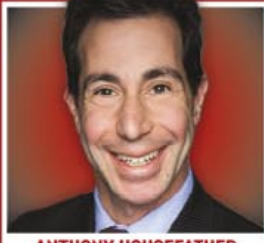


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BLINDED IN GAZA, GUIDED TO INDEPENDENCE

(Continued from page 5)

ganization has provided thousands of dogs to individuals with visual impairments, PTSD, emotional needs and autism, serving people of all faiths and backgrounds.

Since losing his sight, Klein has overcome myriad obstacles and made remarkable achievements. He has earned degrees in Public Relations and Counterterrorism and Homeland Security, and has worked in Israeli intelligence and technology innovation. Klein's an avid downhill skier and triathlete, and competed as a member of Israel's Paralympic Rowing Team at the 2020 Tokyo

Paralympic Games, where his team placed sixth.

"Night was the star in Tokyo," Klein joked. "The journalists asked me two questions about the race, and then all the other questions were about the dog."

Klein now lives in Toronto with his wife, two young children, and a new guide dog, also provided by the IGDC.

When Night passed away in 2023, shortly before the Hamas attack on Israel, IGDC founder and CEO Noach Braun personally brought the dog, Joy, to Klein in Toronto and oversaw their training.

"That just shows

what the organization is about," said Klein. "It feels like a family."

After all he has endured and accomplished, Klein remains committed to inspiring others with visual impairments.

"Almost everything is possible, maybe not in the regular way. Maybe you need to adapt and do it differently. Just go out and try to do things. Because once you realize you're able to do stuff, it's amazing."

DOES POVERTY LEAD TO TERRORISM

(Continued from page 3)

Manhattan was younger than the others; Emir Balat was 18. But nothing else about him fit the supposed profile of a terrorist.

"When he was only 13, he programmed bots to buy pricey sneakers the moment they dropped," the *New York Times* reported. "His father would drive him to the parking lot of a Wawa convenience store, where he would sell them to a sneaker dealer, sometimes making more than \$200 a pair."

When he was in high school, Emir "began selling contractor supplies online — flooring, sinks and vanities, mini-splits and power tools." He had a thriving business. He was

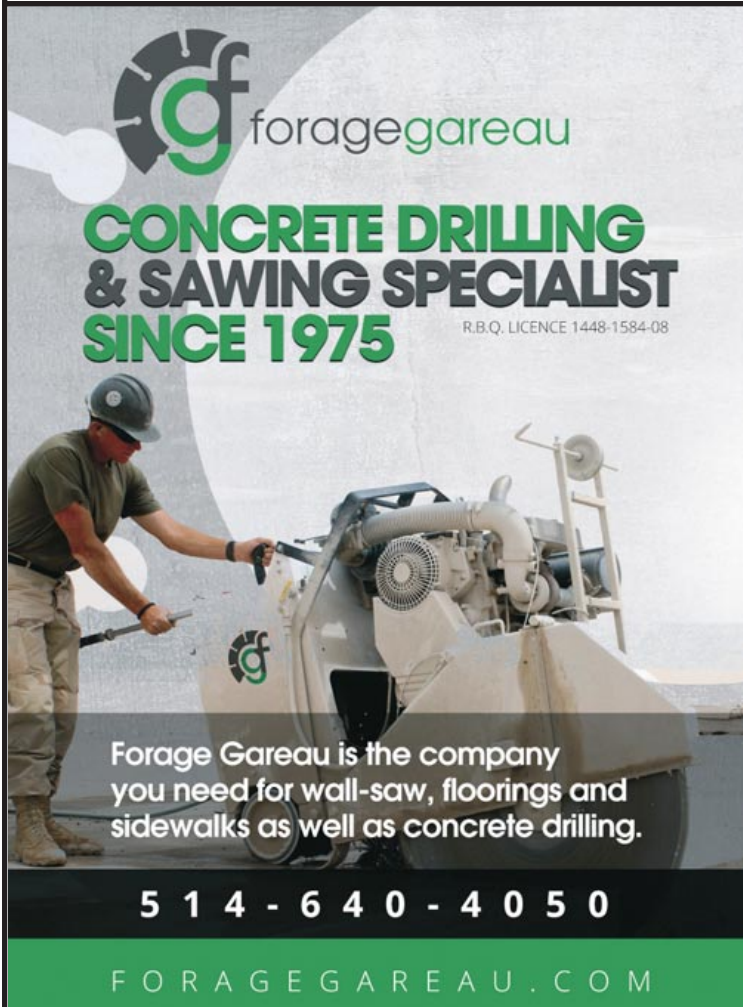
making a lot of money, especially for a teenager. He, too, had plenty to lose.

