

## THE WEEKLY PRINT

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AUGUST 21, 2026

## 'Recognize our humanity and our fear': Jewish employees' 2023 plea to Vox Media went unanswered

*A newly obtained internal memo from the company's Jewish employee group foreshadowed the backlash resulting from New York magazine's 'Habibi City' cover*

By Matthew Kassel

Not long after Hamas' terror attacks of Oct. 7, 2023, members of a Jewish employee resource group at Vox Media, known as the Tribe, circulated a lengthy memo alleging several instances of bias against Israel in coverage by *New York* magazine, which was then a subsidiary, and Vox, the explanatory journalism site.

The document offered editorial guidance for staffers writing about the attack and ensuing war in Gaza, urging colleagues to identify Hamas as a terrorist organization and avoid "both sides" framing as well as "dangerous and factually inaccurate 'buzzwords'" including apartheid and genocide, which, the authors wrote, "are often used to evoke a visceral emotional reaction in favor of one group."

The document, recently obtained by *Jewish Insider*, also admonished staffers to be mindful of promoting ideas that "invoke age-old antisemitic tropes of Israel and Jews controlling the world," citing examples that the Tribe members felt had violated this dictum.

The authors made sure to clarify that their memo was "not meant to diminish

Palestinian suffering or the Palestinian perspective." But with regard to Oct. 7, "the Palestinian perspective is the only perspective being offered in our coverage," they argued, "which not only is extremely hurtful towards the Jews, but also does a major disservice to our audience by not painting a clear picture."

"Recognize our humanity and our fear," the Tribe members implored. "Vox Media prides itself on being a leader in using inclusive language in our journalism — we are asking you to include us too."

Nearly three years later, *New York* magazine is now facing fresh outside scrutiny from critics who say its recent cover issue, dedicated to celebrating New York City's burgeoning Middle Eastern cultural scene, erased the Jewish perspective from its narrative, suggesting the Tribe memo likely faded from institutional memory.

A representative for *New York* said the magazine's leadership took the memo seriously at the time and had met with Tribe members to discuss the feedback, which factored into editorial conversations

regarding its coverage of the tumult following the Oct. 7 attacks.

The magazine has run stories incorporating Israeli and Jewish perspectives since Oct. 7 — including by Jonathan Chait, a center-left columnist who in 2024 departed for *The Atlantic*.

Still, the new package, which has sparked ongoing backlash, underscores the degree to which *New York* has, in the wake of Oct. 7, increasingly distinguished itself as a leading platform for anti-Israel reporting as well as commentary among its competitors within the mainstream media.

Its direction, which has recently prompted some subscriber cancellations, is a break from what had long been viewed as the magazine's culturally Jewish worldview, a tacit recognition it was catering to a city that is home to the largest Jewish community outside of Israel.

The new issue, a package of articles centered around a controversial cover story, "Habibi City," explored what its author, Zaina Arafat, termed a "SWANA" renaissance. The feature used the acronym for Southwest Asia and North Africa to characterize what Arafat called a proud and

active community of Arab and Muslim trendsetters shaping New York's social and political landscape.

But many readers took issue with Arafat's pointed exclusion of Jews and Israelis from participation in the culture, heralded as emerging in response to what she called Israel's "genocide in Gaza" following Oct. 7 — a claim she presented as a statement of settled fact in a manner that critics said abandoned usual norms of journalistic objectivity.

The article also cast Zionism as a uniquely hostile ideology akin to xenophobia and Islamophobia and questioned if "Israelis can claim a connection" to the region as a "complicated" idea that, Arafat wrote in a typically dismissive passage, "gets more so depending on a person's ethnic background."

Another story examining a growing crop of highly regarded Middle Eastern restaurants in New York City also drew scrutiny for depicting Israeli food as nothing more than an appropriation of Palestinian cuisine as well as a widely criticized line referring to "the land mass currently called Israel," a description starkly highlighting the package's broader reluctance to even acknowledge the existence of a Jewish state.

The reported feature article by Madeline Leung Coleman, who along with an editor of the package signed an Oct. 26, 2023, statement that had called Israel's war in Gaza "an attempt to conduct genocide against the Palestinian people," was also criticized for blithely understating the frequency with which Israeli restaurants in New York have faced vandalism amid a troubling uptick in antisemitic hate crimes across the city.

