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## Jewish Leaders Throw Support Behind Bipartisan House Antisemitism Bill



Rep. Dan Goldman talks with a reporter outside the U.S. Capitol on December 18, 2025. Credit: Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

By Grace Gilson

(June 11, 2026/JTA) – Reps. Dan Goldman and Mike Lawler introduced bipartisan legislation last Wednesday aimed at expanding federal security support for Jewish institutions and combatting antisemitism.

The bill, a House companion to Jewish American Security Act in the Senate, would increase Nonprofit Security Grant Program funding to \$1 billion, extend funding to Jewish organizations and allow additional funds to be directed towards law enforcement.

It would also mandate that the Department of Education appoint a dedicated antisemitism coordinator and force social media platforms to explain their handling of online antisemitism.

“Jewish communities across the United States are facing a real and growing security crisis, and the federal government has a responsibility to ensure that all Americans can gather, worship, and live openly and safely as who they are,” Eric Fingerhut, the CEO and president of the Jewish Federations of North

America, which has promoted the bill, said in a statement.

Goldman, a Jewish New York Democrat, cited the March car-ramming attack on Temple Israel in Detroit, saying in a statement that the attack underscored “how essential security is for every single Jewish institution” and that the government should support those costs.

“We should not have to pay a Jewish tax to be able to go to synagogue, and this will not only increase the funding, but it also expands the range of areas that can be funded by the Nonprofit Security Grant to include, very clearly, security personnel and other types of security that have not currently included and that are now clearly essential,” Goldman said.

Lawler, a New York Republican, said in a statement that houses of worship and nonprofit institutions should be “focused on serving their communities, not worrying about whether they have the resources to protect their members from violence.”

“I can walk into my church without passing a security guard stationed outside,” Lawler, who is Catholic, said. “Jewish Americans don’t have that luxury, and it’s outrageous, and it should anger each and every one of us.”

The bill adds to a growing list of attempts to advance antisemitism legis-

lation in Congress, including the Antisemitism Response and Prevention Act, which was introduced by progressives in the House, and the Antisemitism Awareness Act, which failed to pass despite backing by Jewish groups.

Last Wednesday during a press conference in Washington D.C., Lawler and Goldman were joined by a host of Jewish leaders, including representatives from the Anti-Defamation League, Jewish Council for Public Affairs and American Jewish Committee as well as organizations affiliated with the Reform and Orthodox movements.

Amy Spitalnick, the CEO of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, threw her support behind the bill last Wednesday, saying in a statement that it is “vital that we invest in whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches that will keep Jewish and all communities safe.”

“Make no mistake: There is no truly inclusive, pluralistic democracy unless antisemitism is addressed and Jews are safe,” Spitalnick said. “So, too, does Jewish safety require protecting the democratic norms and values that have long protected us – and we will continue to reject the false choice we’re too often offered between countering antisemitism and protecting our democracy and our rights.” **HW**

## At United Nations, Colombian President Makes More Nazi References, Israel Blamed Further for Mid-East Violence



The U.N. Security Council meets on the situation in the Middle East, March 11, 2026. Credit: Eskinder Debebe/UN Photo.

By Mike Wagenheim

(June 11, 2026/JNS) – Israel rebuked Colombia sharply at the United Nations after Gustavo Petro, the latter’s president, who wrote “heil Hitler” on social media days prior, invoked Nazism repeatedly when talking about Israel and migration issues at a Security Council meeting and said that “we are going back to the era of the Nazis.”

Petro’s comments amount to “bizarre ideological rants” and a “dangerous distortion of Holocaust history” that “dishonors the victims of the Holocaust,” Danny Danon, Israeli ambassador to the global body, said last Wednesday.

The Colombian president, who is not favored to win a runoff election on June 21, reportedly declined a call

from Danon, who sought an apology from Petro before the latter chaired the council session on the Middle East last Wednesday. Colombia serves as president of the Security Council this month.

The meeting centered on concerns of all-out war in the Middle East, and it came hours before U.S. President Donald Trump’s decision to launch additional strikes on Iran.

Jennifer Locetta, the U.S. alternative representative for special political affairs in the United Nations, told the council that the Middle East needs “real solutions and political capital, not recycled failed approaches.”

She blamed the Iranian regime for holding “the world’s economy hostage by unlawfully attempting to restrict freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz” and for its patronage of terror proxies in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen.

Locetta also accused Russia and China of covering for Tehran, in part by vetoing a draft Security Council resolution in April that would have authorized an international effort to secure vessels going through the strait.

“Dialogue without consequences

failed to prevent destabilizing behavior,” she said.

Locetta noted a lack of enforcement behind the international diplomatic efforts.

Vassily Nebenzia, Russian ambassador to the global body, accused those outside the Middle East of trying to redraw the region’s political map.

The Security Council “should not attempt to impose a solution beneficial exclusively to one side or directed against any regional state,” the Russian envoy said.

Fu Cong, the Chinese envoy to the United Nations, said that the lack of a Palestinian state is “the greatest injustice in today’s world.”

Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Pakistan’s ambassador to the United Nations, said that the regional situation, which his country has tried to calm in mediations, “is fragile and increasingly volatile,” and that “unresolved disputes have become protracted conflicts, and cycles of violence are becoming normalized.”

Ahmad pushed for a return to pre-war conditions in the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran closed and which Washington subsequently blockaded. **HW**



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Contact Melanie Musser at [melanie@jcrs.org](mailto:melanie@jcrs.org) **HW**

# Owners of Jewish Camp Network File for Bankruptcy as Summer Season Begins

(June 11, 2026/JNS) – Michael and David Shabsels, brothers who operate a network of 22 overnight camps and eight day camps across New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maine – including Camp Mesorah and Camp Achim – declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy on June 4, both personally and under their holding company, Simad Holdings Ltd.

The cases were filed in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of New Jersey. Court filings show each brother holds a 50% stake in Simad.

The debtors reported estimated assets of \$100 million to \$500 million and liabilities of \$500 million to \$1 billion.

Last Monday, Chief U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Christine M. Gravelle authorized

the use of cash collateral and existing bank accounts to cover employee wages, payroll taxes and other essential expenses needed to open and operate the camps during the bankruptcy proceedings.

Mishmeret Trust Company Ltd., trustee for holders of Simad Holdings’ Series A bonds, has asked the court for copies of all filings so bondholders can participate in the case and protect their interests.

The bankruptcy filing comes as the summer camp season begins. eJewish-Philanthropy reported that camp representatives said programs would proceed as planned.

The outlet also reported that Simad Holdings recently missed payments on a \$195 million Israeli bond. **HW**

# Food, Friends and Fun with the MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club

The regular lunch program begins at 11:30 a.m., with speakers and entertainment starting at noon.

**Monday, June 22**  
**Team Trivial Pursuit**

This special edition will be led by the always entertaining **Kevin Payne!** Kevin has brought his unique version of this popular game to our group before, and by popular demand, he’s back. His creative questions and unexpected twists make the competition even more challenging—and even more fun. Gather your friends and form a team, or come on your own. Many times, the people who think they know the least trivia end up providing the winning answers! As always, prizes will be awarded to both the winning team and the “other” team. Come test your knowledge, share some laughs, and enjoy an afternoon of friendly competition.

**Wednesday, June 24**  
**Bingo with Mah Ani**

One of our favorite annual traditions returns as we welcome the MJCC’s Mah Ani teen group for a special BINGO event! These outstanding teenagers spend part of their summer performing good deeds throughout the community and always bring enthusiasm and energy wherever they go. One of the teens will serve as our BINGO caller, making for a fun-filled afternoon enjoyed by all generations. Join us for great prizes, plenty of laughs, and a wonderful opportunity to connect with this remarkable group of young people.