There's a great deal of anecdotal evidence along these lines from other Islamist terrorist attacks in the United States.

For example, Faisal Shahzad, who tried to blow up Times Square with an explosives-filled SUV in 2010, was a 30 year-old father of two with an MBA and a job as a financial analyst.

Syed Farook and Tashfeen Malik were a mid-

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DOES POVERTY LEAD TO TERRORISM

(Continued from page 3)

dle-class Muslim couple, both college graduates. He worked as an environmental health specialist. They had a six-month old daughter. Then they massacred 14 people at a holiday party in San Bernardino in 2015.

Demographic analyses of groups of terrorists have found similar patterns.

Consider the 415 Hamas leaders and activists whom Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin deported to Lebanon in 1992. Dozens of them were medical doctors, university professors, or administrators of institutions of higher education. Three-fourths were married; one third had between one and four children, and one-fourth had five or more children. They, too, had a lot to lose.

Most of the 9/11 hijackers came from “comfortable backgrounds,” terrorism expert Dr. Brooke Rogers wrote in NATO Review in 2012. Two-thirds of them had attended college, some had master’s degrees, and most had professions. Likewise, Rogers noted, “two-thirds of British terror suspects are reported to come from middle-class backgrounds.” She concluded that there is ample evidence “that directly contradicts the assumed link between poverty and terrorism”.

Alan B. Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, who studied the connection between poverty and terrorism for the National Bureau of Economic Research in 2002, concluded that “having a living standard above the poverty line or a secondary school or higher education is positively associated with participation in Hezbollah.”

Similarly, James A. Piazza, writing in the scholarly journal *Terrorism and Political Violence* in 2006 concluded that “contrary to

popular opinion, no significant relationship between any of the measures of economic development and terrorism can be determined.”

The phenomenon is not limited to Islamists. Studies by scholars of the Nazi era have found that a large majority of elite SS officers were university-educated professionals, and many had doctorates. Timothy Snyder, in his book *Bloodlands*, notes that 15 of the 25 commanders of the Einsatzgruppen—which massacred over one million Jews in Eastern Europe in 1941-1942—had doctorates.

From the Holocaust to contemporary Islamist terrorists, it seems clear that poverty is not the cause of terrorism, and education and jobs are not its cures. Recent attacks across the United States have illustrated that fact once again.

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MONTREAL GALA

Canadian Magen David Adom (CMDA) in Montreal hosted a remarkable Gala evening on Tuesday, May 12th, welcoming more than 400 attendees in a powerful tribute to the courageous heroes in Israel who risk their lives every day to save others.

The evening featured a compelling keynote address by Ambassador and Magen David Adom Global President Gilad Erdan. Guests were also treated to captivating entertainment by renowned Israeli mentalist Nevo Abutbul, while acclaimed Israeli singer Hila Ben David brought warmth and emotion to the evening with her powerful performance.

One of the most moving moments of the night came through firsthand accounts shared by Magen David Adom frontline personnel from Israel. Oz Ocampo delivered an emotional testimony of surviving the war and overcoming life-threatening injuries. Determined not to remain a patient but to become a lifesaver himself, Oz found purpose and strength through his journey to becoming an MDA paramedic. His father, Adrian O'Campo, joined him on stage alongside MDA Chief of Staff Uri Shacham, who provided attendees with an update on the ongoing situation on the ground in Israel.

In a strong display of solidarity and partnership, several senior representatives from Magen David Adom in Israel also attended the Gala, including MDA Director General Eli Bin, CFO Alon Fridman, Senior Paramedic and Canada Help Desk Representative Raphael Herbst, and MDA Board Member Ronen Yemini.

The Gala evening served as a poignant reminder of Magen David Adom's unwavering commitment to delivering lifesaving emergency medical care and humanitarian support in Israel and around the world.