The recent issue was just the latest, if perhaps the most inflammatory, instance in which the magazine has fueled controversy

over its coverage of Israel and even Israel-adjacent subjects — adopting a reflexively hostile tone in articles covering the Israeli actress Gal Gadot and a Los Angeles-based food influencer who cooked for Israeli soldiers in 2024, which garnered the headline "Chef Bae Finds a New Occupation."

Shortly after the Oct. 7 attacks, Tirhakah Love, a *New York* writer who had previously described Israel as "genocidal," came under fire for falsely accusing "Zionists" of collaborating with the Nazis in World War II, a claim he said was "not about antisemitism."

The outlet said at the time that Love's social media comment did "not represent the views of *New York*" or "Vox Media, and contradicts our company values," adding that it was "taking this matter seriously." Love remained at the magazine until May 2024, according to his LinkedIn profile.

In June 2025, meanwhile, the magazine published an exhaustively detailed cover feature, called "Crimes of the Century," that seemed to liken the war in Gaza to the Holocaust. The story later drew scrutiny for citing a video whose audio was found to be doctored, and its editors added several corrections to the bottom of the piece.

The latest cover package elicited unusually fierce pushback. Among the most prominent critics was the Anti-Defamation League, which wrote in a statement that the magazine "erased Persian, Syrian, Egyptian and other Jews from the narrative," many of whom "rebuilt their lives in this city after violent expulsion from their homelands."

"Leaving them out is an antisemitic double standard. It's an erasure of the very culture *New York Magazine* is claiming to highlight," the ADL said last week in its statement.

The ADL has in recent years received millions in philanthropic donations from James Murdoch, the media scion who in

May acquired *New York* as well as Vox and its suite of podcasts in a deal reportedly valued at more than \$300 million.

Murdoch's holding company, Lupa Systems, did not return a request for comment. An ADL spokesperson declined to comment further.

In a statement last week amid growing backlash, the magazine defended its cover story as "an exploration of a New York subculture that is making its presence felt, both culturally and politically, in new ways over the last few years," claiming "there is an irreducible political dimension to any coverage of this subject."

The cover story had "endeavored to capture the tensions and live debates that exist within these communities, including how they relate to Israel," *New York* added, without referencing other issues associated with the broader package. "We are aware of the wide range of responses to the piece, including critiques from some in the Jewish community."

"We take these comments seriously, and, as always, we welcome and acknowledge good faith discussion and criticism about our journalism," *New York* said.

The magazine did not respond to a request for comment about how it was weighing the feedback from critics, which in many ways echoed the Tribe memo shared with editorial leadership three years ago.

The issue has faced some internal skepticism. One Vox Media staffer told JI it seemed that the authors "should've included Jewish voices and were trying to make a political point, which is unfortunate."

"I hope that we can learn to focus on our commonalities and the shared elements of our cultures," the staffer added, speaking anonymously to address the sensitive subject, "rather than the things that divide us." ♦

# The moderate Michigan Democrat holding the line against Hasan Piker

*David Kramer, a Jewish Democratic leader in Michigan, said Rep. Hillary Scholten is 'someone who has a very strong sense of self and what she thinks is right and wrong'*

By Marc Rod

Rep. Hillary Scholten (D-MI) has emerged in recent weeks as one of the Democratic Party's most outspoken voices against antisemitic influencer Hasan Piker — including standing as one of the few Michigan Democratic holdouts in endorsing Senate nominee Abdul El-Sayed in light of his relationship with Piker.

Her stalwart outspokenness against antisemitism and resistance to her party's home-state Senate nominee is increasingly rare in today's politics. But Jewish Michiganders who have worked with her say she's long been close with and supportive of the community, and that she's been deeply and personally disturbed by rising antisemitism and other rhetoric from Piker and El-Sayed.

At an event for a fellow Michigan House candidate this week, Scholten faced down a questioner who said that she was making "bad faith accusations" against El-Sayed and Piker and stoking Islamophobic hate speech in the interest of protecting U.S. aid to Israel. Scholten stood her ground.

"I do not support the comments of Hasan Piker. He has said some terrible things about America, about American troops, and I would stand by comments condemning those. I think they don't have any place in the Democratic Party or in the United States of America," she said. "But even though we may not necessarily be in agreement about all of those things, we are in alignment about the things that unite us as Democrats: lowering costs, delivering on universal health care, and fighting corruption."