**Monday, June 29**  
**Speaker, Rabbi Mayer Kurcfield**

Rabbi Mayer Kurcfield returns to the Lunch Bunch with an intriguing presentation, **Who Am I? The Challenge of Me!** Rabbi Kurcfield’s previous visit was extremely well received, and this thought-provoking topic is sure to spark meaningful discussion. Enjoy a delicious lunch and an engaging talk that explores questions of identity, purpose and personal growth.

**Wednesday, July 1**  
**First-of-the-Month BINGO Celebration**

This special game will feature exciting prizes, lots of fun, and plenty of opportunities to socialize with both old friends and new ones. As an added treat, every BINGO participant will receive a free ice cream dessert. Don’t miss this festive afternoon!

We invite you to join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch prepared by the kitchens of the Memphis Jewish Home. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required by 1 p.m. on the previous day.

To make a reservation, contact Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or email [stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org](mailto:stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org). Steve is available Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Reservations may also be made through the MJCC front desk at 901-761-0810.

We look forward to seeing you for another wonderful week of food, friendship, learning, and fun! **HW**

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# More Than a GPA: Inside the Movement to End Letter Grades in Jewish Education

By Debra Rubin

(May 26, 2026/JTA) – At least three times each school year, middle school pupils at the Oakland Hebrew Day School write divrei Torah, or essays on a Torah passage. They read a section of the Torah, come up with a series of questions and answers about the passage, and explain its modern-day relevance.

Students can expect significant feedback when they turn in their essays. Their teachers will provide detailed notes on how well they meet certain benchmarks, such as whether their commentary is explained well and clearly communicates their ideas.

One thing the students won’t receive: a traditional letter or number grade.

Instead, assessments at Oakland Hebrew Day School (OHDS) are designed to provide feedback so the students can improve their essays as well as their understanding of the Torah. “We’re not ranking them in comparison to anyone else,” said head of school Tania Schweig. “We’re most interested in students’ growth in relation to their learning.”

Oakland Hebrew Day school is part of a small but growing educational movement to abandon traditional letter or number grades, switching instead to assessments of student proficiency and progress. There are numerous reasons why schools are making this shift: According to a piece published last year in The Washington Post, “Decades of research, at all levels of education, has demonstrated that grades can promote short-term performance rather than long-term understanding, encourage both superficial studying and outright cheating, and can undermine a student’s intrinsic interest in the material.”

When it comes to Jewish schools, the stakes can be even higher. “Grades in Judaic studies make kids feel judged as Jews, diminishing their Jewish identity,” said Manette Mayberg, founder of the Jewish Education Innovation Challenge (JEIC), an organization focused on improving Jewish day school education through innovation, experimentation and collaboration. “They internalize those grades as a judgement of their Jewish learning capability, which is the exact opposite of what Torah is meant to be: for everyone according to their ability.”

Instead, she and others say, students should be encouraged to learn about Judaism without the pressure of studying to get an A.

A lot of kids “are just working for the grade,” said Sharon Freundel, managing director of JEIC. “And that’s a terrible way to internalize Jewish values and wisdom.”

One of JEIC’s goals is for schools to help students become motivated to study for the sake of learning, rather than for the sake of getting a good grade – and, eventually, getting into a good high school or college.

To that end, JEIC is promoting the idea that alternative assessment methods – and not grades – should be the goal of all Jewish day schools, particularly when it comes to Jewish studies classes. “Judaic Studies holds a unique and vital role, distinct from General Studies, in shaping a strong Jewish identity and influencing students’ lives both now and in the future,” reads a page on its website dedicated to the topic. “To fully achieve these meaningful goals, it’s important to approach evaluation

thoughtfully, as traditional grading can potentially hinder the deeper purpose of Judaic education.”

Traditional grading can have negative effects, including “creating pressure that may diminish their desire to engage with Judaism after graduation.” Instead, JEIC advocates for more experimental practices such as competency-based learning, in which students receive credit for mastering a subject at their own pace.

“If a kid never picks up a math book after graduating school, so be it. But if a kid graduates a Jewish day school and says, ‘I’m never picking up a chumash again,’ that’s heartbreaking,” said Freundel, referring to the Jewish Bible.

At Luria Academy in Brooklyn, a Montessori-based Jewish day school that serves kids from pre-K through 8th grade, teachers write narratives about students’ progress over the semester, including an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses. The goal is “to encourage children to be independent learners” and “to develop a love of learning and a strong desire to learn based on interests,” according to head of school Amanda Pogany.

Bat Sheva Miller, Luria’s upper school director, said teachers assess students’ work by describing it as “challenging,” meaning they need a lot of guidance in the subject; “practicing,” meaning they need a little hand-holding; “meeting,” meaning they reached expected standards or “exceeding,” meaning they surpassed expectations.

Miller calls this type of feedback qualitative, rather than the quantitative approach of conventional grades. “Once you see the number or the A, B, C, D, you stop being curious,” she said. “Grades tend to distance the students from the learning.”

Oakland’s Schweig agrees. “When you stamp a grade on an essay, you’re communicating that the learning is over,” she said. “We generally focus a lot on process, and we want our students to learn from feedback and see feedback as something that makes them grow.”

At OHDS, a teacher reviewing a student essay about a Torah passage will use a rubric to give feedback on the essay’s introduction, whether it provides evidence to support that introduction, and whether it uses good grammar, spelling and sentence structure. Students “get this rubric back multiple times” as they use it to improve their essays, Schweig said.

Those essays will become part of a “student portfolio conference where students share their growth and development with their parents,” said Tamara Beliak, dean of the school’s beit midrash, a middle school program offering mixed-age Judaic studies classes and independent study projects. “Articulating strengths, weaknesses and growth is an important part of the process.”

And yet, Freundel acknowledges that some Jewish day schools are reluctant to try a different approach. She ticks off several reasons why: parents got grades in school, so they want their kids to get grades, too, plus it’s more time-consuming for teachers to write narrative assessments. Some high school students and their parents are concerned that the lack of grades could hurt their GPAs,

which are an essential element for college admissions.

Those GPA concerns shouldn’t be a worry for academically strong students, according to Stuart Nachbar, a Trenton, New Jersey-based college admissions adviser. Colleges typically recalculate applicants’ GPAs, he said, and many colleges, particularly large state schools, factor only core academic subjects like English, math, history and science in their calculations.

“Holistic admissions does consider the ‘dual load’ at religiously affiliated high schools, because the religion courses are required courses for the diploma that come in addition to traditional academic requirements,” he said. Nachbar emphasized that every college is different; whether admissions officers will take the time to review narrative transcripts will depend on the college, he said.

As for parents’ concerns, educators at Luria work “to make sure parents understand how we’re giving feedback,” Pogany said, explaining the school sets explicit goals for students and then tracks “how students are progressing toward those goals.”

Abandoning traditional letter or number grades helps inspire learning for the sake of learning, Pogany added. “We encourage intrinsic motivation,” she said, “for students to develop a love of learning and a strong desire to learn based on interests.”

Educator and author Starr Sackstein began to advocate nontraditional grading more than a decade ago after receiving her national board certification for teaching. “That process is a yearlong reflective process, and I learned so much about myself as a learner,” she said. That led her to bring the process to her own classroom, where she taught AP literature.

“Honors students are hyper-focused on their grades,” Sackstein said, noting she wanted to change that focus. She turned grading into an interactive process, giving students feedback, having them ask questions about that feedback and then revise their work.

“They were paying more attention to the things I needed them to pay attention to, and less attention on superficial kinds of subjective things like grades,” said Sackstein, whose books include “Hacking Assessment: 10 Ways to Go Gradeless in a Traditional Grades School.”

She said this paradigm can be particularly useful in Jewish day schools. Sackstein recalled that when she was growing up, her family rabbi “always used to say to us that to be a good Jew means to be a good person,” she said, adding that self-assessments can help in all aspects of life.