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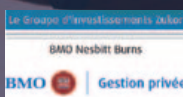
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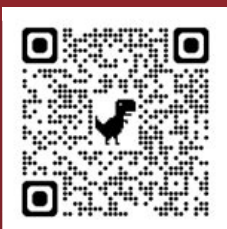
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AMMUNITION HILL

(Continued from page 7)

who fell in the 1967 battle to unite the city of Jerusalem.

In the nearby museum building in its Commemoration Hall, there are photos of the fallen, where they are very movingly shown in their civilian settings, as young fathers, husbands, brothers and sons. There is also an extensive audio-visual presentation of the events leading up to the war and the six days of major combat on the field and in cooperation with the Jewish National Fund, there is a unique feature: a wall of honour consisting of metal plaques

with the names of the many Jewish military and related service personnel from around the world. Several were from Canada, including Canadian Jewish Congress stalwart, the late Col. Bernard J. Finestone of Montreal.

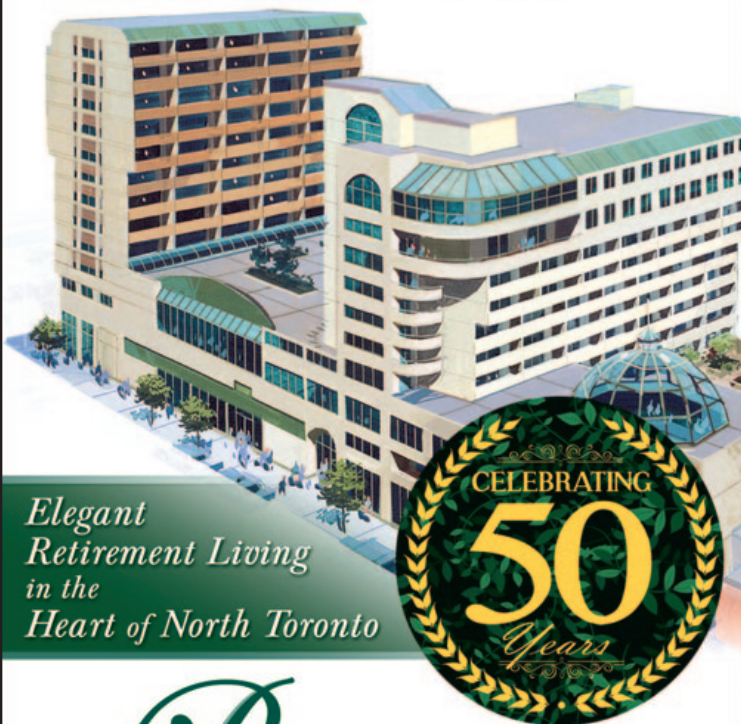
As we confront these very trying times, Ammunition Hill should stand as a poignant reminder to all those who pass along the busy streets of a modern, beautiful and united Jerusalem, that the price for that was paid for with extraordinary sacrifice, dedication and courage on a June night nearly 60 years ago.

The author is a Montrealer and a graduate of McGill Law. He served as chief of staff to the Federal minister in the departments of Human Resources and Immigration and Citizenship Canada. Jack was Executive Vice-President and General Counsel of Canadian Jewish Congress and a visiting scholar at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs. He currently resides in Ottawa. The Editor

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JEWS AND MUSICAL THEATRE

(Continued from page 6)



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vide opportunities for his daughters, only to find himself challenged when they begin making choices that conflict with his expectations.

For Nathens, that tension is what allows the show to resonate so broadly. When *Fiddler on the Roof* premiered in 1964, audiences around the world encountered Jewish characters not as stereotypes but as people struggling with family, change, and uncertainty. Their experiences were culturally specific while still remaining recognizable to anyone who had ever wrestled with tradition, identity, or generational conflict.

Nathens believes that today is an especially exciting time to be a Jewish performer because a wider range of Jewish stories is

reaching audiences. One musical that holds particular significance for her is *Falsettos*, the sung-through musical about a Jewish family navigating sexuality, relationships, and the AIDS crisis in early 1980s New York.