Speaking to reporters after the event, she said that she has not endorsed El-Sayed and hasn't heard from him in any capacity.

"If he would [reach out to me], I would have questions," Scholten said. "A lot of it

has to do with his past associations with Hasan Piker."

She said she's hearing "a lot of support" from people who agree with her raising the question of "whether this is the right direction for our party."

Scholten was among Rep. Haley Stevens' (D-MI) most outspoken supporters during the Senate primary, and unlike Stevens, refused to commit to voting for El-Sayed during the general election. Her decision to stick to her guns carries political risk: El-Sayed carried Scholten's district in the Democratic primary, winning the Kent County (Grand Rapids) base by 26 points over Stevens.

El-Sayed's campaign did not respond to a request for comment, but largely shrugged off questions about Piker and criticisms from Scholten and other Democrats during a press conference on Wednesday.

He accused Republicans of pushing a false narrative of Democratic division and suggested that his critics are simply "still nursing wounds or grievances from the primary."

Despite having repeatedly campaigned with Piker, El-Sayed also dismissed him as "a streamer in California" who is not central to the campaign, which he described as focused on issues in Michigan. He asserted that questions about Piker are driven by a media focus on a "tabloid version of our politics."

Scholten declined to comment to *Jewish Insider* for this story.

She was first elected in 2022, after losing a 2020 race in a GOP-leaning district against former GOP Rep. Peter Meijer. The Grand Rapids-area district was redrawn to be more favorable to Democrats two years later, and she prevailed over a hard-right Republican challenger who defeated Meijer in the GOP primary. The *Cook Political*

*Report* now rates her as a shoo-in to win reelection.

In a 2020 interview with *Jewish Insider* during her run for the House, Scholten did not rule out conditioning or reducing U.S. aid to Israel in the interest of serving as a neutral arbiter to pursue a two-state solution, though she also argued that the U.S. should continue to be supportive of Israel. Scholten voted earlier this year against an amendment cutting U.S. aid to Israel that was supported by nearly half of House Democrats.

She also strongly condemned the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, saying that it has "deep roots in antisemitic sentiment and rhetoric."

Jewish Democrats in Michigan said that Scholten is a longtime ally of their community, and said that her strong stand against Piker and antisemitism is nothing new.

David Kramer, a prominent Jewish Democratic leader in the Detroit area who served as campaign chair for Stevens' Senate race, said Scholten is "someone who has a very strong sense of self and what she thinks is right and wrong, and she has a history of speaking up, even if it's unpopular" — pointing also to her early call for then-President Joe Biden to end his reelection campaign and her strong and early support for Stevens.

"This is another one in the pattern of her doing what she thinks is right, even when she knows she's going to get some flak for it," Kramer continued. "I'm absolutely, positively convinced that she's doing this just because of what her convictions are and her gut reaction."

He said he's heard from Scholten directly that even her staff have warned her about the potential consequences of the stand she has taken on Piker and El-Sayed, but that

she feels strongly that this is an issue of right and wrong.

Kramer said that Scholten has come to him on various occasions about her concerns that El-Sayed and Piker's comments and activity will cause insecurity in the Jewish community — “she just gets it.”

He added that, while Scholten is close with the small Jewish community in Grand Rapids as well as with Jewish leaders in the Detroit area, her positions come from her own deeply held values.

“She is a very, very smart, very, very principled person who is willing to speak the truth and is willing to take stands even if it is not something that others would say will help her politically, and that is really unusual today in politics,” Mark LoPatin, another Detroit-area Jewish Democrat who has interacted with Scholten, said. “She is one of the few who is really willing to get out there to say, ‘This is wrong,’ and why she believes it’s wrong.”

LoPatin said that Scholten may very well face a more difficult primary race in 2028 as a result of her outspokenness and has told supporters that she has faced backlash for

her stances, but that she does not plan to back down.

“We should have more congressional leaders that are willing to do that,” he said. “We probably wouldn’t be in the position that we’re in right now.”

Michael Horowitz, another Detroit-area Jewish Democrat, said he got to know Scholten through Stevens and her campaign at joint events they held together. “She just fits a category of intelligent, caring people who are trying to do good ... they approach their job with the goal of trying to get things done.”

