

CANDLELIGHTING DENVER 7:11 p.m. BOULDER 7:13 p.m. ASPEN 7:18 p.m.

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CRAZY EDDIE'S FRADULENT EMPIRE

By STEPHEN SILVER

JTA

NEW YORK — Crazy Eddie was a consumer electronics empire built on hype. Entrepreneur Eddie Antar grew his chain of discount stores in the New

'Cash only'

York of the 1970s with unforgettably loud TV commercials, a reputation for low prices and a compelling story about an underdog family of Syrian

INSANE

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JEWISH COP RESIGNS IN LOUISVILLE

By JACKIE HAJDENBERG

JTA

LOUISVILLE — The former Louisville police officer who was at the two scenes during the 2020 police killings of Breonna Taylor and of David McAtee has resigned from his new position as security advisor for the Jewish Community of Louisville.

The resignation came after backlash from the

LOUISVILLE

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Greeting migrants

Chasidic Jew raises millions to provide migrants with food, shoes, toiletries — says it's a lesson of the Holocaust



Alexander Rapaport, director of Masbia, a free soup kitchen for all, at the Port Authority in New York City welcoming migrants in Hebrew, Spanish and English packed onto buses from Texas.

By STEVE LIPMAN

IJN Contributing Writer

NEW YORK CITY — The first sight that many of the migrants who have arrived over the last few weeks at the Port Authority bus terminal in Manhattan after a long ride from the southern US border in Texas see is a welcome sign handwritten in Spanish, Hebrew and English.

Held by a bearded, middle-aged chasidic Jew.

Then he guides the migrants, mostly Christians, a few yards across the Port Authority lobby to tables offering free food and drink, usually tuna and crackers, as well as shoes, toiletries, toothbrushes, razors, candy bars and other necessities they had lost or left behind when they left their homes in Central America on the way to the Mexican border.

The tables are also staffed by chasidic Jews, and by Spanish-speaking staff of the Brooklyn-based Masbia Soup Kitchen Network, a kosher institution that for 17 years

has fed the city's indigent residents on a non-sectarian basis.

Masbia's outreach to migrants — the majority from such places as Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Venezuela — has become

“These are human beings, they need help, says Rapaport simply

the focus of a political dispute over the Biden administration's open borders policies, and the organization's latest major humanitarian effort.

Seeking asylum in the US, the migrants since early August have been packed onto buses headed north (whether willingly or not is a matter of dispute), part of an effort

by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott to protest the US government's open policy for immigrants and New York City's declaration of itself as a sanctuary city.

Some of the migrants reportedly got off the buses en route, critics say, and Texas authorities have not kept track of where the men and women and children are now. Texas, which says that its southern cities are overburdened by a groundswell of migrants, has not sought the permission of New York City — and earlier, Washington, DC, another sanctuary city — to take in the nearly 1,000 migrants who had arrived here by last week, nor cooperated with the city's officials in coordinating the migrants' arrival schedule.

Abbott said last week that Texas had “bused over 9,000 migrants to our nation's capital since April.”

WELCOME

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'Israel stabbed Rushdie'

DU condemns prof's remarks

By STEVE MARK

IJN Staff Writer

DU Professor Nader Hashemi is under fire from Jewish groups in the wake of Hashemi's remarks on a Spotify podcast, saying that Israeli's national intelligence agency may be partly responsible for the Aug. 12 attempted murder and stabbing of author Salman Rushdie.

This is the second time in just over one year that DU has faced sharp criticism for an action by Hashemi at the Center for Middle

Nader Hashemi has history of anti-Israel rhetoric

East Studies. Then, as now, DU defended his right to speak but dissociated itself from what he did in 2021 and what he said in 2022.

Hashemi commented Aug. 20, 2022, on The Iran Podcast, hosted by Negar Mortazavi, that the Israeli Mossad could have played a role in motivating Rushdie's alleged attacker, Hadi Matar. Matar, 24, is under arrest. Rushdie sustained multiple stab wounds during his speech at the Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, NY.