If *Fiddler* introduced audiences to a Jewish family rooted in tradition, Nathens sees *Falsettos* as a reminder that Jewish stories are not confined to a single image or historical period. Jewish characters can be messy, modern, funny, flawed, and deeply contemporary.

Recently, Nathens performed "I'm Breaking Down" from *Falsettos* at 54 Below in New York City. The song follows Trina, a recently divorced Jewish housewife struggling to process the collapse of her mar-

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riage after her husband leaves her for a man. Nathens is drawn to the role because of the way it balances comedy with emotional honesty.

The song plays with the familiar image of the anxious Jewish mother, but it ultimately reveals something far more complicated. Trina's frustration stems from love, fear, insecurity, and the pressure she places on herself to hold everything together. What could easily become a stereotype instead becomes an exploration of family expectations and the ways people cope when their lives stop matching the futures they imagined.

When discussing dream roles, Nathens says she hopes to play Trina in a full production one day.

What appeals to her is not just the humour but the character's relatability.

"Her uptightness is so relatable," Nathens says. "Every woman who watches that song, Jewish or not, understands why she's having an absolute breakdown."

Nathens also points to the growing popularity of Jewish musicals that were not initially commercial successes. Younger theatre audiences have begun rediscovering works such as *Parade*, Jason Robert Brown's musical about the trial and lynching of Leo Frank.

The show's recent revival found tremendous success with audiences, something Nathens partly attributes to increased con-

(Please turn to page 22)

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EGLINTON-LAWRENCE MPP SPEARHEADS FIGHT AGAINST HATE CRIMES IN ONTARIO

In response to a sustained and alarming rise in hate motivated offences across Ontario, MPP Michelle Cooper recently introduced and unanimously passed a Private Member's Motion calling for the creation of a specialized Hate Crime Prosecution Unit.

This unit would bring together dedicated Crown prosecutors with focused expertise in hate motivated offences, ensuring greater consistency, stronger prosecutions, and enhanced support for victims and affected communities across the province.

"Hate crimes strike at the very foundation of our society," said MPP Cooper. "They fracture communities, erode trust, and make people feel unsafe simply for who they are. Addressing them requires action, expertise, and coordination."

According to Statistics Canada, police reported hate crimes in Canada increased by more than 80 per cent between 2019 and 2022, with nearly 4,900 incidents reported nationally in 2024. Ontario accounts for almost half of those cases.

Within Ontario, police reported hate crimes in-

creased from 702 incidents in 2020 to 1,190 incidents in 2024—an increase of approximately 70 per cent in four years—indicating a sustained and deeply concerning trend.

Data also shows this rise in hate crimes are disproportionately targets Jewish Canadians. In 2024, approximately 68 per cent of all religion motivated hate

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crimes in Canada targeted the Jewish community, despite Jewish Canadians comprising less than one per cent of the population. In Toronto, anti Jewish hate crimes continue to represent a significant share of reported incidents.

"These are not abstract statistics," MPP Cooper said. "These statistics reflect the lived reality of families and communities across Ontario. Children attending schools with police presence, places of worship requiring security, and neighbourhoods are being targeted by hatred and violence."

Hate motivated offences are among the most complex crimes under the Criminal Code, requiring careful assessment of intent, context, and the line between constitutionally protected speech and criminal conduct.

The proposed Hate Crime Prosecution Unit would:

- Provide specialized Crown expertise in hate motivated offences
- Strengthen Crown-police coordination and consistency across jurisdictions
- Improve prosecutorial outcomes in complex hate crime cases
- Enhance victim support and community confidence in the justice system

The motion has received broad support from law enforcement and community organizations, including York Regional Police, Toronto Police Service, Peel Regional Police, the Police Association of Ontario, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), B'nai Brith, the Ontario Gurdwaras and the Hindu

(Please turn to following page)

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MPP SPEARHEADS FIGHT AGAINST HATE

(Continued from preceding page)

Federation among others, reflecting a strong consensus on the need for specialized prosecutorial capacity to address hate motivated crime.

Other jurisdictions have demonstrated that specialization improves outcomes in complex offences with significant societal impact. Establishing a dedicated unit would position Ontario as a national leader in combating hate motivated crimes and would

send a clear message that such offences will be taken seriously at every stage of the justice process.