He said that Scholten is someone who “sees right and wrong” and was “particularly offended” by the attacks leveled against Stevens in the primary, as well as against state Sen. Jeremy Moss, a House candidate whom Piker attacked by name in recent comments that have drawn particular criticism.

“This isn’t a political calculation, she sees it as wrong,” Horowitz said. “It’s just a person who’s a decent person, cares about right and wrong. I think it just upset her. ... I don’t see any agenda here, other than people that she’s close to have been

attacked, and ... she doesn’t buy into it. This isn’t who she is, and she’s willing to say something.”

Kramer said that, having known Scholten for several years, he believes her convictions on antisemitism are authentic and deeply rooted. He also noted that she’s an active member of her church and “someone of a lot of faith,” and said he believes that some of her dedication to the issue of antisemitism comes through her faith, though he said he hasn’t asked her the question directly.

LoPatin agreed that Scholten’s stance seems to be a product of her moral character, and said that quality means he’ll continue to support her even if he disagrees with particular stances she may take. “I do know that she will have a thoughtful response to whatever those issues are.”

Kramer also emphasized that, despite having not endorsed El-Sayed, Scholten remains committed to helping Democrats up and down the ballot in Michigan win in November — a commitment Scholten expressed herself at the event earlier this week. ♦

**AUGUST 27, 2026**

## **AJC report calls out systemic antisemitism in far-right German AfD party**

*The group typically masks its antisemitic views by using coded rhetoric and promoting conspiracy theories, said the report’s author, Lars Rensmann*

**By Matthew Shea**

**G**ermany’s far-right Alternative for Germany party has embedded antisemitism into its core ideology, using coded rhetoric, conspiracy myths and historical revisionism to mobilize voters and undermine German democracy, according to a new report released by the American Jewish Committee.

The AJC report details how the party rarely uses explicit anti-Jewish rhetoric in official statements, instead relying on coded verbiage — such as attacks on so-called

“globalist elites” — to mask its hostility while maintaining plausible deniability.

“Antisemitism is very much part and parcel of the authoritarian nationalist worldview of the AfD,” said Lars Rensmann, the author of the report and a professor of political science and comparative government at Germany’s University of Passau. During a briefing on the report on Wednesday, he explained that the group “frames politics through stark friend and enemy logics,” pitting a supposedly “virtuous people” against

corrupt “domestic elites, hostile external forces and migrants.”

Rensmann said a key pillar of that rhetoric is the Great Replacement conspiracy theory, which claims that white Western populations are being systematically, “replaced by migrants, particularly migrants from the Muslim world,” in a process orchestrated by Jews, Rensmann said.

He noted that AfD and its allies frequently personify this narrative through attacks on financier George Soros as the

“string-pulling Jew that personifies this kind of orchestration of a replacement of domestic populations.”

While open Jew-hatred sometimes surfaces among rank-and-file activists, Rensmann stressed that the AfD typically relies on “encoded language.” Its antisemitism, he argued, is embedded “in historical revisionism, in positive references to the Nazi past, in downplaying Nazi crimes,” as well as in “targeted campaigns against Jewish individuals,” such as [journalist] Anetta Kahane and [former vice president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany] Michel Friedmann.”

Rensmann noted that the party’s hostility extends to what scholars describe as “secondary antisemitism” — resentment of Germany’s postwar culture of Holocaust remembrance. AfD figures, he said, have repeatedly attacked Holocaust memory as a “cult of guilt” and have engaged in “Nazi crime relativization.”

“Far from being an isolated problem,” Rensmann said, “political antisemitism functions as a key mobilizing resource within the AfD’s broader challenge to liberal democracy.”

“We see a very large support of antisemitism among AfD voters, to which, of course, the party also appeals,” Rensmann continued, noting that AfD voters are “disproportionately antisemitic.”

Rensmann said the AfD is recognized in Europe broadly as too radical for even other far-right parties. Because of its extremism, he noted that the AfD was excluded from the main right-wing populist family in the European Parliament in 2024.

“They are isolated because of their positive references to the Nazi past, the downplaying of the SS as a criminal organization and their antisemitism and extremism,” Rensmann said. As a result, the AfD has had to form a group in the European Parliament with “tiny homophobic and antisemitic and right-wing extremist neo-fascist parties in Europe.”

From an American vantage point, he suggested, the AfD represents “the Tucker Carlson wing of the MAGA movement” within German politics.