“There are nefarious political forces at stake here who are responsible for this attack,” Hashemi said on the podcast.

Hashemi said that Matar “was in communication with someone online who claimed to be an Islamic Revolutionary Gard Corps supporter and lured him into attacking Salmon Rushdie.

“That so-called person online claiming to be affiliated with the Islamic Republic of Iran could have been a Mossad operative.

“Israel has taken a very strong position against reviving the Iran nuclear agreement. It looked like an agreement was imminent and then

DU

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NEWS: New York City

‘We’re all children of immigrants’

From a Vishnitz chasidic home in Brooklyn to a visible symbol of NY’s *haredi* communityWELCOME
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Sometimes 100 or more migrants arrive in New York City in a single day.

Several times in the last few weeks, volunteers of Masbia (masbia.org) were at Port Authority to greet the migrants as they disembarked, usually in

“Rapaport is the grandson of four Holocaust survivors

the early morning.

The migrants “say they’ve never been welcomed like this, including in Texas,” says Shaina Coronel, spokesperson for the mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. “They see New Yorkers of all backgrounds coming together.”

Coronel calls Masbia’s work at Port Authority — especially its willingness to provide shoes — “invaluable, critical.”

The identifiably Orthodox Jews, recruited on short notice by the co-founder of Masbia to make the trek in the dark from their homes in Brooklyn to mid-Manhattan, have literally put a human face on the human costs of a national controversy that has pitted conservatives, who favor tighter immigrant admittance policies, against liberals, who support the Biden administration’s looser ones.

Abbott, who is thought to have presidential ambitions and has raised his national profile this year, has drawn outspoken criticism from New York Mayor Eric Adams.

He says the large number of migrants who have come in the last month stretch the capacity of the city’s homeless shelters and put a strain on the city’s budget; he has said he will request funds for this from the federal government.

Abbott is a Republican; Adams, a Democrat.

Critics of Abbott, who is engaged in an election race with Beto O’Rourke, former member of the House of Representatives, say he is using the migrants as human pawns.

He counters that the migrants go willingly to the Big Apple, signing waivers before they start the arduous, 2,000-mile, 30-40-hour trip.

Masbia’s work at Port Authority “is not politics,” not part of the debate, Alexander Rapaport, Masbia’s executive director says; the organization does not take a stand on the migrant issue.

“These are human beings,” he says. “They need help. This should not be an issue.”

Rapaport himself often is among the Masbia representatives at the bus terminal passing out the items he has bought.

Fortyish, Rapaport was raised in a Vishnitz chasidic home in Brooklyn, and has become a visible symbol of New York City’s *haredi* community, usually before Jewish holidays, when Masbia increases its food distribution activities, and after international tragedies, which increase the need for humanitarian aid.

In New York, where Jewish poverty, especially in *haredi* circles, is a major problem that is frequently overshadowed by food insecurity among other religious and ethnic



‘THEY WENT THROUGH HELL ON EARTH’

Volunteers for Masbia with founder Alexander Rapaport in front of towels and socks for female migrants arriving in New York City with the clothes on their back — but not necessarily with shoes on their feet. Not readable on the Masbia poster in the background is the fine print, ‘Serving Nourishing Meals to All.’

groups, Masbia was formed by Rapaport and fellow chasidic Jew Mordechai Mandelbaum in an effort to fill people’s stomachs and preserve their dignity.

arrive? (City officials gave Rapaport their schedule.)

When he got his answers, he had to persuade an Orthodox friend who owns a truck rental company

at-Port-Authority campaign. “It cost a lot,” he says, not offering an exact figure

This is on top of Masbia’s annual \$2 million operating budget. Ten

“The Torah says you serve everyone food, irrespective of race or religion.”

“Some people think we [*haredi* Orthodox Jews] care only for our people. That’s not the case,” says Shmuel Yaacov Mehring, another member of the Vishnitz community who greeted the migrants at Port Authority.

Mehring, Rapaport’s father-in-law, who worked in the shoe business, assisted in the shoe distribution; he’s an expert in judging a person’s shoe size at a glance. He was doing “something for humanity,” he says.