"This motion is not about one community," MPP Cooper emphasized. "It is about ensuring that every person in Ontario—regardless of religion, race, or identity—can live openly and safely."

The motion overwhelmingly passed in Ontario's provincial legislature on April 16, 2026.

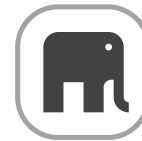
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JEWS AND MUSICAL THEATRE

(Continued from page 17)

versations about representation. Historically, many explicitly Jewish roles were played by non-Jewish performers, even when Jewish identity was central to the

story being told. While she believes actors should be able to portray a wide range of characters, Nathens also argues that there is a unique power in having Jewish artists tell Jewish stories.

"There is nothing quite like Jewish people actually telling these stories," she says.

At the same time, Nathens acknowledges that being a Jewish performer today can feel complicated. In an increasingly polarized environment, Jewish artists often find themselves expected to explain or defend their identities before they are allowed to participate in broader conversations. For performers, whose work already requires a degree of vulnerability, that pressure can very often be exhausting.

For Nathens, the goal is not to make every performance about Jewish identity. Rather, it is to recognize that identity naturally shapes an artist's instincts, perspective, and understanding of the world.

It informs the way someone approaches family dynamics, humour, conflict, and connection without needing to become the sole focus of their work.

Jewish artists helped build musical theatre, but Nathens believes they should not be treated as a historical footnote. The past matters, she stresses, but it should not become a glass case. The future of Jewish theatre depends on continuing to tell new stories while honouring the foundation that earlier artists created.

Ultimately, Nathens believes Jewish musical theatre matters because it allows Jewish people to exist onstage with the same complexity they possess in real life. These stories are not only about survival or history. They are about love, belonging, family, identity, and the ongoing challenge of balancing where you come from with where you hope to go. As long as those stories continue to be told, the legacy of Jewish artists in musical theatre will continue to grow.

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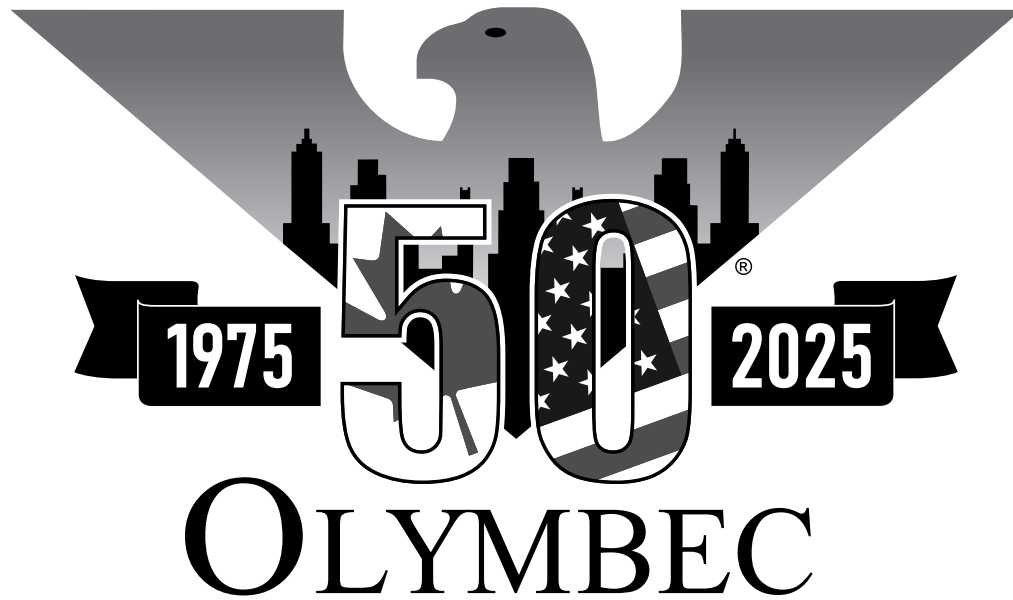
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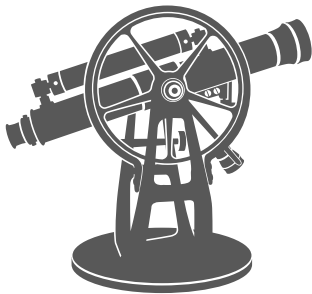
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