The AfD also frequently attempts to

shield itself from criticism of antisemitism by adopting a “superficial” pro-Israel stance, according to Rensmann, particularly by framing Israel as a frontline state against Muslim immigration. Rensmann said that while some AfD actors have used pro-Israel rhetoric as a “counter element” to political antisemitism, this support is performative and “constantly undermined” by anti-Israel memes and the growing strength of an “overtly anti-Israel wing” inside the party.

For the German Jewish community, he said the most immediate concerns center on what AfD gains in upcoming state elections could mean for policy.

“According to the Constitution, education is primarily a state matter,” Rensmann said. “They have ample opportunity to basically set curricular guidelines,” including on how the Nazi past and the Holocaust are taught.

Rensmann warned that an AfD-led state government could also “draw potential civil servants to the state ... with an extremist party neo-Nazi background, who were rejected as teachers, as educators in other states,” but would then have “a good chance to join and become lifetime civil servants.”

Remko Leemhuis, director of AJC’s Berlin Lawrence and Lee Ramer Institute for German-Jewish Relations, pointed to domestic intelligence agencies and the police as another potential flashpoint.

Every German state has its own domestic security service and helps finance the memorialization of former concentration camp sites and other institutions. If the AfD takes power in a state, “this means the AfD then has political power to ... direct security services where to look, where not to look,” Leemhuis said.

He added that party leaders could “immediately appoint a new president” to the state intelligence agency, shift focus away from right-wing extremism and move quickly to cut funding for memorial sites “to a level where a lot of these memorial sites are no longer able to operate in a way that they used to.”

“This would increase the risk for Jewish institutions and Jews in that state dramatically,” Leemhuis warned, adding that the concern is “not an overstatement”

given the profiles of AfD candidates in eastern regions.

Leemhuis also underscored that the Jewish community’s stance toward the AfD remains unequivocal. “No Jewish institution has any contacts with the AfD — not the Central Council, not any Jewish organization, not the embassy of the State of Israel,” he said, noting there is “unity among the community and Jewish organizations in Germany to have no contacts with them.”

From Washington’s perspective, AJC officials argued that AfD’s antisemitism poses not only a European challenge but a test of the U.S. commitment to combat antisemitism globally.

Historically, mainstream German parties built a “firewall” around the AfD by pledging to block it out of coalition partnerships — a boundary past U.S. administrations have typically respected, according to Julie Rayman, AJC’s senior director of policy and political affairs. Under the Trump administration, however, she said that approach has appeared to change.

At the 2025 Munich Security Conference, Vice President JD Vance “talked about this firewall” and “publicly ... criticized European governments for excluding populist parties,” Rayman said. Vance then “went pretty much directly from his speech to meet with AfD leader Alice Weidel,” signaling “a senior U.S. official publicly questioning the legitimacy of Germany’s efforts to isolate the AfD.”

Secretary of State Marco Rubio subsequently “publicly criticized the designation in 2025 of ... AfD as an extremist organization,” calling it a “farce” and suggesting the label was meant to limit the party’s political influence, she said.

While lower-level State Department engagement with the AfD has continued to reflect earlier practice, Rayman warned that senior-level outreach risks normalizing a movement whose antisemitic record is often downplayed or misunderstood in Washington.

“I am not saying that the United States shouldn’t talk to the AfD,” Rayman said, acknowledging that the party is “too electorally significant to simply ignore.”

“The objective should be engagement without endorsement,” Rayman stressed, cautioning that U.S. officials might make

decisions about the AfD “without recognizing the extremist antisemitism

within AfD” in ways that “could jeopardize both German Jews and American Jews.” ♦

AUGUST 26, 2026

## OU splits top leadership role, naming Rabbi Shmuel Silber EVP and Rabbi Josh Joseph CEO

*The announcement comes 10 months after OU leader Rabbi Moshe Hauer’s sudden death*

By Nira Dayanim

*The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.*

**T**he Orthodox Union has named Rabbi Shmuel Silber as its next executive vice president, the announcement completing a leadership transition that began nearly a year ago after the sudden death of Rabbi Moshe Hauer, the OU’s former executive vice president.

Rabbi Josh Joseph, who had served jointly with Hauer as OU’s executive vice president as well as separately as chief operating officer, will assume the newly created role of chief executive officer.