Masbia joined volunteers from a few other refugee-protection and human rights organizations, both Jewish and Christian and religiously unaffiliated, in greeting the migrants.

The migrants’ reaction at Port Authority to the help provided by Masbia? “Very emotional,” Rapaport says. “Some of them start crying. Some of them cross themselves.”

The need for Masbia to greet migrants at Port Authority does not seem likely to end soon.

Abbott says he will keep sending migrants to New York City. “Texas will continue busing migrants to New York City and Washington, DC to help our overrun border communities,” he said last week.

New York City will keep on finding housing for them here, or arranging to send them to relatives in other parts of the country, according to Adams.

“NYC will continue to welcome asylum seekers with open arms, as we have always done,” the mayor’s spokesperson Fabien Levy said on Twitter.

And Masbia will continue to greet the migrants arriving from Texas as long as the buses carrying them roll in, Rapaport says. “Sure.”

Some members of the community in Rapaport’s Brooklyn neighborhood are not accustomed to his very public ecumenical approach to helping non-Jews.

“It’s a teachable moment,” he says. “They’re going to get used to it.” ■

“Rapaport has reached out to refugees from Afghanistan, tornado victims in Kentucky, earthquake victims in Haiti

From modest beginnings, the organization has grown to three sites (two in Brooklyn, one in Queens) that, pre-COVID, fed 40,000 people a week, as a “restaurant” with waiters that — prompted in part by the quarantine requirements of the pandemic — is now a take-out food pantry.

Masbia bills itself as the city’s only five-days-a-week kosher soup kitchen.

Masbia is Hebrew for “satisfy.”

Rapaport, under whose direction Masbia has reached out in recent years to refugees from Afghanistan, tornado victims in Kentucky, and people displaced by an earthquake in Haiti, says his efforts for the migrants who crossed the border

to provide some trucks on a Sunday to *shlep* free items.

He had to call other friends in the chasidic community and ask them to go with him on shopping trips and to Port Authority.

Several agreed.

“It’s a pop-up situation” — neither the city nor humanitarian agencies like Masbia anticipated the massive need created by hundreds of migrants, Rapaport says.

“The immediate need, it turned out, were shoes,” he says. Many of the migrants, leaving their hometowns, had to leave their belongings behind; or they lost their property on their way to the US border; or their shoes were damaged beyond use during the trip.

percent comes from government aid, the rest from private donations.

One more thing Rapaport bought was a few-feet-high Statue of Liberty, which graced one of the Masbia tables in Port Authority, to remind the migrants who came by bus of those who had arrived by boat more than a century ago and saw the famed statue in New York Harbor.

Rapaport’s relatives were among earlier immigrants in the US. He is the grandson of four Holocaust survivors who settled in Brooklyn and Montreal after WW II.

He tells about hearing stories when he was a child from his grand-

“Their first step in New York should not be made barefoot

into Texas grow out of Jewish ethics and his family’s history.

“We’re all children of immigrants,” he says.

Masbia turned up at Port Authority a few days after the migrants started to arrive from Texas. “We scrambled.”

First, Rapaport says, he had to arrange his activities with City Hall. Was Masbia needed? (“Yes.”) What items did the migrants need? (“Shoes.”) When would their buses

“They went through hell on earth,” Rapaport says.

He and two Masbia staff members went on a shopping spree. They filled up at least six shopping carts full of shoes and warm socks. “We cleaned out six New Jersey Wal-marts.”

Not knowing the shoe sizes of the people he would meet, Rapaport bought a variety of sizes. Their “first steps in New York should not be made barefoot,” he says.

Rapaport established a separate fund-raising account for the help-

mother, who interned in “every horrible camp that existed.”

She told her grandson that she managed to feed people in the camps, stealing “beets from the SS” and begging for potato scraps from local farmers.

That motivates his Masbia work, he says. “This is in my DNA. It feels very good to give back.

“As descendants of people who arrived in New York Harbor seeking asylum,” Rapaport says, “it is simply the right thing to do for new migrants 75 years later.