“We become more critical of the decisions we’re making – not just in our learning, but the way we treat people, the situations we’re in,” she said. “That reflective process, I think, then becomes embedded in the people we grow into.”

This article was sponsored by and produced in partnership with the Jewish Education Innovation Challenge, a bold initiative to radically improve the quality of Jewish education in day schools across North America. This article was produced by JTA’s native content team. **HW**

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# Trump Calls Off Iran Strikes, Says Deal Approved but Islamic Republic Denies Agreement Reached



An F-35C Lightning II, attached to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314, prepares to make an arrested landing on the flight deck of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72), May 9, 2026. Credit: U.S. Navy.

By Jessica Russak-Hoffman

(June 11, 2026/JNS) – U.S. President Donald Trump said last Thursday that he has called off strikes against Iran after reaching a deal with the regime. “Based on the fact that discussions with the Islamic Republic of Iran have

been brought to the highest level of Iranian leadership and approved, I have, as president of the United States of America, canceled the scheduled strikes and bombings against Iran this evening,” the president stated. “Discussions and

final points have been, in both concept and great detail, approved by all parties involved.”

Trump said that the other parties were “Israel, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Turkey, Pakistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Egypt and others.”

The U.S. naval blockade on the Strait of Hormuz “will remain in full force and effect until this transaction is finalized,” Trump stated. “Time and place of the signing to be announced shortly.”

During a press conference in the Oval Office later in the day, Trump said that “we have a deal that Iran will never have a nuclear weapon, which was the whole purpose of what we had to go through to get this.”

“We have a signing soon, and the documents are in pretty final shape, so we’ll see,” he said. “It should be done, and it should be done pretty quickly.”

“They want it every bit as much as everybody else wants it,” the president said. “I think a lot of good relationships can ensue from this.”

Iran reportedly denied approving an

agreement with the United States. “I hope we have in fact reached a diplomatic solution to end the Iranian conflict that will meet President Trump’s red lines and be fundamentally different from the JCPOA,” said Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), referring to the past Iran nuclear deal.

“As in the past, any agreement reached with Iran related to their nuclear program will be presented to Congress for review and approval,” the senator stated. “I look forward to that process.”

Jason Brodsky, policy director at United Against Nuclear Iran, told JNS that the president has been “practicing his own brand of coercive diplomacy.”

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-linked media outlets denying that there is a deal is not the same as Iranian officials denying it, according to Brodsky.

“I’ll believe there’s a deal when I see there’s a deal,” he said.

“This is not a final deal,” he added. “This is a memorandum of understanding that paves the way for more talks about Iran’s nuclear program.” **HW**

# Senior Iranian Regime Cleric Calls on Muslims Worldwide to Target ‘Infidel’ United States

By JNS Staff

(June 11, 2026/JNS) – A senior Iranian cleric last Wednesday called on Muslims worldwide to attack U.S. interests, saying that waging jihad against the “infidel enemy” was a religious obligation “for anyone capable of carrying it out.”

“It is incumbent upon the free people of the region not to remain silent in the face of the aggression of the Zionist-American enemy,” said Ayatollah Mohsen Araki, a top member of Iran’s Assembly of Experts, in a statement carried by the semi-official Mehr News outlet.

“America is a hostile infidel enemy, and jihad against it with all one’s strength

is obligatory for every free and faithful believer who adheres to the rulings of Islam,” said Araki, who was reportedly among the candidates to replace Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei following his Feb. 28 death in the opening strike of “Operation Epic Fury/Roaring Lion,” the joint U.S.-Israeli military campaign against the Tehran regime.

Referencing U.S.-led attempts to demilitarize Iran’s regional terrorist proxies, the regime cleric claimed that “American arrogance has launched a conspiracy to disarm the courageous mujahideen [jihadists] in Iraq and Lebanon ... to pave the way for the complete domination of

colonialism over all these lands.”

“Disarming resistance forces is, without doubt, an act of weakening the resistance and assisting hostile unbelievers and arrogant powers, particularly the Zionist-American alliance,” he concluded.

The Iranian regime rejected a Qatari proposal to hold direct talks with the United States to bridge outstanding differences, Axios reported last Thursday, citing regional and U.S. sources.

Following renewed U.S. strikes against Iranian regime targets, Qatari mediators traveled to Tehran last Wednesday for meetings with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and other se-

nior officials to revive talks aimed at ending the war, according to the report.

Iranian and U.S. officials held separate talks with Qatari interlocutors in Doha over the past two days, the regional source said.

Two U.S. officials told Axios that Washington hoped its retaliatory airstrikes would persuade Tehran to respond to President Donald Trump’s proposals, adding that his threats were part of the same effort.

“The deal is still on the table, but the president is ready to make the Iranians pay a price if they continue to delay and drag their feet,” one official said. **HW**

# Trump is Imagining an Israel After Netanyahu. So are Many Israelis. Netanyahu isn’t Biting.

By Philissa Cramer

(June 10, 2026/JTA) – The party of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected speculation that he might not run in Israel’s election this fall, following an offhand comment by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Last Tuesday, ABC correspondent Jonathan Karl tweeted that Trump had told him he was unsure if Netanyahu wanted to press forward in the elections.

“He’s had an amazing career,” Trump said, according to Karl. “Does he want to continue? Because, you know, he’s a wartime prime minister. We will very shortly win the war one way or the other, and you know he’s a wartime prime minister.”

Netanyahu has been prime minister for more than 15 of the last 17 years, losing power only briefly in 2021 and 2022. Israel’s current wars began on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas attacked Israel, triggering regional conflict that has grown to include a joint U.S.-Israeli war with Iran.

Trump’s reported comments left some wondering whether he knew something they did not, amid polling suggesting that Netanyahu will struggle to secure enough votes to put together a governing coalition after elections this fall. Could Trump know that Netanyahu is

considering suspending his already-active campaign? Or could Trump, who last week told the BBC that Netanyahu does anything the U.S. president tells him to, be planning to order his Israeli counterpart to stand down amid growing anti-Israel sentiment in the United States?

Netanyahu’s Likud party soon demolished the idea. “Prime Minister Netanyahu will run in the upcoming elections – and with God’s help, he will win,” the party posted last Wednesday on X.

Only a minority of Israelis were primed to appreciate the declaration, ac-

cording to a poll released last week by the Israel Democracy Institute. It found that 61% of Israelis, including 27% of Likud members, do not want to see Netanyahu run again this fall. The same proportion said they want to see Israel adopt a two-term limit for prime ministers in the future. **HW**



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# Dave Matthews Apologizes to Jewish Fans After Audience Members Shout Antisemitic Expletives at Florida Concert



Dave Matthews Band during a performance at the Best of Blues and Rock Festival, held at the Parque do Ibirapuera in São Paulo, Brazil, on June 7, 2025. Credit: FotografiaWallacyFerrari via Wikimedia Commons.

(June 8, 2026/JNS) – After audience members at a Dave Matthews Band concert in West Palm Beach, Fla., were reportedly heard shouting antisemitic slurs, Matthews used a performance in North Carolina to apologize for any pain his remarks about the war in Gaza may have caused members of the Jewish community.

During the band’s May 30 concert at iTHINK Financial Amphitheatre in West Palm Beach, Matthews spoke from the stage about Gaza. A Jewish attendee later wrote that some concertgoers responded with antisemitic chants, including, “Yeah, f\*\*\* the Jews,” while also using an antisemitic slur. At the June 5 show at Coastal Cred-

it Union Music Park in Raleigh, N.C., Matthews read a prepared statement addressing the controversy.

“I have a deep respect and love for, all of my life that I can remember, and an admiration for the culture and history of the Jewish people,” Matthews told the crowd. He added that he did not believe “any group of people has contributed more to the advancement and the evolution of understanding of each other and the world around us and the universe.”

Matthews cited Albert Einstein, George Gershwin, Hannah Arendt, Howard Zinn and Anne Frank as examples.