Hauer, who died of a heart attack at his Baltimore home last October at 60, had led the OU since 2020, guiding the organization through the dramatic period spanning the COVID-19 pandemic and the aftermath of the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attacks.

While Hauer had functioned as both OU’s operational leader and its rabbinic and public voice, the leadership change will be accompanied by a new structure in which Silber will focus on rabbinic and public-advocacy work, while Joseph — who has informally filled much of Hauer’s role since his death — will oversee management strategy and operations across the OU’s programs. Both Silber and Joseph will report directly to the OU’s executive committee rather than each other, according to a statement.

“In Rabbi Shmuel Silber and Rabbi Dr. Josh Joseph, we are blessed with two world-class leaders who bring complementary strengths to their respective roles,” said Mitchel Aeder, president of the OU, in a statement.

Aeder described Silber as “a distinguished talmid chacham who possesses the rare combination of deep Torah scholarship, exceptional character, humility, and a warm, empathetic heart,” while the organization’s statement credited Joseph with driving organizational growth across the OU’s management, business strategy and professionalization over the past six years.

Silber will begin his role at the OU on Nov. 2. For over 23 years, he has led Baltimore’s Suburban Orthodox Toras Chaim, a Pikesville synagogue that has grown under his tenure into a congregation of more than 400 families. He received rabbinic ordination from Yeshiva University’s Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary and holds a master’s degree in secondary Jewish education from YU’s Azrieli Graduate School. Silber is also founder and dean of the congregation’s learning arm, the Institute for Jewish Continuity, and founding rabbi of the Berger Towers community, a still-developing Anglo community in Jerusalem’s Katamonim neighborhood. With rabbinic ties spanning both Israel and North America, Silber described himself as having the opportunity to “dance at both weddings.”

Silber’s appointment comes as the OU has been expanding its work in Israel, amid a broader surge in *aliyah* from North America since Oct. 7. In recent years, the OU has more than doubled its JLIC presence on Israeli campuses and has been mapping a quickly growing network of congregations with significant populations of American and other English-speaking immigrants,

Joseph told *eJewishPhilanthropy*. That growth reflects a new strategic plan, he said, built around expanding engagement with Jews across the religious spectrum and deepening support for Anglo communities in Israel, priorities he said make Silber, with his ties to both countries, “a perfect match” to help lead.

Asked how he thinks about the growing number of young Orthodox Jews weighing a future in Israel versus the U.S., Silber cautioned against treating emigration as a reflexive response to crisis.

“In general, I think it is always important that whenever we make decisions in life, it’s always good to run to and not to run from,” Silber told eJP. “It’s always tempting to say there’s rising antisemitism, let’s run. I don’t think that should be the math for our life decisions...Our obligation is to figure out where we can have the greatest impact. And if that’s here, fantastic. And if that’s there, that’s great as well.”

Both Silber and Joseph noted the appointment comes as the organization, and many members of its leadership are still mourning the loss of Hauer, whose death last October fell on Shemini Atzeret.

“What I hope to be able to do, first thing, is bring a little bit of consolation. Because Rabbi Hauer was a close friend and a mentor of mine,” Silber told eJP. “I don’t see myself much as an innovator yet, as much as [bringing] hopefully a sense of continuity, because continuity sometimes is the most important thing, especially in times of loss.”

“It wasn’t simply the loss of an executive vice president. It was the loss of a thought leader. It was the loss of a father figure to so

many, and it was the loss of someone who lived and breathed the plight of the Jewish people,” he added.

Joseph, who worked alongside Hauer for six years described him as a “chevrusa” or study partner, and the experience of working together as a “brotherhood” and “partnership.”

“It was like a chavrusa,” Joseph told eJP. “We were just aligned.”

In the aftermath of Oct. 7, 2023, Hauer became one of the most visible Orthodox voices in Washington, testifying before Congress on campus antisemitism and helping organize the delivery of 180,000 letters to the White House calling for the return of hostages held in Gaza. The day

before Hauer died, noted Joseph, the last of the living hostages were returned.

