

Edouard Cukierman – Tel Aviv based Venture Capitalist and an International Advocate for Israel

**JEWISH WEEKLY EDITOR YOSSEI SAUNDERS
RECENTLY SAT DOWN WITH EDOUARD
CUKIERMAN TO REFLECT ON HIS DETERMINATION
TO FIGHT ANTISEMITISM AROUND THE WORLD
WHICH HE HAS BEEN DOING FOR OVER 40 YEARS.**

BY YOSSEI SAUNDERS

Edouard is the Chairman and managing partner of the Cukierman and Co Investment House, a leading Israeli Bank in Israel which has raised over \$10B mostly for Israeli high-tech companies in the last 30 years.

In addition, Edouard is managing partner at Catalyst Funds, a prominent venture capital fund. With Yair Shamir, his partner at Catalyst Funds, Edouard has invested \$450 M in the Israeli high-tech industry since 1999 in mature Israeli companies across different industries.

In recent years, he established The Catalyst Investors' Club (CIC), a cutting-edge platform designed to revolutionize access to investment equity opportunities to private investors. Edouard launched the CIC, to provide initially investment opportunities to mature Israeli startups backed by venture funds to private accredited investors all over the world. The online portal www.catalyst-ic.com allows potential investors to watch a snippet video of a company which encourages them to sift through many potential companies until they find the one they want.

Some of the startups that Edouard's fund invests in go on to become global world leaders in their fields, for example Mobileye, which was sold to Intel for \$15.3 B.

Others become vital cogs in the well-oiled IDF machine. Edouard tells me that his investment bank assists a disruptive laser company used by the Iron Dome to raise funding. As an example of the importance of high-tech in national security, the Iron Dome currently costs Israel \$100,000 for each missile it sends up to destroy Hamas and Hezbollah missiles. These incoming missiles cost the terrorist only \$500 each to make, far less than the cost of shooting them down. By comparison, the laser technology in David's Sling which shoots down the longer-range rockets only costs \$2.50 per interception!

Another disruptive company is Taboola, a world leading online pay per click advertising company, trusted by giants such as ABC and CBS News amongst others. The portal vastly increases advertising revenue from the online community, with a fee-sharing arrangement. 30 years ago, Edouard also invested in a small French Jewish TV channel.

Edouard started Go for Israel Investment Conference, a conference he set up, that has lasted for over 30 years. The show features 60 selected Israeli companies to meet with hundreds of global investors.

Mostly the conference is held in the

Hilton Hotel in Tel Aviv, but on several occasions, it has been held outside Israel including destinations such as Zurich, Paris, China and in the UAE. In the last go4Israel conference, President Herzog has been the main speaker, and virtually every Israeli prime minister has spoken at the events alongside other world leaders.

The Israel based conferences events have on average 1000 to 3000 guests per event.

Edouard is the co-author of the book "Israel Valley: The Technological Shield of Innovation", describing Israeli entrepreneurship and innovation, and the success story of Israeli hi-tech. He believes in 'Economic Zionism', where each one of us can help the State of Israel through positive representation in business, investments and of course the Israeli Hi-Tech. This is what he looks for in all his employees, along with initiative, work ethic, Army path in the IDF if Israeli, motivation for making Aliyah if they are Olim, and leadership skills.

Edouard first came to Israel as an 18-year-old lone soldier from France. His father Roger Cukierman was the former CEO of Rothschild Bank, Vice President of the World Jewish Congress, and the President of the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France (CRIF). The CRIF is an institutional body that represents all Jewish institutions of France, similar to the Board of Deputies here in the UK. They hold an annual dinner with prime ministers and presidents from around the world and the institution became an important part of French Jewry.

After serving in the IDF, Edouard built his way up to become an IDF Spokesperson for 15 years, and he became a reserve officer in the IDF Negotiation Unit in Crisis Situation and Hostage Situation too.

He was part of the negotiating team dealing with foreign countries and terror groups whilst negotiating in crisis situations.

He is positive that in the current climate, the only way to succeed in negotiations with Hamas is to play hardball and put tremendous pressure on them through use of force in parallel to the negotiation efforts. Only being tough works in these negotiations; being nice with terror organizations doesn't get anywhere.

For over 40 years, Edouard has put a tremendous amount of time and energy into fighting antisemitism, since those early days in France. Nowadays, he makes regularly appearances in foreign media, using his expertise and personal experience to promote Israel and the Jewish cause, across the USA, Latin America and Europe, including on Fox News. He appears regularly on some of France's biggest TV stations such as LCE and BFMTV.

Edouard feels that the future for French Jewry will be very hard, and more people will simply make Aliyah. He feels the UK is not far behind

either, and the wave of new Olim will only continue to grow over time.

His media appearances have been especially important in countries such as Argentina and Mexico, where Israel are not very good at promoting themselves, either due to the Israeli government not spending much time or money trying to win over the general public, or because of the language barrier.

He values the effort of being a national advocate by constantly trying to promote the global position of Israel, the ethics of the army and to explain the objectives of the IDF; namely to release all the hostages and enable the civilians of villages in the north and south of Israel to return home.

Since there is less awareness outside the Jewish communities, he promotes Israel's global image, giving an articulate representation of the country's position, which has been absolutely crucial in global media, reinforcing Israel's narrative and advocating for its needs.

Throughout the war, Edouard has been promoting Israel whilst two of his own children are defending the country. One is right now fighting in Gaza and the other is in Lebanon.

His third son is Daniel Cukierman who has chosen a different path since completing army service, is now proudly representing the country worldwide as the number 1 tennis player in Israel, including at the Davis Cup.

Asked how he copes as a parent of a soldier at war, he reminisces about doing the same to his parents in other wars. It's hard of course and there is the constant worry, yet he is fiercely proud of his sons.

Edouard is confident that Israel will win the war with Hashem's help and that the high-tech economy will stay strong too.

If you are interested in the CIC, or wish to find out more information about Go for Israel, email office@thejewishweekly.com, or go to www.catalyst-ic.com



Edouard Cukierman and sons

PHOTO:PR