“It breaks my heart that my opinions, borne out of deep commitment to non-violent resolution and resistance, can be twisted to serve any hateful or racist or bigoted ideas,” he said. “I am so sorry for any misunderstanding or pain I might have caused. My intention is to help bring an end to the seemingly endless violence in the world.”

Matthews said he was attending a friend’s son’s bar mitzvah on Oct. 7, 2023, when news broke of the Hamas-led terrorist attacks in Israel.

“It was interrupted by the horror and the violence on the other side of the world, an ongoing horror,” he said.

“But the violence born out of that day against the Palestinian people is no less horrific and multiplies the death and the suffering over and over and over,” he added.

Matthews has repeatedly criticized Israel’s conduct in Gaza during recent performances and has appeared onstage carrying signs accusing Israel of committing genocide.

Rami Feinstein, a musician who has organized discussion sessions for Jewish Dave Matthews Band fans troubled by the singer’s comments, wrote that the statement fell short.

In a rewritten version of what he thought Matthews should have said, Feinstein stated that a more meaningful apology would have included acknowledgment that describing Israel’s war against Hamas as a genocide is inaccurate. He also said Matthews repeated what he called “antisemitic propaganda,” adding that the singer should have addressed that issue directly. **HW**

# Israeli Startup Trains Cancer-Sniffing Dogs to Revolutionize Early Detection



A cancer-sniffing beagle trained by the Israeli startup, SpotitEarly, on Kibbutz Hama’apil. Credit: SpotitEarly

By Etgar Lefkovits

(June 11, 2026/JNS) KIBBUTZ HAMA’APIL, Israel – Man’s best friend may soon become a revolutionary M.D. A New Jersey-based medtech company founded in Israel is training beagles to detect cancer from breath samples. The aptly named startup, SpotitEarly, seeks to target the world’s second-leading cause of death by merging innate animal intelligence – the canine’s extraordinary sense of smell – with artificial

intelligence. Beagles have one of the most powerful senses of smell in the animal kingdom. While human beings have about 5 million scent receptors, beagles possess about 250 million, making them top-notch sniffers. Founded by a group of tech entrepreneurs and former IDF canine commanders, the company is pioneering a non-in-

vasive method for cancer screening by using beagles to analyze breath samples and improve early detection of the disease.

“We took on a mission to use the ability of dogs and transform it into a marketable product that can save many lives through early detection,” Udi Bobrovsky, co-founder and COO of SpotitEarly, told JNS.

The joint human-canine venture envisions people breathing into a high-tech mask similar to an N95, ordering it online and then sending it back to the company’s laboratories for canine analysis.

A clinical trial last year showed 94% accuracy in the dogs’ detection of lung, breast, prostate and colorectal cancers, Bobrovsky said, with two follow-up studies now underway.

The biotech company plans to launch its estimated \$250 cancer screening test in the second half of 2027, with its initial focus on breast cancer.

**‘If anyone can detect it, they can’**  
The dozen beagles – male and female, ranging in age from 2 to 4 and a mix

of Floridians, Europeans and native Israelis – eagerly rush into the laboratory testing room one at a time with their handler at the central Israeli kibbutz that serves as ground zero for the company’s R&D.

They begin screening six different samples and are closely monitored from a separate room by technicians and staff.

Happy at their work, they inspect each specimen to sniff out the cancer odor – which even their handler does not know the location of – and are sometimes, but not always, rewarded with a snack if they get it right.

“The scent of dogs is absolutely extraordinary and is unmatched by all the AI technology in the world,” said Irit Gazit, the company’s canine production manager, who has worked with dogs for three decades. “If anyone can detect it, they can.”

The company’s dog handlers are former Israeli soldiers from the elite canine unit.

“This is a type of dream job,” said Ehud Cappon. **HW**



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# Seattle Soccer League Sparks Outrage Over Name, Showcasing ‘Terrorist Imagery’



People playing soccer on a field.  
Credit: BOOM Photography/  
Pexels.

By Jessica Russak-Hoffman

(June 11, 2026/JNS) – A Seattle soccer group calling itself the Fedayeen Football League has been hosting weekly matches in city parks while drawing criticism from Jewish and Iranian-American community members who say its imagery and messaging glorify terrorism, violence and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The league, which launched in May, describes its gatherings at Seattle public parks as opportunities to “play football, connect with Palestinian organizations and hang out.”

The group’s next scheduled event is June 12 at Cal Anderson Park in Seat-

tle’s Capitol Hill neighborhood. Promotional materials circulating online and in social media posts associated with the group have included imagery of armed militants draped in keffiyehs, missiles striking urban areas and clips from news articles referencing attacks on Israel and the deaths of Israeli soldiers.

Photos shared by the group on social media also show participants playing soccer and posing with Islamic Republic of Iran and Palestinian flags, with one image showing a participant giving what appeared to be the “T” hand gesture popularized by Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. (JNS sought comment from Seattle Mayor Katie Wilson and asked Seattle Parks and Recreation if the group reserves space in the parks.)

David Solovy, a Seattle resident and former Israel Defense Forces soldier, told JNS he encountered the group carrying the flags at Green Lake Park in North Seattle. He said one of the members recognized him from his pro-Israel activism, and that the group started chanting “death to Zionists” and called him a “baby killer.”

Rose Marandiz, who fled the Islamic regime in 2001 and now lives in Seattle, criticized the group’s use of symbolism associated with the Iranian government.

“These idiots are parading around with the flag of a murderous regime while they hide under the guise of collective liberation,” she told JNS. She also pointed to men and women within the group playing soccer together, saying such activity would be prohibited in Iran.

“This is Western leftist privilege at its finest – wrong, ignorant and proudly confident,” she said. “I have second-hand embarrassment seeing this. I’m disappointed in the American people, especially my Seattle neighbors, for not seeing the group for who they really are. Neo-Nazi terrorist sympathizers.”

Randy Kessler, executive director of StandWithUs Northwest, told JNS that “the term ‘Fedayeen,’ Arabic for ‘those who sacrifice themselves,’ was chosen as a deliberate provocation.”

“The term has been used to describe armed Palestinian groups who carried out terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, including bombings, hijackings

and massacres, from the 1950s onward,” Kessler said. “Groups like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and other designated terrorist organizations used this term to describe their fighters.”

“Naming a sports team ‘Fedayeen’ normalizes and glorifies political violence and terrorism,” he told JNS. “This group should be condemned by anyone who supports peace and tolerance.”

Regina Sassoon Friedland, director of the Seattle chapter of the American Jewish Committee, called on the community to reject the normalization of extremism, calling the soccer club’s promotional materials “offensive, dangerous and completely unacceptable.”

“Sports should bring communities together, not celebrate martyrdom, showcase terrorist imagery, glorify missile attacks or promote the symbols of regimes that support violence and extremism,” she told JNS. “At this time of surging antisemitism and political violence, it is particularly troubling to see this. We should be building bridges through sport, not importing hatred and glorifying violence.” **HW**

# Connecticut Man Arrested for Allegedly Yelling Slurs at Visibly Identified Jews, Slapping Kippah Off Man’s Head

By Jessica Russak-Hoffman

(June 9, 2026/JNS) – Community members helped the New Haven Police Department identify Paul Smith, 36, of East Haven, Conn., who was arrested and accused of shouting antisemitic slurs at three visibly Jewish people and of slapping a kippah off a victim’s head.

Victims said that the alleged attacker smelled of alcohol and that he ap-

proached the three Jews on Crown Street on June 2 and yelled, “get out of my city,” “baby killers” and “go back where you belong.” He is also said to have asked if they liked “genocide.”

The police department told JNS that Smith allegedly tried to “shove a fourth person, who was trying to intervene, threw a rolled-up newspaper at them,

then pointed at the yarmulke one of the victims was wearing and slapped it off his head, causing it to fall on the ground.”