“There’s no question his efforts along those lines were helpful, not just helpful, but fundamental in driving that incredible result, that still did take a lot of time, but that was something that was very much connected to his heart and his passion and his work,” Joseph told eJP. ♦

AUGUST 27, 2026

## Republican state senator aims to be ‘boring enough to win’ Rep. Angie Craig’s seat

*Eric Pratt faces far-left former state Sen. Matt Little in Minnesota’s 2nd Congressional District, and is aiming to cast himself as a common-sense moderate*

By Marc Rod

Facing down a far-left candidate in a swing district near Minnesota’s Twin Cities, Republican state Sen. Eric Pratt is hoping he’s “boring enough to win.”

In a bid to replace Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN), a moderate who flipped the district in 2018, Democrats nominated former state Sen. Matt Little, who defeated two primary rivals as the farthest-left candidate in the race, while staking out anti-Israel policies, including calling for a full arms embargo on the Jewish state.

Pratt, in an interview with *Jewish Insider* this week, argued that the seat, which the *Cook Political Report* rates as “likely Democrat,” remains a swing district and “is a much different race without Angie Craig.”

He’s pitching himself as a moderate voice in contrast to Little.

“My opponent is not an Angie Craig Democrat,” Pratt continued. “He’s been endorsed by Bernie Sanders, Keith Ellison, he runs in circles with Ilhan Omar and Peggy Flanagan. He’s on the extreme side of his party and that’s not what the 2nd District is.”

He argued that the district has many “independent voters with conservative values” who are open to splitting their tickets. The district, he said, “wants stability and common sense over chaos ... and that’s

the appeal that I’m trying to make, that I am the common-sense candidate.”

Pratt is running on issues including the cost of living, controlling federal spending, growing the economy and deregulation.

“Somebody was just telling me, I might be boring enough to win this seat. And I think they’re kind of right in that,” Pratt said. “These are suburban families. They want great opportunities for their kids. They want good education. They want to make sure that they have jobs that they can support their families in and get ahead.”

Pratt said he’s running for Congress to be a “problem solver” and to serve his community as he did as a school board member and state senator. He emphasized that every bill he’s passed in the state Senate has been bipartisan and that he’s “really more focused on trying to help my neighbors than play politics.”

Pratt also takes a starkly different view of the U.S.-Israel relationship than Little, who he accused of pursuing a strategy of isolationism, rather than building alliances.

“Having a Democratic society, an ally in the Middle East, helps the United States be safe. And we have to foster that alliance,” Little said. “Allies can be critical of each other and they can question each other, but at the end of the day, we’ve got to be friends marching in the same direction. ... We can’t

demonize our friends, we’ve got to support them.”

He said that the U.S. needs to make sure that all of its allies, including both Israel and European nations, have the resources they need to defend themselves and withstand attacks — “that’s what it means to be a good ally” — but he said he also welcomes efforts by allies, including Israel, to become more self-sufficient.

Pratt said that he’s open to a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians, so long as Israel has a role in negotiating it and that its sovereignty remains intact. He also emphasized that terrorist organizations cannot control the Palestinian government.

Asked about the war in Iran, Pratt said that he saw Iran’s nuclear program and the threat of an Iranian nuclear weapon as a “clear and present danger to the United States.” He lamented that the popular uprising that many had hoped for to topple the Iranian regime ultimately didn’t come to fruition and it has proved more resilient than expected, “but at the end of the day, failure can’t be an option.”

“We have to find a way out of this — but we have to find a way out of this that allows us to claim a victory, to make sure Iran never gets a nuclear weapon and make sure that we have the free flow of resources coming through the Strait of Hormuz,” Pratt

said. “Whatever we do, we have to finish this. It’s been almost 50 years that Iran has been at war with us, and we’ve got to finish it.”

Asked about antisemitism in the United States, Pratt emphasized the need to

protect civil liberties and said that attacks on Jewish institutions and harassment of Jewish students on campuses shouldn’t be permitted. He said that institutions, including schools, that allow discrimination should lose their federal funding.

He also said that Congress and lawmakers should oppose any Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions efforts targeting Israel. ♦

AUGUST 25, 2026

## From Beirut to Riyadh, Assouline’s luxury book collection has yet to spotlight an Israeli city

*The French house, whose founder has Moroccan Jewish roots, has published Jewish-themed titles but left Israel off its Classics Collection map*

By Haley Cohen

Assouline, the luxury publisher known for turning global cities into vibrant \$100 coffee table books, has turned its lens on several Middle Eastern capitals over the years — most recently Beirut.