Officers viewed video footage to confirm the accounts of the victims. They charged Smith last Monday with intim-

idation due to bias in the second degree and disorderly conduct.

“This behavior will never be tolerated in New Haven,” stated David Zannelli, chief of the New Haven Police Department. **HW**

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# The Art of Passing It On: Preserving Wealth and Wisdom Across Generations

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors  
Questions for Mike? You can reach him at 901.761.8151 or Michael.Stein@WellsFargoAdvisors.com • fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael-stein

There’s a quiet revolution happening in families across the country: conversations about legacy. For generations, money was a subject best left unspoken – taboo, mysterious, sometimes even divisive. But as the largest transfer of wealth in history unfolds, families are discovering that the real secret to preserving what matters isn’t just smart investing or airtight legal documents. It’s talking, planning, and preparing – together.

**Make wealth a family conversation**  
The most successful families treat wealth as a shared responsibility, not a private burden. That means inviting the next generation into the conversation early – well before the reading of a will. Don’t just talk numbers; talk values. Ask: What does stewardship mean to us? What are our hopes for the future? These discussions help build trust and clarity, helping ensure your legacy is about more than just assets.  
Heather Hunt-Ruddy, Divisional President at Wealth & Investment Management, Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC, puts it simply: “Actively challenging the old custom of silence

around money is more important than ever. The conversations we have today help ensure our legacy lives on for generations.”  
**Build a team, plan for change**  
No one preserves wealth alone. The most resilient families surround themselves with trusted advisors – financial, legal, and tax professionals – who challenge their thinking and help them see blind spots. But the best teams also include family members who are educated and empowered to participate. Regular family meetings, sometimes with advisors present, help everyone understand the plan and their role in it.  
“Your actions, decisions, and the conversations you choose to have will echo for generations,” Hunt-Ruddy notes. “A plan is only as good as its execution – and its flexibility to adapt with changes.”  
Life rarely follows a script. Divorce, remarriage, illness, business transitions – these events can all impact your plans. The strongest strategies are flexible, reviewed regularly, and designed to adapt as circumstances shift. Build in “pressure valves” for shared assets, like buyout provisions or usage schedules

for family properties. And make sure to revisit your estate plan after major life events or regulatory changes.  
**Model and communicate your legacy**  
Mariana Martinez, Senior Family Dynamics Specialist at Wealth & Investment Management, Wells Fargo Clearing Services, LLC, says the most enduring legacies aren’t just about money – they’re about meaning.  
Engage your family in philanthropy, volunteer together, or create a family mission statement. These actions reinforce values and foster unity, helping ensure your legacy is measured not just in dollars, but in impact.  
“Building a legacy that lasts is a team effort. When families talk openly about their intentions and values, they can create a foundation of trust that can weather any storm,” Martinez said.  
Transparency is key. Surprises may be fun at birthdays, but in estate planning, they often lead to confusion or conflict. Set clear expectations, revisit them often, and use open-ended questions to keep the dialogue going.  
As Hunt-Ruddy advises, “Normalize financial conversations. Treat them

as part of your family’s rhythm – like annual goal setting or milestone reflections.”  
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OBITUARIES



Jed Dreifus

Jed Dreifus died peacefully in his sleep at the Allen Morgan center at Trezevant Manor on May 25, 2026, after a long period of declining health. He was 97.

Jed was born on March 1, 1929, in Detroit, Mich., and moved to Memphis in 1936 with his parents (Fred Dreifus and Myra Finsterwald Dreifus) and his 5-year-old sister Joan, where Fred founded Dreifus Jewelers. Jed’s youngest sister Nancy was born two years later.

Jed attended Harvard College (A.B. 1950) and Harvard Business School (M.B.A. 1952). While at Harvard he met Jeanne Dinsmore, the love of his life, whom he married in 1950. They

were married for 59 years until Jeanne’s death in September 2009.

Jed and Jeanne returned to Memphis in 1952, and Jed joined his father in the jewelry business. Over the course of the next 35 years, he built Dreifus Jewelers into a thriving chain of 20 retail jewelry stores. He sold the business in 1987 to Reeds Jewelry of Wilmington, N.C.

Jed and Jeanne had four children: David (1952), Amy (1955), Emily (1959) and Jonathan (1963).

The couple played an active role in Memphis civic life. In the 1950s they joined the Better Schools Committee of Memphis to improve the Memphis Public Schools, particularly for lower income and disadvantaged children.

Together they played an important role in the civil rights struggles of the 1960s and were among the first white Memphians to invite Black Memphians to their home as social guests in the 1960s. Following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968, Jed and Reverend Benjamin Hooks – later National Executive Director of the NAACP – founded a Thursday morning breakfast group for Black and white business, political and religious leaders to discuss the racial and political issues that were plaguing the community.

In 1969, Jed and Frances Hooks, a counselor at George Washington Carver

High School (and wife of Reverend Hooks), started the Volunteer Placement Program to give talented inner-city public school students the opportunity to attend summer programs at prep schools such as Andover, Exeter and Choate, which they would have otherwise not been able to afford. In the 58 years since the program was started, it grew from a volunteer effort under the Memphis Volunteer Placement Center ultimately becoming Reach Memphis in 2014. Starting with one student from Carver who attended Exeter that first summer, the program now has more than 2,700 alumni who have gone on to find success as artists, attorneys, business owners, physicians, a college president, a federal judge, teachers and professors among other careers.

Jed also served on the Board of Trustees of LeMoyne-Owen College for 19 years, two of them as chair.

Following his retirement in 1987 after the sale of Dreifus Jewelers, he and Jeanne traveled for the next 22 years, visiting every continent except Antarctica.

Jed took up photography as a serious avocation in his retirement. He studied for years with a group led by the acclaimed photographer Murray Riss and became an accomplished photographer himself.

One of the places closest to Jed’s heart was Camp Nebagamon, a camp for boys in Wisconsin. He attended as a camper in the 1940s and also worked as a counselor.

Jed was predeceased by his parents, wife Jeanne, and his sister, Joan Silberberg (Jerry). He is survived by his sister, Nancy Brenner (Louis) of London, children David (Jennifer Sosensky) of Durham, N.C., Amy Stein (George) of Watsonville, Cali., Emily Dreifus (Mark Maremont) of Needham, Mass., and Jonathan Dreifus (Leslie Wu) of Portland, Maine, eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

The family would like to give special recognition to Jed’s caregivers of the last several years, particularly Jed’s primary caregiver, Tameka Williams.

Jed was a quiet, steady, gentle, loving force for good in the world, which is a better place because he was in it. He will remain in our hearts forever.

Contributions in Jed’s memory may be made to The Camp Nebagamon Scholarship Fund, LeMoyne-Owen College and Reach Memphis, or a charity of the donor’s choice.

Jed’s funeral took place graveside at the Temple Israel Cemetery in Memphis on May 28, 2026. A memorial service to honor Jed will be held at Temple Israel on August 23, 2026, at 10 a.m. **HW**



Harry Samuels

Harry Samuels, beloved son, husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather passed away at home on June 4, 2026. Born May 18, 1931, in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, Harry lived a life defined by devotion to family, community and faith.

A graduate of Washington University in St Louis, he and cousin / business partner, Victor Shainberg, owned and operated the S & S Department Store

in Jonesboro, Arkansas, for five years. Moving to Memphis in 1961, he helped manage the DixieMart and Corondolet department stores. Later, he co-owned/managed Samuels & Shainberg Realtors.

He married the love of his life, Flora Shine, in 1961. Together, they built a lasting relationship that continued until his death. They raised three sons: Marty, William and David.

Harry’s commitment to the Jewish community ran deep and long. During the 1980s, he served terms as president of the Memphis Jewish Community Center and Memphis Jewish Federation and helped found the Jewish Student Union at Memphis State University – later, with significant financial backing, this grew to become Hillel of Memphis, a culmination of his efforts for the campus that started in 1962.

In 1988, they lost their youngest son, David, at age 19. Harry and Flora decided that the only response to death that made sense was to enhance life. They soon called together 20 individu-

als to establish and fund a multi-disciplined social support system designed to help families whose children suffer catastrophic illness. From that grief was born a legacy of giving.

He and Flora became deeply involved community volunteers for the Ronald McDonald House, Make-A-Wish foundation, Methodist Alliance Hospice and Blue Suede Shoes at the Airport. He served as a board member of the Ronald McDonald House, Memphis Zoo and Memphis Jewish Home. He also was the first chairman of the Community Relations Commission for Memphis and Shelby County.

In 2013, he and Flora were awarded the Small Group Volunteer of the Year Award by Volunteer Mid-South for the many organizations they supported.

Harry witnessed a moment of profound continuity in 2011: his grandson celebrated his bar mitzvah at Hebrew University’s Hecht Synagogue; the same location Harry and Flora’s youngest son, David, celebrated his 30 years before. He and Flora also helped estab-

lish the Beit Midrash program at that synagogue, whose origins tie back to the Cape Girardeau community Harry grew up in.

Harry enjoyed fishing with his three sons, and later his three grandchildren, just as he learned to fish as a boy. He and Flora traveled – they visited Israel 14 times, were captivated by Italy, and enjoyed many other trips to Europe, the Panama Canal and parts of the U.S.

Harry had a remarkable ability to find connections – not coincidences – with everyone he met. He began to collect these stories, many from others, which led him to authoring three books: “Beshert - True Stories of Connections;” “Crossroads - Chance or Destiny;” and “Connections,” the last of which he published at age 93.

Harry Samuels was 95 years old. He is survived by his wife Flora, his sons Marty and William, and the grandchildren and great-grandchildren who hope to carry on the power of his quiet leadership, calm demeanor and civic and religious duty. **HW**

# Prospects for Jewish Voters ‘Bleak’ in Dem Party, Fetterman Says

By Andrew Bernard

(June 11, 2026/JNS) – Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pa.) continued to spar with his party on Israel-related issues and said at an event last Wednesday that the success of anti-Israel candidates across the country might alienate Jewish voters.

“I’m not a member of the community, but if I was one, it would be bleak as a Jewish voter in the Democratic Party,” Fetterman said at a conference of the Culture for Peace Institute in Washington.

“You’re willing to support these kinds of candidates across the map?” he said. “Look at Michigan, look at the one in Maine, look at New York City, look across the map.”

The Pennsylvania senator referred to New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani

and the Democratic nominee for Senate in Maine, Graham Platner, as examples of what has “infected” his party.

“It’s like how much anti-Israel rhetoric you can cram into your platform,” he said. “Where are your allies right now, the Jewish community?”

Fetterman has repeatedly broken with his party in his public speaking and in votes over his support for Israel and his opposition to Iran, and on issues like immigration.

After a poll in February suggested that he was more popular in Pennsylvania among Republicans than Democrats, Fetterman wrote a Washington Post opinion piece denying any suggestion that he would switch parties ahead of his next election in 2028.

“I’d be a terrible Republican, who

still votes overwhelmingly with Democrats,” Fetterman said.

The senator told attendees at the Culture for Peace Institute last Wednesday that he did not see any contradiction between his left-wing views and his support for Israel.

“We’re Democrats, right? Don’t we have progressive values?” Fetterman said. “Where is the one place in that region that lives with those same values? Where is the only place in the region where two gay people can walk around holding hands without getting thrown off a building?”

Fetterman said that despite Democrats overwhelmingly backing the notion that Iran should not possess nuclear weapons, he was now the only Democrat voting to oppose war powers resolutions

**“Look across the map,” the Pennsylvania senator said. “It’s like how much anti-Israel rhetoric you can cram into your platform.”**

aimed at limiting U.S. President Donald Trump’s military campaign against the Islamic Republic.

“If you think gas is too expensive today, let Iran become a nuclear power,” he said. “Once they’re nuclear, they are truly untouchable.”

“That’s why as a Democrat, I’m willing to embrace perhaps the most toxic thing a Democrat can do,” he added. **HW**

# These Schools Build Druze Israeli Identity, One Student at a Time



**Jewish and Druze students come together and share bread and vegetables grown at a farm extension of the Amal high school in Yanuh Jat in November 2025. Credit: Elana Sztokman**

**By Elana Sztokman**

(June 1, 2026/JTA) – The front courtyard of the Amal high school in the western Galilee village of Yanuh Jat, with its stone terraces, flower-lined walkways and wooden bench circles, looks more like a retreat center than a typical school. Inside the high-ceilinged lobby, banners feature quotations in Hebrew, Arabic and English from public figures like John F. Kennedy and Steve Martin.

The school serves children from villages along Israel’s northern border, and its atmosphere is no accident. Its design evokes order, beauty and respect, reflecting the philosophy of principal Wageeh Barakat, who took on the role a few years ago after the death of the school’s legendary longtime principal, Majed Bissan.

“I want students to feel like they are at home here,” Barakat said.

Yanuh Jat’s high school is one of several Druze-majority schools run by Amal, an educational network whose 50 affiliates range from vocational schools serving marginalized Israeli populations to science and technology schools in Israel’s biggest cities as well as its periphery. Amal’s Druze schools, which serve an Arabic-speaking religious minority of about 150,000 people in Israel, pursue a dual mission: strengthening Druze identity while preparing students for full participation in Israel’s diverse, democratic society.

Israel’s Druze community primarily lives in the country’s north, and they maintain their own traditions and leadership. At the same time, the community is known for its loyalty to the state and its high rates of service in the Israel Defense Forces.

The last two-plus years of war have underscored the bonds between the Druze and their Jewish neighbors. Two senior Druze IDF officers from Yanuh Jat, both alumni of the school, were killed in Israel’s war in Gaza following Hamas’ invasion on Oct. 7, 2023, while

rocket fire and cross-border attacks from Lebanon have repeatedly disrupted daily life in Western Galilee Druze communities. For Amal’s schools in the region, war is not only a news story but a daily reality that shapes students’ sense of identity, belonging and future.

As part of its mission, Amal schools work with Israel’s minority communities – including Bedouins and Christians – to help explore and affirm their identities as both members of distinct cultural/religious groups and as citizens of Israel. At Amal’s Druze schools, for example, educators teach the community’s history, traditions and values alongside broader civic studies. By helping Druze students understand their own story, they can better grasp what democracy looks like in a diverse society: equal rights, mutual recognition and shared responsibility across different identities.

That mix of loyalty to Israel and a distinct communal identity also means that long-term partnerships with Jewish schools in a network like Amal are never automatic; they grow out of deliberate, respectful relationship-building that models the very democratic values the project seeks to instill.

The Yanuh Jat high school functions not only as an academic institution but as a community hub and safe space. Open seven days a week, it hosts workshops and lectures that strengthen ties between parents, educators and children, as well as informal encounters in Barakat’s always-open office.

Barakat recalls with pride a letter from a hotel manager in Eilat praising his students’ considerate behavior on a school trip. For him, those moments matter as much as test scores because they reflect the values he wants his students to bring into Israeli society.

One expression of that vision in Yanuh Jat is the school’s Library for Democracy. With support from the Dan David Foundation, Amal is transforming its 2,100-square-foot library into a modern,

multi-functional learning center with books and digital resources on democracy, human rights and citizenship.

The redesigned library will also include computer stations, quiet reading corners and spaces for community workshops and intergenerational learning, modeled on other global efforts to turn libraries into hubs of civic engagement. Barakat sees it as a resource not only for his 650 students but for the broader village, aimed at strengthening resilience and democratic values in a community living under the shadow of war.