But out of hundreds of titles spanning the globe, not a single Israeli city has made the cut.

“Beirut Habibi,” launched earlier this month, is the latest addition to Assouline’s Classics Collection, the publisher’s line of glossy travel photography books that has cast a spotlight on cities including Riyadh, Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Alexandre Assouline, the company’s chief of operations, said in a 2023 *Arab News* interview that Saudi Arabia

approached the publisher directly, commissioning a series of books devoted to the country.

The French publishing house, founded by husband-and-wife team Prosper and Martine Assouline, has published a handful of explicitly Jewish titles since it was established in 1994. In 2014, Assouline published *The Light of Jerusalem*, featuring black-and-white photography and excerpts of writing by Elie Wiesel, but no Israeli city has ever been featured in the Classics Collection.

Prosper Assouline, who comes from a Moroccan Jewish family, has shared that a traditional Passover *Haggadah* from his Moroccan grandfather inspired some of the company’s book line. *The Haggadah* by

Assouline was published in 2001 as a limited collector’s edition, and later released in a special hardcover edition in 2008.

Assouline has also published photo and art books *Symbols of Judaism* (1996), *The Burnt Book: Reading the Talmud* (1995), *Mysteries of the Kabbalah* (2000) and *Bar Mitzvah: A Guide to Spiritual Growth*, (2006), which Prosper initiated for his son Alexandre’s bar mitzvah.

Alexandre Assouline has stated that the company creates its publications to “fit in our family’s interests and tastes.”

Assouline did not respond to a request for comment from *Jewish Insider*. ♦

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## Shmuel Harlap, who gave Israel’s largest healthcare gift but kept his name off it, dies at 82

*The Israeli auto magnate and Mobileye investor gave \$180 million to build a new hospital tower — declining to attach his name to it*

By Justin Hayet

*The article first appeared in eJewishPhilanthropy.*

Some philanthropists live for buildings with their names on them. Shmuel Harlap preferred bylines.

The Israeli auto magnate, technology investor and writer whose fortune underwrote the largest gift in the history of Israel’s healthcare system died Aug. 18 at his home. He was 82.

Harlap built his family’s firm, Colmobil, into Israel’s largest car importer and held a significant stake in Mobileye, the autonomous-driving company Intel bought for \$15.3 billion in 2017. Following his

massive financial success, he and his wife, Anat, steered much of that wealth toward science and medicine, giving \$180 million to Petah Tikva's Rabin Medical Center (often referred to as Beilinson Hospital) and \$10 million to the Weizmann Institute of Science, and he became a central patron of the Institute for National Security Studies. Following the events of Oct. 7, 2023, he donated 120 cars to assist displaced individuals from the Gaza envelope.

Harlap was a columnist for the Israeli publications *Haaretz* and *TheMarker*, filtering economic and social critiques through the lens of his Harvard philosophy degree.

Clalit-Beilinson Hospital, where the Harlaps' donation is funding a new heart and brain center, told *eJewishPhilanthropy* in a statement that Harlap was "a visionary, one of Israel's leading business leaders and

philanthropists, and a true friend of the hospital and Israel's public healthcare system."

The couple's \$180 million gift to Rabin Medical Center ranked at the time as the largest ever made to Israeli healthcare. It will open the 15-story Tower of Hope in early 2027, adding hundreds of beds for cardiac and neurological care. Rather than attach their own name to the building, the Harlaps chose "Tower of Hope" for what the hospital described as "a place open to everyone, regardless of religion, community, or background." The hospital said it would honor a benefactor who held "that medical excellence, science, and innovation are assets belonging to society as a whole, and that even in the most challenging times, we must choose hope and invest in the future."

At INSS, colleagues remembered a donor

who stayed closely engaged with the work he funded. Ofer Shelah, who heads the institute's Israel's National Security Policy program, said Harlap "neither sought to see his name on a plaque nor limited his involvement to making a donation, but continued to push, encourage, and critique us, always with deep passion and great friendship." The program, Shelah said, "would not have been established without him. There were few like him."

Tamir Hayman, the institute's executive director and a former head of Israeli military intelligence, called Harlap "a man of truth, a man of letters and a razor-sharp intellectual, as well as a highly successful businessman who cared deeply about the fate of the State of Israel."

Harlap is survived by his wife, Anat, their two children, Goni and Asaf, and seven grandchildren. ♦