Barakat, who grew up in Yanuh Jat, also devotes significant energy to building bridges with Jewish communities. In November last year, the school hosted Jewish students from an Amal school in nearby Amka at a farm that serves as an extension of the Yanuh Jat campus.

“I am a great believer in coexistence, in partnership, in knowing the other,” Barakat said. “The more we know the other side, then there is truly room to come closer and live together in this country.”

In hillside fields, students worked together handling medicinal plants that are part of Druze culture, learning traditional techniques for pressing olive oil and conducting agricultural experiments. They shared Druze pita, labneh and cucumbers picked on site, turning a school day into a lesson in shared life.

Educational coordinator Madlen Bibar described the activity as representative of “our common roots.” The workshop is intended as a model for similar encounters in other Amal schools.

Supporting these efforts behind the scenes is regional Amal director Shiri Eshed Yehoshua, whose aim is to tighten the link between schools in the field and Amal’s central leadership, as well as initiate activities with other Amal schools to strengthen the experience of being part of a network that is proud of its mission to create a shared society.

For Eshed, that means spending much of her time on the road across the Galilee, helping educators translate Amal’s democratic values into everyday school life.

“This work on identity and culture is vital to the work at Amal,” she said. “It is not a one-off encounter for coexistence but rather the beginning of creating a lifelong, meaningful partnership.”

Amal’s teachers are also part of this push. Educators from Amal schools across the northern Galilee participate in a program called Democracy Community that meets every two weeks to explore civic identity and develop classroom tools for discussing difficult topics.

If Yanuh Jat illustrates how a school can serve as a community anchor, the Amal Multidisciplinary High School in Kisra Samia shows how an educational institution can become a shared anchor for two neighboring communities. Led

by principal Nazir Rabah, a renowned educator and veteran Amal leader, the school serves the Druze villages of Kisra and Samia, which are about 30 minutes apart. Under Rabah’s leadership, the school has become a place where students from the two villages learn, volunteer and celebrate together, modeling a respectful coexistence that often eludes wider public life.

The school’s nearly 1,000 students are mostly Druze, though there are Christian and Muslim pupils as well. “A school must open opportunities and strengthen identity,” Rabah said. “Because a student who knows who they are can face the world without fear.”

Over the years, Kisra Samia – which offers majors in medical science, software engineering, business administration and rescue and safety studies, alongside core academic subjects – has been recognized for academic excellence, innovation and social leadership. The school frequently partners with local Jewish schools, and it also attracts visitors, including American Jewish delegations, who want to see how Israeli public schools can combine strong identity building with high-level STEM and vocational education.

The school is part of an initiative Amal is leading with the Accord Center at the Hebrew University that brings together teachers from selected schools to explore identity: social and personal, national and international, as a way of bridging differences across Israel’s diverse society.

“As a diverse network that is a microcosm of Israeli society, we see it as our responsibility to give every student in Amal the best possible education, even when the starting points are very unequal,” said Tamar Peled Amir, Amal’s vice director general for education, research and technology. “Equality, human dignity, liberty and social justice are not slogans for us. They are about giving each student the best possible ticket to the next station in life”.

In both Yanuh Jat and Kisra Samia, that “ticket” is shaped every day in classrooms, hallways and courtyards where Druze teenagers wrestle with questions of faith, citizenship and future in a country recovering from a brutal war. For Amal, investing in these schools means investing in a shared Israeli society in which a small, proud minority can both preserve its identity and fully participate in the national story.

This story was sponsored by and produced in collaboration with Amal Educational Network, an Israeli public high school network specializing in science and technology that prepares students of all social groups for the changing needs of democratic Israeli society. This article was produced by JTA’s native content team. **HW**

# Likud Confirms Netanyahu to Seek Re-Election, After Trump Notes ‘Amazing Career’

**By JNS Staff**

(June 10, 2026/JNS) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Likud Party confirmed last Wednesday that the Jewish state’s longest-serving leader would run in the upcoming election.

The statement came after U.S. President Donald Trump wondered in an interview with ABC News last Tuesday, “If Bibi even wants to continue ... .”

“I don’t know, he’s had an amazing

career. Does he want to continue? Because you know, he’s a wartime prime minister,” Trump told correspondent Jonathan Karl.

“We will very shortly win the war one way or the other, and you know he’s a wartime prime minister,” Trump said. “That’s okay, just like I’m a wartime president.”

The Likud Party said in its response,

“Prime Minister Netanyahu will run in the upcoming elections,” adding, “With God’s help, he will win.”

Israeli lawmakers on June 2 voted 106-0 in a first reading to advance a coalition bill to dissolve parliament and pave the way for early elections.

Due to disagreements within the coalition, Likud’s Ofir Katz advanced the bill without specifying an election date, say-

ing the date would be added before its final two readings. The bill currently stipulates that elections will be held between Sept. 8 and Oct. 20. In any case, national elections must be held by Oct. 27.

Likud recently held internal elections for its Central Committee and municipal branches, with members reaffirming support for Netanyahu’s leadership as he ran unchallenged. **HW**



*In 2027, Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR) will celebrate 100 years of serving patients. In honor of this accomplishment and all the people who made it possible, we are telling 100 of their stories. Over the next two years, we will publish 100 Stories for 100 Years – a weekly column spotlighting resident, staff, and lay leader stories with the Home from throughout our history. This week, we are sharing words from our past president, Steve Wishnia.*

## Meet Steve Wishnia



*Steve Wishnia (r) with Executive Director Bobby Meadows at MJHR’s Annual Golf Tournament.*

**By Shoshana Center**  
**MJHR: Tell us about yourself (hometown, education, family, hobbies, career).**

I grew up in New York and served in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War. I earned my BBA from Pace University. My wife, Eileen, and I have three adult children and six grandchildren, living in New York, Chicago and Memphis.

I moved to Memphis to work with Abe Plough; he was my mentor. Then I started Highland Capital Management, providing investment advisory services, with business partners in 1987.

I work a lot but also enjoy traveling; we’ve been all over the world: Europe, Africa, Asia.

**MJHR: How did you become connected to MJHR?**

In the early ’80s, William Rudner got me involved to help with the Home’s investments. This was back when it was still on Tucker St. in Midtown.

**MJHR: Share your favorite MJHR story.**

As a past president, I was involved in every aspect of the Home, including the golf tournament. My family has been very generous to the Home – we’re big supporters. We dedicated the sculpture that’s in front of the Home and the garden. Though the Home is majority non-Jews, it is critical that elderly Jews in this community have somewhere to go. We have to have a place for Jews.

Most people are willing to help and give money for children’s causes, which is wonderful. But I always felt that we have to honor our mothers and fathers,



*Steve (l) with Bobby and Robert Wallace of the Plough Foundation at the grand opening of the Belz Family Foundation Rehab Center.*

and that we shouldn’t forget our elderly.

**MJHR: What do you wish for the future 100 years of the organization?**

I hope that we’re still there. It’s critical. We’ve built a phenomenal endowment through the years. I think it’s the most well-funded of all the Jewish homes in the country. We’ve done a great job to help us continue the legacy of the Home. I want us to continue to have the reputation that we’re the best Home in the State of Tennessee. We must have this facility for Jewish residents.

**MJHR: Anything else you’d like to share about MJHR?**

We were very lucky we found Bobby Meadows when we did. Nat Landau, Mark Halperin and I got the ball rolling. I remember some saying that we needed to hire someone Jewish for that role.

But Bobby knows more than some Jews now! He knows all about our holidays and customs. We’re so lucky to have him. Bobbie Yarbrough, director of the deli, and Baylee Less-Eiseman, director of development, are doing fabulous work. Joel Ashner and Kate Menke were wonderful. People know about the Jewish Home because all those people helped keep our reputation up.

Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab is a not-for-profit nursing home, Jewish in character and environment, dedicated to providing the highest level of care possible with dignity, compassion, and professionalism. Only through the help of generous donors is the organization able to care for those in need. Find more information at [www.memphisjewishhome.org/giving](http://www.memphisjewishhome.org/giving). **HW**

## Former Biden Chief of Staff Ron Klain Accused of ‘Whitewashing’ Graham Platner’s Nazi Tattoo



*U.S. President Joe Biden hosts an official transition event for outgoing chief-of-staff Ron Klain in the East Room of the White House, Feb. 1, 2023. Credit: Hannah Foslien/White House.*

**By Jessica Russak-Hoffman**

(June 10, 2026/JNS) – Ron Klain, former White House chief of staff under President Joe Biden, is facing backlash after he defended Maine Democratic Senate candidate Graham Platner, who has covered up a tattoo that he said he

didn’t know was Nazi imagery.

Last Tuesday, the Republican Jewish Coalition called for Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) to withdraw support for Platner, whom it condemned in the “strongest possible terms.”

“A Nazi tattoo is disqualifying. Full stop,” the RJC said. “Chuck Schumer,

the highest-ranking Jewish elected official in America, and every Senate Democrat propping up Platner’s campaign should be ashamed.”

Klain, chief legal officer for Airbnb who is Jewish, responded on social media to the RJC statement, which he called “just a partisan attack.”

“The tattoo was a skull and crossbones to remember his fallen comrades from his service in Afghanistan,” wrote Klain, who hosted a fundraiser for Platner in Washington the week prior.

Platner has denied knowing that his Totenkopf tattoo was a symbol used by Adolf Hitler’s SS, though Lindsey Field, who dated Platner more than 10 years ago, has said he understood the tattoo’s symbolism.

Sam Markstein, national spokesman for the RJC, told JNS that “Ron Klain is not some random political operative who stumbled into this.”

“He is President Biden’s former White House chief of staff, Airbnb’s chief legal officer and a former member of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council,” Markstein said. “He knows exactly

what the insignia of the Nazi SS represents.”

“Klain chose to host a fundraiser for Graham Platner anyway and is now whitewashing the Totenkopf skull and crossbones itself. It’s a total disgrace,” he told JNS. “One after another, prominent Jewish Democrats are lining up behind Graham Platner, a candidate caught wearing the insignia of the unit that ran the Holocaust death camps.”

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), who is Jewish, “calls him ‘excellent.’ Chuck Schumer gives his full endorsement. Klain writes the check and writes the excuse,” Markstein said.

Airbnb owes the Jewish community “an answer about whether this represents the values and position of their company,” he told JNS. “The American Jewish community is watching, and we will remember.”

Klain told JNS that he has heard Platner tell the story of his tattoo.

“I find it believable,” Klain told JNS. “He has denied Ms. Fifield’s claim that he knew the tattoo to be a Totenkopf, and I believe Mr. Platner’s account.” **HW**

# Wikipedia Softens ‘Public Image of Extremists’ Like Hasan Piker, Analyst Says



Hasan Piker, a far-left streamer, speaking at a re-election campaign rally for former Rep. Cori Bush, the Missouri Democrat who lost her position in 2024, in St. Louis, Mo., May 1, 2026. Credit: Poisonwithahawkseye via Wikimedia Commons.

By Aaron Bandler

(June 5, 2026/JNS) – The Wikipedia page for Hasan Piker, a far-left streamer who has called the Israel Defense Forces a “Nazi army” and Orthodox Jews “inbred,” has received more than 327,000 views in the past 30 days.

At the top of the page, it states that he has “regularly spoken about the Gaza war, advocating for Palestinians and criticizing the Israeli government.” Readers must scroll down quite a bit to learn that he has praised Hamas, a U.S.-designated terror organization.

Despite an editor recommending it, the page does not note that the U.S. Department of the Treasury reportedly subpoenaed the streamer, who has 2.8 million followers on Twitch and has hosted multiple Democratic politicians on his

show, regarding a recent trip to Cuba.

An editor stated in the page’s “talk” section that the crowdsourced encyclopedia should wait for more details to come out before including that detail.

Toby Dershowitz, senior adviser at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told JNS that “a look under the hood shows that anonymous editors hold sway over how figures like Hasan Piker are publicly portrayed.”

“Through structural changes to text, strategic placement of controversies and calls for ‘balance,’ they soften the public image of extremists,” she said, “even when the factual record is so one-sided that balance for its own sake is unwarranted.”

**‘Bias within the Wikipedia com-**

**munity’**

Piker’s entry has one paragraph, out of some 3,000 words, that addresses allegations of Jew-hatred directly.

The paragraph notes that Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-N.Y.) accused him of antisemitism, and Piker denied it. The entry also states that he called Orthodox Jews in Israel “inbred” and that he later regretted saying it.

It cites reporting from The New Yorker, which reported that “when Piker is criticized by the right, it’s usually for soft-pedaling the brutality of Hamas, or the Houthis,” and from Vox stating that Piker has “lack of issue” with Hezbollah, which is also a U.S.-designated terror group.

Editors opposed a suggestion that the entry should mention Reps. Mike Lawler (R-N.Y.) and Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.) introducing a resolution in April decrying Piker and Candace Owens, another antisemitic podcaster. Editors stated that it was too soon to determine if the resolution would have any real impact on Piker.

On May 8, an editor removed a sentence from the entry about Piker interviewing a Yemeni influencer, who was on a ship that the Houthis seized in January 2024.

The influencer, who calls himself the “pirate king,” has defended the Houthis, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

“Wikipedia claims to present a neutral point of view on factual information, but this page shows yet again an apparent bias within the Wikipedia community against Jews and Israel in how it underemphasizes or fails to cite

the extreme and antisemitic positions of Piker,” Daniel Kelley, senior director of the ADL’s Center for Technology and Society, told JNS.

The ADL, which Wikipedia considers a “generally unreliable” source on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, compiled a list of Piker’s remarks that it says show his support for terrorism and his antisemitic ideas.

Some but not all of the remarks are covered in the Wikipedia entry, including his view that Hamas is “1,000 times” better than the Israeli government, that Hezbollah’s is his “favorite flag” and that he supports “every type of armed resistance against both the settlers and also the Israeli occupying force in the West Bank.”

He also compared Zionists to Nazis and engaged in Oct. 7 rape denial, according to the ADL. Neither of those things is mentioned in Piker’s Wikipedia entry.

Kurt Schwartz, CEO of the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis, told JNS that “when editors conceal Piker’s indifference to and even denial of Hamas’s sexual assault, for example, these amount to errors of omission.”

They are “errors meant to distort understanding and rewrite history in a Pravda-like manner,” Schwartz said. (The latter was a Soviet official publication.)

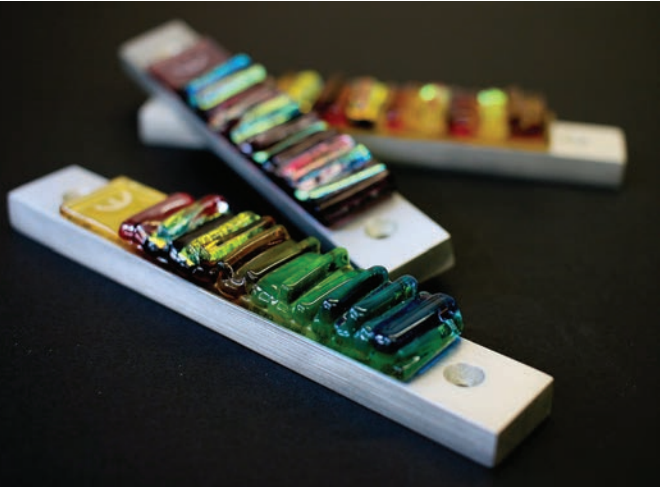
Dershowitz told JNS that “from Piker’s justification of the deadly attacks on America on 9/11 to his comments that ‘it doesn’t matter if rape happened on Oct. 7,’ the public record merits the full ground truth, however that tips the scale.” **HW**



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